



## ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

### Preparing Wildflower Planting Plans and Work Schedule

Applicants must develop and submit a planting plan, a work plan, and a work schedule to the District Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) Coordinator. It is strongly recommended that applicants consult with a Caltrans Landscape Specialist or Architect before preparing these documents. AAH Permits will not be issued until these documents are received and approved. All costs incurred for adoption activities, including materials, equipment rental, and labor charges are the sole responsibility of the adopter. If available, Caltrans may provide base plans of the proposed adoption area for reference purposes.

#### 1. Planting Plan(s)

A planting plan (or map) illustrates the location of the adoption site within the highway right of way. If the proposed location requires further clarification, a written description should be included. The plan must show where the seeds or bulbs are to be planted. The plan must list the quantity and species of the seeds or bulbs. The plan(s) must comply with the following guidelines:

##### **Proposed Location**

- Wildflower planting adoptions must cover approximately of three acres (net). There is no minimum acreage requirement for “spot” wildflower planting groups who will not be receiving an AAH sign.
- Planting areas must be at least eight feet from the roadway edge, fences, drainage facilities or other structures.

##### **Proposed Plant Quantity and Species**

- Caltrans Districts will provide a recommended species list upon request.
- Wildflower plantings may include wildflowers, meadow mixtures, grasses, annuals, perennials, bulbs, or any combination of these. Planting of California native species is encouraged.
- The type and height of the proposed species must be appropriate to the specific region and adoption site. Most wildflower suppliers will provide custom mixtures for specific geographical areas.
- Seed application/planting rates will vary depending on the types of wildflowers chosen.

#### 2. Work Plan

Your work plan must describe how the following planting and maintenance operations will be accomplished. Any assistance to be provided by Caltrans (i.e., mowing or disposal of debris) must be included in the work plan.

##### **Site Preparation**

- **Weed and Litter Removal:** Weeds and weed seeds will interfere with germination of your planted seeds and obstruct the display of blooms. Prior to planting you must remove weeds and litter from the area to be planted.

- Describe of the type of weeds present.
- Describe control method(s) to be used. Methods should take into account the type and density of weeds, soil conditions, and slopes. Typically, weed removal activities include one or more of the following tasks: hand-pulling, hoeing, mowing, weed-whipping, and/or applying herbicides.
- Describe how any resulting vegetation debris and/or litter will be removed from the site.

- **Digging or Tilling:** Describe how you plan prepare the ground for planting.

A list of any Caltrans-owned underground facilities, such as irrigation and electrical installations, will be supplied by Caltrans. It is the adopter's responsibility to contact the Underground Service Alert (USA) at 1-800-227-2600 for identification of underground lines that are not owned by Caltrans. USA must be called at least two full working days prior to breaking ground. If underground lines are found, you must call the Maintenance Supervisor listed on your Encroachment Permit before proceeding.

- **Soil Amendment:** List what kind, and the quantity of, any soil amendments you plan to use (i.e. compost, gypsum, etc.)
- **Fertilizer:** If recommended for the species being planted, list what kind, and the quantity of, fertilizer you plan to use. A slow release, organic fertilizer or a fertilizer low in nitrogen is recommended since high nitrogen fertilizers contribute to more weed growth in seeding operations

### Planting

- Indicate whether the wildflowers will be sown by manual means or mechanical means (hydroseeding, drill-seeding, etc.) and at what depth they will be planted. Seed/bulb suppliers and/or packaging may provide procedures appropriate for your chosen species.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- **Weed Control:** Controlling weeds at your adoption site will be your primary ongoing responsibility. Describe the method(s) you will use to control weed growth at your site. Typically, weed control includes one or more of the following tasks: hand-pulling, hoeing, mowing, weed-whipping, mulching, and/or applying herbicides.

**Note:** "Spot" wildflower planting groups (who do not receive a recognition sign) are not required to provide weed control.

