

Maplewood Neighborhood Preserves Statement of Purpose and Policies

Approved by Maplewood City Council 2/26/01

1. Purpose of Preserves

The Maplewood Neighborhood Preserves were set aside by and for the citizens of Maplewood to preserve natural resources, scenic areas, and landscape buffers. They are protected natural areas where people can enhance their understanding and enjoyment of the natural world through passive-use activities such as nature study and hiking.

2. Commitment to Preservation

The preserves are the only sites in Maplewood's Park System where preservation of natural resources is placed above all other activities, uses, and priorities. Preservation of natural resources will guide site plans, recreational activities permitted, rules, type of trails, and management. Maplewood has a special commitment to areas of the preserves with high ecological quality and will insure they are not degraded due to trails, recreational activities, or neglect in management.

3. Commitment to Restoration and Management

Restoration and management of natural resources is a primary focus of the Neighborhood Preserve Program and takes precedence over recreational use of the preserves. Where ecologically and economically feasible, the city will restore the preserves to native plant communities so residents can experience the prairies, savannas, woodlands, and wetlands that historically dominated this landscape. Management may include, but is not limited to, the use of prescribed burns, controlling the population of wildlife species, herbicide application, removal of exotic species, planting of native species and enhancing wildlife habitat.

4. Recreation, Access, and Amenities

The preserves are open to community use and activities that have minimal ecological impact. Passive activities such as hiking, bird watching, and nature study have priority over other recreational activities at the preserves. Amenities such as improved parking, trails and benches may be needed at some preserves to make them more accessible to hikers and to help prevent environmental degradation. There is no mandate that every preserve have trails or other amenities. Routing regional or city trail systems through a preserve is discouraged; however, such a trail may be permitted if alternative routes on nearby roads or along the site perimeter are seriously evaluated and determined to be impractical or undesirable. Decisions on trails and amenities will be determined individually for each site and will be based on site ecology, terrain, soils, activities permitted, and use patterns.

5. Commitment to Education

As places for people to enhance their understanding and enjoyment of nature, the preserves are open to informal and formal learning experiences such as self study,

guided tours, interpretive signs, brochures, and school programs as long as environmental impact of these activities is minimal.