

General Management Plan

Black Swamp Preserve

Bowling Green, Ohio

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Prepared For:

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Executive Summary

Black Swamp Preserve was established to preserve, restore and interpret remnants of the Great Black Swamp, in the heart of the City of Bowling Green, and illustrate the park's significance protecting these historic wetlands so they can support modern storm water needs and providing opportunities for those seeking natural beauty, environmental education, and passive recreational opportunities.

Its significance consists of providing the community with a natural landscape of high environmental and aesthetic quality within the city limits; maintaining accessible linkages between community parks, multi-use regional trails, adjacent schools and active recreation facilities throughout the area and buffering between contrasting land uses; holding and purifying storm water, recharging the aquifer and increasing the community's environmental and economic sustainability; creating opportunities to increase hands-on education that focuses on increasing science and environmental literacy for school children and immersing park visitors of all ages into the function and importance of a balanced wetland ecosystem; Preserving the local heritage of the Great Black Swamp through the education, appreciation, and understanding of the site's swamp woodlands and open wet meadows; utilizing this central green space, within an urban setting, to combat global warming, reduce carbon emissions and provide a heat island to reduce ambient air temperatures; and functioning as a refuge and rest stop for migratory birds and as a breeding area for local wildlife.

Through a partnership between the Wood County Park District and The City of Bowling Green, the park will be preserved, enhanced, protected, and valued by present and future generations and the public will understand and appreciate how the parkland plays a critical role in the community's environmental, social and economic systems.

Four alternatives were developed and evaluated through a series of public meetings where the planning advisory committee received many comments and suggestions about the park. The alternatives included a no action alternative which maintains existing management practices and resource conditions, a maximum development alternative, an immersion in the wetlands alternative and an alternative that has a focus on history. Of the four alternatives, the focus on history alternative provides the lowest range of impacts to the resources for the lowest cost to the community.

The focus on history alternative provides for a variety of visitor experiences which range from pedestrian connections between the regional bike trail and the nearby neighborhoods, designated trails that provide for educational opportunities and in depth experiences into the remnant of the Great Black Swamp and support services which include parking and restrooms.