



Natural Areas Certification Program Guidelines

Purpose of the Program

The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program encourages site management practices that focus on protecting, restoring, and enhancing native animal and plant communities. The Natural Areas Certification Program was created to provide natural areas management guidance to private landowners and non-City public landowners.

Benefits of Natural Areas Certification

Land certified as a natural area is managed by the landowner so that native animal and plant communities are enhanced, restored, and protected. City staff provides assistance in the planning of this management. Landowners can feel proud that they are contributing to the Fort Collins community's goal of resource protection. Not only will they be providing higher quality habitat for the wildlife that they and their family enjoy seeing, but they will also be contributing to the protection and enhancement of the quality of life for all of Fort Collins citizens.

Land certified as a natural area is eligible for the City's *Natural Areas Enhancement Fund Program*. This program was created to assist landowners in the implementation of their management plan. A separate application for these funds is required and is available from the Natural Areas Program.

Requirements

Natural Areas Certification is open to individual private landowners, groups of private landowners (e.g., homeowners' association, irrigation company), and schools whose land meets the City's established criteria for Natural Areas Certification. An organization or club can sponsor the Natural Areas Certification, with written permission of the landowner(s).

All of the following must be met:

- The land must be at least 1/4 acre in size.
- The land must be located entirely within the Fort Collins Growth Management Area.
- The land must have existing or potential wildlife habitat value.

The management plan must conform to City Code regarding trees and shrubs, weeds, brush piles, rubbish, and animals, even if the site is located outside of the City limits. If plantings are included in the management plan, in most cases, only native species should be planted. Control of noxious weeds will be required; removal of other exotic, pest plants will be encouraged. Amount and species of trees and shrubs planted in floodplain areas may be restricted or removal may be required, based on requirements of the Utilities. Poudre Fire Authority may restrict the height of grasses and wildflowers in some areas or during dry periods. Adjacent landowners must be informed by the applicant, in writing, of the management plan.

Application and Certification Period

Applications must be submitted on the enclosed forms and include all requested information. Applicant must submit **the original and one photocopy**. Photographs of the site and a map or scale drawing of project location and plans must be enclosed with the application. Photographs are part of the application and will not be returned. Anticipate a 4-week processing period once the initial application is submitted.

Private and non-City public natural areas are certified for a period of 5 years after approval of the management plan. At the end of the 5-year period, the natural area is eligible for re-certification only if the management plan was successfully implemented.

Site Visit and Assistance

Natural Areas Program staff can assist applicants with development of a management plan and provide information on City Code, native plants, and exotic pest plants. Applicants must schedule a site visit with Natural Areas staff.

Signage

The City supplies one 12" x 18" sign free of charge to designate certified natural areas. The sign must be displayed on the site to maintain certification.

Funding for Implementation of the Management Plan

The Natural Areas Program has limited funds available to enhance or restore privately-owned natural areas. A separate application to obtain these funds is available upon request from the City's Natural Areas Program.

For Further Information

Karen Mancini, Senior Environmental Planner
Natural Areas Program
P.O. Box 580
Fort Collins, CO 80522-0580
(970) 221-6310
e-mail: kmancini@fcgov.com

Revised: September 2008



Natural Areas Certification Application Form

Date: _____

Site Name: _____

Site size (natural areas portion only): _____ (acres)

Site Address/Location: _____

Name of Applicant(s): _____

Contact Person Name/Address: _____

Phone: _____ Home _____ Work (if applicable)

E-mail (if available): _____

Landowner's Name and Address (if different from contact person): _____

Site Manager's Name and Address (if different from contact person): _____

Adjacent Landowners Contacted ___ Yes ___ No (Attach written documentation).

Is site within the Fort Collins City Limits? ___ Yes ___ No

Is site within the Fort Collins Growth Management Area? ___ Yes ___ No

Is site located within a defined floodplain? ___ Yes ___ No

Is site located along an irrigation ditch? ___ Yes ___ No

General Site Description

Describe current habitat/vegetation of the site (e.g., cattail marsh, grassland, wooded area):

Describe current wildlife use of the site (e.g., species observed, dens, burrows, cavities, nests):

List physical features on the site

Native plants (trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers): _____

Non-native plants (trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers): _____

Deadwood (e.g., snags, brush piles): _____

Water (e.g., ditch, stream, pond): _____

Geological features (e.g., outcrops): _____

Human-made structures (e.g., fences, culverts, utility poles, bank stabilization): _____

Current and past use of site (e.g., gravel mine, pasture): _____

Five-Year Habitat Protection, Restoration, and Enhancement Goal(s)

Management Plan to Accomplish Goals (attach additional pages, if necessary)

Establish native plants (planting, seeding, watering techniques, species list): _____

Remove non-native plants (techniques, list species): _____

Control noxious weeds (techniques, list species): _____

Mow (e.g., along streets, sidewalks, buildings, combustible fences): _____

Install structures to protect sensitive habitat or enhance wildlife use (e.g., fencing, nest structures):

Site clean-up (e.g., removal of debris, replacing/covering concrete bank stabilization):

Additional information: _____

SCHEDULE OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

<u>Describe management action (e.g., planting, weed control)</u>	<u>Month(s)</u>
Year 1 _____	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Year 2 _____	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Year 3 _____	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Year 4 _____	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Year 5 _____	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Projected 5-year costs (optional) Note: Limited funds for enhancing or restoring natural areas are available through the Natural Areas Program. Contact Karen Mancini at 221-6310 for current information on the Natural Areas Enhancement Fund.

Plant Materials	\$ _____
Equipment Purchase or Rental	\$ _____
Structural Materials	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Anticipated number of volunteers working on site over the next 5 years: _____

Estimated total hours of volunteer time: _____

Would you allow your site to be used for limited media coverage to promote the program?
(Note: a "yes" reply is not necessary for certification.)
_____ Yes _____ No

Would you allow the public, or a special interest group, to visit your site on a limited basis with your approval for each visit? (Note: a "yes" reply is not necessary for certification.)
_____ Yes _____ No

ATTACH RECENT PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE.

Attach color photographs to original application.

Photocopies of the photographs are acceptable on the copy.

ATTACH SITE PLAN.

Black and white on 8.5" X 11" paper is preferable. A rough sketch is acceptable.

Don't forget to make one copy of the entire completed application and submit with the original. You should also make an additional copy to keep for your records.