

## *Know Your Property Line*

The Highlands Ranch Metro District has 4,739 neighbors in Highlands Ranch. These neighbors have properties that back to parks and open space managed by the District. This equates to more than 70 miles of fence line separating parks and open space from neighboring backyards. As a homeowner who backs to open space, you may be unsure exactly where your property line ends and the Metro District property line begins. This opens up the possibility for encroachment and other violations.

As part of the board-approved land use rules for open space, the following are prohibited from occurring beyond your property line on Metro District property:

**Storage** – Personal items such as landscape material, lawn mowers, wood and utility-trailers.



**Recreation** – Recreational items such as playgrounds, trampolines, horseshoe pits, tree houses and rope swings.



**Dumping** – Discarding grass clippings, sod, soil, yard waste, trash, debris, landscape materials and dog waste over your backyard fence is harmful to the open space. Yard clippings dumped in the open space establish a seed bed for weeds to flourish and suffocates native grasses. In addition, dumping yard clippings creates a habitat for unwanted rodents and increases the fire danger. Dumping dog waste is unsightly and creates a health and safety concern for our water supply and for wildlife.



**Extended Landscaping** – Irrigation, planting, gardening, mowing, dog houses, timber walls and structural supports for improvements located on private property are to be contained within your backyard. Mowing native areas with residential mowers is harmful to vegetation because residential mowers cut at a height that puts stress on the native vegetation, in turn creating an environment for invasive weeds to establish.



**Access** – Access to your property through Metro District property is not permitted. Creating walkways beyond your fence line or removing Metro District fencing along the parkway landscaping is prohibited.



**Motor Vehicle Operation** – The operation of any motorized vehicle or equipment such as trucks, electric/gas scooters and skid steers on or through parks and open space property is not allowed. The following are exceptions to this rule: Metro District and Centennial Water & Sanitation service vehicles and equipment; emergency vehicles; utilities; and permitted contractors for Metro District or Centennial Water projects. Permits are not given to residents for access to their property for landscaping.



**Social Trail** – Residents who frequently enter the open space through their back fence may be creating social trails in the open space. Social trails increase erosion, fragments the wildlife habitat and establishes a place for weeds to grow, damaging natural resources. Residents may enter the open space through their backyard, but should avoid taking the same path each time so a social trail does not develop.



**Bird Feeders** – Bird feeders, houses and baths placed in the open space introduce non-native species to the area and can attract wildlife such as rodents, coyotes and raccoons. If you wish to ‘host’ birds, all items must be placed on your property.



**Spraying of Herbicide** –Spraying herbicides in open space areas creates a hot bed for weeds, and results in erosion on slopes behind your fence line. Spraying herbicides beyond your back fence is not allowed.



**Construction** –Whether it’s digging into a natural slope of the open space or building a fort with wood, you are damaging the natural resources of the open space. The Metro District strives to maintain a healthy habitat beyond your backyard. Altering it in any way, including creating bike jumps and dirt tracks, is harmful.



### **What we’re doing**

The Metro District performs three fence line mows annually between May and October. The fence line mows are performed 18 to 24 inches away from the fence line to ensure private property is not damaged. The fence line mow is six feet wide at a height of four to six inches.

Metro District Park Rangers enforce parks and open space rules through education and enforcement. Park rangers are happy to show the location of property lines, and talk with residents to explain the rules and why they exist.

Violations are considered Class three misdemeanors punishable by a fine from \$50 to \$750 or six months imprisonment or both, as provided in the Colorado Revised Statutes. In addition to any penalties, the Metro District may correct violations at the expense of the responsible party. Prior to Metro District staff correcting any violation, we shall give the responsible party 10 days written notice.

## **What you can do**

As a practice, residents who back to open space may **ONLY** mow or weed whip between the fence line and the District's mow line. If you choose to mow this space, mow decks should be raised to their maximum height. Mowing beyond the Metro District mow line is prohibited.

To promote healthy vegetation beyond your fence line, the Metro District can provide you with a bag of seed and instructions to facilitate growth. Planting the seed and adhering to the accompanied instructions will improve site conditions by reducing erosion and improving wildlife habitat.

For more information about your property line or how to be a good neighbor to the open space, contact Nick Adamson, open space supervisor, at 720-240-5917 or [nadamson@highlandsranch.org](mailto:nadamson@highlandsranch.org).

*May 2009*