

EIGHTEEN MILE CREEK PARK

DESCRIPTION

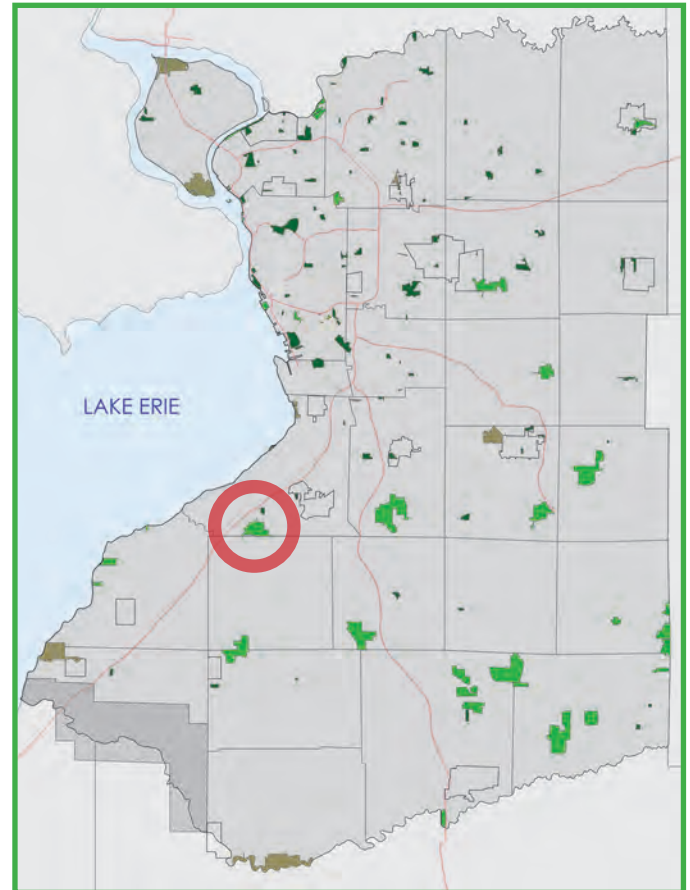
Eighteen Mile Creek Park is defined by the two branches of Eighteen Mile Creek; the North Branch and South Branch. This 466-acre park is presently undeveloped. Access is extremely difficult to the Creek and parking is currently very limited, however, this portion of the Creek is a hot-spot for fishing. While the park's landscape character is dramatically marked by a 60'-deep gorge cut by Eighteen Mile Creek, most of the Park's land above the gorge and between the two branches of the creek is very flat. Park and area history is generally tree covered, with former farm fields reverting back to woodlands. Previous concepts for this park proposed a conservation-oriented park with nature study and passive recreation, and an alternative proposed developing the land into a golf course. Current plans call for maintaining the passive, natural setting of the entire park area.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Located on the southern edge of the Town of Hamburg, Eighteen Mile Creek Park lies approximately 15 miles south of Downtown Buffalo. The Park is located between the fork of the North Branch and South Branch of the Creek. It is situated roughly 3.5 miles from Lake Erie and 3 miles from the Village of Hamburg to the northeast. The center of the park is accessible only via South Creek Road, a narrow, two-lane town road. The area around the property is largely rural, with a few newer residences and housing developments nearby. The south fork of the Creek borders on the Town of Eden.



