

Kendall Ridge Meadow

Overview: This proposal is for the creation of a small (0.05 acre) meadow in the open space adjacent to the path where Young Buck Circle and Dry Stone Gate converge. Currently this area is landscaped solely with turf grass. The addition of the meadow to this area would provide benefits in terms of pollinator habitat, stormwater management, community engagement and reduced maintenance.

Justification: Turf grass has been the preferred landscaping species for decades. It is the perfect plant to weather foot traffic from humans and continue to thrive. However, grass requires frequent warm-weather mowing and creates extremely poor habitat incapable of sustaining a diverse population of pollinators or significant wildlife, in general. Turf grass is currently the number one 'crop' in the United States, covering an area roughly the size of Texas.¹ With our pollinator populations struggling and more sustainable landscaping necessary to combat the effects of climate change, we propose moving away from expanses of turf grass to aesthetically pleasing meadow. We can transform this small portion of open space into a very low-maintenance (requiring only one mowing per year) area of native vegetation that will support several species of pollinators, including Monarch butterflies with the addition of milkweed species.² Conversion to meadow will also result in stormwater management benefits. Compared to a conventional lawn planting, native vegetation found in meadows has stronger and denser root and stem systems. This leads to a greater volume of water uptake (evapotranspiration), improved soil conditions through organic material and macropore formation, and greater infiltration, culminating in decreased runoff of the area.³

Proposal: We have identified two possible locations for the meadow (see map). These are both areas of turf grass maintained by CA. Our first choice is on a small slope in the "U" where the paths from Young Buck Circle and Dry Stone Gate come together. This area is optimal as it is centrally located such that those using the path will see the area. The second choice is further from the path in a less-traveled area. Because this second choice is further from pedestrian traffic along the path, this limits the education potential to only those residents who already know about the presence of the meadow.

Site preparation: The number one reason restoration meadows fail is due to improper preparation of the site. The turf grass must be removed, along with any weed seeds residing in the soil seed bank. The best way to accomplish this is by blading the site, or removing the top 6-8 inches of soil. If this method is not feasible, alternatively we can simply kill the existing vegetation through a variety of methods, such as solarization with black plastic, smothering with layers of cardboard/newspaper, or application of herbicide. Again, simply killing the existing vegetation does not address the concern with the weed seed bank, which would mean a much heavier workload when it comes to weeding in the first few growing seasons.

Populating the vegetation. After thoroughly preparing the site, the next step is to add in the desired plant species. Again, there are multiple ways to accomplish this goal. The easiest and fastest way to establish the meadow flora is to plant young seedlings. This will make an immediate impact in terms of aesthetics as these plants should flower in the first growing season. Incorporating plants (rather than

seed) will also give the desired plants a competitive advantage, as they will be larger than any weeds coming up from seed. Finally, with the aim of this project being at least in part to engage the community, particularly children in the area, they are much more likely to be an active participant with plants versus seed. If plants are too expensive, we can alternatively sow the area with the seed of selected native species.

Protecting the area. Deer are a consistent problem in our neighborhood. To limit the damage from grazing, it is recommended that the area be surrounded in fencing. We have had good success with running fishing line as a perimeter fence at other areas. The deer are unable to see the fishing line and bump into it. This startles them and they tend to run off. Other types of fencing could also work, such as snow fencing.

Resident Responsibilities. The Kendall Ridge residents are eager to initiate this project. We have an enthusiastic core group of three residents (Janine Pollack, Nicola Fenty-Stewart and Stefanie Catella) who will be primarily responsible for overseeing all stages of development. We all have young children at Deep Run Elementary and will be involving not only our own children, but other children and their parents in the neighborhood. This will be a wonderful opportunity to teach them about nature, particularly the plants in the meadow and the wildlife that it will host. It will also allow us to teach them about conservation, sustainability, teamwork, community involvement and much more.

It is our hope that CA can provide most, if not all, of the materials and we will provide the labor. This excludes blading of the site, which we hope CA will be able to provide for us. From there, we will do the planting, weeding, watering, etc. that are necessary for the site to thrive.

CA Responsibilities: Again, it is our hope that CA can provide all materials we may need. This would include:

1. Blading of the site
2. Plants (or seed)
3. Fencing to deter deer

References:

1. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/lawn-largest-crop-america_us_55d0dc06e4b07addcb43435d
2. *Pollinator-Friendly Best Management Practices for Federal Lands, May 2015*
3. *Pennsylvania Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual, 2006*