

Northwoods Development
Perimeter Buffer Zone Management Plan

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North Woods Development

Perimeter Buffer Management Plan:

Management Plan • Overview

This management plan is designed to maintain and protect the North Woods Development perimeter buffers, as well as to sustain and encourage a healthy plant community within the prescribed buffer zones. Over time, the continuous implementation of this plan will also help protect the homeowners of this community from undesirable plant incursion into their yards, thereby minimizing the potential use of chemical herbicides. This ongoing practice will support the vibrancy and overall health of the community.

To ensure that the buffers remain healthy, periodic inspection of the buffer areas are to be carried out followed by a series of specific actions designed to remedy any situation that may occur. Invasive plant species found in the buffer areas as well as out-of-control aggressive native species, are to be removed and disposed of at a designated burn or compost location. These plant materials may be detrimental to the health of the buffer zones and should not be used in creating wildlife snags.

Yard waste, such as brush, leaves, and lawn trimmings, are not to be disposed of within any of the buffer zone areas. This practice can lead to negative environmental consequences of the living buffer zone for numerous reasons.

The goal of this plan is to perpetuate a high quality, long term, living buffer zone for the North Woods Development

Management Plan • Perimeter Buffer Zone Area Access

A simple 'un-improved' narrow maintenance access path will be established in order to periodically accommodate both access to and the removal of undesirable plant material. This access will be critical to the maintenance of the northern perimeter buffer area. The route of this maintenance access path within the perimeter buffer area will be determined as needed, on-site. The actual route may fluctuate based upon maintenance needs within the buffer area. This maintenance path may be able to accommodate a cart but is not to be desired for use by vehicles or a volume of pedestrian traffic. It is not intended for use as a permanent trail and is not to be utilized by dirt bikes, mountain bikes, or any other intrusive element, as such use will lead to the detriment of the health of the perimeter buffer area.

To access the northern perimeter buffer area, a dedicated entry point to the maintenance path will extend from the end of the sand filter area behind the row of proposed arborvitae trees, behind the back of Lot 10. A limited-access gate may be installed at the beginning of this maintenance access path in order to maintain the intention of the maintenance path, as well as the integrity of the buffer zone. If needed, restrictive signage next to this gate may be added.

Maintenance access to the South Road perimeter buffer can possibly be accessed from the cow path off of South Road or from the Northwoods entrance road near the end of the South Road perimeter buffer. The South Road perimeter buffer will require less frequent and less intense maintenance than the northern buffer. Any periodic maintenance of the historic cemetery, SK-029, aka. the Holley-Oatley Lot, can also be accessed from these points.

The western perimeter buffer is a dense, deep, and largely intact thicket that serves as a somewhat impenetrable natural buffer. It should be left alone.

Management Plan • Bull Briar Incursion (northern perimeter buffer zone)

This section of the management plan specifically addresses the heavy growth of bull briar, (*Smilax rotundifolia*), within extensive portions of the northern buffer area. The removal and disposal of large areas of bull briar from the north perimeter buffer will help to establish and maintain control of this robust native species. This is to be done on an annual basis, preferably during mid-to-late winter.

All native tree and shrub species in this area are to be protected during the bull briar removal process. Young American holly in particular may be found growing within the bull briar thickets. Protecting the hollies and other desirable native species of trees and shrubs is very important, as the presence of these young plants will grow to fortify the health, quality, and aesthetic enhancement of this living buffer.

In order to accomplish this higher level of protection for co-existing plant species, the bull briar should be removed at or close to the soil line by hand-mechanical means, including gas and battery powered hand held hedge trimmers and brush cutters. Hand held clippers and/or lopping shears can also be utilized in close proximity of young hollies and other more desirable species. Clear-cutting the bull briar is not a preferred option. No herbicides or other chemicals are to be used.

After the first brush clearing event, some of the the bull briar roots will want to send up new sprouts. These new sprouts can subsequently be removed during the next bull briar removal session. Each subsequent bull briar removal procedure will require less effort than the previous, and the incursion of bull briar will steadily diminish.

An on-site burn and compost location will be established for the disposal of bull briar and invasive plants. This burn and compost area will be located in an open area near the proposed community gardens. The bull briar and invasive brush should not be utilized as wildlife snags. Downed twigs and small branches that may lie within the maintenance path area are better materials to utilize if wildlife snags are desired. Downed twigs and small branches away from the maintenance access path area but within the perimeter buffer best left alone.

Management Plan • Invasive Species (all perimeter buffer zone areas)

All perimeter buffer areas are to be monitored and inspected on a regular basis. Invasive species are to be removed and disposed of from any of the perimeter buffer areas. If possible, remove the roots of each of these plants during the process of removing the plant. If the roots systems remain intact, the plant will grow back again, only more robust than the previous time.

Invasive removal is important in order to protect the ability of the native species to survive and thrive, thereby protecting the quality of the buffer itself. Invasive plant species threaten native ecosystems by out-competing and displacing native plant species, and in the case of autumn olive, creating areas of dense shade and interfering with natural plant succession and nutrient cycling.

