



Riparian Corridor Project Profile



Inkster Road 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 Grant Program to convert 13 acres of turf grass into native landscape. The 1.5 acre Inkster Road site was selected as a priority site due to its proximity to the Rouge River, high visibility to park visitors and its unique natural features, (high water table and proximity to an oxbow of the Rouge). This portion of the Rouge River suffers from flooding and soil erosion during storm events. 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 2006.

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 Inkster Road Grow Zone Project focuses on providing wildlife habitat and a riparian buffer, while being aesthetically pleasing to look. 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.



Inkster Road Grow Zone project area, before (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 1.5 acres of Hines Park by herbiciding and tilling. There were three separate areas of the grow zone and were all shallow tilled. The slope along the Hines entrance ramp was hand broadcast seeded by Wayne County Master Gardeners and Cub Scouts. The gentle slope area to the east of the slope was hand broadcast seeded by Ford Motor Company Volunteers and the area adjacent to the oxbow was seeded by Pheasants Forever volunteers using a seed drill. Occasional mowing and managing for invasive species is the only maintenance procedures needed. Research on native landscapes suggest the maintenance cost for 1.5 acres of grow zone will be approximately 80% less than managing the previous turf grass land cover.

A list of the over 60 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 the Middle Rouge River Parkway. This project has become a welcome addition to the park's natural environment.

Methods Used

- Native Plantings
- Seed Drill Application
- Hand Seed Broadcast Method

Materials Used

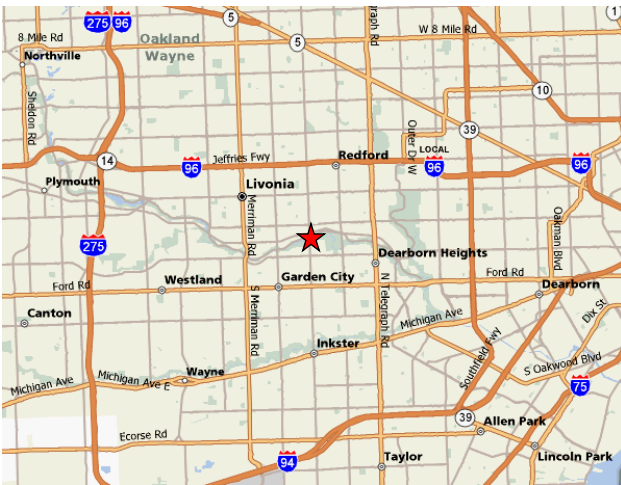
- Roundup, Tractor and Seed Drill
- Shovels, rakes, landscape mulch
- Design Consultant Services
- 55 trees and shrubs and 17 lbs of native plant seed
- 6 large grow zone sign w/ logo decal and 12 small grow zone boundary signs.



Wayne County Master Gardeners and Cub Scouts seeded the slope with little bluestem. (Pictures - M. Best)

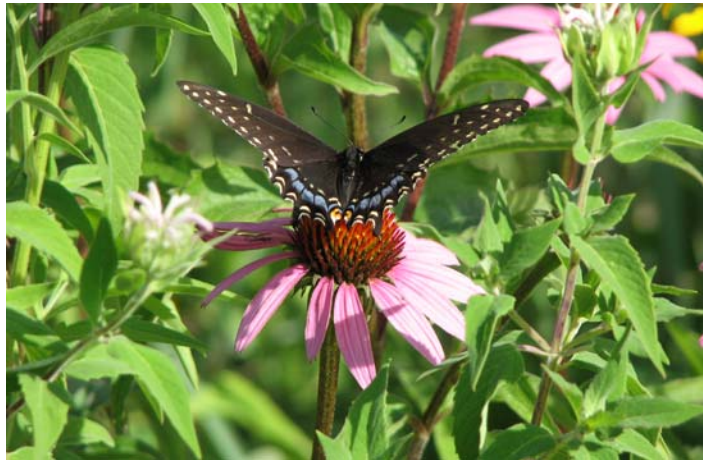
Permits

None



Partners

Pheasants Forever (Washtenaw County Chapter), Wayne County Master Gardeners, Cub Scouts, Ford Motor Company, Wildtype Nursery, Osenbaugh Seed, Nativescape, Design Resource Associates, Wayne County Parks and Wayne County Department of Environment.



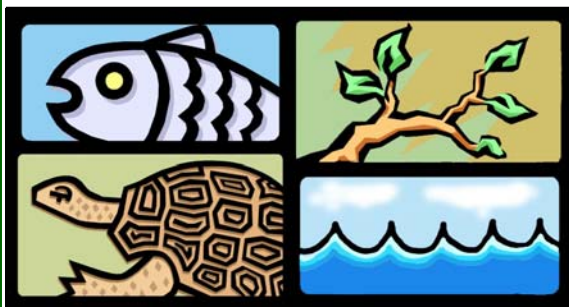
Over 60 native plant species were used in the project. Here, a butterfly eats nectar from a Purple Coneflower. (Picture - M. Best)

Cost

The total cash cost of the project was \$5532. This cost covered the design, plant material, seed, signage and herbicide. The site benefited by having Pheasants Forever, Wayne County Master Gardeners, Cub Scouts, Ford Motor Company 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, which reduced the overall cost.



Members of Pheasants Forever's Washtenaw County Chapter donated their time and the use of their Seed Drill to help install the Grow Zone (Pictures - M. Best)



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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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