

Park Meadow Project

One of the goals of Naperville Park District's 2018-2020 Strategic Plan is to "develop a long term land management plan that is aligned with changing design and maintenance practices." The District is taking steps toward this goal in 2019 by converting turf grass to meadow in strategic areas in nine of its 147 parks. The meadow areas will be planted with native wildflowers and grasses. The areas selected for conversion include stormwater detention sites and other areas that are occasionally wet and are not used for recreation.

Environmental stewardship is one of the Park District's core values. Replacing turf grass with plants native to Illinois will bring many environmental benefits for our local rivers and streams, area wildlife and soil. Native plants are better adapted to the local climate and have deeper, more extensive root systems than turf grass. Because of their extensive roots, native species absorb and filter stormwater, removing pollutants before the water enters the rivers and streams. These visually attractive plant communities also offer a variety of species that provide food and habitat for wildlife such as birds and butterflies.

Once established, native plants require minimal maintenance—only periodic mowing and an occasional controlled burn to control invasive species. Native plants are adapted to the Northeastern Illinois climate, thus requiring less watering and no fertilizing. In fact, they are often referred to as "drought resistant." For all of these reasons, planting and maintaining native plants in stormwater basins is considered a best management practice and will result in cost savings for the Park District.

The District has identified areas in the following parks for conversion to meadow in 2019: Century Farm Park, Olesen Estates, Wil-O-Way Park, Buttonwood Park, Bailey Hobson Woods, Willowgate Square, Ashbury Greenway, Brook Crossings, and Knoch Knolls Park. The Park District will notify neighboring residents with more detail of these projects as they are planned.