Local context map



Park Location Map: Eighteen Mile Creek Park is located in the Town of Hamburg off of South Creek Road

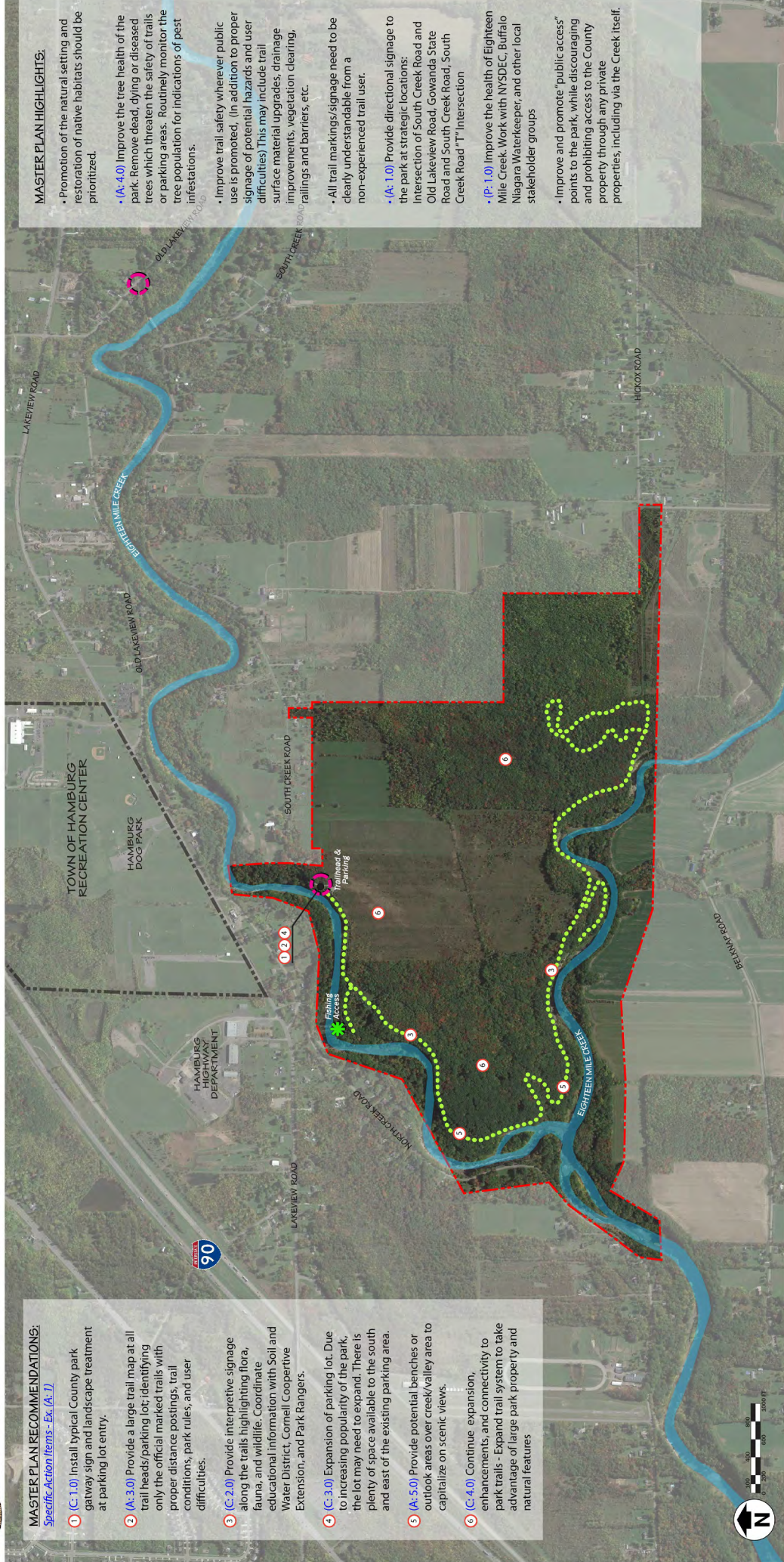
PARK SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

- **Install typical County park gateway sign and landscape treatment at parking lot entry.** Provide new welcome sign and large trails map.
- **Improve trail safety;** this may include trail surface material upgrades, drainage improvements, vegetation clearing, railings and barriers, etc.
- **Address and remove emerging invasive species** like Japanese Knotweed along the Creek and Common Buckthorn.



