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Native Landscape Design 101

Tim Pollowy, PLA, ASLA
Hey and Associates, Inc.





What is native landscape design?

- Use of native plant materials in built landscapes
 - Bioswales
 - Stormwater management basins
 - Rain gardens
 - Specialized gardens
 - Alternative to traditional “landscaping”
- Different than ecological restoration which seeks to create or restore a natural ecosystem



Native Landscape vs. Naturalized Landscape

- Native landscape: all native species
- Naturalized landscape: mix of natives and exotics



What does “native” mean???

def.: part of the indigenous pre-settlement flora of an area

- Native to the continental U.S.? (palm trees and fothergilla)





What does “native” mean???

def.: part of the indigenous pre-settlement flora of an area

- Native to Illinois?
- Native to specific county?
- Native to specific site or habitat?



What does “native” mean???

def.: part of the indigenous pre-settlement flora of an area

- Provenance



Cultivars

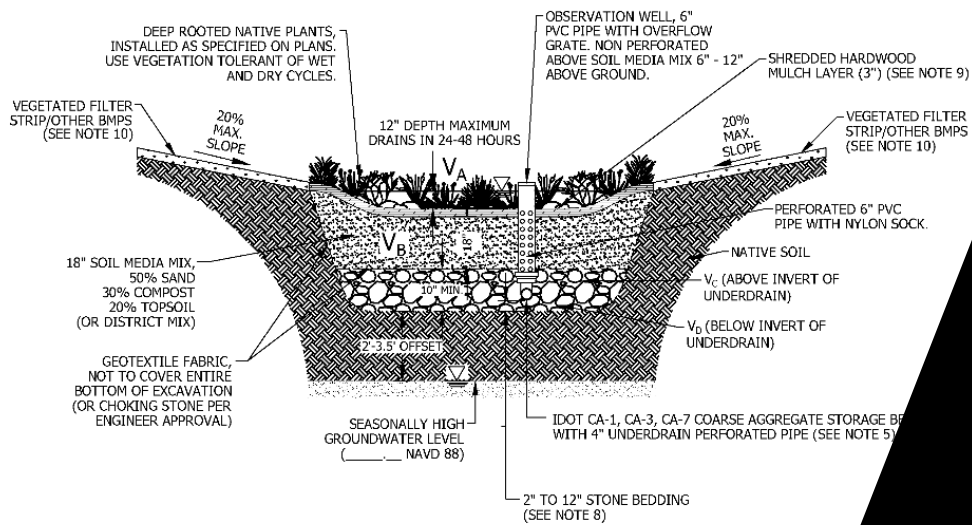
- Cultivated + variety = cultivar



Plant hierarchy

- Straight native species - no cultivars
- Native cultivar - a.k.a. nativar
- Non-invasive exotic species
- Invasive exotic species





MWRD Bioswale Detail

Biological considerations in plant selection

- Sun vs. shade
- Hydrology
- Soil conditions



Cultural considerations in plant selection

- Size
- Texture
- Habit
- Bloom
- Fall color
- Order/organization

Common Butterflies of the Chicago Region Chicago Wilderness, USA

1



Common Butterflies of the Chicago Region Chicago Wilderness, USA

2



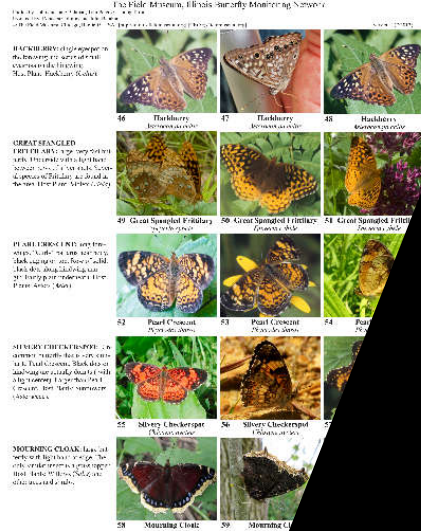
Common Butterflies of the Chicago Region Chicago Wilderness, USA

