

# **Wild Rose Meadow Grounds Description and Care**

Purpose: to maintain the health and growth of the landscaping of all common areas and wetlands of Wild Rose Meadow for years to come and to encourage as many residents as possible to take a part in the care and enhancement of the property that is outside their individual parcel.

Committee Members: any resident(s) of WRM who help make sure that the work that needs to be done per season is done. The Board will appoint the Grounds Committee chairperson at the annual meeting. Any WRM resident can join the committee by contacting the chairperson. The chairperson may need to invite people to be part of the committee if no one volunteers as there needs to be a representative from each cluster for the committee. The chairperson will report to the Board regarding who is on the committee. The chairperson needs to have a vision of the entire property to help encourage committee members and residents to take part in the care of the landscaping as well as schedule any work that needs to be hired out. The grounds committee may be called upon to approve a major planting or removal of a tree or large shrub that was part of the original landscape design. All expenditures go through the normal approval process by the WRM Treasurer and if there are any large unexpected events/costs, the chairperson will discuss this with the Board for approval.

## History and Development of the Landscape Plan at WRM

Wild Rose Meadow is the first development that OPAL provided formal landscaping. Kucklick Landscape, Inc. was hired to install trees, shrubs and groundcovers in the berms that surround the houses; in the common areas; around the swales; and in the wetland area. OPAL did special fundraising for this purpose. There were 3 parts to this endeavor: 1) to make this large development that is in full view of the public aesthetically pleasing to the owners and those who pass by WRM; 2) regarding the wetlands, to comply with state and federal law that mandates that the original wetland that was disturbed during construction would be regenerated to acceptable standards; and 3) regarding the swales, to comply with county regulations that require a rainwater run-off and filtration system. Starting in 2011, after the final construction was completed and the final landscaping was installed, it became abundantly clear that there were a lot of grounds that the WRM community was responsible for caring for, but a maintenance plan was not in place. OPAL and WRM have worked together to help find a workable solution for grounds/wetland maintenance. In the end, it is up to the WRM community to work together to tend and budget for the care for this property so it will be beautiful, healthy and that our wetlands are in compliance with the Department of Ecology standards.

## Care Descriptions

### Berms

The berms are the landscaped strips of common area that surround the household plots and border the walkways. Some berms surround the parking areas. There are 2 berms that border Rosehip Rd. (one is the round-about and one is on the east side of Rosehip Rd. just south of the round-about).

As a contribution to grounds upkeep, each household is asked to weed, water, “dead head” perennials, and look out for the health of the trees in the berms surrounding their house. Some households have no berm in front of their parcel (lot 1,2,3,16,23,24,29,30) and some have a large berm surrounding their parcel (lot 7,10,11,17,18,20,25,26,27,A,B). Ideally, in the spirit of community, each household would take care of the berm in front of their parcel and those who do not have a berm would volunteer to help those who have an extra large berm or those who may not be physically able to care for their berm.

Berms that surround the parking areas need to have volunteers from the cluster using that parking lot to weed, water and prune. Regular application of wood chips need to be applied to the berms.

Household and parking lot berms need application of wood chips regularly. If any resident is able to procure donated chips, this would cut down on the expense of purchasing chips. The annual budget allows for the purchase of the least expensive wood chips (large grade) that rotates between clusters per year or based on need.

#### Grassy Common Areas

The common areas that need regular weed-eating or mowing and some thistle/blackberry maintenance are west of lot 14 in the west cluster (near Twigs Lane); the grassy area between the 2 south clusters (including the playground area); and along the Rosehip Rd., driveways, and fence lines. The grounds committee would like the households in the west cluster to maintain the common area in the NW corner; the east cluster to maintain the northern fence line in their cluster; and the south cluster to maintain the playground area. WRM hires help to mow the grassy area in the south cluster west of the playground mid-summer if no one volunteers to do it.

#### Swales

There are 3 swales that were dug and planted to filter and manage the water run-off from the road, pathways, and the ground. The swales are located in: the orchard; east of lot 30; and on the Oberon Wood property along the fence line. (An easement was procured to use that property to make a necessary swale for WRM). The care of the swales involves keeping the pipes clear of plants, trees and grasses so the water can flow through the proper channels. One or 2 weed-eating(s) per year are sufficient to keep the pipes clear, but some hand weeding might be necessary. Once a year, the weed-eating is hired out if there is no volunteer help. Note: though the swale that is located on the Oberon Wood property recognized by OPAL as Oberon Wood’s responsibility, a neighborly agreement has been made between Oberon Wood and Wild Rose Meadow residents to split the care of the swale. WRM takes care of the east side of the swale and OW takes care of the west side.

#### Orchard/Garden

The community orchard and garden common area is maintained by those who belong to the orchard or garden committees. There are separate documents for the garden committee guidelines and orchard committee guidelines. Any resident of WRM may become a member of the orchard or garden committees and the care of this common area would also be part of their responsibility.

### Pathways

There is a long pathway that borders the west fence of the orchard/garden and goes all the way from Twigs Land to Mt. Baker Rd. at the Deye Lane turn off. This pathway needs to be weed-eated periodically to allow for easy access of pedestrians and bicycles. The pathway also needs to be cleared of low-growing thistles that border the path and are directly on the path. The people who use this path the most should be responsible for maintaining this path. It is not only used by WRM residents, but it is now used by the Orcas Island community as a whole.

