



Riparian Corridor Project Profile



Bennett Arboretum Wildflower Grow Zone Project

Background

In early 2005, Wayne County Parks made a commitment to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in Edward Hines Park, the largest riparian park in Wayne County. In partnership with Wayne County Department of Environment, they received a grant through the Clean Michigan Initiative to convert 13 acres of turf grass into native landscape. The 2.0 acre site was selected because it was identified in the Bennett Arboretum Master Plan as a potential wildflower planting area due to its high public visibility, rich healthy soils, good drainage and long rolling slopes. This area in Hines Park has shallow rooted grass, which allows most of the storm water to drain directly into the river with little or no infiltration. Native prairie grasses and wildflowers are deep rooted, encourage infiltration and assists the soil in storage of storm water runoff. This project was installed and completed in Spring 2007.

The grow zone demonstration project shows many benefits and opportunities that the use of native plants can create. For this project, the grow zone is an area where turf grass was removed, the soil properly prepared and native plantings installed and established. The Bennett Arboretum Wildflower Grow Zone Project focuses on providing wildlife habitat and a riparian buffer, while being visually attractive. This is one of 12 grow zone projects located along Edward Hines Drive that highlights, to both staff and citizens, the benefits of native plants and riparian buffers.



Bennett Arboretum Grow Zone project area, before seeding (left) and after (right). (Pictures - M. Best)

Project Overview

Karen Gorman, of Design Resource Associates, designed the grow zone and planting plan. Wayne County Parks staff eliminated the existing turf grass and seed bank on 2.0 acres of Hines Park by herbiciding and tilling. The area was shallow tilled. The grow zone area was hand broadcast seeded by Ford Motor Company Volunteers and planted by master gardeners and volunteers on a work day sponsored by Wayne County Commissioner Laura Cox. Wayne County installed an interpretive kiosk that explained the grow zones purpose and function. Occasional mowing and managing for invasive species is the only maintenance procedures anticipated. Research on native landscapes suggest the maintenance cost for 2.0 acres of grow zone will be approximately 80% less than managing the previous turf grass land cover.

A list of the 55 plus native plant species used is available upon request. The species mix was specific to match the habitat of the planted area. Planted native trees and shrubs along with grow zone signage help to delineate the Grow Zone as a managed, important part of Edward Hines Park. This project has become a welcome addition to the Park's natural environment.

Methods Used

-Native Plantings -Hand Seed Broadcast Method

Materials Used

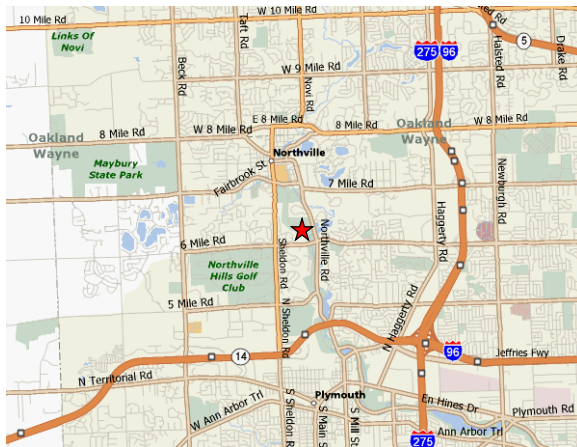
- Herbicide, shovels, rakes, landscape mulch
- Design consultant services
- 21 trees and shrubs and 23 lbs of native plant seed
- 6 large grow zone sign w/ logo decal and 12 small grow zone boundary signs.
- 380 native plant plugs
- Full color interpretive kiosk



The grow zone signs and interpretive kiosk provide a sense of place and purpose for visitors to the Bennett Arboretum. (Picture - M. Best)

Permits

None



Over 55 native plant species were used in the project. Here swamp milkweed blooms in the grow zone three months after installation (Picture - M. Best)

Cost

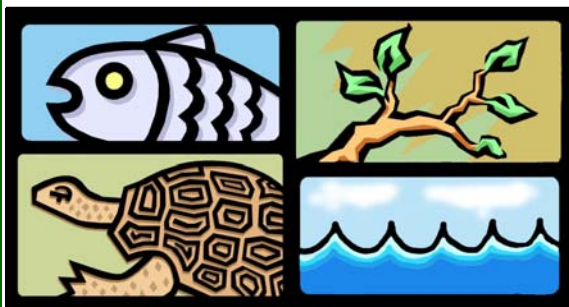
The total cash cost of the project was \$6,740. This cost covered the design, plant material, seed, signage and herbicide. The site cost was higher than other sites due to the installation of an interpretive kiosk (\$1,250). The site benefited by having Wayne County Master Gardeners, Ford Motor Company, citizen volunteers and Wayne County provide in-kind service for the physical preparation and installation of the planting area. This project was part of a larger Grow Zone effort that took place across Edward Hines Park in the Spring and Summer of 2006.



The Bennett Arboretum Wildflower Grow Zone—July 2007. (Picture—M. Best)

Partners

Wayne County Master Gardeners, Commissioner Laura Cox, Ford Motor Company, Wildtype Nursery, Nativescape, Design Resource Associates, Wayne County Parks and Wayne County Department of Environment.



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Text and photographs supplied by Matthew R. Best. For more information on this project, please contact Matthew R. Best at Wayne County's Department of Environment - (734) 326-3936

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