3

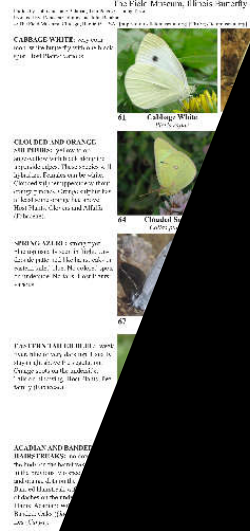


Common Butterflies of the Chicago Region Chicago Wilderness, USA

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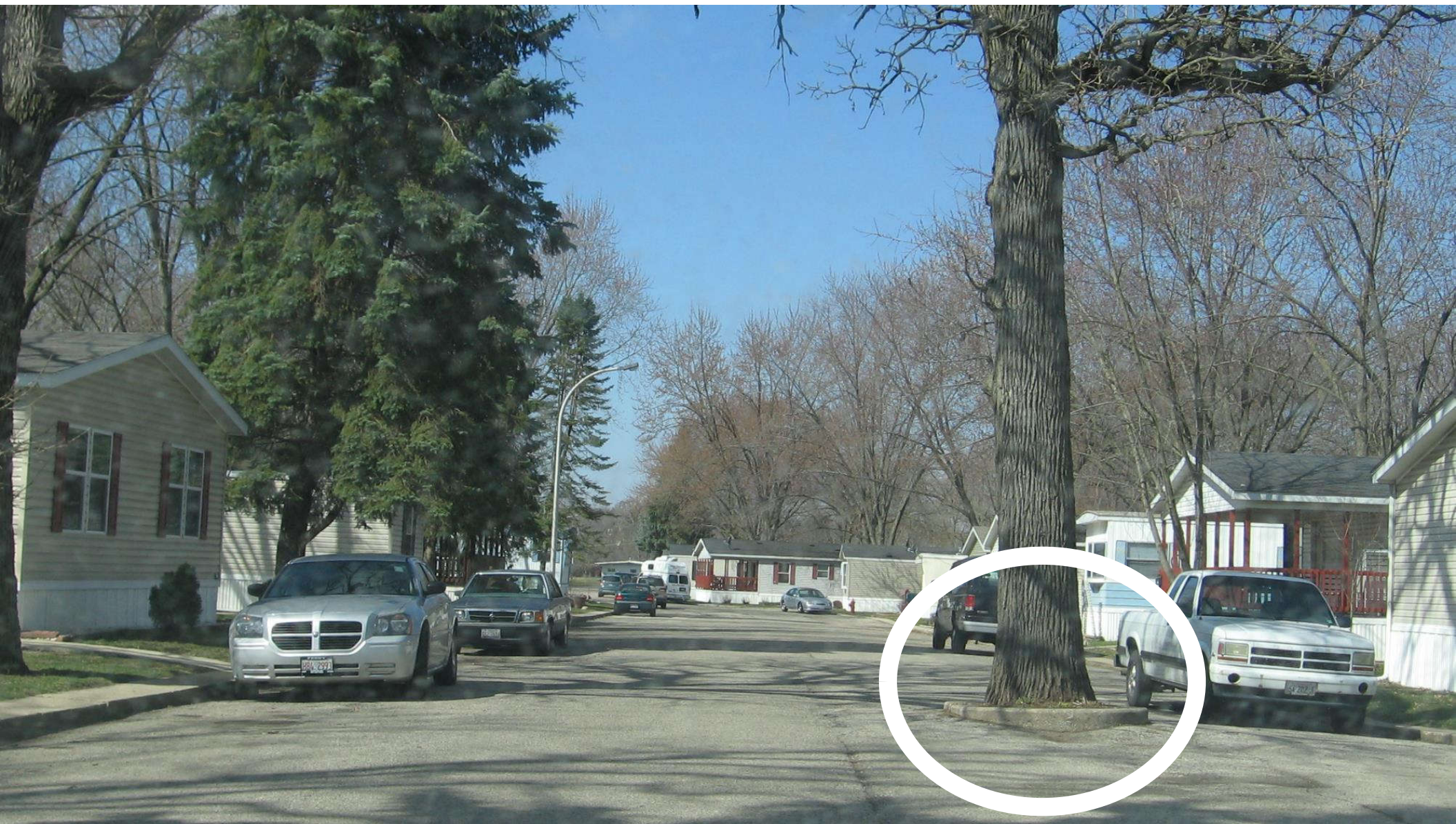


Common Butterflies of the Chicago Region Chicago Wilderness, USA



Additional values & benefits considerations

- Food and cover for wildlife (e.g., migratory birds)
- Pollinators
- Butterflies
- Water quality





Soil as a growing medium

- Soil structure
- De-icing salts (sodium)
- Fertility
- Moisture content
- Tilth
- Compaction



Soil as a growing medium

- Topsoil
- Planting mix
- Engineered topsoil
- Amendments



Drainage

- Grading
- Hydroperiod



Erosion and sediment control

- Siltation
- Preventing washouts
- Erosion control blanket (ECB)
- Turf reinforcement mat (TRM)
- Use of stone



Mulching

- Compost
- Raw wood chips
- Double processed wood chips
- Triple processed wood chips
- Inorganic mulches





Construction

- Experienced contractor
- Timing
- Submittals
- Inspections
- Initial establishment



Post-Construction Management

- Plan (and budget) to maintain
- Adaptive management
- Experienced contractor



Overcoming Common Pitfalls

- Inexperienced contractor
- Weed control
- Irrigation
- Supplemental seeding or planting
- Controlled prescribed fire???
- Regular monitoring



Trouble...

- Poor initial establishment and lack of effective adaptive management leads to complaints and neighbors taking matters into their own hands



What have we learned?

- Do your research
- Design to look intentional
- Use experienced contractors
- Plan for maintenance

If native landscapes were easy, they would be much more common!!!

Questions?

Tim Pollowy, PLA ASLA
Senior Landscape Architect
Hey and Associates, Inc.

(773) 693-9203
tpollowy@heyassoc.com

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