MASTER PLAN EIGHTEEN MILE CREEK PARK

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE



MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Specific Action Items - Ex. (A.1)

- 1 (C.1.0) Install typical County park gateway sign and landscape treatment at parking lot entry.
- 2 (A.3.0) Provide a large trail map at all trail heads/parking lot; identifying only the official marked trails with proper distance postings, trail conditions, park rules, and user difficulties.
- 3 (C.2.0) Provide interpretive signage along the trails highlighting flora, fauna, and wildlife. Coordinate educational information with Soil and Water District, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Park Rangers.
- 4 (C.3.0) Expansion of parking lot. Due to increasing popularity of the park, the lot may need to expand. There is plenty of space available to the south and east of the existing parking area.
- 5 (A.5.0) Provide potential benches or overlook areas over creek/valley area to capitalize on scenic views.
- 6 (C.4.0) Continue expansion, enhancements, and connectivity to park trails - Expand trail system to take advantage of large park property and natural features

MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:

- Promotion of the natural setting and restoration of native habitats should be prioritized.
- (A.4.0) Improve the tree health of the park. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees which threaten the safety of trails or parking areas. Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
- Improve trail safety wherever public use is promoted. (In addition to proper signage of potential hazards and user difficulties) This may include trail surface material upgrades, drainage improvements, vegetation clearing, fallings and barriers, etc.
- All trail markings/signage need to be clearly understandable from a non-experienced trail user.
- (A.1.0) Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations: Intersection of South Creek Road and Old Lakeview Road, Gowanda State Road and South Creek Road, South Creek Road "T" Intersection
- (P.1.0) Improve the health of Eighteen Mile Creek. Work with NYDEC, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, and other local stakeholder groups
- Improve and promote "public access" points to the park, while discouraging and prohibiting access to the County property through any private properties, including via the Creek itself.

Legend:

- Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations
- Destination
- Natural Features
- Existing Trails
- Park Boundary

RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

Outdoor activities include hiking, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- This magnificent Creek setting has difficult access.
- Limited parking.
- Difficult to find, very little signage apart from the immediate parking area.
- Complaints have been raised by certain neighboring residents: some people are accessing the park area through private properties.
- Welcome sign has been vandalized by graffiti.
- Old stone chimney was found, in disrepair, off of a trail in the woods.
- Park map sign has been vandalized with graffiti.
- Trail signage is limited.
- Invasive species

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Key - (Project Type: Project Number)

A - Action Item: Completed at low to no cost by Parks Staff

P - Assistance or completion of project by potential partner/user group

C - Capital project

- **(A: 4.0) Improve the tree health of the park.**
 - Remove dead, dying or diseased trees.
 - Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
 - Develop a multi-pronged approach to tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings.
 - Apply for funding from NYSDEC for example for purchase of trees and materials and for the tree inventory.

