



HERITAGE PARKS

2.0 HERITAGE PARKS

2.1 Akron Falls Park

2.2 Chestnut Ridge Park

2.3 Como Lake Park

2.4 Ellicott Creek Park

2.5 Emery Park

AKRON FALLS PARK

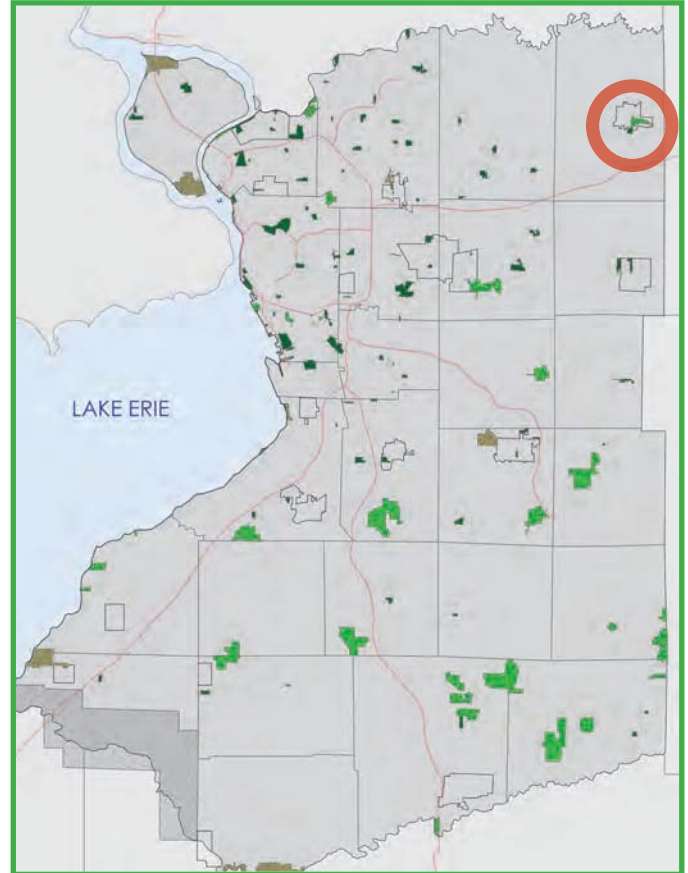
DESCRIPTION

Akron Falls Park, in the Village of Akron and Town of Newstead, is one of the older parks in the County's overall system. It was initially built as a Village Park in the early 1930s, but was later acquired by Erie County in 1947. This 154-acre, multi-purpose park features many iconic old stone structures and sloping terrain that straddles the scenic Murder Creek.

The dominant natural feature of the park is the 80'-high Akron Falls along the Onondaga Escarpment, which includes two separate cataracts on Murder Creek. The Creek then flows through a scenic glen within the park that includes an old manmade lake with dam, several islands, pathways and picnic areas. Numerous old, unique stone park structures dot the landscape, making this a unique 'Heritage Park' in the Parks System.

PARK AND AREA HISTORY

The first settlement in the area began in 1829, and following a rapid development of commerce and industry, the Village of Akron was incorporated in 1849. Cement and gypsum industries sustained the Akron economy for over a century. In fact, once nicknamed the "Cement City," an old news article from 1884 states that "there is hardly a piece of masonry of any importance from the Hudson River to the Rocky Mountains into which it [Akron Cement] has not entered as one of its component parts." In fact, there is a strong connection between the cement industry with the Akron Falls Park, including a series of mines underneath the falls and park. Remnants of one of the tunnel entrances can still be seen under the upper falls within the park. Also in 1884, the West Shore Railroad came to Akron, adding to the service provided by the New York Central Railroad, dubbed the "Peanut Line," running from Niagara Falls to Canandaigua beginning in 1854. As for park specific history, in 1933, the Civil Works Administration, which was funded by the Public Works Administration (WPA), initiated the development of Akron Falls Park, with approximately 90 men working for a minimum of \$15.00 per week. Later that same year the dam and artificial lake was constructed from bond funds (The Akron News 1933 – Wnyrin). Following the County acquisition in 1947, additional acreage was purchased to provide for skating and picnic space.



Park Location Map: Akron Falls Park in the Town of Newstead and the Village of Akron

PARK SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

- **Preserve and repair historic stone structures;** comfort stations, shelters, old stone grills, and unique features like the Rock Garden and stone railings at the Lower Falls.
- **Reduce lawn mowing to provide natural areas of wild flowers and meadows, especially along Parkview Drive.**
- **Enhance falls viewing opportunities at the Lower and Upper Falls.** Fortify and provide safety measures, possible barrier wall or guard rails at Lower Falls overlook, or by providing safe areas to view the falls at closer points along the creek.



Manmade lake and Murder Creek within Akron Falls Park.



Local context map

RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

Since the earliest days of the Akron Falls Park development, the area around Akron and Newstead has seen and continues to see growth. In its earlier days, Akron Falls Park served the recreational needs of nearly all area residents. Now, with more recent developments of other local park and recreation facilities, there is less demand on Akron Falls Park for certain types of active recreation, while more and more people have rediscovered the park for its natural beauty, unique assets, and heritage features. One significant recreational feature in the northern Erie County area is the recreational trail that links the Village of Akron to the Town of Clarence. This Rails to Trail development on the old "Peanut Line" has the potential to eventually link Akron all the way to Ellicott Creek Park and the Riverwalk, through the Towns of Clarence, Amherst and Tonawanda.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Akron Falls Park lies directly adjacent to Akron Village, and yet there does not appear to be any direct or significant relationship between the two. Parkview Drive cuts through the park and provides a direct connection for passing vehicles into the east end of the business district (near the historic Octagon House). The Village of Akron has been revitalized over the past few years, and has become a destination for many looking for that small, quaint historic village setting. Other area industries and businesses have flourished, including the Perry's Ice Cream Plant on the north side of the Village. Given its location, Akron Falls Park likely draws most of its users from the immediate area of Akron Village and Town of Newstead, as well as the surrounding communities of Clarence to the west, Alden to the south, Pembroke to the east, Royalton to the north and the Town of Alabama to the northeast. The Tonawanda Indian Reservation also is within close proximity to the Park.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Natural scenic beauty is the greatest asset of Akron Falls Park. The falls themselves changes throughout the seasons as stream flow varies, making each visit a slightly different experience. Below the falls, steep wooded slopes provide a feeling of wilderness, despite the park's proximity to the village. These slopes are home to spring wildflowers, which should be protected as well as possible from visitors short-cutting the historic foot path by climbing straight downslope from the parking area.

Murder Creek provides a natural division of the park into north and south portions, which are also different in character. The northern part of the park consists mainly of wooded glen and creek floodplain, as well as the man-made lake. The southern portion is at higher elevation, and includes large areas of manicured lawn that present opportunities for enlarging natural habitat and re-introducing native plant species.



Park road featuring old stone culvert walls on either side





Lower Falls



Stone and timber railing along path to Lower Falls

The character of the lake also varies with seasonal changes in stream flow. In spring, high flows top the dam easily, allowing flow and mixture within the lake, but in late summer and fall, low flows mean the lake level drops, and the water can become stagnant. While it is not a practical possibility at this time, in the long term, modification or even removal of the dam could be considered as a way of improving the connectivity of stream habitat within the park. Flow variability also effects the stream itself-- portions of Murder Creek above the lake show bank erosion from fast flowing spring high-waters.

While invasive species are not a severe problem at Akron Falls Park, there are scattered populations of non-native plants such as *Vinca minor*, which have the potential to become problems in the future.

RECENT PARKS DEPARTMENT PROJECTS / IMPROVEMENTS

The 2012-2016 Capital Improvements within Akron Falls Parks totaled \$1,820,029 and included the following projects:

- Sealed and striped tennis courts, and striping for pickleball
- Sealed and striped basketball courts
- Parkview Dr. – Replacement of bridge over Murder Creek
- Brooklyn St – Replacement of bridge over Murder Creek
- Roadway improvements – Drain inlets replaced, road to shelter #3 reconstructed
- Parking improvements – Cummings Lodge and Parkview Comfort Station lots reconstructed
- Cummings Lodge – General repairs and painting
- Parkview Comfort Station – Replaced roof
- Valley Comfort Station – Replaced roof
- Brooklyn St. Comfort Station – Replaced roof
- Gas Shed – Replaced roof
- Shelter #1 – Replaced roof including decking
- Shelter #5 – Replaced roof
- Shelter #10 – Replaced roof and concrete pad
- Shelter #11 – Replaced roof and concrete pad
- Shelter #12 – Replaced roof
- Shelter #14 – Replaced roof and concrete pad
- Shelter #15 – Replaced roof and concrete pad
- Waterfall access – Fencing added and repaired, walkway resurfaced
- Dam sedimentation study completed



Warning sign and temporary barrier at the Lower Falls overlook





Lower Falls - Many people trespass and jump into and off of the falls, creating significant safety issues and increased duties for the Park Rangers



Old stone grill near Parkview Drive - All grills are displaying signs of deterioration like this throughout the park



Old ball diamond on Brooklyn Street; diamond is not maintained and hardly used

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- The park is showing deterioration in its older, historic stone structures.
- Chain link fencing prevents access and views to the upper falls.
- Over the years, safety has become a big concern with deteriorating walkways, railings and former viewing areas.
- More connections to the Village are needed.
- Park lacks distinct gateway signage needed at key locations entering the park.
- As resources and funding dwindle, a new strategy for lawn mowing needs to emerge. Currently, most of the open space in the park is mowed, including areas that are beyond the recreational use areas.
- There is an apparent underutilization of some of the park facilities, for example the Concession Stand and Ice Skating Lodge.
- Numerous reports and accounts of unruly park users entering the falls beyond the 'safe viewing areas'. Park Rangers have had difficulty maintaining safety around the falls and keeping individuals from high risk areas. This has precluded the Rangers from being able to function and perform their regular park duties.
- Many old stone grilling stations still exist throughout the park, many are in disrepair and falling apart.
- Older pieces of playground equipment, not compliant with current guidelines, are scattered throughout the park.
- The Park has two baseball diamonds, but infields are not maintained. The diamond near Brooklyn Street has stadium lighting that is in disrepair.
- Poor safety along Parkview Drive for pedestrians. A sidewalk or crosswalk is not provided in the main park area, this creates an unsafe condition with park users walking along the road to access different areas/amenities of the park.



MASTER PLAN

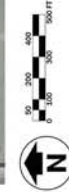
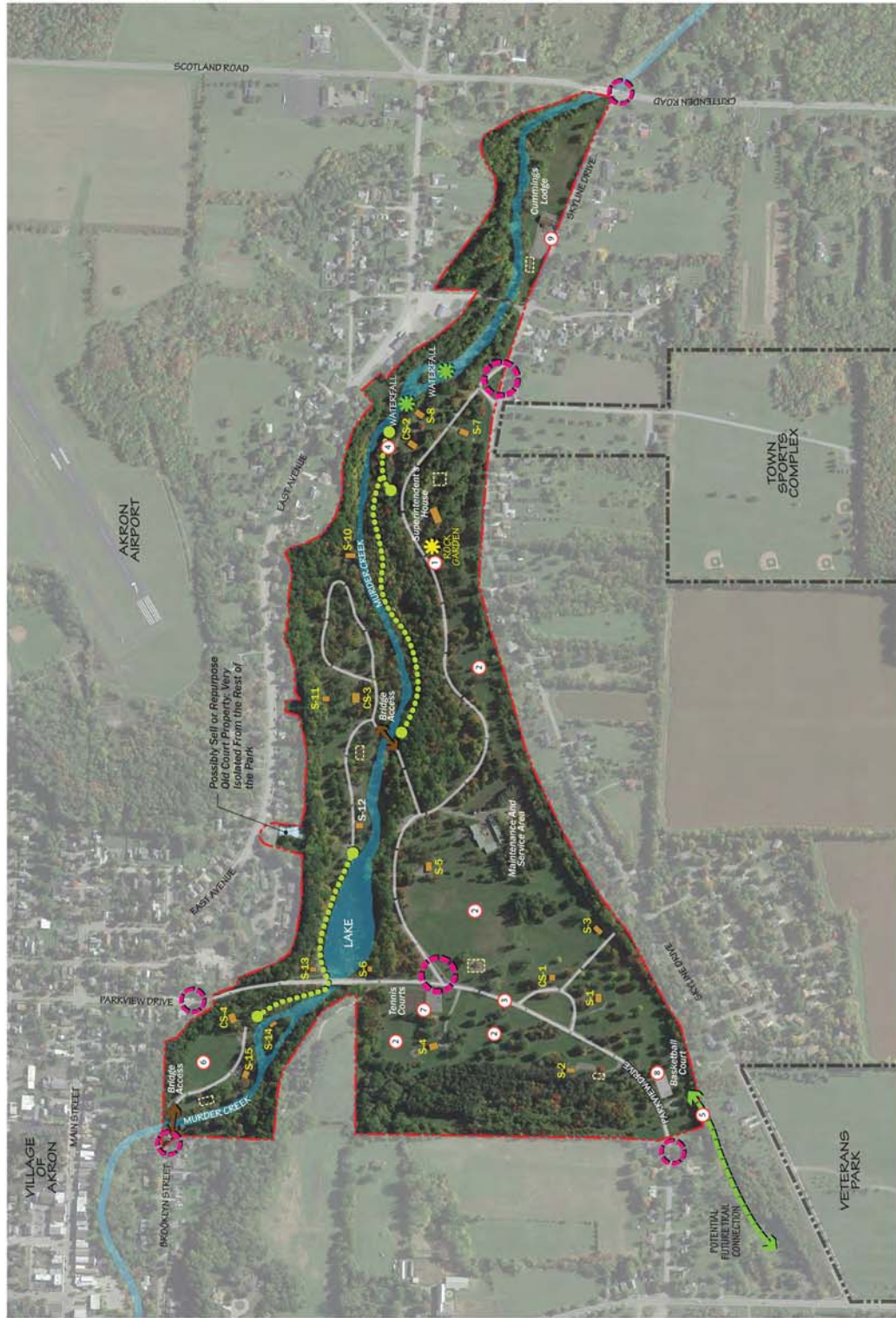
AKRON FALLS PARK

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Specific Action Items - Ex. (A1)

1. (P: 1.0-9.3) Preserve/enhance and restore Heritage Areas within the park, including: shelters, comfort stations, WPA era grills, other structures. Consider the heritage "value" of these old park features for future tourism and visitor appreciation
2. (A: 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-recreational use areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures. (2003 Master Plan)
3. (A: 5.0) Improve pedestrian safety along Parkview Drive. Several strategies can be pursued. Lower the speed limit on Parkview Drive to 15mph to coincide with the park speed limit.
4. (C: 4.0) Enhance falls viewing opportunities at the Upper and Lower Falls; Provide new ADA accessible overlook platforms with newer methods of pedestrian safety.
5. (A: 10.0) Partner with Town of Newstead/Village of Akron to ensure that current and proposed area trails may expand to connect with Akron Falls Park.
6. Consider the removal or repurposing of sports fields and courts based on recreation trends and interests of the area. Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara (VBN) to identify possible opportunities.
7. (C: 6.0) Provide striped lines for Pickleball use.
8. (C: 7.0) Install new updated basketball hoops (rim/backboard and nets).
9. Enhance the usage and purpose for the Cummings Lodge, located off of Skyline Drive.



Legend:

- Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations
- WPA Park Heritage Feature/Destination
- Natural Features
- WPA Pump Shelters/ Misc. Features
- Existing Park Trails
- Park Boundary
- Playground
- CS - Comfort Station - (P) (S-1) WPA Era Structure (S-2) WPA Era Structure (S-3) WPA Era Structure
- WS - Warning Shelter

- MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:
 - (A: 4.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (A: 7.0-7.5) Establish more dominant "gateway" features for the park, including upgraded entrance signs, enhanced landscaping with seasonal interest, etc. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (A: 9.0-9.4) Establish legible and recognizable directional signage to the park.
 - (C: 2.0-2.4) Provide new interpretive signage system and informational kiosks that tie the park better into the mix with other local cultural and historical attractions.
 - (A: 6.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.
 - (A: 6.2) Remove the numerous old metal playground structures and equipment that dot the landscape throughout the park.
 - (P: 10.0) Work with NYSEEC Buffalo Waterkeeper, Soil and Water District and other local stakeholder groups to continue to improve the health of Murder Creek.
 - Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology.



NATURALIZATION PLAN

AKRON FALLS PARK

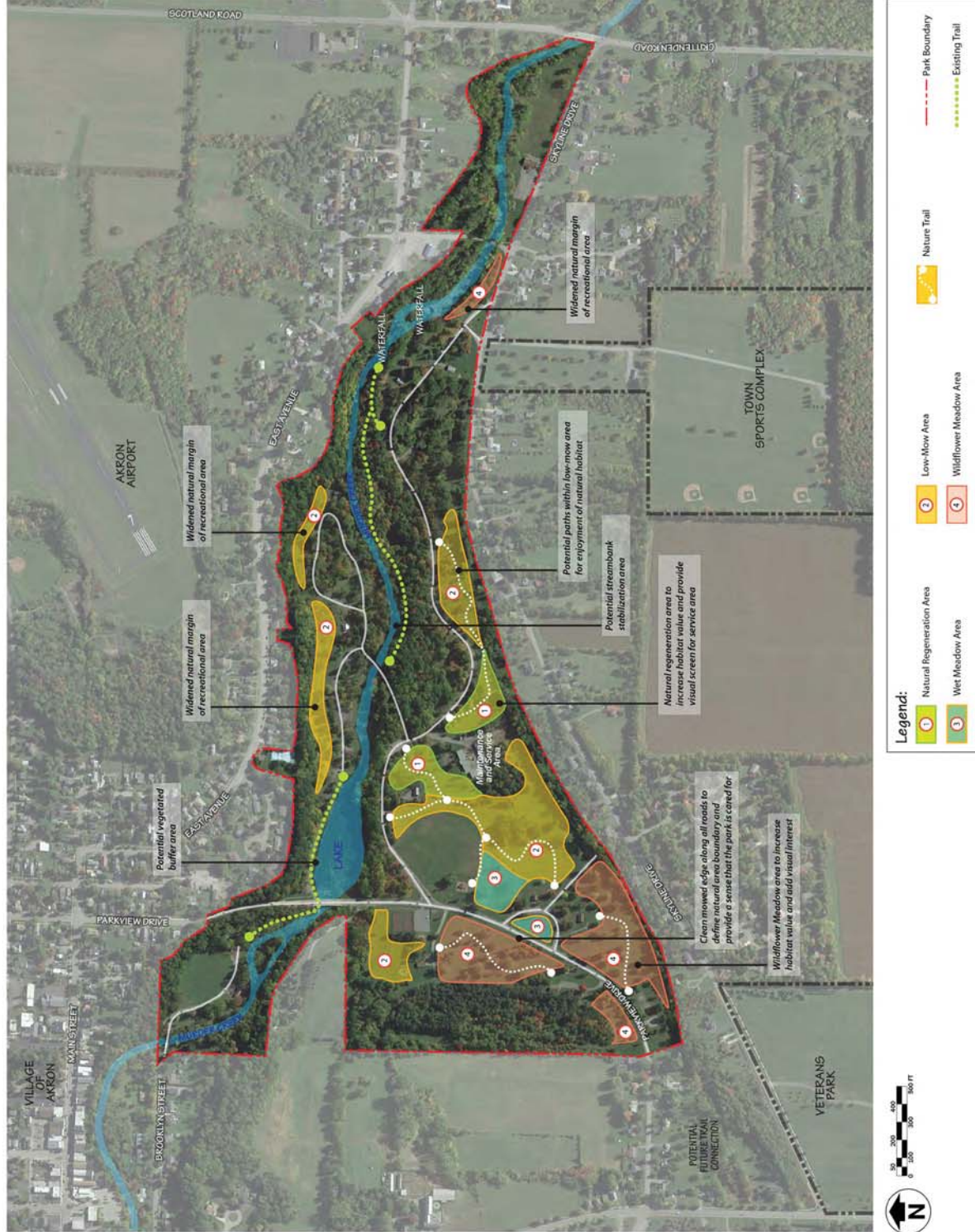
ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MOWING REDUCTION:

Natural Regeneration: 3.5 acres
Low-Mow Meadow: 13.5 acres
Wet Meadow: 1 acre
Wildflower Meadow: 8.5 acres
Total: ~27 acres

TREATMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

- 1 Natural Regeneration**
In these areas, which are currently mowed lawn, natural forests will be allowed to develop. In most cases, suggested natural regeneration areas are adjacent to existing forest, and serve to expand continuous forest habitat within the parks. Mowing will cease altogether, and woody plant removal will be limited to non-native species. Young native trees of species found in neighboring forest can be planted to speed natural reforestation, and native meadow grass and wildflower seeds can be planted to replace lawn until the tree canopy matures.
- 2 Low-Mow**
These are areas that may potentially see different use in the future, and are not intended to be reforested. They would be mowed infrequently to prevent woody plants from establishing. Within the 'low-mow' management category, there exists flexibility for tailoring management to a particular park or zone.
- 3 Wet Meadow**
A sub-type of Low-Mow Area, Wet Meadow simply refers to areas that currently tend to remain wet, and therefore may support different plant species than typical Low-Mow Meadow. Wet Meadow is not intended to retain standing water as a pond would.
- 4 Wildflower Meadow**
In locations with low use but high visibility, such as near park entrances, the Low-Mow Meadow treatment can be modified by the addition of significant native wildflower planting efforts. This will create a higher level of biodiversity and visual interest than simple mowing reduction.



NATURALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lawn Reduction

A large percentage of Akron Falls Park is currently mowed despite seeing little use for active recreation. Much of this area can be converted to use as wildlife habitat and passive recreation area.

At Akron Falls Park, the majority of lawn reduction will be conversion to Low-Mow and Wildflower Meadow. Certain areas near the western edge of the park tend to be wet, making them opportunities to create Wet Meadow.

The natural forest area between the waterfalls and the lake is one of the main attractions of Akron Falls Park. Natural Regeneration areas can begin a process of expanding this valuable forest habitat.

Natural Regeneration areas are recommended surrounding the park maintenance and service area. These will provide visual screening over time, and function much like an addition to the existing woodland north of the main park drive.

In the northern part of the park, the unmowed margin areas surrounding the higher activity zones can be increased over time without compromising flexibility for the future.

Water Quality Protection

Akron Falls Park offers an opportunity to enhance the water quality of Murder Creek, which has at times been a concern for the community. Increasing natural vegetation buffers and stabilizing streambanks are known to help maintain water quality. In the long term, however, adjustments to the dam may be the only way to prevent the lake from becoming stagnant in late summer when stream flows are low.

Invasive Species Management

Aggressive non-native plants are currently having a relatively low impact at Akron Falls, compared with many public parks. It is important to keep monitoring for changes so that the current level of quality can be protected.

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

Historic Structures/WPA/Other Structures:

- **(P: 1.0-9.3) Preserve/enhance and restore Heritage Areas within the park, including; shelters, comfort stations, WPA era grills, other structures.** Consider the heritage “value” of these old park features for future tourism and visitor appreciation
 - The Rock Garden
 - Enhance and promote Old Rock Garden as unique destination to the Erie County Park System. Include interpretive signage about the history of the site. Picnic Groves including grill structures
 - Preserve and/or repair, depending on condition and location, WPA grilling structures to be used again as part of the original picnic groves
 - Hillside trails with unique stone steps, posts, railings and stone bench built into the hillside.
 - Lower Falls viewing area
 - Stone structures such as culvert headwalls and small foot bridges
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: PBN/In-House
- **(A: 1.0) Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Stone bench at the rock garden

- **(A: 13.0) Picnic Shelter #13 should be preserved and/or considered for possible reuse.** The shelter, which is at the west end of lake does not have vehicular access and it is not available for rentals at this time.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(A: 14.0) Enhance the usage and purpose for the Cummings Lodge, located off of Skyline Drive.** This facility could be retrofitted to serve as a multi-purpose recreation center, “nature education center,” or other park use.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



WPA era comfort station off of Parkview Drive



Shelter #2





Large areas of open lawn on the west side of the park

Maintenance/Safety:

- **(A: 2.0-3.3)** Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-recreational use areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures. (2003 Master Plan)
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 4.0)** Enhance falls viewing opportunities at the Upper and Lower Falls; Provide new ADA accessible overlook platforms with newer methods of pedestrian safety.
 - Consider a new trail access route and viewing area to the upper falls from the north side of Murder Creek off East Avenue.
 - Provide safe areas to view the lower falls at closer points along the creek utilizing elevated platforms/boardwalk.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Contractor
- **(A: 5.0)** Improve pedestrian safety along Parkview Drive. Several strategies can be pursued:
 - Lower the speed limit on Parkview Drive to 15mph to coincide with the park speed limit.
 - Provide high visibility crosswalks and signage to provide a safer crossing scenario for park patrons using features on both sides of the road.
 - Construct a sidewalk or walking trail from the bridge to the park boundary. Coordinate with the Village to continue the walk to Buell Street.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Highway
- **Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - New renovations can present opportunities to address standards in ADA accessibility. These can include for example, designing sports fields/courts for greater accessibility and seating, improved accessibility/updated surfaces to children play areas, and potential paving of new trails for people of different abilities.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House



Parkview Drive, heading north

- **(A: 10.0) Partner with Town of Newstead/Village of Akron to ensure that current and proposed area trails may expand to connect with Akron Falls Park.**
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: Town of Newstead/Village of Akron
- **(A: 7.0-7.5) Establish more dominant “gateway” features for the park, including upgraded entrance signs, enhanced landscaping with seasonal interest, etc. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - The park contains several entry points, and Parkview Drive splits the park into three distinct areas.
 - Two primary entrances into the park are from Skyline Drive and Parkview Drive. It is recommended that Major gateway features be implemented at these locations. These features would include upgraded entrance signs, informational kiosks nearby, and landscape treatments to impact a sense of arrival.
 - At several other entry points to the park a ‘minor’ gateway, or welcome type sign and treatment is recommended. At these locations the park rules should be posted. The locations identified for these ‘minor’ gateways include;
 - The park boundaries along Parkview Drive.
 - The Brooklyn Street entrance.
 - East Avenue at the roller hockey rink.
 - Skyline Drive at the parking lot to Cummings Lodge
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **Continue working with the Town to develop an overall plan for Akron Falls Park.** An access to the park should be promoted from Main Street in the Village, to increase the profile of the park in the Village. A walkway should be developed along Buell Street to link the Park with East Avenue. *(Recommendation from Newstead/Akron Joint Comprehensive Plan)*
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Newstead Town Board/Akron Village Board
- **(A: 9.0-9.4) Establish legible and recognizable directional signage to the park.**
 - There are small signs at the intersections of Crittenden Road and Skyline Drive, and at Buell Road and Parkview Drive that are difficult to spot, the County outline shape blends in with the background, and the text is hard to read. In addition to replacing the wayfinding signage at these two locations it is suggested that additional wayfinding signage be provided at:
 - Intersection of Crittenden Road and Skyline Drive.
 - Intersection of Buell Street and Parkview Drive.
 - Intersection of John Street and Parkview Drive.
 - Intersection of Main Street and Parkview Drive.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Highway
- **(C: 2.0-2.4) Provide new interpretive signage system and informational kiosks that tie the park better into the mix with other local cultural and historical attractions.**
 - Provide an interpretive “story-line” for the Park’s geological and local history, i.e. How and when the falls were formed?; How did Murder Creek get its name?; When was the Village and Town first Settled?; What’s the history behind the Octagon House?; What were some significant historic happenings in the area, or in the park?; When were the old stone structures built?; How did the discovery of Gypsum Deposits change the Village of Akron?; What is the background of “Cement City?” etc.
 - Provide interpretive signs or markers at key history and natural sites, such as at the site of any old mills on Murder Creek, at the falls, etc.
 - Enhance existing nature trail system along Murder Creek with new interpretive signage (2003 Master Plan)
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Existing park sign off of Parkview Drive from the south



Murder Creek



Entrance to the Rock Garden

Recreation:

- **(A: 6.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.**
 - Provide or replenish fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.
 - Replace swings/play equipment as needed due to wear and tear.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: In-House
- **(P: 11.0) Consider the removal or repurposing of sports fields and courts based on recreation trends and interests of the area.** Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara (VBN) to identify possible opportunities.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: VBN/In-House
- **(C: 6.0) Improve tennis courts by including striped lines for Pickleball use.** Allow for dual-use courts.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Contractor
- **(C: 7.0) Install new updated basketball hoops (rim/backboard and nets).**
 - Potentially restrripe basketball court as a 'multi-purpose court' responding to the recreation trends of the area. Court could accommodate several sports, i.e basketball, volleyball, 4 square, floor hockey, and more.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Contractor



Playground off of Parkview Drive

- **(A: 6.2) Remove the numerous old non-compliant metal playground structures and equipment that dot the landscape throughout the park.** These pieces of equipment are outdated, most are unsightly, and many do not meet any current playground safety requirements.
 - Consideration should be given to several “legacy” playground pieces, such as the pumpkin coach. This equipment appeared to be in good condition and could be maintained in the park as a feature or considered artwork, without a fall surface which would encourage its use as play equipment. Refer to Volume One for additional information regarding “legacy” playground pieces.
 - Consider earthtone colors for playground equipment in the Heritage park setting rather than bright, primary colors.
 - Potentially reuse this old playground equipment by reaching out to local artists and craftsman. The metal parts could be used as installation pieces located throughout the park. (2003 Master Plan)
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(C: 9.0) Improve fishing access and opportunities to the edge of the park lake (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Provide a small deck similar to the one featured near the Commissioners Cabin at Chestnut Ridge for fishing access and as an overlook destination.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**

Environment:

- **(A: 4.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas.**
 - Remove dead, dying or diseased trees.
 - Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
 - Provide new native tree plantings throughout the park, particularly along Parkview Drive to enhance the arrival experience into the Park. (Consult County Forester and local experts to determine appropriate species to benefit wildlife).
 - Develop a multi-pronged approach to tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings.
 - Develop annual tree planting program to restore tree canopy and improve natural image of the park.
 - Apply for funding from NYSDEC for example for purchase of trees and materials and for the tree inventory.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House/NYSDEC/ECSWD/Forestry**



Old swingset and slide adjacent to Murder Creek



Pumpkin coach - One of the many unique attractions providing character and charm to the park setting



Existing tree canopy on the west side of the park



- **(P: 12.0) Coordinate with partners to identify opportunities to naturalize the lake edge with riparian native plantings and other natural features.** Projects can take the shape of the “Living Shoreline” project at Ellicott Creek Park.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper/ECSWD/NYSDEC

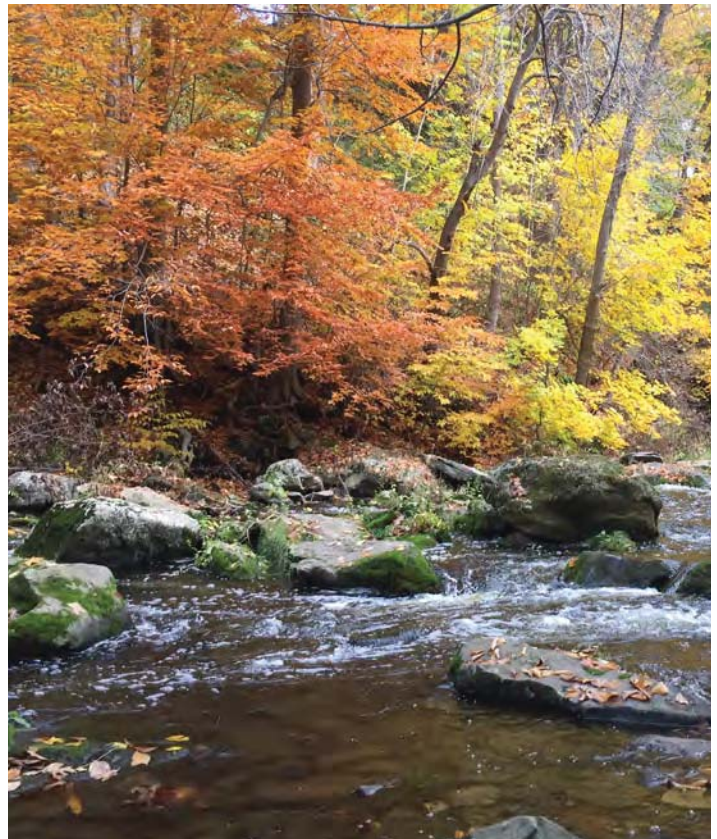
- **(P: 13.0) Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology.**
 - Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas;
 - Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;
 - Prioritize native pollinator friendly plantings for bird and butterfly habitats;
 - Designate potential native plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats;
 - The County should encourage the development of outdoor classrooms through partnerships with local schools. Outdoor classrooms can be living laboratories for local children to immerse themselves in nature and our local ecosystem.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: NYSDEC/Cornell Cooperative Extension/ECSWD/In-House

- **(P: 14.0) Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park.**
 - Address and remove threatening invasive species.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: WNY Prism/ECSWD

- **(P: 10.0) Murder Creek focus projects should include stream bank stabilization and erosion control, habitat conservation and restoration, stormwater management, and contaminant reduction.** Work with NYSDEC, Buffalo Waterkeeper, Soil and Water District and other local stakeholder groups to continue to improve the health of the Creek.
 - Continued improvements to the ecological status of the creek and naturalization of the surrounding wooded areas can contribute to educational nature programs and trail/water recreation.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper/ECSWD/NYSDEC



Creek edge conditions as it flows into the lake



Murder Creek flows towards the lake, surrounded by beautiful fall color

AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	2.0	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Natural Regeneration Zones” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	P.O.B.
A	3.1	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Low Mow Zones” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	P.O.B.
A	3.3	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Provide necessary signage along the “Low Mow Zones” to inform the public the reasons behind the practice and also to identify the areas to park personnel.	High	1-2 Years	In-House, Highway
A	4.1	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. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Prune and/or remove trees if determined to present an increased risk to park patrons and employees.	High	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
A	6.1	Improve playground safety	Continue to provide or replenish engineered fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.	High	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	11.0	Promote alternative transportation to the park.	Coordinate with the Village of Akron and Town of Newstead to ensure proposed trail projects connect to Akron Falls Park.	High	Ongoing	NA
C	4.0	Enhance safety at Lower Falls viewing point.	Reconstruction deteriorating stone wall(s) and construct period appropriate (in appearance) guard rails.	High	1-2 Years	\$60,000
P	13.0	Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas; Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;	Designate potential native pollinator plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats.	High	Ongoing	Partner
P	14.0	Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park. Address and remove threatening invasive species.	Coordinate with WNY Prism, ECSWD, and others.	High	Ongoing	Partner

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



AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	4.2	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. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Develop an annual tree planting program.	Medium	Ongoing	In-House
A	5.0	Improve pedestrian safety along Parkview Dr.	Coordinate with the Village to reduce the speed limit of Parkview Dr. to 15 MPH within the park boundary.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.0	Establish Minor Gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the park at the following locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.1	Parkview Dr. (north end)	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.2	Parkview Dr. (south end)	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.3	Brooklyn St.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.4	East Ave.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.5	Cummings Lodge	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	8.0	Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	X
A	8.1	The Falls	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House

AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	8.2	The Rock Garden	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.3	Trail heads, maps and trail markers	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	12.0	Ensure that shelters, comfort stations and buildings are identifiable	Coordination between Parks and Highways to develop and produce the sign panels.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
C	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of warming lodge next to pond. Replace roof.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$99,000
C	5.0	Improve safety along Parkview Drive:	Engage a consultant to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	3-5 Years	X
C	5.1	Construct high visibility cross-walks, advance warning and crosswalk signage.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	3-5 Years	\$2,500
C	7.0	Install new updated basketball hoops (rim/backboard and nets).	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$1,600
P	12.0	Coordinate with partners to identify opportunities to naturalize the lake edge with riparian native plantings and other natural features. Projects can take the shape of the "Living Shoreline" project at Ellicott Creek Park.	Coordinate and partner with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper and NYSDEC	Medium	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
A	1.0	Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places	Coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer assigned to Erie County to complete the required nomination forms and submit to a State review board.	Low	Ongoing	In-House

KEY:

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

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AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	3.2	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Begin an educational program, through the use of the County’s website, to the general public which provides information regarding the “Low Mow Zone” program	Low	3-5 Years	In-House
A	6.2	Improve playground safety	Remove playground equipment that is not compliant with current regulations, with the exception of the pumpkin coach or other “legacy” pieces of equipment	Low	Ongoing	In-House
A	9.0	Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.1	Intersection of Crittenden Rd. and Skyline Dr.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.2	Intersection of Buell St. and Parkview Dr.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.3	Intersection of John St. and Parkview Dr.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.4	Intersection of Main St. and Parkview Dr.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	10.0	Remove dysfunctional lighting from Brooklyn St baseball diamond	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements	Low	6-10 Years	In-House

AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	13.0	Picnic Shelter #13 should be preserved and/or considered for possible reuse. The shelter, which is at the west end of lake does not have vehicular access and it is not available for rentals at this time.	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements	Low	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
A	14.0	Enhance the usage and purpose for the Cummings Lodge, located off of Skyline Drive. This facility could be retrofitted to serve as a multi-purpose recreation center, "nature education center," or other park use.	Planning and improvements implemented by parks staff	Low	6-10 Years	\$25,000
C	1.0	Establish Enhanced Gateways for the park at the following locations:	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	x
C	1.1	Parkview Drive at main park road	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,800
C	1.2	Skyline Drive	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,800
C	2.0	Provide interpretive signage in the park:	Coordinate with historical society to develop copy and obtain images for the interpretive content.	Low	Ongoing	In-House
C	2.1	The Rock Garden	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.2	Geological history	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500

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Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	2.3	The Legend of Murder Creek	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.4	History of WPA structures	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	5.2	Construct sidewalk from Parkview Dr. bridge to west park boundary.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and a contractor to construct the sidewalk	Low	6-10 Years	\$13,200
C	8.0	Improve fishing access and opportunities to the edge of the park lake (2003 Master Plan) Provide a small deck similar to the one featured near the Commissioners Cabin at Chestnut Ridge for fishing access and as an overlook destination.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$15,000
P	1.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following WPA Era picnic shelters:	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	X
P	1.1	Shelter #3 – Repoint stonework	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$35,000
P	1.2	Shelter #8 – Repoint stonework	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$25,000
P	1.3	Shelter #10 – Repoint stonework	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$35,000
P	1.4	Shelter #11 – Repoint stonework	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$25,000
P	2.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone work at Brooklyn Street Comfort Station; Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$6,000
P	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone work at Falls Comfort Station; Repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$120,000

AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	4.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone work at warming lodge next to pond; Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$85,000
P	5.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone work at small seat/shelter near rock garden; Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$21,000
P	6.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone bench near falls. Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$7,500
P	7.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone bench at rock garden. Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$7,500
P	8.0	Repair Franklin J. Nice memorial; Reset capstone, replace broken "mantle", clean and repoint joints.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$7,000
P	9.0	Rehabilitate the following WPA Era grills to prevent further deterioration:	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	X
P	9.1	Grill #8; Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
P	9.2	Grill #9; Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
P	9.3	Grill #17; Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
P	10.0	Improve the ecological status of Murder Creek through stream bank stabilization, erosion control, habitat conservation and restoration and storm water management	Coordinate and partner with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper and NYSDEC to develop projects similar to the Living Shoreline project in Ellicott Creek Park	Low	Ongoing	\$150,000

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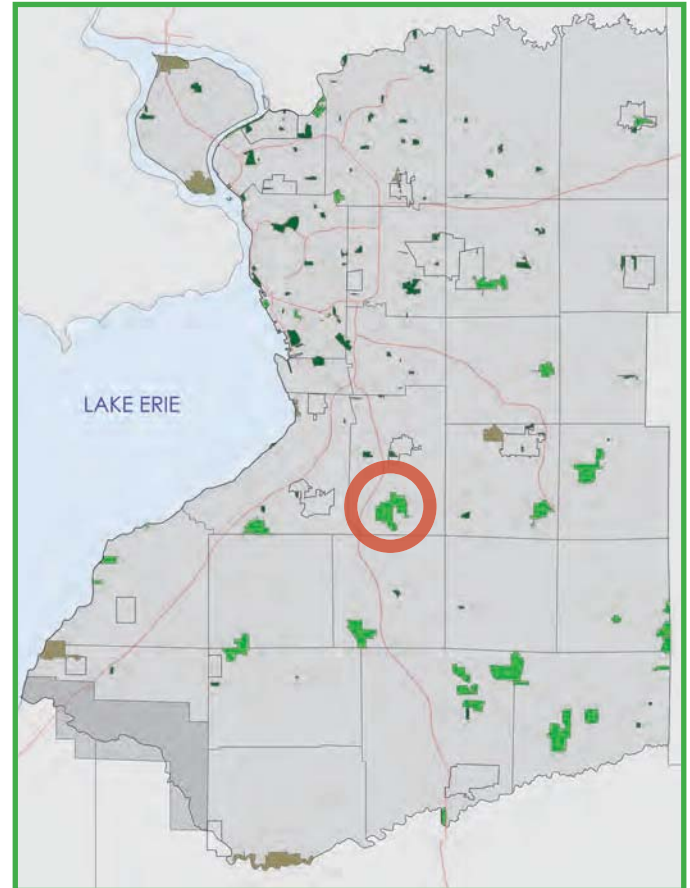
CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK

DESCRIPTION

Acquired in 1926, Chestnut Ridge Park is the largest and most heavily used County-owned park. This jewel of a property includes some of the most impressive natural scenery and vintage WPA-era park structures around. Located in the Town of Orchard Park, the 1,151-acre park is centrally located within the County Parks System, has convenient access and has always been a popular destination to residents all over Erie County. This is the largest County Park in the system and arguably one of the largest County Parks in the United States. The most well-known portion of the park is the large open grass hillside, upon which sits the old stone Park “Casino” building. This north-facing hillside allows for impressive vistas to downtown Buffalo, and has been a favorite in the snowy winter months for its sledding and tobogganing. Rugged terrain, deep ravines, mature woodlands, open meadows, scenic picnic areas and miles of nature trails has made Chestnut Ridge a popular getaway from the hustle and bustle of urban life.

