

Vegetation Management on Beachcrest Community Property

June 2011

1. Purpose:

To provide for the use and enjoyment of community property by the community members, protect the natural aesthetics and the ecological values of the community property, and prevent unreasonable impairment of views.

This document describes the standards and decision making process pertaining to pruning, trimming, and cutting trees and shrubs on property managed by the Beachcrest Community Association. The intent is that the basis for these activities and decisions are clear, consistent, and open to input by community residents.

2. Background:

The Beachcrest Community Association, according to its Bylaws, is formed “for the purpose of managing, and maintaining the easements, roads, trails, paths, common areas, beach areas and fronting tidelands “The Board of Trustees (Board) is charged with managing community property “for the benefit of all property owners”.

The Beachcrest Community Association Covenants state: "The [Beachcrest] Corporation reserves the right to determine whether or not any trees or natural shrubbery shall be removed, it being the intention to preserve all natural growth of any kind..."

Beachcrest covenants also make specific reference to preventing visual obstructions, including vegetation, as follows: “No building or obstructions of any kind shall be erected, constructed or grown within 30 feet of the north line of Block 12 and/or Lots 1 to 10 inclusive of Block 1, and no building or obstructions of any kind shall be erected, constructed or grown within a height exceeding that of a conventional one-story dwelling on the remainder of the above mentioned Block 12 and/or Lots 1 to 10 inclusive Block 1.”

As part of meeting its responsibilities, the Board manages vegetation in areas that include roadsides, entrance areas, the watershed ravine, nature trail, cabana areas, the shoreline bluffs and waterfront.

Much of this property is located in sensitive areas with unstable slopes or significant ecosystem values, notably the wooded ravine between Marian Drive and Beach Way, and the wooded area east of Crestview Loop. Our ownership of property in these sensitive areas obligates us to manage them responsibly for the community and to provide leadership for the management of

privately-held portions of these sensitive areas.

The Board will also work with owners of view property in responding to requests for vegetation management for the purpose of protecting view. It is acknowledged that the general intent of preserving natural vegetation is to be balanced with the interests of all of its property owners, including those owners that have view properties.

Only the Board, or others acting with the specific authorization of the Board may remove or authorize the removal of vegetation from community property. Property owners whose actions lead to damage of community property (including vegetation growing on community held land) may be required to pay compensation and may be liable for legal fees or additional penalties. There may also be county or state regulations that apply to tree vegetation in certain situations.

3. Routine vegetation management

These activities involve trimming and other vegetation management that may be conducted as a typical course of property management at the direction of the Board.

a. Roadsides

As a normal part of property upkeep, the Board will provide routine vegetation management along roadsides to allow clearance and visibility for traffic and pedestrians and provide visibility of signs.

As a general practice, along the paved roads in the uplands section of the community, a mowed area will be regularly maintained with woody vegetation removed within approximately six feet from the edge of the pavement and elsewhere that grassy vegetation exists along roadsides.

Residential lawns, ornamental plantings and other landscape features placed in community right of way may be allowed at the discretion of the Board provided they do not interfere with community needs, are appropriately maintained by the owner and will be removed if requested by the Board.

The general intent is that woody vegetation (shrubs and trees) will be trimmed along roadsides consistent with the profile shown in Figure 1. At intersections woody vegetation on community owned property should be trimmed as shown in Figure 2, to allow visibility of the intersection.

Beach access roads will be kept clear of vegetation to allow passage of vehicles.

Exceptions to these general guidelines may be provided on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Board.

b. Common areas

In common areas such as the playground, entrance lot and cabana areas, vegetation will be managed to facilitate use by residents and guests. Grass will be kept mowed. Trees and shrubs will be trimmed for safety and aesthetic value.

Along the nature trail vegetation should be preserved in as natural a state as possible, allowing for the safety and enjoyment of community members. Vegetation may be trimmed as needed to provide for foot traffic. Fallen or leaning trees impeding the trail and those presenting a hazard to trail use may be removed with the approval of the Board.

The community rules state that “the use of pesticides or other chemical treatments is prohibited on all Community owned property, unless otherwise approved by the Board of Trustees at a regular monthly meeting.”

4. Other Vegetation Management.

It is the general intent of the Beachcrest Community Association to preserve all vegetation on community property in its natural and unaltered condition to the extent possible, consistent with the Beachcrest Covenants.

If the Board plans to conduct pruning or cutting of trees on Beachcrest rights-of-way, other than routine vegetation management discussed above, a written description of the plan will be made available to any interested residents and an opportunity for comment will be provided at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting prior to commencement of the work. The written description will be sufficiently detailed to serve as a work plan and to allow a review of whether the pruning or cutting was performed as intended.

Exceptions may be provided under any of the following circumstances:

- Emergencies. Where there is an imminent threat to private property, community facilities, or public safety.
- Situations which require immediate attention such as wind storm clean up of fallen trees or landslides.

Trees on community property that present a potential threat to people or property should be brought to the immediate attention of the Board.

5. Requests from Beachcrest homeowners.

A homeowner may request the trimming, pruning or cutting of shrubs or trees on community property that obstructs a view or for other reasons.

a. What is required?

The request must be submitted in writing and include a description of the proposed work. This document will be made available to any interested residents for review, and an opportunity for comment will be made available at a regularly scheduled Board meeting before any decision is made.

b. Preliminary approval

In making a decision on whether to give preliminary approval for the request, the Board will give

consideration to residents' comments and to whether the proposal reflects known best practices for management of steep slopes and sensitive areas such as those available through the Washington State Department of Ecology or the Thurston County Conservation District. More useful resources on this topic may be found at Beachcrest.org.

To protect the value of view properties, there will be a presumption in favor of vegetation pruning and tree-trimming, subject to approval by the Board and as otherwise provided in this policy, to address view-encroaching trees or vegetation when views are, or are becoming, impaired by trees or other vegetation on community property. There will be a presumption against tree removal. If removal is approved by the Board, the homeowner may be required to replace the tree with one that, at maturity, will not obstruct views.

c. Contractor Selection

If the Board grants preliminary approval, the Board will specify whether the work requires consultation with a certified arborist, or whether a licensed, bonded tree service will be adequate. If consultation with a certified arborist is required, the Board may rely on, and require compliance with, the arborist's recommendations in determining whether to grant final approval of the plan. (A list of Certified Arborists is available on the International Society of Arboriculture website (<http://www.isa-arbor.com/>.) The homeowner will then select a suitable contractor and obtain an estimate for the job, which will be submitted to the board along with the statement of work.

All view protection activities, including tree removal and replacement, must be done at the homeowner's own expense. In addition, the homeowner is responsible for any ongoing maintenance or irrigation deemed necessary to assure the survival and growth of the subject trees and vegetation.

d. Final approval

The Board will then give final approval or disapproval of the request. If granted, approval will be subject to the following conditions:

- The approval shall include a written description in sufficient detail to serve as a workplan and to allow a subsequent review of whether the work was performed as intended.
- The Board will request a Beachcrest resident who is familiar with the workplan to be present during the work to ensure that it complies with the approved plan description.
- The homeowner must agree to pay any costs associated with the proposal.
- The homeowner may also be required to pay survey costs if the Board is concerned that the action will encroach on private property.
- The proposal may include a plan for limited ongoing maintenance trimming activities if approved by the Board.

The Board may reduce or modify the approval conditions where the proposed action involves

limited, routine work and is not controversial. In all cases, a description of the work approved by the Board and the approval conditions will be recorded in writing, either as part of the Board meeting minutes or as a separate document.

This document and related resources are available at: Beachcrest.org

Figure 1. Street tree clearing limits.