■ Priority: High

■ Partner: In-House/Forestry



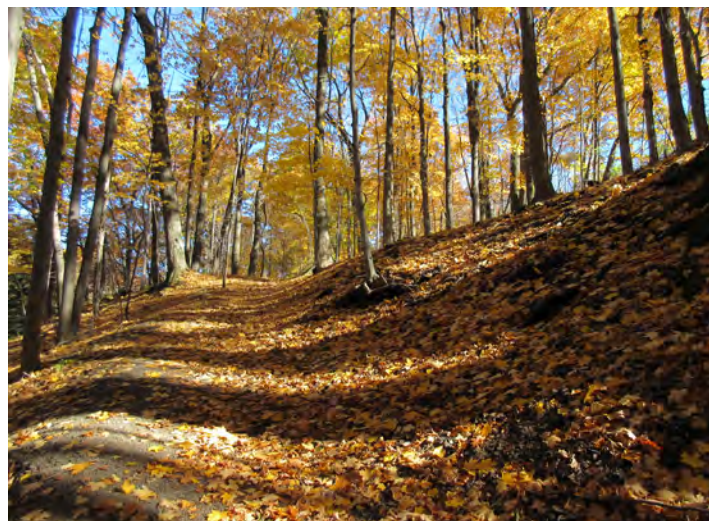
Graffiti on park kiosk



Parking area



Eighteen Mile Creek



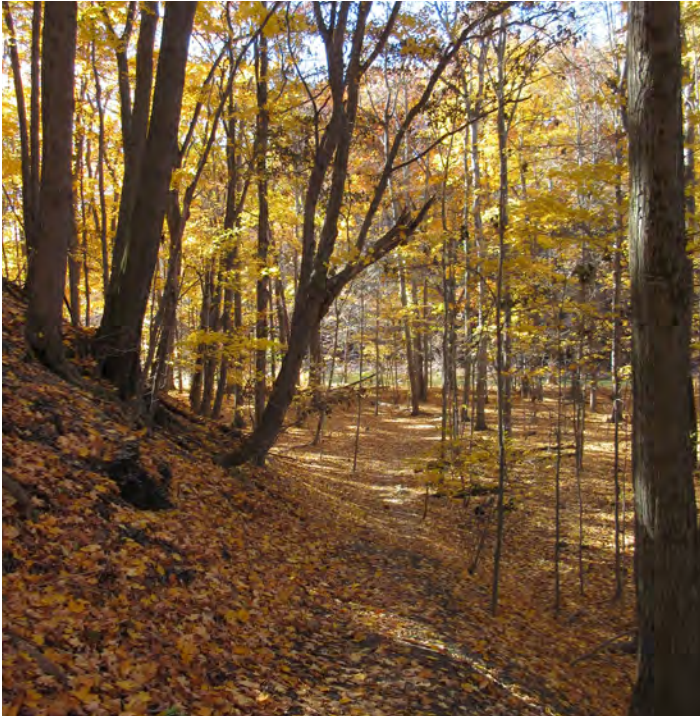
Park trail

- Improve and promote “public access” points to the park, while discouraging and prohibiting access to the County property through any private properties, including via the Creek itself.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: In-House
- Promotion of the natural setting and restoration of native habitats should be prioritized.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: NYSDEC/WNY Prism
- (P: 2.0) Address and remove emerging invasive species like Japanese Knotweed along the Creek and Common Buckthorn.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: WNY Prism
- (P: 5.0) Manage and address large grassland areas for grassland birds and pollinator friendly plants.
 - Consult and coordinate with experts in the field from State and Federal natural resource agencies, academic institutions, and private conservation organizations.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: Natural resource agencies and experts
- Improve trail safety wherever public use is promoted, (In addition to proper signage of potential hazards and user difficulties) This may include trail surface material upgrades, drainage improvements, vegetation clearing, railings and barriers, etc.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- All trail markings/signage need to be clearly understandable from a non-experienced trail user.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Forestry
- (C: 1.0) Install typical County park gateway sign and landscape treatment at parking lot entry.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- (A: 3.0) Provide a large trail map at all trail heads/ parking lot; identifying only the official marked trails with proper distance postings, trail conditions, park rules, and user difficulties.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Forestry
- (A: 1.0) Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations:
 - Intersection of South Creek Road and Old Lakeview Road
 - Gowanda State Road and South Creek Road
 - South Creek Road “T” Intersection
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House