The Eternal Flame, originally known as the “Burning Spring”, is now a regional destination on the ‘west’ section of the park. It has increased in popularity over the years with the addition of parking access and trailhead signage off of Chestnut Ridge Road, Route 277. It is within this remote section that nature is at its finest, with its seemingly primitive wooded ravines and a most unique natural feature: the constant emission of gas producing a small flame.

Chestnut Ridge Park’s popularity is not just for its natural wonder and unique assets, but also now for the increasing amount of events and activities that take place. Events such as “movie in the park” nights, kite flying events, tennis tournaments, 5K races, Santa Land, and Winterfest. These events have brought in thousands of people to the park, due in part to the help and support of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy and continued efforts of park staff.



Park Location Map: Chestnut Ridge is located in the Town of Orchard Park off of Chestnut Ridge Road



Chestnut Ridge Casino

PARK SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

- **Preserve and enhance “Heritage” areas and special park features**, including: Repoint/clean stonework where needed, replace missing stones, replace or repair roofs, make improvements to concrete/asphalt floors, etc. to all historic structures and facilities.
- **Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-use, little-trafficked areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures.**
- **Relocation of Disc golf holes to prevent continuous damage to natural areas and wildlife from excessive foot traffic.**

PARK AND AREA HISTORY

Chestnut Ridge Park is one of the original Erie County Parks, beginning its development in 1926. Much of the park construction was handled through the WPA work force through the 1930s; this consisted of shelters, pump shelters, colony ovens, and pavilions. The most significant and prominent structure was and is the Casino, a stone building sitting atop a hill overlooking the surrounding park and community. The original timber Casino was built in 1925, and destroyed by fire in 1932. The present day stone Casino was completed in 1938 by nearly 50 employees of the WPA. The use of stone in the construction of the park during the days of the WPA provided its structures with a rustic feel. The flagstone area behind the building allows park users to gaze upon marvelous views out towards Buffalo and even far out beyond Lake Erie to Canada.

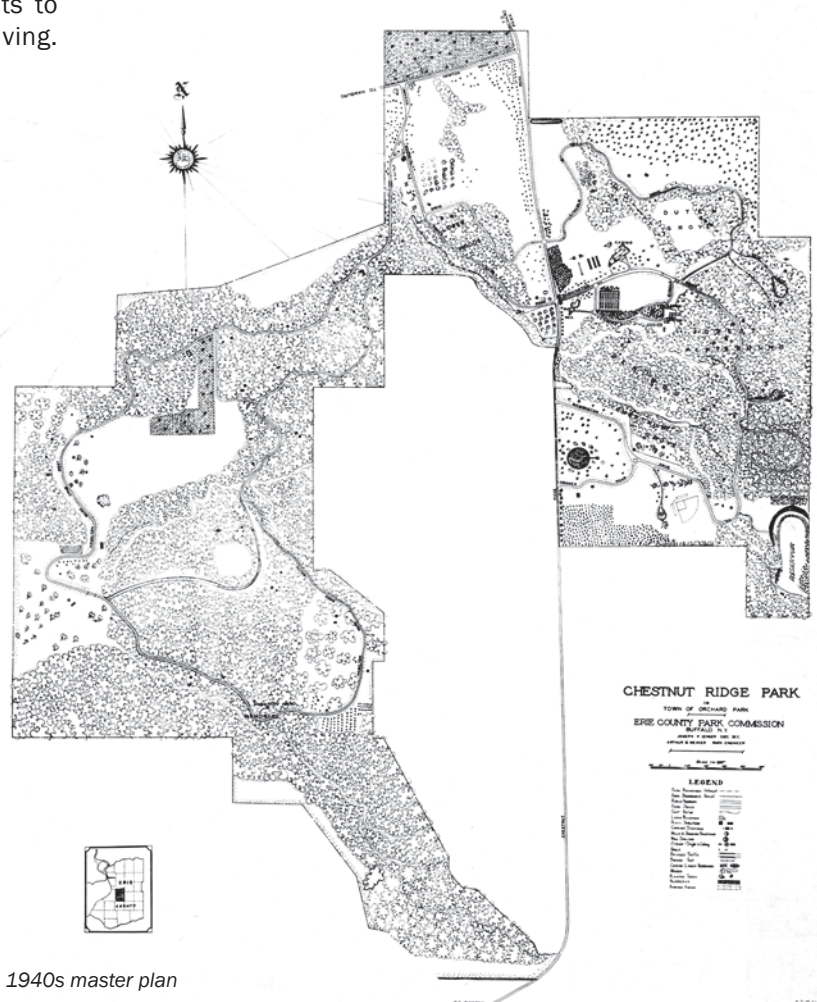
The design of bridges and cabins blended into the natural beauty of the park and 3.5 miles of roads were constructed to allow access to the natural areas of the park. The diversified forest provides many habitats to wildlife and opportunities for relief from urban living.



One of the original picnic shelters at the park (Photo Credit: Chestnut Ridge Conservancy)



Historic photograph - Playground at Chestnut Ridge



1940s master plan

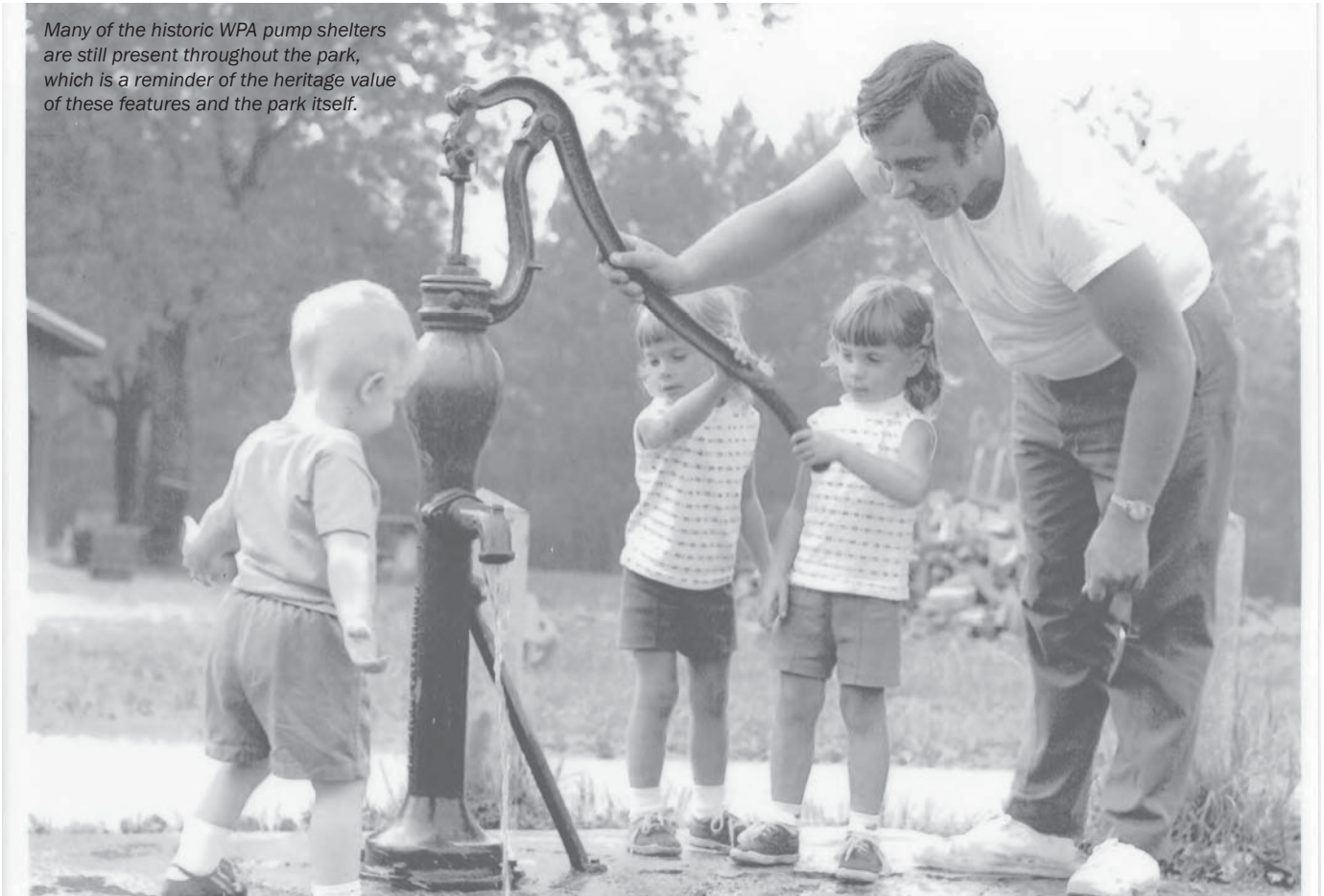




Past and present views from the Chestnut Ridge Casino



Many of the historic WPA pump shelters are still present throughout the park, which is a reminder of the heritage value of these features and the park itself.



(Image Credit: Chestnut Ridge Conservancy)



Existing WPA pump shelter, all of them no longer function



Local context map

LOCAL CONTEXT

Route 277, running north-south between the Village of Orchard Park and hamlet of North Boston, divides the park into two halves, with the park's most developed section lying to the east of the state highway. Chestnut Ridge Park is strategically located at the center of the County's overall park system holdings, and has easy and well-signed access from the local highway system (Route 219 to Armor Duells Road to Route 277 southbound). It also lies just off a major access route to the nearby ski areas of Ski Tamarack and Kissing Bridge, as well as off of the main route to Holiday Valley Ski Resort from points north (Route 219).

RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

At one point, Chestnut Ridge served as a central recreation facility for the local residents, including both active and passive forms of activities. It has always been a magnet for regional park users for certain types of recreation (i.e. sledding, hiking, etc.) and special events. Although still utilized for some organized sports, the Town of Orchard Park and the Orchard Park School District have since developed their own recreational facilities that offer many of the active recreational courts and fields at a local level.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Chestnut Ridge Park is home to a number of popular activities and events, but is also characterized by high quality woodlands with dramatic terrain crisscrossed by small headwater streams. The majority of these wooded areas are not heavily impacted by invasive species, but should be a high priority for surveillance so that their current high level of quality can be maintained. Particularly on the west side of the park, broad footpaths and roads make the woodlands accessible to a wide range of visitors, but also have the effect of creating erosive runoff patterns in some locations. Streambank erosion is minor in many areas, but is a significant issue in the southwest corner of the park, downstream from the Eternal Flame. Throughout the park, small areas formerly occupied by structures provide opportunities for closing forest habitat gaps. In some areas, unused lawns are opportunities to create wildflower meadow habitat.



Historic view of people playing baseball at the park (Photo Credit: Chestnut Ridge Conservancy)

RECENT PARKS DEPARTMENT PROJECTS / IMPROVEMENTS

The 2012-2017 Capital Improvements within Chestnut Ridge Park totaled \$2,719,032. Recent projects included:

- Entrances from Chestnut Ridge Road – New guiderails installed
- East Entrance Drive – Constructed median divider and island to define drive from parking, added lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks and accessible parking spaces
- Roadway Improvements – Repairs to Construction Road, Fire Tower Loop, Commissioners Cabin Road, and approximately 2 miles of roadway
- Maintenance Parking Lot – Repaired pavement including drainage
- Parking Lots – Repaired three parking lots including drainage
- Culverts – Replaced two major culverts at the lower end of the park
- Casino – Replaced doors, added sidewalks and repaved around building.
- Storage Building – Replaced roof, including portions of rotted deck, and electrical improvements.
- Mechanic Shop – Replaced roof, new siding, doors and windows
- Martin Lodge – Replaced floor and doors, upgraded restroom fixtures, repaired areas of damaged block/ masonry, and fascia.
- Many improvements to various shelters and comfort stations
- Tennis Courts – Twelve courts repaired, repaved and surfaced including new nets and posts
- New viewing binoculars were installed on top of the sled hill next to the Casino
- New Hamilton Ward Plaque installed at memorial site on west side of park
- New fencing installed at Eternal Flame parking area
- Roof completely torn off and replaced at Maintenance Shop
- Complete renovation of comfort station #8 including ADA accessible stalls
- Trail head kiosk and map installed at Eternal Flame parking lot



ADA Improvements to comfort station #8



New shelter construction



New sign kiosk installed at the Eternal Flame Trailhead





WPA comfort station in poor shape - not functional



Erosion and damage to the environment



No screening to the large maintenance area at the park as you enter near entrance

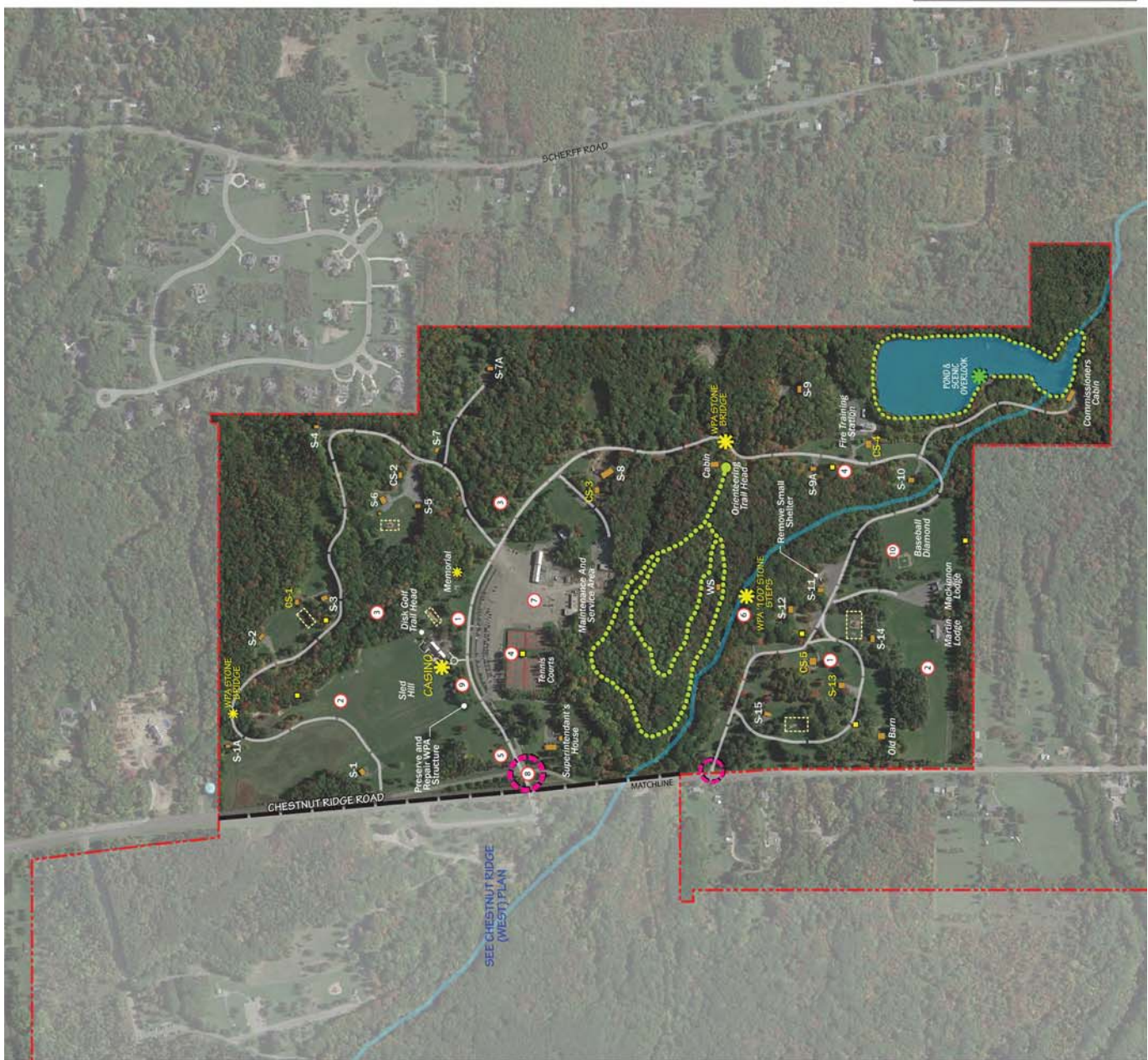
CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- The park is showing deterioration in its older, historic stone structures.
- The arrival to the park near the casino is underwhelming and “out of character” for this magnificent, natural park. A “sea of pavement” and views to the maintenance structures greets all visitors to the east side of the park.
- Threats to natural reserve areas including erosion of waterways, fallen limbs/trees, disc golf, and invasive species.
- Lack of directional and interpretive signage highlighting the wonderful park structures and natural features
- Most of the open space in the park is mowed, including areas that are beyond the recreational use areas.
- There is an apparent underutilization of some of the park facilities, i.e. main casino building, concession stand, Martin Lodge, etc.
- Popularity and heavy usage of the Disc Golf course is causing many environmental concerns to nature reserve zones including erosion, root/tree damage, and littering.
- The park still contains many old wooden picnic tables, and some are in very poor shape.
- There are numerous outdated play structures that do not meet current safety or accessibility codes.
- Limited staff to operate toboggan chutes.
- Safety concerns and other issues over the management and maintenance of the Eternal Flame Trail.
- Recent damage to trees from Emerald Ash Borer.
- Trails very rarely have information providing users with trail name, map, trail length, etc.
- No bathroom provided on west section of park during the winter - no heat.
- West section of the park contains one primary vehicular entrance which is on the northern-most portion of the park, which could be an issue for emergency responders.
- “Shale Creek” portion of Chestnut Ridge Park contains significant riparian and aquatic habitats that are at risk from erosion, sedimentation, invasive species and lack of ecology-based management plans.
- Runoff from Eternal Flame parking lot flows directly onto trail.

MASTER PLAN CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK (EAST)

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: *Specific Action Items - Ex. (A.1)*

- ① (C. 1.0-1.9, 3.0-15.0/ P.4.0-9.0) Preserve and enhance the original Heritage Areas, particularly the area around the Casino building. Restore historic stone structures, picnic shelters, comfort stations, pump houses and original park buildings;
- ② (A. 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-recreational use areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures. (2003 Master Plan)
- ③ (P. 1.0) Potential relocation of disk golf holes to prevent continuous damage to natural areas and wildlife.
- ④ (C. 2.0-2.6) Provide interpretive signage throughout the park which can display historic images and content of significant park assets like the Eternal Flame Falls, Hamilton Ward site, WPA structures, etc.
- ⑤ (P. 2.0) Prevent further deterioration of Gateway pillars at Newton Road entrance. Replace missing stones, repair loose stonework and clean and repoint stonework.
- ⑥ (P. 10.0) Restoration of "100 steps" on east side of park would produce a new destination spot at Chestnut Ridge.
- ⑦ (C. 17.0) "Soften" the appearance of the existing large parking area between the casino and tennis courts by providing additional landscape treatments and trees to this important visual setting.
- ⑧ (C. 19.0) Need better transition/connection from east section of park to west section. Provide additional signage and/or painted crosswalks at the on/off ramps to route 277.
- ⑨ (A. 15.0) Upgrade toboggan chutes as necessary to maintain proper safety standards and continued recreational value. Increased staff is needed to operate toboggan chutes if repaired.
- ⑩ (P. 12.0) Repurpose or restore baseball diamond based on usage and partnership opportunities. Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara to explore tournament and recreation prospects.



ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:

- (A.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees.
- Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)
- (A. 8.0-8.10) Promote natural and cultural heritage interpretation and enjoyment throughout the park through an expanded trail system and park signage; provide new wayfinding system to bring awareness to existing trails and hidden park features.
- (A. 6.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.
- (A. 14.0) Remove all old, dilapidated wooden picnic tables throughout the park. Dispose of rotten and decayed tables, and repair all those that can be salvaged.
- (A. 6.2) Remove the numerous old metal playground structures and equipment that dot the landscape throughout the park.
- Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology. Prioritize protection and enhancement of areas deemed appropriate for additional native plantings to make suitable for bird and butterfly habitats. Native plant gardens will promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats.
- Promote and expand four seasons use of the park, including winter use – e.g. tobogganing, sledding, cross-country skiing, weekend sleigh rides.

Legend:

Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations

WPA Park Heritage Feature/ Destination

Natural Features

WPA Pump Shelters/Misc. Features

Existing Park Trails

Park Boundary

Playground

CS: Comfort Station (H) (P24) WPA Em. Structures

S-1: Shelter (H) (P24) WPA Em. Structures

WS: Warning Shelter

NATURALIZATION PLAN CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK (EAST)

TOTAL PARK MOWING REDUCTION:

Natural Regeneration: 8.5 acres
Low-Mow Meadow: 17.5 acres
Wildflower Meadow: 8 acres
Total: ~34 acres

TREATMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

- 1 **Natural Regeneration**
In these areas, which are currently mowed lawn, natural forests will be allowed to develop. In most cases, suggested natural regeneration areas are adjacent to existing forest, and serve to expand continuous forest habitat within the parks. Mowing will cease altogether, and woody plant removal will be limited to non-native species. Young native trees of species found in neighboring forest can be planted to speed natural reforestation, and native meadow grass and wildflower seeds can be planted to replace lawn until the tree canopy matures.
- 2 **Low-Mow**
These are areas that may potentially see different use in the future, and are not intended to be reforested. They would be mowed infrequently to prevent woody plants from establishing. Within the "low-mow" management category, there exists flexibility for tailoring management to a particular park or zone.
- 3 **Wildflower Meadow**
In locations with low use but high visibility, such as near park entrances, the Low-Mow Meadow treatment can be modified by the addition of significant native wildflower planting efforts. This will create a higher level of biodiversity and visual interest than simple mowing reduction.



ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

NATURALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lawn Reduction

The majority of Chestnut Ridge Park is forested, and much of this is high quality native woodland. Natural regeneration areas are recommended in small pockets within the park, for example where structures have been removed, or for areas once active but now infrequently used as activity types have changed over time.

In some locations, particularly near more active areas, low mow meadow is recommended as a way of increasing habitat value without sacrificing open views or flexibility for future changes of use.

Tree Planting

The extensive natural forest area is one of the main attractions of Chestnut Ridge Park. Planting young native trees in select areas can begin a process of diversifying and adding resilience to this valuable forest area.

Forest Floor Restoration

On the east side of Chestnut Ridge Park, certain areas of forest floor are suffering from severe soil erosion, soil compaction, and loss of understory vegetation due to heavy foot traffic. Redirecting activities away from steep or otherwise sensitive areas will allow a process of restoring the high quality habitat that has been lost to begin. The addition of signage such as "Restoration in progress" can aid in this effort.

Water Quality Protection

In some locations, streams that run through Chestnut Ridge Park are impacted by erosion. This is most noticeable at road crossings, and along stream banks in the southwest part of the park. Strategic use of erosion control measures such as check dams and streambank stabilization can help protect the health of these waterways.

Invasive Species Management

Aggressive non-native plants are currently having a relatively low impact at Chestnut Ridge, compared with many public parks. It is important to keep monitoring for changes so that the current level of quality can be protected.

Legend:

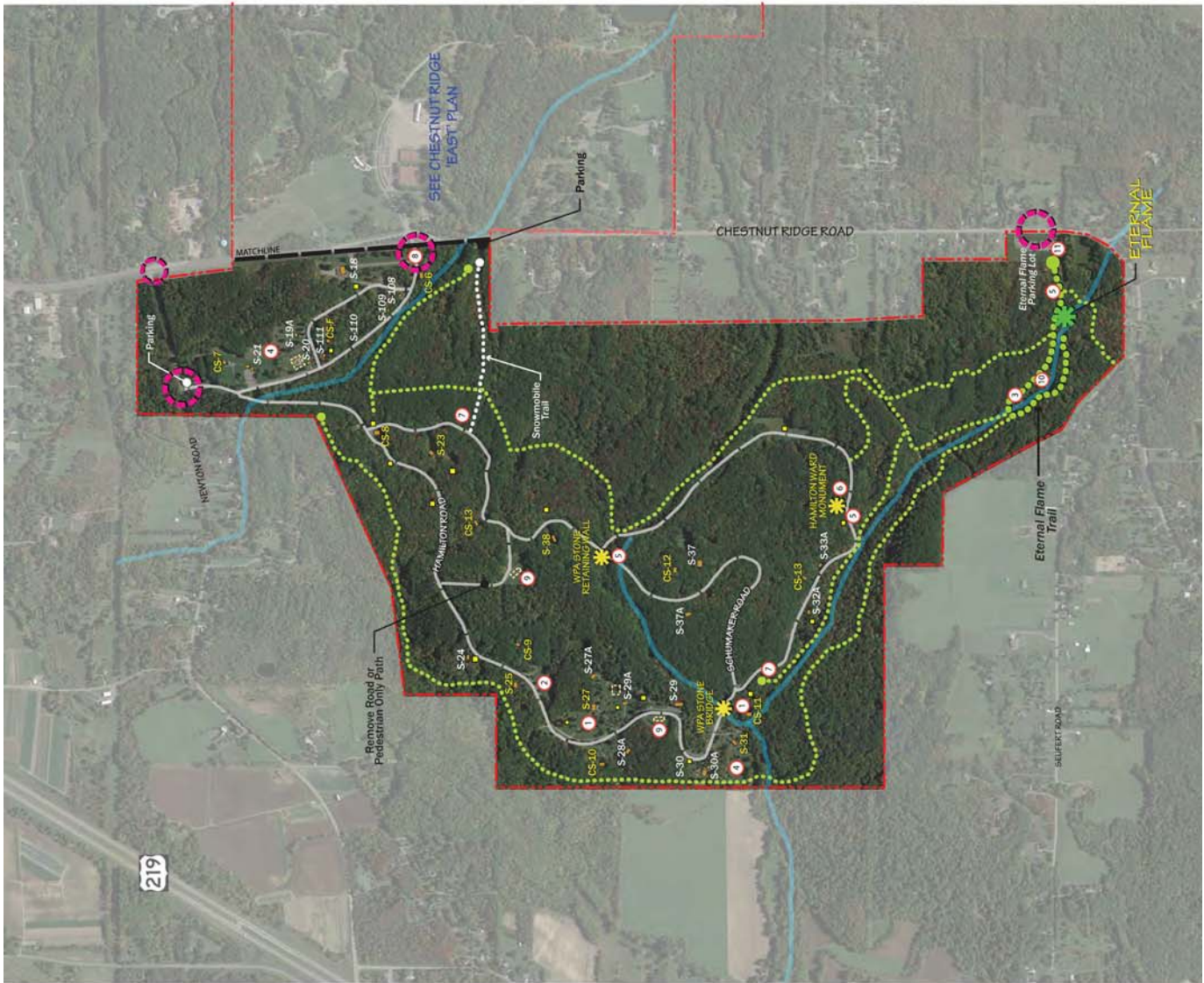
---	Park Boundary
---	Existing Trail
1	Natural Regeneration Area
2	Low-Mow Area
3	Wildflower Meadow Area
4	Nature Trail

MASTER PLAN CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK (WEST)

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Specific Action Items - Ex. (A-1)

- (C) 1.0-1.9, 3.0-15.0/P-4.0-9.0) Preserve and enhance original Heritage Areas, particularly the area around the Casino building. Restore historic stone structures, picnic shelters, comfort stations, pump houses and original park buildings;
- (A) 17.0) Allow West section of park to become more natural and passive in use. Refrain from adding new playgrounds. Remove old backstops from ball fields not in use. Allow passive mowed areas to naturalize into meadows/natural reserve areas.
- (A) 13.0) Prioritize the safety and maintenance of the main trail to the Eternal Flame. Stabilize trails and prevent erosion issues. Provide proper warnings and signage alerting users of the difficulties of the trail. Repair steps and provide possible railings in areas where applicable.
- (A) 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-recreational use areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures. (2003 Master Plan)
- (C) 2.0-2.6) Provide interpretive signage throughout the park which can display historic images and content of significant park assets like the Eternal Flame Falls, Hamilton Ward site, WPA structures, etc.
- (P) 3.0) Restore Hamilton Ward Memorial: Replace missing stones, repair loose stonework, and clean/repoint stonework. Provide wayfinding signage to find/highlight the historic site.
- (C) Continue progress with expansion, enhancements, and connectivity among park trails. Provide kiosks with trail maps and rules at select trailhead locations.
- (C) 19.0) Need better transition/connection from east section of park to west section. Provide additional signage and/or painted crosswalks at the on/off ramps to route 277.
- (A) 16.0) Relocate smaller (3 piece) playground components out of West section of park. Playground features take away from the Heritage and natural scenic value of the park.
- (P) 11.0) Design and construct alternative methods and viewing points to see the waterfall and the Eternal Flame. Provide a safe route which may reduce possible risk to park users wishing to see the natural feature.



ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

- (C) 18.0) Divert runoff from primary park trails wherever possible; especially at the base of the Eternal Flame trail where the trail starts at the parking lot. Install planting areas or rain gardens as a means of capturing runoff from parking area.
- MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:
 - (A) 4.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (A) 8.0-8.10) Promote natural and cultural heritage interpretation and enjoyment throughout the park through an expanded trail system and park signage; provide new wayfinding system to bring awareness to existing trails and hidden park features.
 - (A) 6.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.
 - (A) 14.0) Remove all old, dilapidated wooden picnic tables throughout the park. Dispose of rotten and decayed tables, and repair all those that can be salvaged.
 - (A) 6.2) Remove the numerous old metal playground structures and equipment that dot the landscape throughout the park.
 - Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology. Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas; Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park.

Legend:

Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations

WPA Park Heritage Feature/Destination

Natural Features

WPA Pump Shelters/Misc. Features

Existing Park Trails

Park Boundary

Playground

CS Comfort Station - (H) (S-4) WPA Em. Structure S-4 Shelter - (H) (S-4) WPA Em. Structure WS - Warning Shelter

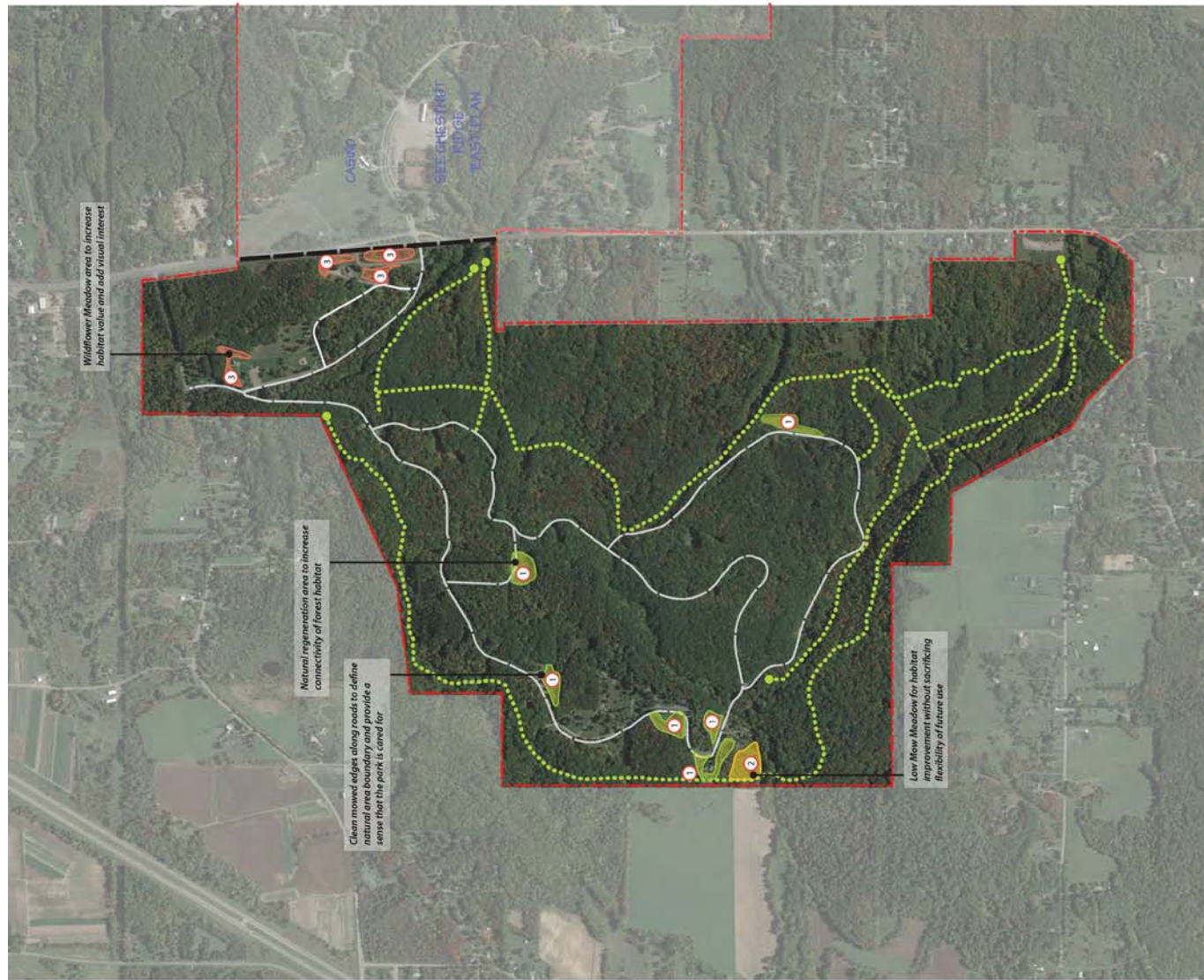
NATURALIZATION PLAN CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK (WEST)

TOTAL PARK MOWING REDUCTION:

Natural Regeneration: 8.5 acres
Low-Mow Meadow: 17.5 acres
Wildflower Meadow: 8 acres
Total: ~34 acres

TREATMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

- 1 **Natural Regeneration**
In these areas, which are currently mowed lawn, natural forests will be allowed to develop. In most cases, suggested natural regeneration areas are adjacent to existing forest, and serve to expand continuous forest habitat within the parks. Mowing will cease altogether, and woody plant removal will be limited to non-native species. Young native trees of species found in neighboring forest can be planted to speed natural reforestation, and native meadow grass and wildflower seeds can be planted to replace lawn until the tree canopy matures.
- 2 **Low-Mow**
These are areas that may potentially see different use in the future, and are not intended to be reforested. They would be mowed infrequently to prevent woody plants from establishing. Within the "low-mow" management category, there exists flexibility for tailoring management to a particular park or zone.
- 3 **Wildflower Meadow**
In locations with low use but high visibility, such as near park entrances, the Low-Mow Meadow treatment can be modified by the addition of significant native wildflower planting efforts. This will create a higher level of biodiversity and visual interest than simple mowing reduction.



ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

NATURALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lawn Reduction

The majority of Chestnut Ridge Park is forested, and much of this is high quality native woodland. Natural regeneration areas are recommended in small pockets within the park, for example where structures have been removed, or for areas once active but now infrequently used as activity types have changed over time.

In some locations, particularly near more active areas, Low Mow or Wildflower Meadow is recommended as a way of increasing habitat value without sacrificing open views or flexibility for future changes of use.

Tree Planting

The extensive natural forest area is one of the main attractions of Chestnut Ridge Park. Planting young native trees in select areas can begin a process of diversifying and adding resilience to this valuable forest area.

Water Quality Protection

In some locations, streams that run through Chestnut Ridge Park are impacted by erosion. This is most noticeable at road crossings, and along stream banks in the southwest part of the park. Strategic use of erosion control measures such as check dams and streambank stabilization can help protect the health of these waterways.

Invasive Species Management

Aggressive non-native plants are currently having a relatively low impact at Chestnut Ridge, compared with many public parks. It is important to keep monitoring for changes so that the current level of quality can be protected.



MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Key - (Project Type: Project Number)

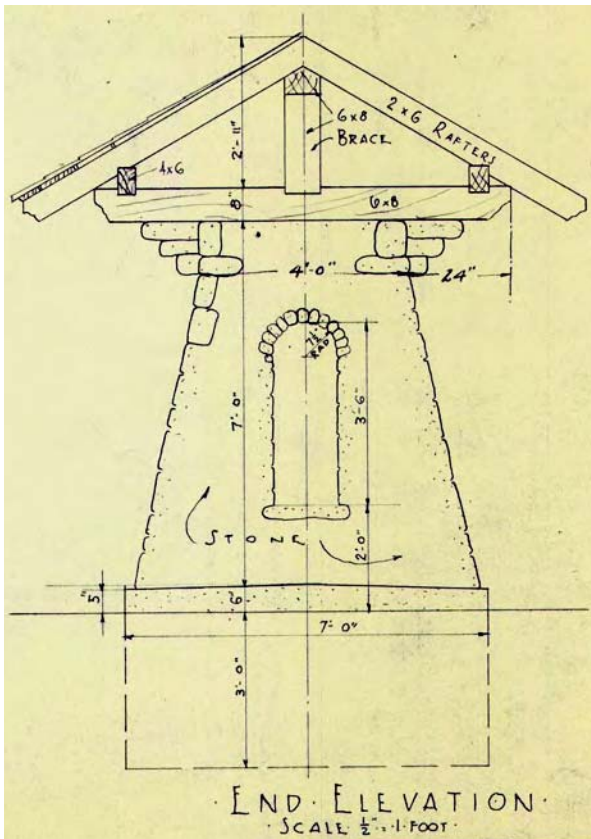
A - Action Item: Completed at low to no cost by Parks Staff
 P - Assistance or completion of project by potential partner/user group
 C - Capital project

Historic Structures/WPA/Other Structures:

- **(C: 1.0-1.9, 3.0-15.0/ P: 4.0-9.0)** Preserve and enhance original Heritage Areas, particularly the area around the Casino building. Restore historic stone structures, picnic shelters, comfort stations, pump houses and original park buildings;
 - Restore old stone picnic shelters and structures before building new picnic shelters and structures. (Consider the heritage “value” of these old park features for future tourism and visitor appreciation). Consider the entire park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. (2003 Master Plan)
 - Repoint/clean stonework where needed, replace missing stones, replace or repair roofs, make improvements to concrete/asphalt floors, etc.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: In-House/ Chestnut Ridge Conservancy/PBN



Historic WPA pump shelter



Original construction drawing of a typical parks pump shelter on the left; on the right is an existing pump shelter





