

Bear Mountain
Recreation and Park
District
Tree Policy

May 2016

Bear Mountain Recreation and Park District

Tree Policy

1.0 PURPOSE STATEMENT

To maintain, preserve and enhance the trees within the parks. To increase the overall tree canopy, tree health and tree longevity within parks and to ensure that parks trees are managed in a manner that is consistent with other parks and recreation policies.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Parks Property** is any property that is owned or managed by Bear Mountain Recreation and Parks District.
- 2.2 **Qualified Arboricultural Professional** is a tree care professional with a minimum of two years experience in the evaluation and care of trees in combination with a professional license or certification that measures minimum competency in relevant subjects, including protection of public health, safety and welfare. Acceptable titles include Certified Arborist, Registered Consulting Arborist, Certified Forester, and Landscape Architect.
- 2.3 **Hazardous Tree** is a tree that can be predicted to fail and has a high probability of striking people or property causing injury or damage.
- 2.4 **Tree failure** is the breaking and falling of a tree or any substantial part of a tree. This does not include falling leaves or fruit.
- 2.5 **Crown cleaning** is the removal of the dead, dying, diseased, crowded, weakly attached, low-vigor branches, and waterspouts from a tree's crown.
- 2.6 **Crown thinning** is the selective removal of branches to increase light penetration and air movement, and to reduce weight.
- 2.7 **Crown restoration** is pruning to improve the structure and appearance of trees which have sprouted vigorously after the upper portion of the tree canopy has been broken, topped or severely pruned.
- 2.8 **Topping** is the removal of the terminal shoot of a tree to a stub or lateral branch that is not sufficiently large enough to assume a terminal role **or** cannot be expected to achieve wound closure to inhibit decay.

2.9 **Phase of work** is a specific work activity (clearing, removal, installation, planting, maintenance, etc.) on a specific part of the project site.

3.0 **POLICY**

3.1 **Criteria for Tree Work:** Specific criteria will be established and applied to the removal and/or pruning of trees located in or on park property. The criteria will be used to evaluate the overall public benefit of the proposed work. In all cases, safety concerns will receive the highest priority. Priority will be given to limiting removal on Parks property.

3.2 **Hazardous Tree Management:** Public health, safety and general welfare will be maintained through the use of generally accepted professional practices of evaluation and treatment to reduce risks to people and property from hazardous trees. Attention to proper selection, planting and maintenance of new trees will also be pursued to achieve long-term risk reduction.

3.3 **Pruning Standards:** The latest pruning standards established by the International Society of Arboriculture will be used in the maintenance of park trees.

3.4 **Topping Disallowed:** Because “topping” of trees can cause permanent damage by promoting decay, as well as unnatural, dense and weak branching structure, topping will not be practiced or permitted except under special circumstances.

3.5 **Tree Replacement:** At least one tree will be planted for every tree that is removed from park property. Replacement tree species will be selected so that overall mature canopy volume will be maintained or increased. It is preferable to plant the replacement tree in close proximity to the original tree’s location. Alternately, the replacement tree may be located elsewhere, and this is preferable if local conditions contributed to the previous tree’s failure. New locations should be found on the same site.

4.0 **RESPONSIBILITY**

4.1 **General**

The “responsible party” (Bear Mountain Recreation and Park District) indicated below will conduct the required “review” by collecting relevant information and presenting it to other appropriate staff that have responsibilities for the area under consideration.

4.2 **Removal of Trees:**

It will be the responsibility of the designated representative to review and approve all action taken relevant to the removal of trees from all park properties.

4.3 **Pruning of Trees:**

- 4.3.1 It will be the responsibility of the Department Head or designated representative to review and approve all actions taken relevant to the pruning of trees that require climbing and/or the use of an aerial bucket truck.

4.4 **Planting of Trees**

- 4.4.1 It will be the responsibility of the designated representative to review and approve proposed planting or replanting of trees.

5.0 **CRITERIA FOR DEPARTMENTAL ACTION**

- 5.1 Trees that will be considered for **REMOVAL** will include:

- 5.1.1 Hazard trees which pose substantial risk to the park users, adjacent properties or park facilities.
- 5.1.2 Trees which are dead, dying, or diseased.
- 5.1.3 Trees which create visibility problems (sight line) near roadways, bikeways and service access areas and may contribute to unsafe conditions to park users will be removed to a point where public safety is insured.
- 5.1.4 Trees that may interfere with a designated public viewpoint
- 5.1.5 Trees that block trails, drains or otherwise obstruct the use and function of park infrastructure elements.

6.0 **REPLACEMENT TREES**

- 6.1 **Replacement of Trees:** At minimum, each tree that is removed will be replaced by planting 2 other trees close to the original location. Tree species selection and numbers will be required to meet or exceed the loss of mature canopy proposed by the project.