### Rosehip Road

The shoulder to the east of Rosehip Road, between the round-about and the east cluster parking area, had been designated as a place to compost garden debris. The intent was to fill in the drop-off of the road after the road was paved to allow for some overflow guest parking. Putting garden debris here fulfills two needs in one step, however, some care needs to be observed. As the road itself is part of the view of the households in lot A and B, the depositing of debris should be done with care. The weeds or stems should be laid out to create as even a distribution as possible in the shoulder. No large branches should be thrown there unless they can be laid out in such a way to encourage a more uniform look. No rosehips or blackberries should be put there unless they are covered by a thick layer of other sod. We don't want to tires to get punctured. Also, no residents who have their own landscaping business can use the Rosehip Road shoulder as their dumping ground.

To the east of the roadside berm just south of the round-about and fire hydrant is a good place to throw larger branches, thorny stems, and larger volumes of garden debris. Some garden debris may be deposited near the wooded fence line on the east side of Rosehip Rd. near the south cluster. It should also be laid out evenly to encourage decomposition with the intent of keeping the entryway to WRM looking good.

### Wetlands and Wetland Buffer Zones

Wild Rose Meadow's existence would not have been possible if OPAL hadn't negotiated with the State Department of Ecology to restore the same square footage of wetlands that would be disturbed or destroyed during the construction of these houses.

Specific types of plants and trees were planted in what we call the wetland area (pond and marshy area) and the wetland buffer zones. The majority of these areas are south and southeast and east of lots 30, 31, and 32 down to Mt. Baker Rd. The buffer zone also includes the area where the Wild Rose Meadow sign is and along Rosehip Rd. up to the wooden fence (east side of the road). There is also a small wetland plot in the east cluster between lots 2 and 3. These are the only wetlands that we come into contact on a daily basis. (The buffer zones between the south fence lines of lots 30, 31, and 32 and the

walking path that approaches the bridge are allowed to be mowed and kept as a grassy area for the residents in these houses. If the homeowners choose to plant in those small areas up to the pathway, the plants must be native trees or shrubs.)

In addition, OPAL had to agree to install a new wetland to accommodate for the additional lost wetland acreage at the Mt. Baker site. This wetland is called Stonebridge and it is north of Mt. Baker Rd. and west of Terrill Beach Rd. This wetland was installed by Joe Bullock Landscaping and is currently being maintained by Joe Bullock using WRM reserve funds.

From year 2012 to 2022, Rozewood Environmental Services (Scott Rozenbaum) is and will be monitoring the progress of WRM's compliance with the state and county's requirements of restoring the wetlands to acceptable standards. There are 3 main issues that are being addressed: 1) the acceptable number and variety of woody stem native plants/trees per square footage in the buffer zones; 2) the acceptable number and variety of rushes, sedges, and shrubs in the wet areas; and 3) the proper level (or lack of) invasive plants in all areas. The invasives that must be removed are: thistles, blackberries, scotch broom, tansy ragwort and alder saplings (which may be thinned to an appropriate density).

In 2012, over a hundred more native plants/trees were planted by Kucklick Landscaping in the buffer zone east of lot 32, south of lot 31, along the east side of the pond, and south of the WRM sign. These additional plants needed to be installed as Scott Rozenbaum assessed that the buffer zones were under planted. Also, a work party of residents transplanted over a hundred sedges, rushes, and willow to seed the east and southeast sides of the pond with more growth.

As each year goes by, Scott Rozenbaum will assess the growth and density of the plantings and send a report to the state and county and give recommendations of additional work. As of 2013, new trees were planted in the buffer zone along Mt. Baker Rd. Large work parties have been necessary to water newly installed plants and to clear out blackberries and alders and scotch broom. WRM hires help to weed-eat the entryway buffer zones.

The small wetland between lots 2 and 3 in the east cluster does not need any additional plantings. However, this wetland hovers over lots 2 and 3 and needs to be pruned along the fence lines as to not invade or damage the houses in lots 2 and 3. Also, this wetland needs to be kept from encroaching on the main pathway in the east cluster. Volunteer help is necessary and shouldn't just be the responsibility of the 2 households neighboring the wetland.

#### Gravel for Pathways and Parking Lots

The purchase of gravel for both pathways and parking lots is taken out of the annual budget. The parking lots for the west and south cluster will receive gravel each year. The distribution of pathway gravel for each cluster will rotate each year or based on need. The

spreading of gravel depends entirely on volunteer labor from each cluster. (The east parking lot does not receive gravel due to the fact that it is asphalt and gets annual vacuuming.) At the annual meeting, a resident will be the volunteer in charge of ordering the necessary gravel and communicating with the cluster representatives.

## CONCLUSION

The homeowners at Wild Rose Meadow are lucky to have such beautiful grounds and landscaping. They may not have realized when they purchased an affordable home from OPAL that more would be asked of them regarding the maintenance of the property outside of their parcel. If most of the residents put some effort into the property, it won't be such a daunting task. The grounds committee consists of residents and neighbors who are out there weeding and watering and pruning and trying to encourage others to help. It's a task too large for just a few people to take on.

See the document on the OPAL (WRM) website that shows the specific work needed for each cluster. Some of this work is to be done by volunteer labor and some will be hired out based on the annual budget. Each cluster's representatives will help organize work parties and encourage residents to take care of their respective areas. The grounds committee will be in charge of hiring out the work designated.