Hamilton Ward Memorial site



Eternal Flame



WPA Shelter #25

- **(C: 2.0-2.6) Provide interpretive signage throughout the park which can display historic images and content of significant park assets like the Eternal Flame Falls, Hamilton Ward site, WPA structures, etc.**
 - Consider restoring and utilizing the numerous small stone pump shelters throughout the park as new interpretive signage and informational kiosks that would tie into the heritage park setting.
 - Provide an interpretive “story-line” for the Park’s geological and post-settlement history, i.e. How and when the ravines and rock formations were formed?
 - How did the park get its name? When was the Village and Town first Settled?
 - What’s the history behind the Eternal Flame? What were some significant historic happenings in the area, or in the park?
 - When were the WPA stone structures built?; What is the history behind the Round Barn site?; etc.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **(P: 3.0) Restore Hamilton Ward Memorial;** Replace missing stones, repair loose stonework, and clean/repoint stonework.
 - Provide wayfinding signage to find/highlight the historic site.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: PBN/ In-House
- **(P: 2.0) Prevent further deterioration of Gateway pillars at Newton Road entrance:** Replace missing stones, repair loose stonework and clean and repoint stonework. Improve entry with additional landscape treatment, etc.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: PBN/In-House
- **(C: 20.0) Restore a single hand pump to be a fully functional water source,** as a potential historic element to show respect to the history of the park and gives the youth a chance to operate a working pump.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: PBN/ In-House

- **Investigate additional uses for Casino which may generate additional revenue;**
 - Potential Visitor Information Center for Overall Erie County Park System. This could house information for all of the parks in the County. In addition, the Casino could be the “headquarters” and central administrative “clearinghouse” for picnic shelter and facility rentals/ reservations for all of the parks.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: Chestnut Ridge Conservancy**
- **(P: 10.0) Restoration of ‘100 steps’ on east side of park would produce a new destination spot at Chestnut Ridge.**
 - With sufficient staff and funds consider potential trails and connections at base of steps to allow for future exploration of the park and its scenic assets.
 - Continue to prevent access to stairs in the short term. Preserve steps for future long-term restoration effort.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: Significant investment from Chestnut Ridge Conservancy and/or other resources/grants**
- **(A: 1.0) Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**

Maintenance/Safety:

- **(A: 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-recreational use areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Consider a large portion of the bottom of the sled hill to become a low-mow area, with a nature trail connecting park users with various scenic locations of the park.
 - Establish select zones of ‘no-mow’ naturalized areas where excess lawn is being mowed with potential wildflowers and meadows.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House**



Large mowed area in front of the Casino



Missing stones and damage observed at the ‘100 steps’



- **(A: 13.0) Prioritize the safety and maintenance of the main trail to the Eternal Flame.**
 - Stabilize trails and prevent erosion issues;
 - Remove fallen limbs and trees that increase risk of tripping hazards and falls for trail users trying to see the Flame.
 - Provide proper warnings and signage alerting users of the difficulties of the trail. Additional warnings and information may be needed (i.e. proper footwear, dangerous for young children, etc.)
 - Repair steps and provide possible railings (new railings to be sensitive to park aesthetics) in areas where safety and accessibility is a concern. Further studies needed to continue to properly maintain safety of the trail.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House**

- **(C: 18.0) Divert runoff from primary park trails wherever possible; especially at the base of the Eternal Flame trail where the trail starts at the parking lot.**
 - Install planting areas or rain gardens as a means of capturing runoff from parking area.
 - Construction of drainage swales may also be appropriate to divert water from trails.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House**



Water was pooling into the trail from the Eternal Flame parking lot



A view into the snowy woods near the Eternal Flame Trail



Eternal Flame waterfall



Fallen limbs in several cases nearly prevent people from getting to the Eternal Flame

- **(P: 11.0) Design and construct alternative methods and viewing points to see the waterfall and the Eternal Flame.** Provide a safe route which may reduce possible risk to park users wishing to see the natural feature.
 - Provide railings directly north of the Eternal Flame falls off the trail as it meanders towards the edge of the ravine. This can add a layer of safety for those trying to see the natural attraction from the trail itself.
 - Provide new steps down areas of the ravine where it is not as steep, to bring people to a possible overlook area over the creek.
 - This can be a concept that may be applied to other parks with similar situations, like Emery Park with waterfalls that are difficult to access.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: Chestnut Ridge Conservancy/Grants**

- **Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - New renovations can present opportunities to address standards in ADA accessibility. These can include for example, designing sports fields/courts for greater accessibility and seating, improved accessibility/updated surfaces to children play areas, and potential paving of new trails for people with mixed abilities.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(C: 17.0) “Soften” the appearance of the existing large parking area between the casino and tennis courts by providing additional landscape treatments and trees to this important visual setting.**
 - Provide appropriate buffers and screening to the maintenance yard, such as landscaped berms and rain gardens. Screening the maintenance area creates a better sense of place upon arrival into the Casino/park area
 - Better organize and define the parking lot with painted spaces and driving lanes, landscaped islands, etc.
 - Prioritize methods of green infrastructure including rain gardens and other bio-retention strategies throughout the large lot. Better strategies of stormwater management will prevent contaminants and pollutants entering nearby streams/ravines.
 - Main lot at Chestnut Ridge is the priority, but other larger parking areas may also be suitable for possible rain gardens and planting medians.
 - Engage consultant to design improvements and engage contractor to construct improvements
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**



Renovated ADA accessible comfort station - As improvements to other structures continue, ADA accessibility should be considered



Large parking area is in need of additional landscape treatment



Large parking area is in need of additional landscape treatment



Large parking area is in need of additional landscape treatment

- **(A: 14.0)** Continue to remove all old wooden picnic tables throughout the park. Dispose of rotten and decayed tables, and repair all those that can be salvaged. (2003 Master Plan)
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House

Connectivity/Signage:

- **(A: 7.0-7.4)** Establish Minor Gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the park at the following locations:
 - Newton Road entrance
 - Eternal Flame Falls parking lot
 - Boy Scout Trail parking lot
 - South entrance to east side of park
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Highway
- **(A: 8.0-8.10)** Promote natural and cultural heritage interpretation and enjoyment throughout the park through an expanded trail system and park signage; provide new wayfinding system to bring awareness to existing trails and hidden park features, e.g. the 100 stone steps, stone monument area, impressive ravines, waterfalls, Commissioner's Pond, etc.
 - Provide ADA access to these important and scenic vista locations.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- Continue progress with expansion, enhancements, and connectivity among park trails.
 - Provide kiosks with trail maps and rules at select trailhead locations (develop similar models to the one recently installed at the Eternal Flame Trailhead)
 - Provide interpretive signage along the trails highlighting flora, fauna, and wildlife.
 - Design and provide distinct trail markers for better park orientation.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Forestry



Orienteering Trail



Commissioner's Cabin and pond

- **(C: 19.0)** Improve transition/connection from east section of park to west section. Provide additional signage and/or painted crosswalks at the on/off ramps to route 277.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: NYSDOT/In-House

Recreation:

- **(A: 6.1) Continue to improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.**
 - Provide or replenish fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.
 - Replace swings/play equipment as needed due to wear and tear.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(P: 1.0) Potential relocation of some Disc golf holes to less environmentally sensitive areas to prevent continuous damage to natural areas and wildlife.**
 - Shift some holes away from wooded/forest areas into existing mowed lawn areas. Disc golf at Ellicott Creek Park and Como Lake Park is played across their mowed lawn areas, and result in far less damage to the landscape. Work with Niagara Region Disc Golf to redesign the course into less environmentally sensitive areas. Provide alternate hole locations to reduce compaction.
 - Further studies and analysis is needed.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: Niagara Region Disc Golf**



Playground near the Martin Lodge



Heavy usage of the Disc Golf Course is eroding away the forest understory

- **Enhance and promote fishing platform at Commissioner's Pond.**
 - Provide park rules sign at pond enforcing 'catch and release only', no boats, no ice fishing, etc.
 - Fish species include; largemouth bass, sunfish, and yellow perch
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(A: 6.2) Remove the numerous old metal playground structures and equipment that dot the landscape throughout the park. These pieces of equipment are outdated, most are unsightly, and many do not meet any current playground safety requirements.**
 - Consideration should be given to several "legacy" playground pieces, such as the shoe slide. This equipment appeared to be in good condition and could be maintained in the park as a feature or considered artwork, without a fall surface which would encourage its use as a play event.
 - Consider earthtone colors for playground equipment in the Heritage park setting rather than bright, primary colors.
 - Reuse old playground equipment by reaching out to local artists and craftsmen. The metal parts could be used as installation pieces located throughout the park. (2003 Master Plan)
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **Promote and expand four seasons use of the park, including winter use – e.g. tobogganing, sledding, cross-country skiing, weekend sleigh rides.**
 - Investigate opportunities for flooding area for ice-skating.
 - Current snowmobile trails should be properly posted to avoid future multi-use conflicts. (2003 Master Plan)
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(P: 12.0) Repurpose or restore baseball diamond based on usage and partnership opportunities.** Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara to explore tournament and recreation prospects.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: Visit Buffalo Niagara/Chestnut Ridge Conservancy**
- **(A: 16.0) Relocate smaller (3 piece) playground components out of West section of park.** Playground features take away from the Heritage and natural scenic value of the park.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**



Toboggan chutes



One of the many old non-compliant metal playground pieces of equipment scattered throughout the park



Old non-compliant swingset with missing swings in the middle of the woods



Baseball diamond on the east side of the park



Playground on the west side of the park is in a somewhat random location, this area should be low-mow/no-mow (Relocate playground to active area)



Large wooded area behind Shelter #2

Environment:

- **(A: 4.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas.**
 - Remove dead, dying or diseased trees.
 - Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
 - Provide new tree plantings throughout the park, particularly along the roadway edges.
 - Develop a multi-pronged approach to tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings.
 - Develop annual tree planting program to restore tree canopy and improve natural image of the park.
 - Apply for funding from NYSDEC for example for purchase of trees and materials and for the tree inventory.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNY Prism/ECSWD/Forestry**
- **(P: 13.0) Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park.**
 - Address and remove threatening invasive species.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNY Prism/ECSWD**
- **(P: 14.0) Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology.**
 - Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas;
 - Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;
 - Prioritize plantings for bird and butterfly habitats;
 - Designate potential native plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements

- while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats;
 - The County should encourage the development of outdoor classrooms through partnerships with local schools. Outdoor classrooms can be living laboratories for local children to immerse themselves in nature and our local ecosystem.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: NYSDEC/Cornell Cooperative Extension/ECSWD/In-House
- **(A: 17.0) Allow West section of park to become more 'natural' and passive in use.**
 - Refrain from adding new playgrounds.
 - Remove old backstops from ball fields not in use.
 - Allow passive mowed areas to naturalize into meadows/natural reserve areas.
 - Remaining picnic shelters on west side of park should be evaluated in terms of usage. Shelters should be removed/or repurposed if significant repairs are needed or deemed unsafe. If they are historic or considered WPA, shelters should be preserved and repaired.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House



Shelter #117



WPA era pump shelter surrounded by low-mow area



View down the Creek which flows along the Orienteering Trail, down through the Eternal Flame

CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	2.0	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	3.1	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Low Mow Zones” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	3.3	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Provide necessary signage along the “Low Mow Zones” to inform the public the reasons behind the practice and also to identify the areas to park personnel.	High	1-2 Years	In-House, Highway
A	4.1	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. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Prune and/or remove trees if determined to present an increased risk to park patrons and employees.	High	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
A	6.1	Continue to improve playground safety	Provide or replenish engineered fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.	High	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	11.0	Improve safety on pedestrian bridge near Commissioners Cabin	Review railing condition to determine if they can be repaired or require replacement	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	13.0	Prioritize the safety and maintenance of the main trail to the Eternal Flame. Stabilize trails and prevent erosion issues; Remove fallen limbs and trees that increase risk of tripping hazards and falls for trail users trying to see the Flame. Provide proper warnings and signage alerting users of the difficulties of the trail. Additional warnings and information may be needed (i.e. proper footwear, dangerous for young children, etc.) Repair steps and provide possible railings in areas where safety and accessibility is a concern.	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements and repairs to trail during a routine basis	High	Ongoing	In-House
C	1.2	Shelter #7 - Posts have rot, replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	High	1-2 Years	\$10,000

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



CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	1.9	Shelter #12 - Potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	High	1-2 Years	\$22,000
P	1.0	Reconfigure the disc golf route to avoid environmentally sensitive areas.	Coordinate with Niagara Region Disc Golf regarding a new course layout. Accommodate alternative hole positions to reduce compaction / erosion from repetitive foot traffic.	High	1-2 Years	\$15,200
P	13.0	Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park. Address and remove threatening invasive species.	Coordinate with WNY Prism, ECSWD, and others.	High	Ongoing	Partner
P	14.0	Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas; Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;	Designate potential native pollinator plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/ bird habitats.	High	Ongoing	Partner
A	4.2	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.	Develop an annual tree planting program.	Medium	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	5.0	Improve aesthetics along east entrance driveway, between Casino and parking lot through additional tree plantings.	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements	Medium	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
A	7.0	Establish Minor Gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the park at the following locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.1	Newton Road entrance	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.2	Eternal Flame Falls parking lot	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.3	Boy Scout Trail parking lot	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway

CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	7.4	South entrance to east side of park	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	8.0	Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.1	Boy Scout Trail, only maps	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.10	XC Ski Outer Loop, maps and trail markers	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.2	Eternal Flame Falls Trail, only maps	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.3	Orienteering Trail, only maps	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.4	Reservoir Trail, maps and trail markers	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.5	Seufert Trail, maps and trail markers	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.6	Snowmobile Trail, maps and trail markers	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.7	Ward Hill Trail, only maps	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House

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



CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	8.8	Ward Hill Walkway, maps	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.9	XC Ski Inner Loop, maps and trail markers	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	12.0	Ensure that shelters, comfort stations and buildings are identifiable	Coordination between Parks and Highways to develop and produce the sign panels.	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	14.0	Continue to remove all old wooden picnic tables throughout the park. Dispose of rotten and decayed tables, and repair all those that can be salvaged.	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements	Medium	Ongoing	In-House
A	17.0	Allow West section of park to become more 'natural' and passive in use.	Educate parks staff on procedures and improvements	Medium	Ongoing	In-House
C	1.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following picnic shelters:	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	X
C	1.1	Shelter #4 - Replace roof and repair gable ends	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	1.3	Shelter #14 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	1.4	Shelter #19A - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	1.5	Shelter #20 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	1.6	Shelter #24 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	1.7	Shelter #33A - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	1.8	Shelter #37 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Shelter #13. Replace roof.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	4.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Comfort Station #7. Roof repairs required	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000

CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	5.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Comfort Station #12. Replace roof and fascia boards, repair broken windows.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$12,500
C	16.0	Improve safety and accessibility on pedestrian bridge near Shelter #31. Construct railings and approach guiderails, provide a level transition to bridge approach. Potentially replace entire bridge with accessible structure.	Engage consultant to design improvements and engage contractor to construct improvements	Medium	3-5 Years	\$30,000
C	18.0	Divert runoff from primary park trails wherever possible; especially at the base of the Eternal Flame trail where the trail starts at the parking lot. Install planting areas or rain gardens as a means of capturing runoff from parking area.	Engage consultant to design improvements and engage contractor to construct or have parks staff to implement improvements	Medium	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
P	2.0	Prevent further deterioration of Gateway pillars at Newton Road entrance. Replace missing stones, repair loose stonework and clean and repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Medium	6-10 Years	\$6,000
P	11.0	Design and construct alternative methods and viewing points to see the waterfall and the Eternal Flame. Provide a safe route which may reduce possible risk to park users wishing to see the natural feature.	Significant investment from Chestnut Ridge Conservancy and/or other grants/resources, increased staff would be needed.	Medium	6-10 Years	\$200,000
A	1.0	Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places	Coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer assigned to Erie County to complete the required nomination forms and submit to a State review board.	Low	Ongoing	In-House
A	3.2	Establish "Low Mow Zones" to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Begin an educational program, through the use of the County's website, to the general public which provides information regarding the "Low Mow Zone" program	Low	3-5 Years	In-House
A	6.2	Improve playground safety	Remove playground equipment that is not compliant with current regulations, with the exception of "legacy" pieces of equipment	Low	Ongoing	In-House

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



CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	9.0	Reduce damage to turf areas and reduce erosion by providing a resilient surface, such as crushed stone or millings at each shelter location.	Utilize parks staff to perform repairs	Low	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	16.0	Relocate smaller (3 piece) playground components out of West section of park.	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements	Low	3-5 Years	In-House
C	2.0	Provide interpretive signage in the park:	Coordinate with historical society to develop copy and obtain images for the interpretive content.	Low	Ongoing	In-House
C	2.1	Geological history	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.2	Eternal Flame Falls	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.3	Hamilton Ward	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.4	Round Barn Site	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.5	100 Stone Steps	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.6	History of WPA structures	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	6.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Old Comfort Station "L" (Note this comfort station is located near shelter #33A, as there are two comfort stations numbered with 13). Replace roof and fascia boards, repair broken windows and doors.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$12,500

CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	7.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #22, south of Shelter #1A, replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	8.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #14, east of MacKinnon Lodge, replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	9.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #64, south of Shelter #27, replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	10.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #58, near Ward Hill Trailhead, replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	11.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #55, near Hamilton Ward memorial, replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	12.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #51, east of Shelter #37, replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	13.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #44, east of Shelter #38, replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	14.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era stone shed near fishing pier parking lot, replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	15.0	Prevent deterioration of Comfort Station #2. Clean, re-point and paint exterior CMU walls.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$7,500
C	17.0	Provide adequate visual landscape screening at the maintenance facility and storage yard. Remove a portion of pavement and construct a planted berm or rain garden, including evergreens, native trees and shrubs.	Engage consultant to design improvements and engage contractor to construct improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,500
C	19.0	Improve transition/connection from east section of park to west section. Provide additional signage and/or painted crosswalks at the on/off ramps to route 277.	Engage consultant to design improvements and engage contractor to construct or have parks staff to implement improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000

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



CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	20.0	Restore a single pump shelter to be a fully functional water source, as a potential park destination and to show respect to the history of the park.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	3-5 Years	Additional Studies Needed
P	3.0	Restore the Hamilton Ward memorial. Replace missing stones, repair loose stonework and clean and repoint stonework	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	4.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era incinerator west of Shelter #24. Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$12,500
P	5.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Comfort Station #1. Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	6.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Comfort Station #5. Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$9,000
P	7.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Comfort Station #11. Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$9,000
P	8.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Comfort Station #12. Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$9,000
P	9.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Old Comfort Station "L" (Note this comfort station is located near shelter #33A, as there are two comfort stations numbered with 13). Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$25,000
P	10.0	Restoration of '100 steps' on east side of park	Significant investment from Chestnut Ridge Conservancy and/or other grants/resources, increased staff would be needed.	Low	6-10 Years	Partner
P	12.0	Repurpose or restore baseball diamond based on usage and partnership opportunities	Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara	Low	3-5 Years	P.O.B.



SCHEMATIC PLAN

CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK - MAIN PARKING LOT

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE



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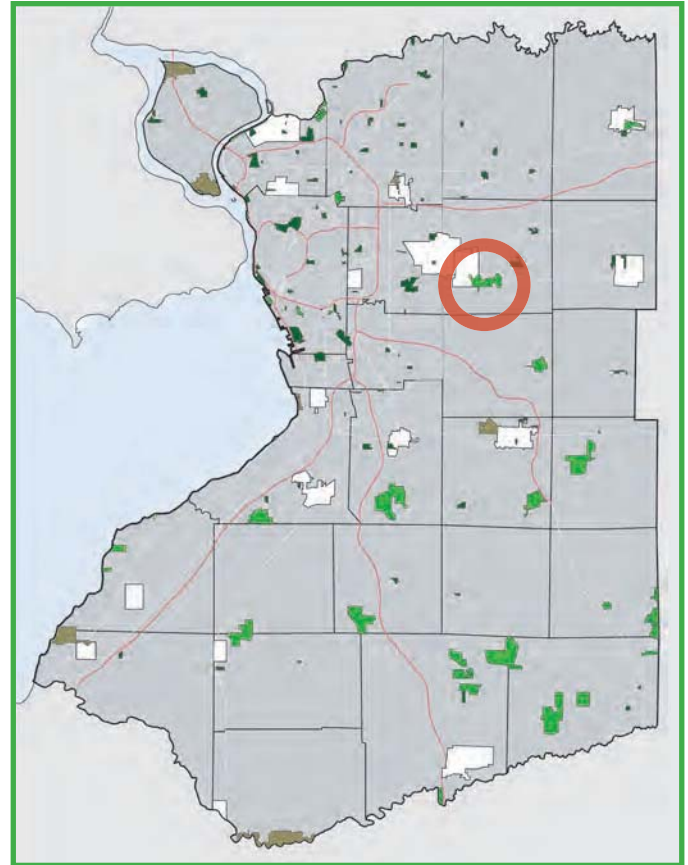
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COMO LAKE PARK

DESCRIPTION

Como Lake Park is a 524-acre park facility located in both the Village and Town of Lancaster, approximately 14 miles east of downtown Buffalo. The park was among the first four parks acquired by the County in 1926, and lies along the banks of Cayuga Creek. The park includes a dam and lake at its western end, with natural islands, extensive picnic grounds, play fields and courts, skating rink, sledding hill and nature trails. This Heritage park includes numerous old stone park structures that continue to enjoy heavy use by both local residents and those coming out from the urban areas to enjoy a slice of nature. In contrast to much of the manicured older park areas and picnic groves, the eastern-most section of Como Lake Park (east of Bowen Road) is an undeveloped natural zone straddling Cayuga Creek.