- **Litter Removal:** Litter removal prior to weed control is required.
- **Debris Removal:** Describe how any resulting vegetation debris and/or litter will be removed from the site.
- **Supplemental Watering (Optional):** Seed germination and plant growth will depend primarily on natural rainfall. However, the need for supplemental watering may be dependent on the chosen selection of wildflowers or extreme climatic conditions. If supplemental watering is necessary, describe the water source, the means by which water will be delivered to the plants, and the watering frequency. Please note that AAH wildflower planting groups are not permitted to use Caltrans' irrigation systems. The proposed schedule of supplemental irrigation shall meet Caltrans' current water conservation policies or requirements.
- **Use of Mulch:** Mulch must be applied to provide a four- to six-inch layer. Mulch should not be placed in drainage facilities or within one-foot of the trunks of existing trees and shrubs. If you plan to use mulch, please obtain a copy of the *Instructions for Using Mulch* handout from your District AAH Coordinator before proceeding.

- **Use of Herbicides:** If your work plan includes the use of herbicides, please request a copy of the *Working With Contractors* or the *Caltrans Licensing Requirements for Adopt-A-Highway Volunteers Using Herbicides* handout from your District AAH Coordinator before preparing your plans. Only Caltrans-approved herbicides may be used on the State right of way.
- **Use of Motorized Equipment:** It is recommended that only contractors be allowed to use motorized equipment to perform adoption tasks. However, at the discretion of Districts, volunteers that routinely perform landscape maintenance tasks in a professional capacity, may be permitted to use motorized equipment on State right of way.

*Use of Contractors:* If your group intends to hire a contractor to perform any portion of your adoption work, please obtain a copy of the *Working With Contractors* handout from your District AAH Coordinator before proceeding.

### 3. Work Schedule for Wildflower Planting and Maintenance Activities

A proposed, five-year work schedule for planting and maintenance work must be submitted along with the planting plan and work plan. The schedule must give dates for all of the activities mentioned in your work plan. Planting and maintenance activities must be appropriate for the area's climatic conditions.

Generally, wildflower plantings are more successful if sown in the early fall, after the first rains of the season. However, if you are planting in the desert or in areas with snowfall, the best time for planting may be different.

Statewide guidelines require that you provide weed control a minimum of two times a year. You may be required to work more often if necessary to keep the area in a neat and clean condition. Please obtain the vegetation control frequency for your site from your District AAH Coordinator before preparing your work schedule. Plan to control weeds before they reach six inches in height or before they produce seeds. In order to avoid accidentally starting a fire, do not plan to use power equipment for weed control during periods when weeds and brush are dry.

Sample items to include in your work schedule.

#### Year 1

- Soil preparation prior to seeding
- Initial seeding
- Supplemental watering (optional)
- Year-round weed control
- Litter removal in conjunction with any adoption activity

#### Following Years

- Soil preparation prior to reseeded
- Reseeding\*
- Supplemental watering (optional)
- Year-round weed control
- Litter removal in conjunction with any adoption activity

\*At the discretion of the Maintenance Supervisor for the adopted area and a District Landscape Specialist or Architect, fall reseeded may be waived. Waivers will only be granted for one planting season at a time.

**Note:** Changes to a work schedule once a permit has been issued must be approved by the District AAH Coordinator in consultation with the Maintenance Supervisor of the area where the site is located and a Caltrans Landscape Specialist or Architect.

#### **4. Requirements for Groups Renewing a Wildflower Adoption**

Near the end of your encroachment permit period, your adoption site will be reviewed by a District Maintenance Supervisor and a District Landscape Specialist. If changes in adoption requirements are recommended, the District AAH Coordinator will communicate these to you.

Groups who wish to apply for another five-year encroachment permit must provide a new or amended planting plan and/or work plan to reflect any changes. If there are no changes, copies of existing plans may be submitted along with the application.

Whether or not there have been any changes in the adoption requirements, all groups who reapply must provide a revised work schedule for the new encroachment permit period.