Fishing at Eighteen Mile Creek





Trail down to the Creek

- **(P: 1.0) Improve the health of Eighteen Mile Creek.** Work with NYSDEC, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, and other local stakeholder groups.
 - Focus projects should include stream bank stabilization and erosion control, habitat conservation and restoration, stormwater management, and contaminant reduction.
 - Continued improvements to the ecological status of the waterways and naturalization of the surrounding wooded areas can contribute to educational nature programs and trail/water recreation.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: ECSWD/NYSDEC/Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper**
- **(C: 4.0) Continue expansion, enhancements, and connectivity of park trails.**
 - Expand trail system to take advantage of large park property and natural features
 - Provide kiosks with trail maps and rules at select trailhead locations.
 - Provide distinct trail markers to guide trail users.
 - Provide interpretive signage along the trails highlighting flora, fauna, and wildlife. Coordinate educational information with Soil and Water District, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Park Rangers.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(P: 4.0) Improve and enhance fishing access.**
 - Provide clear trails and access points, along with possible fishing platforms or stone areas.
 - Fish species include steelhead and smallmouth bass.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House/NYSDEC**
- **(C: 3.0) Expansion of parking lot.** Due to increasing popularity of the park, the lot may need to expand. There is plenty of space available to the south and east of the existing parking area.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: DPW**
- **(A: 5.0) Provide benches or overlook areas** over the creek/valley area to capitalize on scenic views across the ravines.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House/Local stakeholder groups**
- **(C: 2.0) Provide interpretive signage** highlighting some of the significance of the park space and its natural and physical assets.
 - Coordinate with Hamburg Historical Society with information pertaining to the history of the park site;
 - Acquire information regarding the history of the old stone chimney and other lesser known facts about the park.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: Hamburg Historical Society/In-House**
- **(P: 3.0) Potential mountain biking/shared trail systems could be established** with proper studies, usergroup funding/support, and if deemed appropriate (does not conflict with other park uses).
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: Usergroups/WNYMBA**
- **Provide possible small picnic shelter or two adjacent to the creek.**
 - This could provide anglers and park patrons areas to eat and seek shelter from inclement weather.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: Usergroups/In-House**

EIGHTEEN MILE CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	4.0	Increase tree health and tree canopy throughout the park. The overall age of the tree population at the Park is considered to be mature, with limited young trees to renew the resource over time.	Prune and/or remove trees if determined to present an increased risk to park patrons and employees.	High	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
P	2.0	Address and remove emerging invasive species like Japanese Knotweed along the Creek and Common Buckthorn.	Partner with usergroups such as WNY Prism	High	1-2 Years	In-House WNY Prism
A	2.0	Provide welcome sign and rules for the park	Coordination between Parks and Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House, Highway
A	3.0	Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park, including large park trails map at main trailhead	Coordination between Parks and Highways to develop and produce directional sign panels, trail maps and markers	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
C	4.0	Continue expansion, enhancements, and connectivity of park trails. Expand trail system to take advantage of large park property and natural features	Engage consultant to design new trails	Medium	6-10 Years	P.O.B
P	1.0	Improve the health of Eighteen Mile Creek	Focus projects should include bank stabilization and erosion control, habitat conservation and restoration, stormwater management, and contaminant reduction.	Medium	Ongoing	Waterkeeper, NYSDEC, ECSWD

KEY:

A: Action Item: Completed at low to no cost by Parks staff

P: Assistance or completion of project by potential partner/user group

C: Capital Project

POB: Parks Operating Budget



EIGHTEEN MILE CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	4.0	Improve and enhance fishing access. Provide clear trails and access points, along with possible fishing platforms or stone areas.	Work with potential usergroups like the NYSDEC and other potential partners with interest	Medium	3-5 Years	Partner
A	1.0	Provide directional signage to the park.	Coordination between Parks and Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	5.0	Provide benches or overlook areas over the creek/valley area to capitalize on scenic views across the ravines.	Establish a few of these areas in several areas of the main trail	Low	3-5 Years	In-House
C	1.0	Establish gateway signage for the park	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape.	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,800
C	2.0	Provide interpretive signage in the park	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	3.0	Provide additional parking	Engage a contractor to construct a larger parking lot	Low	6-10 Years	\$30,000
P	3.0	Potential mountain biking/shared trail systems could be established with proper studies, usergroup funding/support, and if deemed appropriate (does not conflict with other park uses).	Work with usergroups to implement possible expanded trails	Low	3-5 Years	Partner