

Southwood Nature Preserve

Long-range Management

Managing for a Sustainable Future



Introduction:

During the 2013 and 2014 school year nine graduate and undergraduate students worked with the City of North St. Paul and Dr. Ken Gilbertson to develop a long-range management plan for Southwood Nature Preserve.

Data Collected:

Mission:

To help make North Saint Paul the most livable city in America, North Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will facilitate the creation of active lifestyles, vibrant places, and a vital environment (North St. Paul, homepage 2013)

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this project is to investigate and recommend the best means of education that can enhance the visitor experience, and lead to a sustainable management of the Southwood Nature Preserve.

Significance of Southwood

- Near several schools and a large wetland
- Natural learning area for students in urban area
- Historical significance provides interpretive opportunities
- Importance to ecosystem and community of North St. Paul

Goals of the Student Management Team

- Increase use and quality of experience
- Create an Interpretive Curriculum

Aim to Create Resilience Through:

- Education
- Community Development
- Recreation
- Environment

Recommendations:

Short Term:

1) Revise mission statement

Southwood Nature Preserve aims to make North St. Paul a more sustainable city by increasing the use and quality of green space by providing opportunities for outdoor education and environmental education

2) Construct informational kiosk

Include:

- Welcome Sign
- Map
- Informational signs regarding
 - History
 - Habitat
 - Wildlife

3) Add interpretive signs at resting points

These signs should be:

- Relevant to area of SNP
- Interactive and sensory motivated
- Easy to read and relatively brief
- Located near intersections and benches

4) Create site specific curriculum guide

- Distribute at local schools and on field trips
- Follow path of SNP trails
- Age appropriate editions

5) Increase winter recreation

- Groom cross country ski trails
- Maintain pond for ice skating

Once these small scope recommendations are met and implemented, we hope that the directors of the Southwood Nature Preserve continue to evaluate and address the park's current status and its future capabilities in order to evolve with and sustain community resiliency.

Long Term:

1) Monitor Usage

- Monitor numbers and types of users
- Monitor with a staff member and sign in sheet

2) Create a shelter

- A pavilion picnic area or a fully enclosed structure would offer refuge for visitors and classes at SNP.
- Lead to an increase on formal and non formal education

3) Create parking lot

- Located in northeast corner of SNP
- Constructed of permeable surface

4) Staffing

- Interpreter to monitor usage and teach lessons
- Maintenance crew for trails and invasive species management

5) Environmental sustainability

- Monitor presence and distribution of invasive species
- Monitor water quality
- Implement and enforce pet policy
- Build more trash and recycling receptacles
- Construct wildlife feeders

6) Holloway Marsh

- Work with the city of Maplewood to protect and utilize Holloway Marsh
- Will result help with environmental sustainability in NSP



Conclusion:

Southwood Nature Preserve is a beautiful 28 acre natural parcel in a very urban area. Although it has a great potential as an educational and recreational resources it is currently being under utilized. Though the our long-range management plan we aim to increase the sustainability and ecological value of the site. We also aim to increase the use of the site by local and neighbor communities.

All of our research and recommendations have been turned over to the City of North St. Paul to be further reviewed and implemented.

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Poster created by Adam Maxwell

