

Lower Riverside Park Vegetation Operation and Maintenance Plan

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Holyoke, MA

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LOWER RIVERSIDE PARK VEGETATION OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE
PLAN
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Plan is intended to coordinate vegetation management activities for the Lower Riverside Park with the current HG&E Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) and Yearly Operation Plan (YOP) for electric, steam, gas, hydroelectric and public pathway rights-of-way (ROWs) approved by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Pesticide Bureau, as well as the Order of Conditions for the construction of the park issued by the South Hadley Conservation Commission ([Appendix P1](#)). In addition, all vegetation management activities conducted in areas identified as Priority Habitat by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife are subject to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and implementing regulations found at 310 CMR 10.00. This O&M plan identifies specific activities both within ROWs subject to 333 CMR 11.00 and areas outside of the ROWs, but within the park. The activities are divided into five (5) categories that are addressed individually below.

HG&E requires that all personnel directly involved in the implementation of this O&M plan hold the appropriate qualifications and training to perform their duties, including but not limited to the qualifications listed in subsequent sections of this plan. All personnel must be familiar with the OOC issued for the park, as well as the MESA regulations (310 CMR 10.00). In addition, personnel involved in the management of vegetation within ROWs must be familiar with and perform all work in compliance with the current ROW Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) and Yearly Operational Plan (YOP) approved by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

2.0 TRAIL-SIDE AND LAWN AREAS

The areas consist of trail side grass areas and other grass (lawn) areas of the park that will require frequent maintenance during the growing season. Management activities in these areas are as follows:

- Mowed lawn areas shown on the plans in [Appendix P2](#) will be mowed at approximately one (1) week intervals during the growing season.
- Edging along pathways may be performed as needed.
- Fertilizers shall be applied only in accordance with manufacturers' directions.
- Application of herbicides must be performed by an applicator holding appropriate Massachusetts certification/licensure.
- Application of herbicides within the ROW areas must be consistent with the Vegetation Management Plan and Yearly Operational Plan for HG&W ROWs, as well as 333 CMR 11.00

3.0 WILDFLOWER MEADOW AREA

Management activities for the wildflower meadow area shown on plans in [Appendix P2](#) are as follows:

- Mowing shall be performed once per year.



- For the first year of maintenance (2008) mowing will be conducted in the early spring to remove taller weeds.
- For subsequent years (post-2008), mowing should occur in late fall/early winter after plants have set seed.
- Mow height should be no less than 4 to 5 inches.
- All cuttings shall be removed and properly disposed of off site

4.0 OTHER LANDSCAPED AREAS

Other landscaped areas consist of planting beds and areas adjacent to the entry drive and parking area, signage, and viewing areas within the park (Appendix P2). Management activities in these areas include:

- Driveway buffer strip and handicap parking areas will receive periodic pruning, weeding, and mulching, as needed.
- Invasive species saplings will be removed and replaced with native species appropriate for the location (See Plan L.0 in Appendix P2)
- Shrub areas will receive periodic pruning, weeding, and mulching as needed.
- Within planting beds, grasses, wildflowers or other plant species will be removed biannually or as directed by HG&E.

5.0 VISTA PRUNING AREAS

Vista pruning will be conducted to maintain the viewsheds within the park (Appendix P2). Vista pruning, as defined in 310 CMR 10.04, is the selective thinning of tree branches of understory shrubs to establish a specific "window" to improve visibility. Vista pruning does not include the cutting of trees which would reduce the leaf canopy to less than 90% of the existing crown cover and does not include the mowing or removal of understory brush.

- Vista pruning activities in the Lower Riverside Park will be conducted from the bottom of the slope.
- Cutting will be minimized by evaluating the visual effects of cutting practices as work is conducted.
- Tree pruning activities may be carried out within the designated vista pruning areas as needed, but no more frequently than once every two years.
- Pruning shall be done in winter or early spring before new growth occurs. Pruning shall not be performed in fall or soon after growth occurs.
- When pruning, dead or diseased limbs shall also be removed by cutting them at the point of origin or back to a strong lateral branch or shoot.
- Sapling removal within vista pruning areas may occur as needed but no more than once every two (2) years. The entire sapling, including the root system, should be removed if possible. If removal of the root system is not possible, cut the target species flush with the ground surface and immediately follow with a herbicide treatment applied with a squirt bottle or painted on the freshly cut surface of the stump within 2 hours after cutting, unless such treatment is prohibited due to the presence of wetland resources or other sensitive areas. Note that the herbicide application is limited to the freshly cut surface of the remaining stump.
- All pruning debris shall be removed and properly disposed of off site.



- Activities within wetland resource areas shall comply with the requirements of 310 CMR 10.00 (the Wetlands Protection Act regulations) and the OOC for Lower Riverside Park by the South Hadley Conservation Commission ([Appendix P1](#)).

6.0 STRUCTURAL FEATURES

In order to maintain their structural integrity, the existing stone masonry retaining walls must remain free of vegetation. Maintenance activities on these structural features may include physical removal of vegetation as well as herbicide treatment. In addition, vegetation growth along boundary fence lines may require mowing, hand trimming and/or herbicide treatment depending upon equipment accessibility and vegetation type.

All herbicide treatment must be performed by applicators that are appropriately certified and/or licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and must comply with pesticide regulations found at 333 CMR 11.00 or 333 CMR 13.00, as appropriate.



APPENDIX P1
Order of Conditions



APPENDIX P2

Plans