

VIRGINIA BEACH PARKS & RECREATION

MEADOW
MANAGEMENT



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VBGOV.COM/PARKS

Meadow management is a method of converting manicured lawn to meadows to protect our waterways, while also establishing more efficient maintenance and management practices. Meadow management limits woody vegetation growth by annual mowing, while allowing grassy, native vegetation to become established.

Meadows are better buffers than manicured lawns because they:

- Filter sediment, excess nutrients and other pollutants before they enter our waterways;
- Protect sensitive wildlife and plant species;
- Reduce shoreline erosion;
- Reduce labor & fuel costs; and
- Reduce potential for injuries or equipment damage.

WHERE CAN MEADOWS BE ESTABLISHED?

- As buffers along natural shorelines and streams, but only to the top of bank
- As buffers for man-made ponds and canals, but only to the top of bank
- Areas required to be vegetated by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Ordinance
- Areas required to be vegetated by the Southern Watersheds Management Ordinance
- Other areas may be suitable for meadow management. Please refer to City Code Section 23-50 at VBgov.com or contact Park & Landscape Services at (757) 385-4461 for more information.
- The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Ordinance and the Southern Watersheds Management Ordinance may prohibit clearing a forested shoreline buffer to create a managed meadow.

HOW ARE MEADOWS CREATED & MAINTAINED?

- Identify the area to become a meadow. To gain environmental benefits, a minimum 20-foot wide meadow buffer is desirable, but the buffer cannot extend beyond the top of bank unless exempted under City Code.
- Establish a new mowing cycle. This is determined by the meadow location and the amount of woody vegetation. To control woody vegetation, mow no more than once per year, to a minimum height of 6 inches, in November to February.
- Selectively remove woody shrubs and trees, and control invasive species using approved practices.
- Meadows may be enhanced by seeding wildflowers or planting other perennials that tolerate winter mowing.
- Meadows will begin to appear in a month or two, with native wildflowers blooming in a year or more.

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