



Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping Policy

Page 1 of 4

Revision #

Implementation Date 7/1/2025

Last Reviewed/Update Date 7/1/2025

Resolution # 32444

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to encourage the preservation, restoration and maintenance of diverse biologically stable natural plant communities or environmentally sound practices. The City Council finds that the establishment of native or naturalistic plant communities is a desirable landscape treatment in the City. However, as a protection for the larger community, this change in vegetation must be properly planned, managed and maintained.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping Areas on private property. It does not apply to natural or conservation areas as designated by the City's Weed Official on City-owned property. Said Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping Areas shall not constitute a Conservation Area for purposes of Natural Resources Conservation Services programming or resources.

3. Definitions

Native and Naturalistic Vegetation - shall mean grasses and flowering broad-leaf plants that are native to, or adapted to, the State of Iowa, except noxious weeds. This does not include turf grass lawns (blue grass, fescues, ryegrasses and their blends) left unattended for the purpose of returning to a natural state.

Native grasses - shall mean grasses that existed in the area prior to European settlement.

Native plants - shall mean plants that existed in the area prior to European settlement.

Natural landscaping - shall mean the use of groups of plants native to the area.

Naturalistic landscaping - shall mean the use of native and non-native plants.

Noxious weeds - shall mean plants so designated by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) pursuant to Iowa Code, those identified by Linn County, or USDA-APHIS.

Transitional period - shall mean the amount of time to change from one type of landscaping to another.

4. Policy

- A. Property owners may apply for a permit to utilize a specific area or areas for natural or naturalistic landscaping.



Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping Policy

Page 2 of 4

Revision

Implementation Date 7/1/2025

Last
Reviewed/Update
Date

7/1/2025

Resolution #

32444

- B. Permits shall be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Department for review.
- C. Upon completion of said review, the Parks and Recreation Department shall promptly notify the applicant if the permit is approved, denied, or if additional information is needed.
- D. The Parks and Recreation Department shall compile a list of plants that are desirable for use in Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping. The Parks and Recreation Department may update this list as needed without further action by City Council.

5. *Application*

The permit application shall contain the following information:

- A. The name and address of the applicant and the legal description of the property being permitted;
- B. Provide contact information of the applicant for notification if inspection is required;
- C. Agree to abide by Natural or Naturalistic Policy and rules set herein;

6. *Rules*

- A. No person shall engage in Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping without an approved permit.
- B. The Marion Parks Department may access Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping areas for the purpose of conducting such inspection with 24 hours' notice to the property owner.
- C. All Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping areas shall be planned and or maintained in a manner so as not to encroach upon public or private property not covered by an approved permit.
- D. Noxious weeds shall not be utilized in any Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping. All other weeds must be properly maintained.
- E. Any vegetation within 18 inches of a public walk, street, alley, and/or path must be maintained to a height of 8 inches or less.
- F. Burning is not a permitted form of maintenance for Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping.
- G. In accordance with Marion Code of Ordinances Section 324-5E, plant material



Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping Policy

Page 3 of 4

Revision

Implementation Date 7/1/2025

Last
Reviewed/Update
Date

7/1/2025

Resolution #

32444

shall not be cut and accumulated on the property so as to constitute a fire hazard.

- H. The owner must adhere to the maintenance plan submitted with the permit application.
- I. The transition period should not extend beyond three growing seasons for any specific area.
- J. Natural or naturalistic areas shall not be located within 5 feet of any structure or property line.
- K. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in revocation of the property owner's permit.

7. Appeals

Any person whose application for a Natural or Naturalistic Landscape Permit is denied or revoked shall receive written notice of such denial or revocation and may appeal that determination to the Nuisance Board by filing notice of such appeal within 10 days of the date on the notice of denial. Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, the Nuisance Board shall set a hearing at which the applicant and any other party wishing to be heard shall have an opportunity to present evidence as to the applicant's compliance with the provisions of this policy and the Marion Code of Ordinances, primarily but not limited to Chapter 324. If the Nuisance Board determines that the applicant has complied with the application provisions of this policy including the management and maintenance plan requirements, it shall direct the Parks and Recreation Department to issue or reissue the Permit. The Nuisance Board shall affirm the denial if it determines that the applicant has not complied with the provisions of this chapter.

8. Questions

Any questions concerning the policy above or related procedures and fees should be directed to the following:

Marion Parks and Recreation Department
City of Marion
343 Marion Blvd.
Marion, IA 52302
parksoffice@cityofmarion.org
319-447-3580



Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping Permit Application

Name of Applicant (Property Owner Name): _____

Property owner name if different: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Legal address of property to be permitted: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I certify that:

_____ I am the legal owner on record, or

_____ I have secured the property owners permission and have full authority to make this application,
and that the above information is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and
ability.

_____ I agree to conform to the Natural or Naturalistic Landscaping Policy and Rules herein.

Species List:

- Native Species list can be found at www.iowastormwater.org/campaigns/rainscaping/native-landscaping/

Signatures (required):

The owner of this property and/or the undersigned agree to conform to and are knowledgeable of all applicable laws, codes, and ordinances of this jurisdiction and any other authority having jurisdiction pertaining to the activity for which this permit is requested.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Property Owner: _____ Date: _____

For official use only:

Date reviewed: _____ Reviewed by: _____

Approved: _____ Denied: _____