

MORRIS COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Policy and Procedure

Tree Removal and Replacement	Effective Date: 2011	Approval:
	Revised Date: March 24, 2014	Approval: Res. No. 45-14
	Revised Date:	Approval:
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Purpose:

The Park Commission recognizes the environmental and aesthetic values of trees on parklands. Trees provide aesthetic and scenic beauty; shade; and wildlife habitat. Trees also improve water and air quality; stabilize soils; and reduce stormwater flow.

The Park Commission also recognizes that a variety of circumstances will require the removal of trees on parklands. Trees may pose safety hazards or conflict with site development plans. Environmental stewardship plans and programs may require the removal of trees to meet conservation objectives in certain areas. Certain trees may conflict with cultural and horticultural site objectives.

The Park Commission seeks to minimize any negative impacts associated with tree removals on park resources; to maintain the aesthetic and environmental benefits provided by trees; and to stimulate awareness of tree removal impacts by staff. This policy outlines the criteria a tree must meet before it can be removed; establishes a procedure to determine the compensatory value of a removed tree; and details the replacement program that the Park Commission will use to offset the losses of removed trees.

- A. A tree must fall into one or more of the following categories before it can be removed from park property.
 - 1. Tree is dead, dying, diseased, damaged or injured and its location, condition, or deterioration constitutes a safety hazard.
 - 2. Tree location compromises the preservation and maintenance of buildings, structures, parking lots, utilities, or other resources.
 - 3. Tree location interferes with the construction of facilities and site development.
 - 4. Tree presents an immediate threat to public safety.
 - 5. Tree preservation is not economically feasible.

6. Tree detracts from landscape design plans or does not fulfill plant collection objectives.
 7. Tree is considered an invasive species.
 8. Tree is infested with a pest or pathogen that threatens forest and landscape health.
 9. Removal of the tree is required to meet objectives outlined in an approved stewardship, forest management, or meadow management plan.
- B. A Tree Removal Assessment Form (attached) must be filled out for any tree that needs to be removed.
1. The following information must be recorded for each tree removal project:
 - a. Facility name
 - b. Date of assessment
 - c. Name(s) of staff or contractor performing assessment
 - d. Specific location of tree
 - e. Reason for removal
 - f. Date of removal
 - g. Name(s) of staff or contractor responsible for removal
 - h. Species name
 - i. Diameter at breast height (DBH)
 - j. Vigor ranking
 - k. Nativity
 2. Forms must be submitted to the Assistant Deputy Director for Cultural & Environmental Resources or designee within one week of the removal date.
 3. The Assistant Deputy Director for Cultural & Environmental Resources or designee must be made aware of trees to be removed as part of a large-scale construction project at the start of the project planning process.
- C. The Park Commission will plant replacement trees for each tree that is removed from parkland to offset the losses in aesthetic and environmental values that were provided by the tree.
1. A replacement value will be calculated for each removed tree that will determine the number of trees the Park Commission will plant to offset these losses. The valuation method places the highest value on large, healthy, native trees. Small, diseased or damaged, invasive trees have the lowest value.

The valuation method assigns a score for each of three categories: size, vigor, and nativity, as specified in the Valuation Scoring Tables. The three scores are added

together to obtain the replacement value. The replacement value is equivalent to the number of trees that must be planted by the Park Commission. Possible replacement values range from 1 to 11.

Valuation Scoring Tables

Tree Size	Score
< 6 in.	1
6 – 12 in.	2
12 – 18 in.	3
18 – 24 in.	4
24 – 30 in.	5
30 – 36 in.	6
> 36 in.	7

Vigor	Score
Poor	0
Fair	1
Good	2

Nativity	Score
Invasive	0
Nonnative	1
Native	2

The following examples illustrate how the valuation method works:

- A 24-inch healthy red oak: $5 + 2 + 2 = 9$ replacement trees
 - A 35-inch Norway spruce with some signs of decay: $6 + 1 + 1 = 8$ replacement trees
 - A 30-inch severely damaged Norway maple: $6 + 0 + 0 = 6$ replacement trees
2. Replacement trees shall be of nursery grade quality and grown in a minimum of a #2 sized container or equivalent as specified in the American Nursery & Landscape Association’s (ANLA) American Standard for Nursery Stock (ANSI Z60 - 2004).
 3. Shrubs may be planted in place of or in combination with trees in order to meet replacement requirements as dictated by the replacement value.
 - a. For each replacement tree required, two shrubs may be substituted.
 - b. Shrubs shall be of nursery grade quality and grown in a minimum of a #1 sized container or equivalent as specified in the ANLA’s American Standard for Nursery Stock (ANSI Z60 – 2004).

All replacement plants shall be approved by the Assistant Deputy Director for Cultural & Environmental Resources or designee and shall not be considered a significant invasive species threat based on current knowledge and intended use. Replacement plant suggestions for Horticultural and Historic sites will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

4. The Park Commission will strive to plant the replacement trees or shrubs at the same facility where the original tree was removed. In the event that replacement trees are not

appropriate or needed at that facility, the Park Commission will use the replacement plants in another facility that will maximize their value and likelihood of establishment.

5. Trees that fall on their own accord are not subject to this replacement policy.
- D. In circumstances where a tree is removed by an entity that is not the Park Commission, the replacement value as calculated in Section C will be multiplied by a base factor to establish a monetary value that the responsible entity must contribute to a tree mitigation bank.
 - a. The base factor will be established by the Park Commission's annual fee schedule.
 - b. Funds in the mitigation bank may be used to purchase plant materials as specified in Section C of this policy, as well as plant protection materials including fencing and tree shelters.

Tree Removal Assessment Form

Facility Name:		Date of Assessment:	
Name(s) of Staff Performing Assessment:			
Reason for Removal Code #:	Reason for Removal Description:		
Date of Removal:	Name(s) of Staff or Contractor Responsible for Removal:		

Instructions: Fill out row for each tree that is scheduled to be removed.

Species	DBH*	Vigor**	Nativity	Tree Replacement Value
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				

***DBH:**
 Measure diameter in inches at a height of 4 1/2 ft. above the ground. When a fork occurs at or above 4 1/2 ft., the DBH is the smallest diameter at 4 1/2 ft. or below. When a fork occurs below 4 1/2 ft., or if the tree splits into multiple stems at ground level, measure the diameter of each stem and add together for final value.

****Vigor:**
 Poor: Tree is dying or dead; cracked, split, or leaning; physically damaged to the extent that it is likely to fall. Shows advanced signs of decay, discoloration or dieback; has a dead top or large dead limbs high in the crown. Foliage sparse. Severe insect or disease damage.
 Fair: Tree exhibits minor structural problems, thinning crown, or stunted growth compared to adjacent trees; some decay; some insect damage; sporadic browning of foliage.
 Good: Tree in good health; no apparent structural damage; no apparent disease or insect damage.