

TREE SAVE AREAS

General Information

Many development sites and communities in Loudoun County have areas that have been designated for “Tree Save” purposes. Existing trees which are to be preserved may be included to meet all or part of the canopy requirements, and may include wooded preserves if the site plan, or record plat, or construction plans and profiles, identifies such trees and the trees meet standards of desirability and life-year expectancy established by the Zoning Administrator. Included among the many benefits associated with Tree Save areas are the following:

- Enhanced recreational and aesthetic values
- Improved water quality through soil stabilization
- Improved water quality through the filtration of surface and sub-surface nutrients and other impurities (Riparian function).
- Enhanced wildlife and aquatic habitat
- Visual screens and buffers for noise abatement
- Positive microclimate impacts (lower summer temperatures, reduced glare, and creation of summer breezes)
- Reduced maintenance costs

Designated Tree Save areas must therefore remain undisturbed with few exceptions. The following list of **Do’s and Don’ts** are intended to be a guide for the HOA’s to help insure that Tree Save areas remain in sustained forest cover and functioning in viable fashion:

- No mowing may occur in the Tree Save since this would eliminate establishment of natural regeneration.
- Removal of “hazard trees”, vines, invasive tree or plant species or stand management in the Tree Save is allowed as long as there is a forest management plan prepared by a Professional Forester or Certified Arborist and approved by Loudoun County. Hazard trees are defined as any tree that threatens an adjoining property. It will require a single page letter stating the need and requesting an FSM waiver (\$250.00 fee). This process can generally be acted upon within 2 working days.
- No removal of fallen trees within the Tree Save is allowed as this is part of the natural ecology of the site. The exceptions would be unusual damage from high winds, or insect, disease, fire or drought mortality. This process would also require a forest management plan prepared by a Professional Forester or Certified Arborist with County approval and an FSM waiver request.

- Pruning back of all vegetation extending from a Tree Save into an adjoining property is allowed as long as it does not extend back into the Tree Save area. This will require permission from the HOA.
- Supplemental tree planting in the Tree Save is encouraged in areas that are inadequately stocked. The County Urban Forester would be glad to provide technical advice in this regard to any HOA.
- The County highly recommends that Tree Save areas be evaluated by a Professional Forester or Certified Arborist to identify hazard trees. Once identified, they may be removed following the same waiver process as already described. Live canopy lost in this process should be replaced using canopy trees with a 1” minimum caliper from a native species list provided by the County.
- Contact the County Urban Forester concerning any Tree Save issue not previously addressed.

Dana Malone
County Urban Forester
Loudoun County