The park in recent years has continued to see increased popularity for its location among dense residential areas. The park has added an 18-hole Disc golf course (2007) and a multi-generational fitness station, diversifying its attractions and unique role within the regional park context.



Park Location Map: Como Lake Park is located in both the Town and Village of Lancaster with several entrances within the community



Como Lake

PARK SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

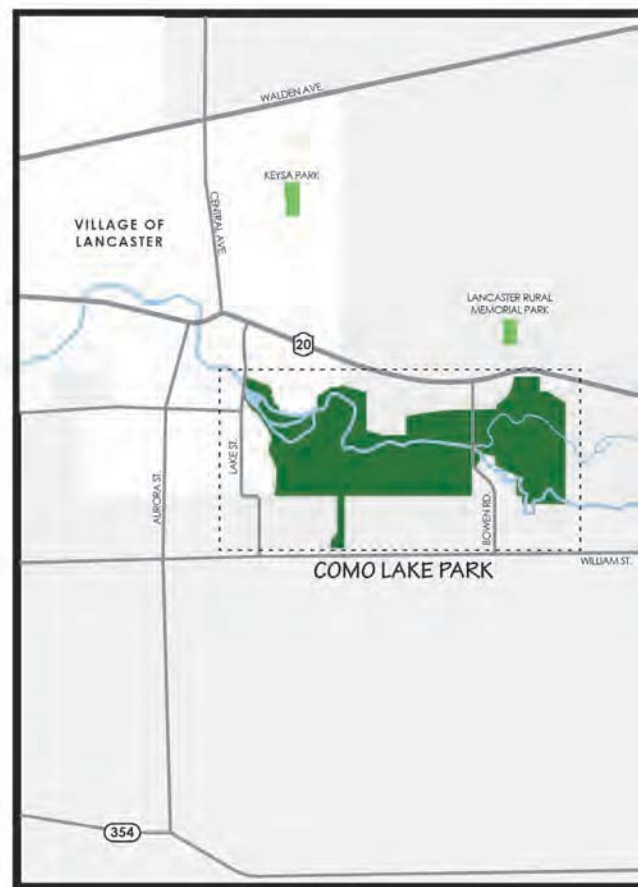
- **Preserve and enhance Heritage areas and special park features**, including; Repoint/clean stonework where needed, replace missing stones, replace or repair roofs, make improvements to concrete/asphalt floors, etc. to all historic structures and facilities.
- **Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting**: Create and provide meadows and wildflower areas in high visibility areas to produce a more natural park landscape.
- **Improve pedestrian safety and provide improvements/upgrades to pedestrian bridges crossings onto the islands**. Improve bridges to be ADA compliant if possible and repair missing/broken rails.

PARK AND AREA HISTORY

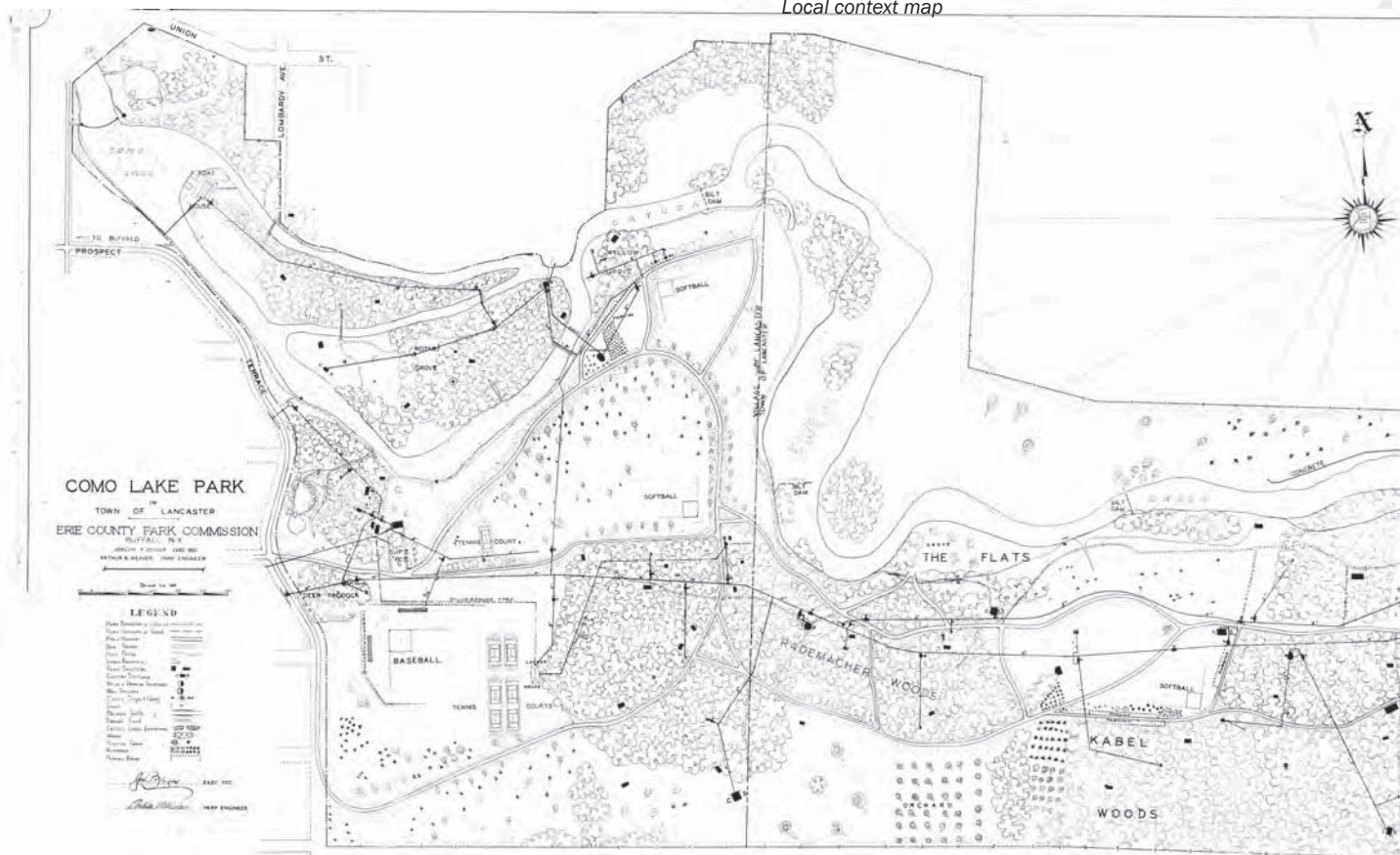
Como Lake Park was originally developed as a Village of Lancaster Municipal Park beginning in 1923. The original acquisition totaled 120 acres, with later acquisitions adding an additional 404 acres. The Park was originally developed as a water-oriented park to serve the densely populated area along Broadway from Buffalo to the Villages of Depew and Lancaster. In fact, boating was once a popular activity in the lake and around the islands. Archived plans show that a magnificent “Bath House” facility was designed and proposed to be built on one of the islands, but apparently never came to fruition. Original activities also included a small zoo. WPA crews handled much of the physical development of the park. WPA crews built many structures and features of the park which still stand today including numerous picnic shelters and the old stone Lighthouse which overlooks the dam.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Como Lake Park is a well-known and integral part of the historic Village of Lancaster. The park sits on the southeast side of the Village, and extends westerly along the Cayuga Creek corridor. Lake Avenue forms the park’s western edge, while Bowen Road bisects the park and forms the boundary between the developed older section from the undeveloped section of the park at the eastern end. Development patterns



Local context map



1940s master plan of the park



have shifted as new subdivisions are constructed to the south of the park off of William Street. Much of the area to the east of the park is still rural in nature, but Como Park remains one of the most heavily used parks in the system.

RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

This large multi-purpose heritage park once provided most all recreational amenities for the Town and Village of Lancaster, as well as the Village of Depew. It also once served as a magnet for Buffalo residents, who could easily reach the park via public transportation. More recently, Lancaster has become one of Western New York's fastest growing suburban communities, spreading development into eastern areas beyond the Park, where farms once dominated the landscape. This recent surge in population growth has also come with the demand for expanded recreational facilities. The Town and Village have looked to expand their recreational offerings to provide many new opportunities to the area residents, and thus lessened the need for Como Park to provide large fields for organized sports.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Como Lake park consists of low-lying terrain, characterized by moisture-loving woodland communities and floodplain wetlands. Much of the park has traditionally been kept as mowed lawns, but Parks staff have already begun to reduce the area mowed, in an effort to increase habitat value and redirect resources toward other maintenance needs. There is significant acreage remaining that could be converted to regenerated forest or wildflower meadows.

Cayuga Creek is both a major asset and an area of concern in Como Lake Park. The creek provides wildlife habitat and interest for park users, but is subject to severe seasonal flooding and "flashiness," or rapidly fluctuating stream flow. Resulting rapid bank erosion reduces habitat value, visitor safety, and enjoyment. These conditions also contribute to rapid sedimentation of the man-made lake at the northwest corner of the park. The lake must be dredged periodically to prevent it from filling in entirely. While it is not under consideration at this time, in the long term interest may develop in removing the dam in order to improve stream habitat connectivity and provide a new type of recreational opportunity.

Invasive plant species are a serious concern within the park, particularly along parts of the stream bank. Large areas of Japanese Knotweed are particularly prominent along parts of the islands, in areas that are well used by visitors.

Because Ash species are more common in low-lying areas like Como Lake Park, the property will likely be more significantly impacted by the Emerald Ash Borer than some other parks in the system. This means large changes will come to the forested parts of the park in the coming years. Beginning to plant new

native trees now can reduce the time until a new generation of canopy trees can take over from those that will be lost.

RECENT PARKS DEPARTMENT PROJECTS / IMPROVEMENTS

The 2012-2017 Capital Improvements within Como Lake Park totaled \$902,711. Recent projects included:

- Comfort Station D – Replaced roof and fascia boards
- Comfort Station E – New glass block installed, ceiling replacement, and interior painting
- Shelter #5 – Replaced roof
- Shelter #9 – Repaired support posts, constructed new plywood ceiling
- Shelter #13 – Replaced roof and fascia boards
- Shelter #14 – New parking area
- Shelter #17 – Replaced roof and fascia boards
- Shelter #18 – Replaced roof and fascia boards
- Shelter #19 – Replaced roof and fascia boards
- Shelter #29 – New shelter constructed
- Shelter #32 – Replaced roof and fascia boards
- Shelter #33 – Replaced roof and fascia boards
- Shelter #39 – Replaced roof
- Shelter #49 – New parking area
- Shelter #50 – New parking area
- Shelter #56 – Replaced roof
- Shelter #58 – Replaced roof, concrete floor and constructed new parking area



Old photograph of one of the pedestrian bridges on the islands

- New guardrail installed along main park road curve.
- Installed new multi-generational exercise recreation area.
- Installed new steel chain link fence on the slope of the sledding hill to separate children sledding from those walking back up to the top of the hill, installed lights.
- Alternative hold locations installed for Disc Golf holes (2018).
- Sealed and striped tennis courts, added pickle ball striping (2018).
- Sealed and striped basketball courts (2018).

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- The park is showing deterioration in its older, historic stone structures.
- The interior of the park has many unattractive and out of character large paved areas, indicating an era of more heavy use of certain facilities.
- Vehicular circulation and park signage is very confusing.
- Health of Como Lake/the Dam continues to be an issue. Build-up of silt and debris is producing more islands, thus reducing the health and aesthetic of the lake.
- There is a lack of directional and interpretive signage highlighting the wonderful park structures and natural features.
- Most of the open space in the park is mowed, including areas that are beyond the recreational use areas.
- There is an apparent underutilization of some of the park facilities.
- There is a lack of connection/linkage to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Some play structures are starting to become outdated, most are from the late 90's/early 2000's.
- Park maps on website are outdated and do not show some amenities.
- Many shelters are showing general wear in their roofing and interior columns/face boards. Some shelters appear to be leaning.
- Cayuga Creek is rapidly eroding the streambank in certain areas of the park resulting in loss of land, and trees that are falling into the water.
- Lack of definition and organization of parking areas, especially the lot south of the Casino.



Large asphalt parking lot in front of the skating area



The shoreline continues to suffer from erosion



Many WPA shelters are in need of repairs and preservation



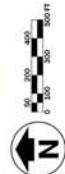
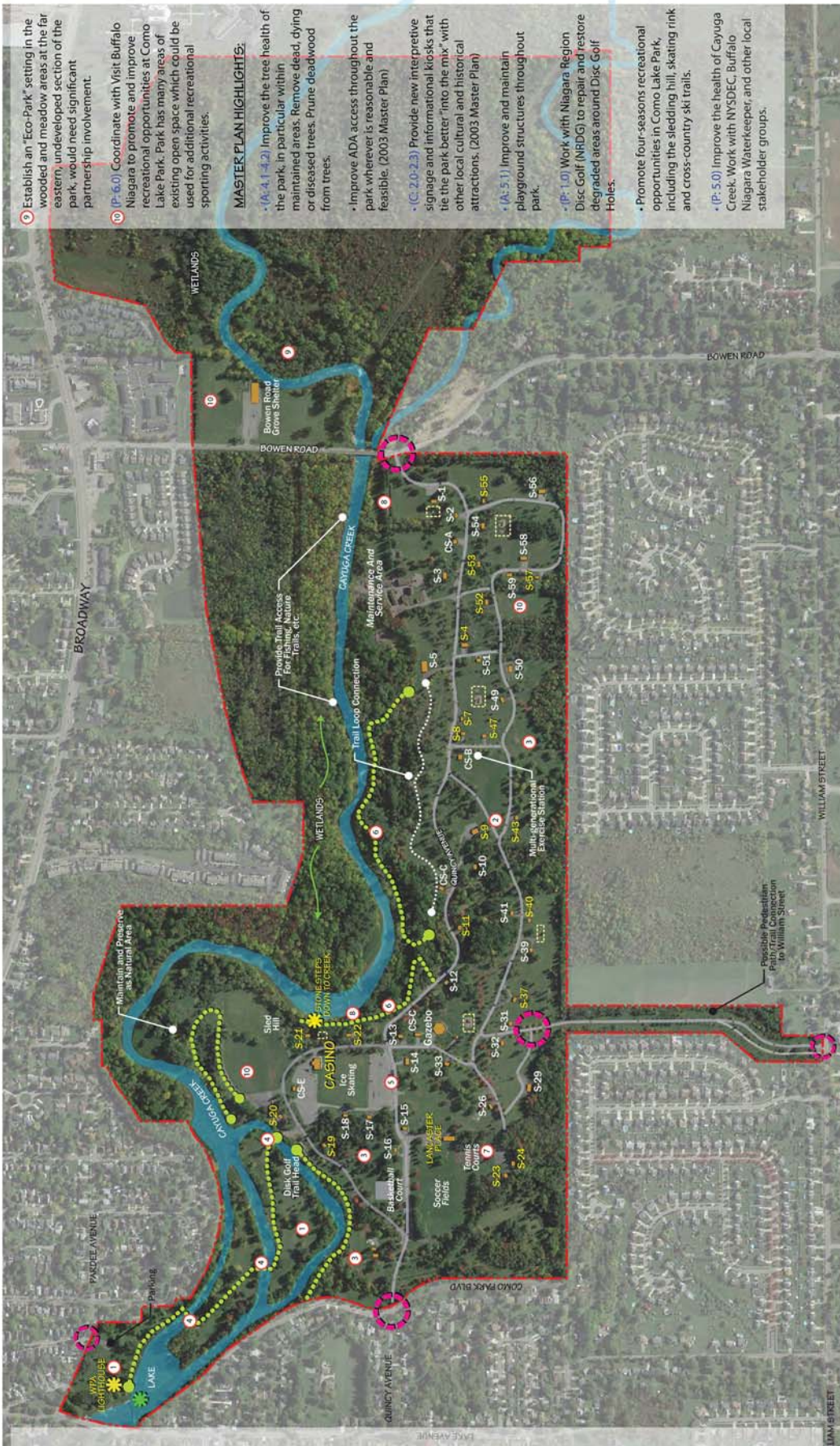


MASTER PLAN COMO LAKE PARK

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: Specific Action Items - Ex. (A: 1)

- ① (C: 3.0-5.0) P: 2.0-4.0) Preserve/enhance and restore Heritage Areas within the park - i.e. westernmost section of the park, lighthouse, dam and lake, islands, etc. Preserve and enhance historic setting of lawn and tree canopy. (2003 Master Plan)
- ② Restore old stone picnic shelters and structures before building new picnic shelters and structures. (Consider the heritage "value" of these old park features for future tourism and visitor appreciation).
- ③ (C: 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-use areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures.
- ④ (C: 8.0-9.1) Make improvements/upgrades to pedestrian bridge crossings onto the islands. Improve bridges to be ADA compliant if possible.
- ⑤ (C: 11.0) Provide possible medians/parking islands in parking lot south of Casino separating lot from Quincy Avenue. This would improve pedestrian and vehicular safety and break up the large area of asphalt.
- ⑥ (A: 7.0-7.2) Promote natural and cultural heritage interpretation and enjoyment throughout the park through an expanded trail system and park signage; provide new wayfinding system to bring awareness to existing trails and hidden park features.
- ⑦ (C: 13.0) Consider dual-stripping one or more tennis courts to accommodate other court sports.
- ⑧ (A: 14.0) Enhance views of the creek; currently there are few, if any, spots to see the Creek from any of the picnic groves. Remove invasive species and take down any trees in decay.



Legend:

- Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations
- WPA Park Heritage Feature/Destination
- Natural Features

- WPA Pump Shelters / Misc. Features
- Existing Park Trails
- Park Boundary
- Playground
- CS-A: Comfort Station - (P) CS-A: WPA Bus Stop/Station S-1: Shelter - (P)

- ⑨ Establish an "Eco-Park" setting in the wooded and meadow areas at the far eastern, undeveloped section of the park, would need significant partnership involvement.
 - ⑩ (P: 6.0) Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara to promote and improve recreational opportunities at Como Lake Park. Park has many areas of existing open space which could be used for additional recreational sporting activities.
- ### MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:
- (A: 4.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (C: 2.0-2.3) Provide new interpretive signage and informational kiosks that tie the park better "into the mix" with other local cultural and historical attractions. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (A: 5.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.
 - (P: 1.0) Work with Niagara Region Disc Golf (NRDG) to repair and restore degraded areas around Disc Golf Holes.
 - Promote four-seasons recreational opportunities in Como Lake Park, including the sledding hill, skating rink and cross-country ski trails.
 - (P: 5.0) Improve the health of Cayuga Creek. Work with NYSDCC Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, and other local stakeholder groups.



NATURALIZATION PLAN COMO LAKE PARK

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MOWING REDUCTION:

Natural Regeneration: 26.5 acres
Low-Mow Meadow: 6.5 acres
Wildflower Meadow: 6 acres
Total: ~41 acres

TREATMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

- ① **Natural Regeneration**
In these areas, which are currently mowed lawn, natural forests will be allowed to develop. In most cases, suggested natural regeneration areas are adjacent to existing forest, and serve to expand continuous forest habitat within the parks. Mowing will cease altogether, and woody plant removal will be limited to non-native species. Young native trees of species found in neighboring forest can be planted to speed natural reforestation, and native meadow grass and wildflower seeds can be planted to replace lawn until the tree canopy matures.
- ② **Low-Mow**
These are areas that may potentially see different use in the future, and are not intended to be reforested. They would be mowed infrequently to prevent woody plants from establishing. Within the 'low-mow' management category, there exists flexibility for tailoring management to a particular park or zone.
- ③ **Wildflower Meadow**
In locations with low use but high visibility, such as near park entrances, the Low-Mow Meadow treatment can be modified by the addition of significant native wildflower planting efforts. This will create a higher level of biodiversity and visual interest than simple mowing reduction.



NATURALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS:
Lawn Reduction
A large percentage of Como Lake Park is currently mowed despite seeing little use for active recreation. Much of this area can be converted to use as wildlife habitat and passive recreation area.

At Como Lake Park, much of the lawn reduction will be Natural Regeneration. A large number of trees in this low-lying park are expected to be lost to the Emerald Ash Borer. Planting young native trees of a variety of species can begin the process of replacing this valuable resource by establishing a new generation of forest canopy. Recommended areas are mainly adjacent to established woods, and will provide an extension of the existing forest habitat.

Low Mow Meadows are recommended in several areas where maintaining flexibility for the future is particularly valuable. Wildflower Meadow is recommended in areas of high visibility, such as near park entrances.

Water Quality Protection
Como Lake Park offers an opportunity to enhance the water quality of Cayuga Creek, which has at times been a concern for the community. Increasing natural vegetation buffers and stabilizing streambanks are known to help maintain water quality.

Severe bank erosion is a concern along Cayuga Creek, and the Como Lake impoundment periodically silt in with sediment from upstream and must be dredged. Reducing pavement within the park is one way to reduce stormwater runoff that contributes to these issues.

Invasive Species Management
Aggressive non-native plants are a serious concern in specific locations at Como Lake. Japanese Knotweed and non-native Phragmites are well established along parts of the stream banks, reducing habitat value and increasing bank erosion. It is important to address these invasions in order to help protect the health of Cayuga Creek.

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

Historic Structures/WPA/Other Structures:

- **(C: 3.0-5.0/ P: 2.0-4.0) Preserve/enhance and restore Heritage Areas within the park** – i.e. westernmost section of the park, lighthouse, dam and lake, islands, etc. Preserve and enhance historic setting of lawn and tree canopy; (2003 Master Plan)
 - Restore old stone picnic shelters and structures before building new picnic shelters and structures. (Consider the heritage “value” of these old park features for future tourism and visitor appreciation). There are too many varied picnic structures throughout the park. Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. (2003 Master Plan)
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: In-House/PBN



Historic staircase down to the Creek



Historic WPA Lighthouse



Stonework is starting to break apart at many shelters and structures



Foundation from old boat house



Ball field and old backstop could have potential for future recreational opportunities

- **(A: 1.0) Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 12.0) Restore/reconstruct former structure at the west tip of the islands (currently has wood deck cover) as park pavilion or bandshell, etc.**
 - Structure has a great view at the base of the lake
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **Consider removal of future shelters to include the demolition of the shelter as well as associated asphalt drive, foundation, and parking area.**
 - Many shelters that have been removed have the old asphalt drive, parking area, and foundation still in place.
 - Allow area to renaturalize and revert back to the natural landscape.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Concrete foundation remains from removed structure



Maintenance/Safety:

- **(A: 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-use areas,** and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(C: 8.0-9.1) Make improvements/upgrades to pedestrian bridge crossings onto the islands.**
 - Improve bridges to be ADA compliant if possible.
 - Repair missing/broken rails
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: Consultant/Contractor**
- **Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Renovations present opportunities to address standards in ADA accessibility. These can include for example, designing sports fields and courts for greater accessibility and seating, improved accessibility/updated surfaces to children play areas, and potential paving of new trails for people with mixed abilities.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**



Existing pedestrian bridge over the Creek

- **(C: 11.0)** Provide medians/parking islands in parking lot south of Casino separating lot from Quincy Avenue. This would improve pedestrian and vehicular safety and break up the large area of asphalt.
 - Construct a planted berm or rain garden, including evergreens, native trees, and shrubs.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: Consultant/Contractor/In-House**
 - **(A: 6.0-6.3)** Establish Minor Gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the park at the following locations:
 - Bowen Road
 - Pardee Avenue
 - North Bridge
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House/Highway**
 - **(A: 7.0-7.2)** Promote natural and cultural heritage interpretation and enjoyment throughout the park through an expanded trail system and park signage; provide new wayfinding system to bring awareness to existing trails and hidden park features
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**
 - **(C: 1.0-1.2)** Establish enhanced gateways for the park at the following locations:
 - William Street
 - Como Lake Boulevard
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- Connectivity/Signage:**
- **(C: 2.0-2.3)** Provide new interpretive signage and informational kiosks that tie the park better “into the mix” with other local cultural and historical attractions. (2003 Master Plan)
 - Provide an interpretive “story-line” for the Park and area’s history, i.e. When was the Village and Town first Settled?; What’s the history behind the Lighthouse and Dam? What were some significant historic happenings in the area, or in the park?; When were the old stone structures built?; (2003 Master Plan)
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**



Wayfinding signage



- **Continue progress with expansion, enhancements, and connectivity among park trails.**
 - Provide kiosks with trail maps and rules at select trailhead locations.
 - Provide interpretive signage along the trails highlighting flora, fauna, and wildlife.
 - Design and provide distinct trail markers for better park orientation.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House/Forestry**
- **(A: 9.0-9.5) Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations:**
 - Intersection of Lake Avenue and Como Park Boulevard
 - Intersection of William Street and Lake Avenue
 - Intersection of William Street and Bowen Road
 - Intersection of Broadway and Bowen Road
 - Intersection of Broadway and Lake Avenue
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**



Orienteering Trailhead



Park signage off of Bowen Road

- **(A: 11.0) Improve park circulation through consolidation of roadways and path system;** Consider a new round-about feature to better “organize” the park roadways where the southern access drive meets the internal road network. (2003 Master Plan)
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**

Recreation:

- **(A: 5.0) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.**
 - Provide or replenish fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.
 - Replace swings/play equipment as needed due to wear and tear.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(P: 1.0) Work with Niagara Region Disc Golf (NRDG) to repair and restore degraded areas around Disc Golf Holes.**
 - Explore the possibility of updating hole locations, such that they can be easily pulled up from their location and moved to a different nearby area. (Like on a typical golf course)
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: Niagara Region Disc Golf**
- **Establish clear partnership responsibilities and duties pertaining to future dog park areas and other recreational proposals within the park.**
 - Coordinate with Lancaster Unleashed to adhere to partnership policy, locate a sensible location for a dog park which would not be

environmentally detrimental and adequate infrastructure exists (or would be economically feasible to provide).

■ **Priority: High**

■ **Partner: Lancaster Unleashed/Usergroups**

- **(P: 6.0) Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara to promote and improve recreational opportunities at Como Lake Park.**
 - Park has many areas of existing open space which could be used for additional recreational sporting activities.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: Visit Buffalo Niagara/Lancaster Recreation**



Recently installed multi-generational fitness area



Large playground featured on east side of park



- **(A: 5.1) Improve playground facilities throughout the park.**
 - Remove and replace oldest structures on-site. Consider earthtone colors in the Heritage park setting rather than bright, primary colors (2003 Master Plan)
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **(A: 12.0) Remove old backstop in large mowed area adjacent to the sled hill.**
 - This can be a potential area for soccer, lacrosse, or other activities like a potential bark park, etc. in response to the recreational trends of the community.
 - This mowed area is in close proximity to parking and restrooms.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: VBN/Lancaster Recreation
- **Enhance fishing access and opportunities along Cayuga Creek.** This includes establishing strategically placed fishing platforms or stone areas, as well as paths to multiple areas of the Creek for access.
 - The DEC annually stocks about 3,000 keeper-sized rainbow trout in early April. Trout are stocked in 5 locations from Como Lake to the pavilion on Bowen Road.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/NYSDEC
- **Consider additional recreational opportunities such as paddle boats or kayak uses in the lake. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Private Businesses
- **Promote and expand four-seasons recreational opportunities in Como Lake Park,** including the sledding hill, skating rink and cross-country ski trails.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 14.0) Explore the potential for transforming one of the basketball courts into a 'multi-purpose court'.** Court could accommodate several sports and become a destination for the youth of the neighborhood.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: VBN/In-House



Foot traffic and heavy usage at Disc Golf hole is causing damage to the surrounding landscape



Newly striped tennis courts



Basketball courts

Environment:

- **(A: 4.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas.**
 - Remove dead, dying or diseased trees.
 - Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
 - Provide new tree plantings throughout the park, particularly along the roadway edges.
 - Develop a multi-pronged approach to tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings.
 - Develop annual tree planting program to restore tree canopy and improve natural image of the park.
 - Apply for funding from NYSDEC for example for purchase of trees and materials and for the tree inventory.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNY PRISM/ECSWD/Forestry**
- **(P: 10.0) Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology.**
 - Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas;
 - Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;
 - Prioritize plantings for bird and butterfly habitats;
 - Designate potential native plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats;
 - The County should encourage the development of outdoor classrooms through partnerships with local schools. Outdoor classrooms can be living laboratories for local children to immerse themselves in nature and our local ecosystem.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: NYSDEC/Cornell Cooperative Extension/ECSWD/In-House**
- **(P: 11.0) Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park.**
 - Address and remove threatening invasive species.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNY Prism/ECSWD**
- **(P: 7.0) Continue to improve the health of Como Lake because of continued accumulation of debris and silt.** The lake is an important cultural/environmental landmark in Lancaster and the community strongly supports the on-going efforts to see the lake revitalized.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: Grants/Other Resources**
- **Maintain and enhance natural wooded buffers along perimeter;** This will offer more protection for the natural open space as more and more houses are built around the park. (2003 Master Plan)
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(A: 13.0) Preserve and enhance the environmental character of the islands at Como.**
 - Create low-mow/meadow areas where appropriate;
 - Define trail surface on islands;
 - Repair and improve character of the pedestrian bridges;
 - Remove invasive species from shoreline areas.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: NYSDEC/ECSWD**
- **(A: 14.0) Enhance views of the creek;** currently there are few, if any, spots to see the Creek from any of the picnic groves. Remove invasive species and take down any trees in decay.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House/ECSWD**
- **(C: 15.0) Promote the expansion of the existing “Cayuga Creek Nature Trail” system,** to continue along the Creek bank in both directions, with important signage and connections to other park attractions and picnic groves.
 - Provide ADA access to scenic creek vista locations. (2003 Master Plan)
 - Better define trails along Cayuga Creek with enhancements including wayfinding signage, viewing areas, interpretive signage, and benches.
 - Provide distinct trailheads with updated map information and trail descriptions.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House/Consultant**



Como Lake



- **(P: 8.0) Establish an “Eco-Park” setting in the wooded and meadow areas at the far eastern, undeveloped section of the park,** would need significant partnership involvement; i.e. NYS DEC, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, local agencies.
 - Provide a pedestrian bridge crossing over the Creek
 - Establish a unique system of nature trails to view an impressive naturalization area of meadows and young woodlands. This would provide a new recreational and educational opportunity to the residents in the area, and provide enhanced protected habitat for wildlife.
 - Parking would initially be shared with the Bowen Road Picnic Grove.
 - Future developments could include a small nature interpretive/educational facility with meeting room.
 - New native plantings could be introduced to strengthen perimeter buffers, improve creek shoreline conditions, and enhance wildlife habitat.
 - **Priority:** Low
 - **Partner:** NYSDEC/Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

- **(P: 5.0) Improve the health of Cayuga 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 creek and naturalization of the surrounding wooded areas can contribute to educational nature programs and trail/water recreation.
 - **Priority:** Low
 - **Partner:** NYSDEC/Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper



Existing conditions on one of the islands at Como



Significant erosion of the bank pictured here

COMO LAKE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	2.0	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	3.1	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Low Mow Zones” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	3.3	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Provide necessary signage along the “Low Mow Zones” to inform the public the reasons behind the practice and also to identify the areas to park personnel.	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	4.1	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. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Prune and/or remove trees if determined to present an increased risk to park patrons and employees.	High	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
A	5.0	Improve playground safety	Provide or replenish engineered fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.	High	Ongoing	P.O.B.
C	3.1	Shelter #7 - Potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	High	3-5 Years	\$17,500
C	3.10	Shelter #55 - Potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	High	3-5 Years	\$17,500
C	3.9	Shelter #47 - Potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	High	3-5 Years	\$20,000
C	4.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era structure “Lancaster Place”. Repair slab foundation near women’s restroom.	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action. Engage contractor to perform repairs	High	1-2 Years	\$33,000

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



COMO LAKE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	6.1	Shelter #10 - Potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	High	3-5 Years	\$15,000
C	6.2	Shelter #13 - Potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	High	3-5 Years	\$7,500
C	9.1	Improve pedestrian safety on the Middle Bridge	Engage contractor to perform repairs to undermined bridge approach slab.	High	1-2 Years	\$25,000
P	1.0	Reconfigure the disc golf route to avoid environmentally sensitive areas.	Coordinate with Niagara Region Disc Golf regarding a new course layout. Accommodate alternative hole positions to reduce compaction / erosion from repetitive foot traffic.	High	1-2 Years	\$15,200
P	10.0	Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas; Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;	Designate potential native pollinator plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats.	High	Ongoing	Partner
P	11.0	Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park. Address and remove threatening invasive species.	Coordinate with WNY Prism, ECSWD, and others.	High	Ongoing	Partner
A	4.2	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. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Develop an annual tree planting program.	Medium	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	6.0	Establish Minor Gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the park at the following locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	6.1	Bowen Road	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	6.2	Pardee Avenue	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway

COMO LAKE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	6.3	North Bridge	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.0	Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	7.1	Cayuga Creek Nature Trail, maps and trail markers	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	7.2	Overall park maps showing drives, amenities and shelter locations	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels and maps.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	10.0	Ensure that shelters, comfort stations and buildings are identifiable	Coordination between Parks and Highways to develop and produce the sign panels.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	13.0	Preserve and enhance the environmental character of the islands at Como. Create low-mow/meadow areas where appropriate; Define trail surface on islands;	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements and enhancements	Medium	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
C	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following WPA Era picnic shelters:	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	X
C	3.11	Shelter #57 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.12	Unnamed Shelter near garage - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.2	Shelter #8 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.3	Shelter #11 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.4	Shelter #20 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.5	Shelter #21 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.6	Shelter #22 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.7	Shelter #37 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000

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COMO LAKE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	3.8	Shelter #40 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	5.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Comfort Station "C". Replace roof.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$32,000
C	6.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following picnic shelters:	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	X
C	6.3	Shelter #15 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	6.4	Shelter #54 - Replace floor slab, potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	Medium	3-5 Years	\$17,500
C	8.0	Improve pedestrian safety on the North Bridge	Engage a consultant to determine if existing railings can be modified to be brought into compliance, or if a new railing system is required.	Medium	3-5 Years	\$9,200
C	9.0	Improve pedestrian safety on the Middle Bridge	Engage a consultant to determine if existing railings can be modified to be brought into compliance, or if a new railing system is required.	Medium	3-5 Years	\$9,200
C	10.0	Improve pedestrian safety adjacent the Casino, replace areas of deteriorating concrete pavement.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$5,250
P	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era structure "Lancaster Place". Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Medium	3-5 Years	\$33,000
P	7.0	Continue to improve the health of Como Lake because of continued accumulation of debris and silt. The lake is an important cultural/environmental landmark in Lancaster and the community strongly supports the on-going efforts to see the lake revitalized.	Coordinate with local stakeholders and agencies for funding and resources	Medium	Ongoing	Partner
P	9.0	Enhance fishing access and opportunities along Cayuga Creek. This includes establishing strategically placed fishing platforms or stone areas, as well as paths to multiple areas of the Creek for access.	Coordinate with NYSDEC and other usergroups	Medium	3-5 Years	Partner In-House

COMO LAKE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	1.0	Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places	Coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer assigned to Erie County to complete the required nomination forms and submit to a State review board.	Low	Ongoing	In-House
A	3.2	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Begin an educational program, through the use of the County’s website, to the general public which provides information regarding the “Low Mow Zone” program	Low	3-5 Years	In-House
A	5.1	Continue to improve playground safety	Remove playground equipment that is not compliant with current regulations, with the exception of “legacy” pieces of equipment	Low	Ongoing	In-House
A	8.0	Reduce damage to turf areas and reduce erosion by providing a resilient surface, such as crushed stone or millings at each shelter location.	Utilize parks staff to perform repairs	Low	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	9.0	Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.1	Intersection of Lake Avenue and Como Park Boulevard	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.2	Intersection of William Street and Lake Avenue	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.3	Intersection of William Street and Bowen Road	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway

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COMO LAKE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	9.4	Intersection of Broadway and Bowen Road	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.5	Intersection of Broadway and Lake Avenue	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	11.0	Improve park circulation through consolidation of roadways and path system; Consider a new round-about feature to better “organize” the park roadways where the southern access drive meets the internal road network.	Coordination between Parks and DPW	Low	6-10 Years	In-House
A	12.0	Remove old backstop in large mowed area adjacent to the sled hill. This can be a potential area for soccer, lacrosse, or other activities, etc.	Utilize parks staff to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	In-House
A	14.0	Enhance views of the creek; currently there are few, if any, spots to see the Creek from any of the picnic groves. Remove invasive species and take down any trees in decay.	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements and enhancements	Low	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
C	1.0	Establish Enhanced Gateways for the park at the following locations:	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	X
C	1.1	William Street	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,800
C	1.2	Como Park Boulevard	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,800
C	2.0	Provide interpretive signage in the park:	Coordinate with historical society to develop copy and obtain images for the interpretive content.	Low	Ongoing	In-House
C	2.1	The lighthouse and dam	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500

COMO LAKE PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	2.2	Flora/fauna on the Bowen Grove portion of the park	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.3	History of WPA structures	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	7.0	Improve pedestrian safety on the pedestrian bridge near Shelter #23.	Replace bridge in its entirety	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,500
C	11.0	Enhance pedestrian/vehicular safety along Quincy Ave. Remove a portion of pavement between the drive and parking lot (approximately 420-feet by 20-feet) and construct a planted berm or rain garden, including evergreens, native trees and shrubs.	Engage consultant to design improvements and engage contractor to construct improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$85,000
C	12.0	Restore/reconstruct former structure at the west tip of the islands (currently has wood deck cover) as park pavilion or bandshell, etc.	Engage consultant to design improvements and engage contractor to construct improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
C	14.0	Explore the potential for transforming one of the basketball courts into a 'multi-purpose court'.	Engage consultant to design improvements and engage contractor to construct improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	15.0	Promote the expansion of the existing "Cayuga Creek Nature Trail" system, to continue along the Creek bank in both directions, with important signage and connections to other park attractions and picnic groves.	Engage consultant to design improvements and engage contractor to construct improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,000
P	2.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following WPA Era picnic shelters:	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$
P	2.1	Shelter #11 - Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$15,000

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Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	2.2	Shelter #20 - Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	2.3	Unnamed Shelter near garage - Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$16,000
P	4.0	Prevent further deterioration on WPA Era Comfort Station "C". Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$32,000
P	5.0	Improve the ecological status of Cayuga Creek through stream bank stabilization, erosion control, habitat conservation and restoration and storm water management	Coordinate and partner with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper and NYSDEC to develop projects similar to the Living Shoreline project in Ellicott Creek Park	Low	Ongoing	\$75,000
P	6.0	Park has many areas of existing open space which could be used for additional recreational sporting activities.	Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara to promote and improve recreational opportunities at Como Lake Park.	Low	6-10 Years	Partner
P	8.0	Establish an "Eco-Park" setting in the wooded and meadow areas at the far eastern, undeveloped section of the park	Significant partnership involvement; i.e. NYS DEC, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, local agencies.	Low	6-10 Years	\$100,000