The diligent removal of these invasive plant species will add to the long-term health of the perimeter buffer zone. Each of the following invasive plant species have been observed growing in one portion or another of the North Woods Development buffer areas:

- Oriental Bittersweet, (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)
- Japanese Knotweed, (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
- Barberry, (*Berberis vulgaris*)
- Autumn Olive, (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)
- Burning Bush, (*Euonymus alatus*)
- Multiflora Rose, (*Rosa multiflora*)

There are people who consider bull briar, (*Smilax rotundifolia*) to be an invasive species, but it is not. This is a relatively short-lived native species that can become aggressive and colonize areas. There are also people who consider poison ivy, (*Toxicodendron radicans*), to be an invasive species, though it is not. Poison ivy is a native species that contains an oil, (*urushiol*), that can cause a dermatological allergic reaction in some people. I have not observed poison ivy within the buffer areas. Should poison ivy begin to appear, it can be mechanically controlled by: removal by shovel, for any smaller plants, or a hatchet, for larger tree-climbing poison ivy vines.

Management Plan • Perimeter Buffer Zone Tree Planting Information

The proposed perimeter buffer zone tree plantings will consist of green giant arborvitae, (*Thuja plicata*, 'Green Giant'), and Norway spruce, (*Picea abies*).

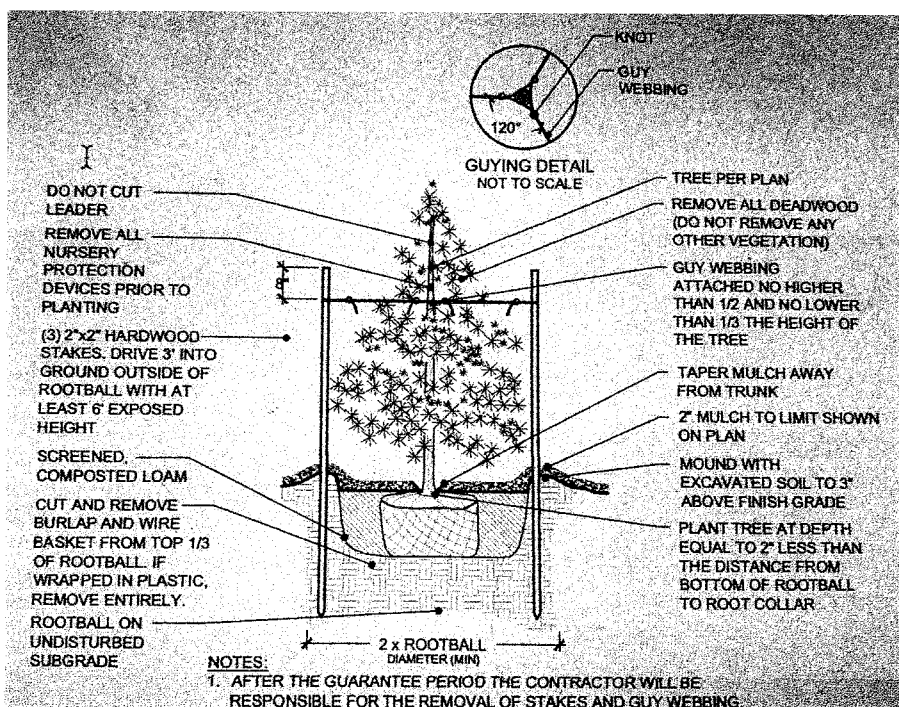
Green giant cultivar of arborvitae was specifically selected for its resistance to deer, its ability to provide a visual screen, and its ease in becoming established. Though arborvitae is sometimes associated with ubiquitous suburban landscapes it is native to southern Rhode Island. The remains of a very old stand of native arborvitae, *Thuja Occidentals*, commonly known as eastern white cedar, are located off of South Road, less than a half mile from the North Woods Development.

Norway spruce was selected because several Norway spruce already exist within the perimeter buffer areas of this site and they appear to have been growing here for close to a hundred years. The Norway spruce are well suited for the growing conditions here and they will grow within the shady canopy area of the perimeter buffer.

The planting of these trees should follow the instructions specified in the attached planting detail below. Individual tree staking is also recommended and the procedures are also included within the attached planting detail.

It is best if the proposed green giant arborvitae and Norway spruce trees are not planted during the months of June, July, or August. In order to adequately maintain these trees, they should not be planted until on-site water is available at the North Woods Development.

Management Plan • Tree Planting Detail NTS



Management Plan • Water Regimen (all perimeter buffer zone plantings)

The proposed green giant arborvitae and Norway spruce will need to be watered on a regular basis to help them survive as they become acclimated to their new growing location. This is especially important during their transitional first year after being transplanted. The watering will be critical during the growing months, and Best-method watering practices should be followed.

Regular watering is important because for at least the first year after transplanting, the root systems of these plants will be compromised and their ability to absorb water and nutrients on their own will be diminished. Deep watering of the root system is essential to their well-being.

Plantings and watering will commence on a lot-by-lot mandate. Prior to a certificate of occupancy being issued, the plantings must be installed with the lot owners agreement in order to give access to water until plantings are established. If weather or season does not permit, monies will be held to insure that this agreement is honored.