SCHEMATIC PLAN

COMO LAKE PARK - CASINO PARKING LOT

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE



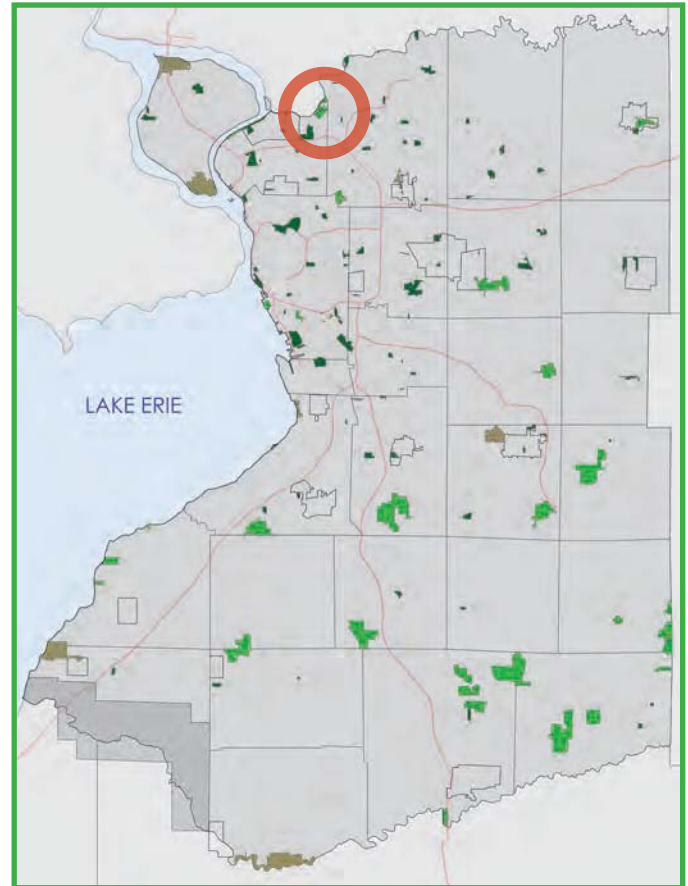
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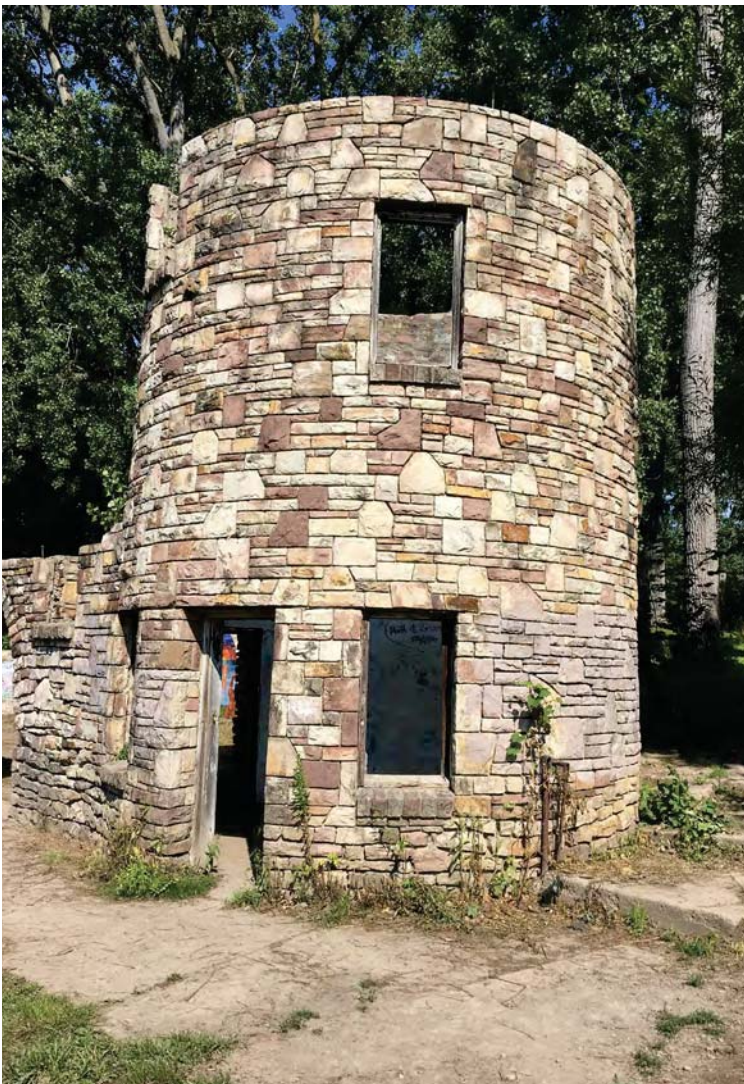
ELLICOTT CREEK PARK

DESCRIPTION

At 165 acres, Ellicott Creek Park is one of the original Heritage parks in the County system, and is entirely within an urban environment setting. The park is centrally located and easily accessed by residents of Tonawanda, Amherst, Buffalo, and North Tonawanda (Niagara County), and is also a destination along area bike routes, including the Ellicott Creek Bike Path (via the Town of Amherst), and Erie Canalway Trail which connects with the Shoreline Trail. It is one of the four oldest parks in the system, acquired by the County in 1925 due to its attractive landscape setting between Ellicott Creek and the Erie Canal (Tonawanda Creek). This beautiful Heritage park is noted for its impressive collection of old stone structures and waterfront setting. Ellicott Creek Park is generally flat, which was considered ideal for the development of many field sports and active recreation, such as tennis and ice-skating. The Park is bisected by a major floodway corridor (spillway flume) between the two Creeks.



Park Location Map: Ellicott Creek Park is located in the Town of Tonawanda



WPA-era Boathouse Ruins

PARK SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

- **Preserve and enhance Heritage areas and special park features, including:** Repoint/clean stonework where needed, replace missing stones, replace or repair roofs, make improvements to concrete/asphalt floors, etc. to all historic structures and facilities.
- **Reduce lawn mowing in passive recreational areas, provide meadows and wildflowers to enhance natural character of park.**
- **Coordinate with Friends of Ellicott Island Bark Park to maintain and upgrade amenities on Ellicott Island, as well as protecting and enhancing sensitive shoreline conditions.**

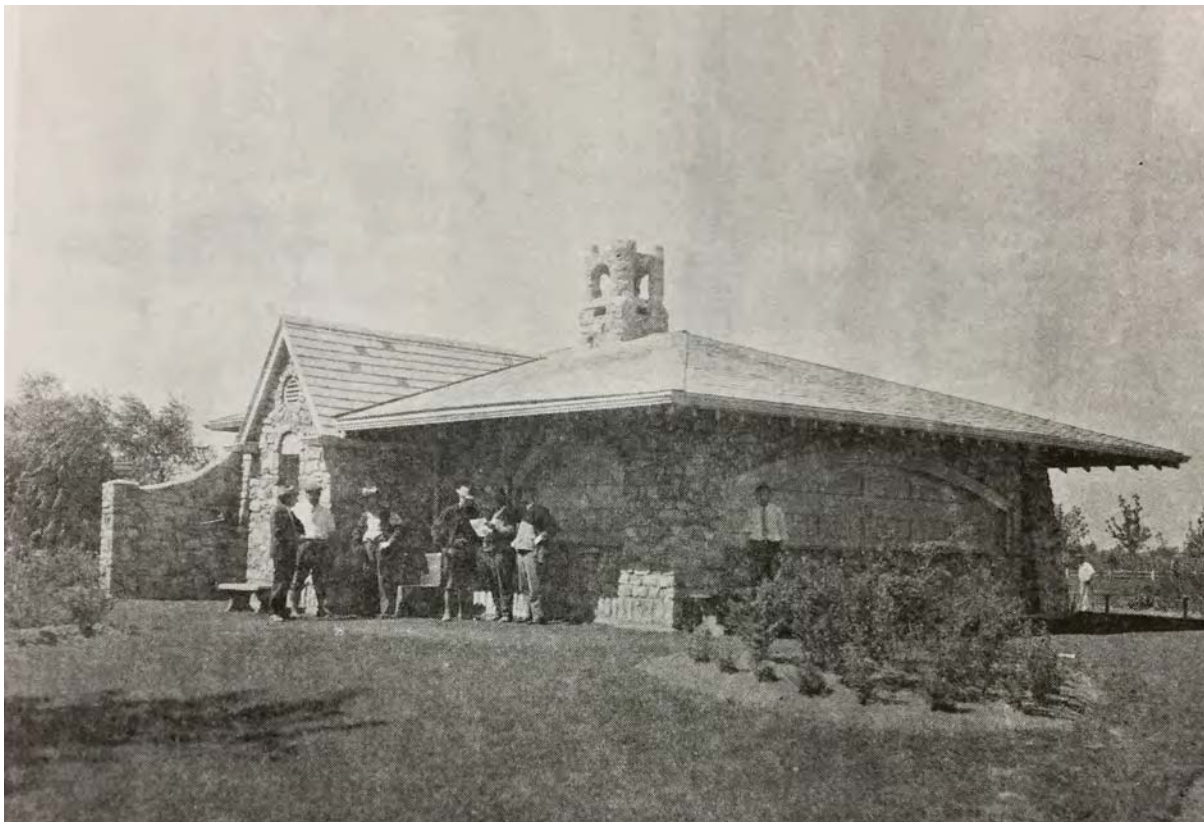
PARK AND AREA HISTORY

No park in the system is more connected to the region's historical development than Ellicott Creek Park. It was constructed along the banks of the historic Erie Canal. The majority of the original 40 acres was acquired through purchasing private land and County tax foreclosures (1936 & 1937). During the 1930s, WPA crews built the original stone structures and park features. Ellicott Island, A.K.A. "Island at Three-mile Bend" was constructed to make the creek more navigable and divert canal traffic. Charles Ellicott, a landscape architect, heavily influenced the island in the design process. The residential building boom of the 1930s and 1940s established Ellicott Creek Park as a mecca for boaters and family picnics.

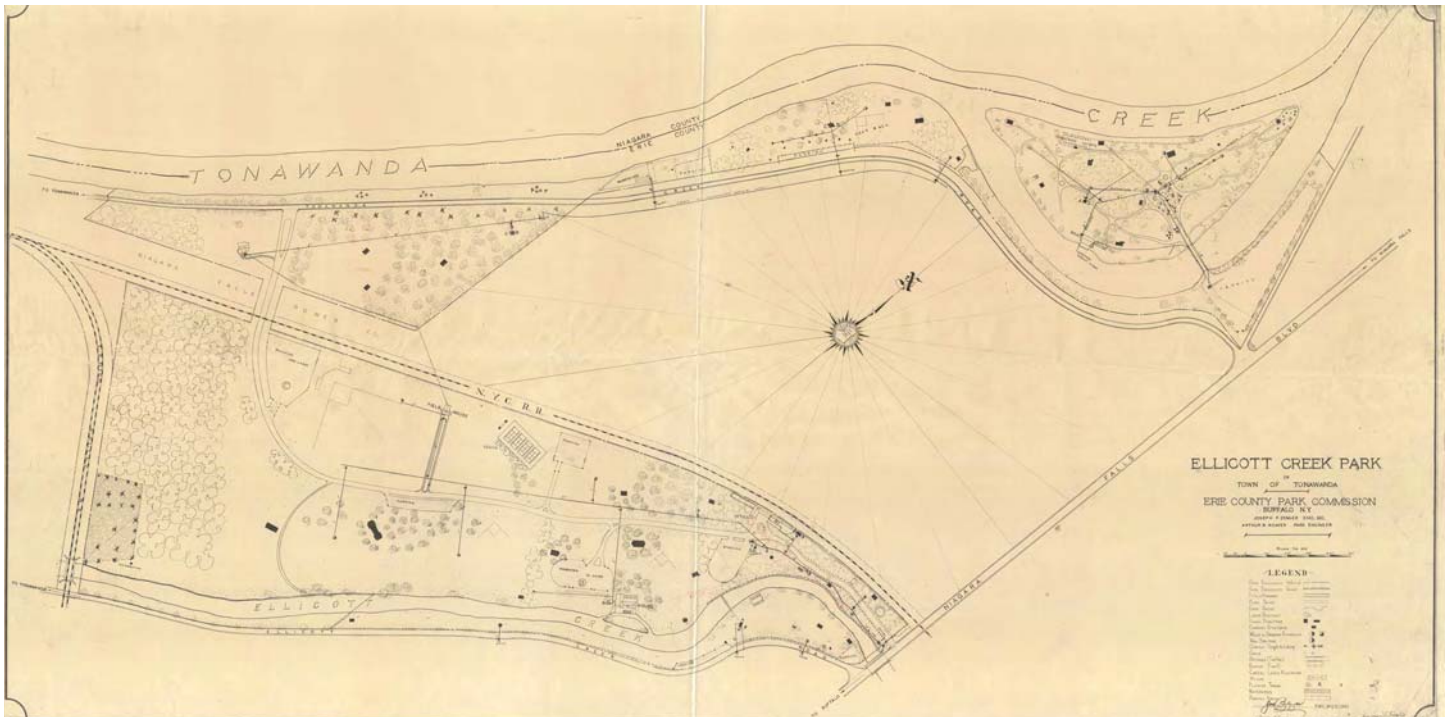
The more recent decades of the 1970s, 80s and early 90s were not overly positive for Ellicott Creek Park. These were years of neglect and overgrowth, which tended to attract undesirable activities into the park. This led to a "less-than-positive" reputation for the park that was not very attractive for family picnics or conducive for comfortable outings. However, beginning in the mid and late 1990s, Ellicott Creek Park saw a major resurgence in County attention, maintenance and care that has regained its positive standing with the community. The park, once again, enjoys large crowds of people utilizing its many diverse recreational amenities.



Ellicott Island Boathouse



Ellicott Island WPA Concession Stand



1940's master plan



LOCAL CONTEXT

Ellicott Creek Park is located in the northwest corner of Erie County along the shore of Tonawanda Creek, which also forms the boundary line with Niagara County. The park is entirely within an urban environment. The Park is strategically located between the Towns of Tonawanda, Amherst and City of North Tonawanda, and is less than 2 miles from the Towns of Wheatfield and Pendleton, as well as the City of Tonawanda. The University at Buffalo North Campus is situated only a few miles to the east, and is linked to the Park via the Ellicott Creek Bike Path (7.2 miles).

The area south of Ellicott Creek Park is heavily populated and densely developed, including the mega-commercial developments along busy Niagara Falls Boulevard, while the area to the north of the park into Niagara County continues to grow with more residential and commercial development. Convenient access is provided to the park via numerous area roadways, with Niagara Falls Boulevard providing a direct linkage to the I-290 (Youngman Expressway), less than 2 miles south of the park. Residents of the Village of Kenmore and City of Buffalo can also easily utilize public transportation routes to access the Park. Creekside Drive cuts through the park along the Canal edge, while Ellicott Creek Road forms the southern border of the park.

Most of Ellicott Creek Park lies within the Town of Tonawanda, with a small portion lying within the Town of Amherst. North Tonawanda (Niagara County) lies on the opposite side of the Tonawanda Creek that forms the western/northern boundary of the Park.



Local context map



Snow covered Ellicott Island





Area around Disc Golf hole has reverted to bare dirt, because of excessive foot traffic and use

RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

Ellicott Creek Park has many diverse recreational facilities, and tends to be many things to many people. It offers both active and passive recreation opportunities. While beginning as more of a passive park with a boating and water-based theme, active recreational facilities were added to the park as the demand for these facilities grew strong. At one point, Ellicott Creek Park was one of the only parks of its kind around the area, and thus served the wholesale recreational needs of the public. However, the area surrounding the park has grown tremendously since the 1920s, and over the years, Town parks began to be added and began to take the active recreational pressure away from Ellicott Creek Park. This is particularly true with Brighton Park, a Town of Tonawanda park that is located less than a mile away, and offers numerous recreational facilities. Many other Tonawanda and Amherst Town parks also provide additional recreational amenities.

In 2010 the Niagara Region Disk Golf Association constructed an 18-hole disk golf course. In the last few years one of the tennis courts have recently been turned into a pickleball court, a kayak launch has been installed, and the India Association finished plans for a regulation Cricket Pitch on a former softball field within the park. Ellicott Creek Park has further separated itself from many of the County parks for the diverse amount of recreational amenities.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Ellicott Creek Park is characterized by low-lying floodplain landscapes. It is quite “urban” in character, with little significant natural area. It is important to keep open areas for active recreation. Some parts of the park are less used, however, and these areas can be naturalized into forest or wildflower meadow habitat. Even in more formal park areas, understory trees can be added to increase the complexity and diversity of the urban forest habitat.

The park’s unique location between two major streams presents opportunities to celebrate and restore shoreline habitat. Projects such as the recent Living Shoreline demonstration can help connect residents with nearby nature. They can therefore be considered to improve habitat not just for wildlife but for human beings as well.

Invasive species are a moderate concern at Ellicott Creek Park, particularly on Ellicott Island. It is desirable to replace them with natives wherever possible. To this end, the Friends of Ellicott Island Park have established an on-site native plant nursery, from which they are able to plant small restoration areas.

Because Ash species are more common in low-lying areas like Ellicott Creek Park, the property will likely be more significantly impacted by the Emerald Ash Borer than some



Ellicott Creek with its expanse of open lawn areas is a popular destination for recreational activities

other parks in the system. Beginning to plant new native trees now can reduce the time until a new generation of canopy trees can take over from those that will be lost.

RECENT PARKS DEPARTMENT PROJECTS / IMPROVEMENTS

The 2012-2017 Capital Improvements within Ellicott Creek Park totaled \$307,202. Recent projects included:

- Comfort Station 5 – Waterline repaired, electrical upgrades/repairs, drainage work, new siding, and general carpentry
- Ellicott Island parking lot – Resurfaced
- Shelter #3 – Replaced roof
- Shelter #10A / 10B – Replaced roofs
- Friendship Building – Complete remodel of men's and women's restrooms, including ADA compliant stalls; additional upgrades completed (2018)
- Casino – New doors and fireplace insert
- Pedestrian Bridge PK-6 – Railings replaced
- New pickleball court created on existing tennis court
- Chimney repaired and repointed at Casino
- Cricket Pitch installed on former softball/baseball diamond (2017)
- New kayak launch installed off of Ellicott Creek Road and Niagara Falls Blvd. (2017)
- Paved parking lot off of new kayak launch site (2017)
- "Living Shoreline" – 500 linear feet of Ellicott Creek shoreline has been reconstructed by Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper (2017)



New kayak launch installed 2017

- Roofs completely replaced at shelters 2, 3, & 4. Concrete pads completely replaced at shelters 3 & 17.
- Roof replaced on WPA pump shelter near main entrance off of Niagara Falls Blvd. (2018)
- 700 trees to be planted throughout park through partnership with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper (2018)



Recent "Living Shoreline" project





WPA Comfort Station #1



WPA era Casino



WPA Creekside Stand

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- The park is showing deterioration in its older, historic stone structures.
- There is a lack of directional signage to the park, and within the park. The park occupies four distinct areas: the area between Ellicott Creek Road and Ellicott Creek, the 'main' part of the park between Ellicott Creek and Creekside Drive, the Creekside area, and Ellicott Island.
- Better linkages could be made between four park areas.
- There is a lack of interpretive signage highlighting the wonderful park structures and natural features.
- Currently, most of the open space in the park is mowed, including areas that are beyond the recreational use areas.
- There is an apparent underutilization of some of the park facilities.
- There are numerous outdated play structures that do not meet current safety or accessibility codes.
- Many older trees are displaying health issues.
- Many dead trees within the park including Silver Maples and Ash.
- Nearly all shelters off of Creekside Drive are showing deterioration and need repairs.
- Heavy usage of the Bark Park on Ellicott Island has caused erosion and maintenance issues.



Poor shoreline conditions at Ellicott Island Bark Park



MASTER PLAN ELLICOTT CREEK PARK

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: *Specific Action Items - Ex. (A-1)*

- 1 (C-4.0-9.0, P-1.0-10.0) Preserve, repair, and enhance park Heritage Areas and structures; i.e. the Casino, WPA era shelters, comfort stations, and pump shelters.
- 2 (A-2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-use, little-trafficked areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures.
- 3 (C-17.0) Provide possible trail/path on south side of Ellicott Creek.
- 4 (C-11.0-12.0) Restore or reconstruct the various pedestrian bridges that connect to the community. These important linkages tie the park to its neighborhood users.
- 5 (C-14.0) Improve safety and functionality of parking lot 12; reduce size of the lot, provide asphalt surface, striping, and accessible parking spaces.
- 6 (A-12.0) Restone or pave parking lot near tennis courts. Repair pot holes leading to parking area.
- 7 (P-15.0) Improve pedestrian safety and visibility along main roads, particularly the trail crossing at Creekside Drive; possible reduction in speed.
- 8 (P-18.0) Remove existing ball diamond backstops or repurpose ball diamonds. Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara and usergroups/stakeholders to maintain diamonds if there is interest in the use of these amenities.
- 9 (P-12.0) Continue coordination with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper on "expanding" Living Shoreline along Ellicott Creek.
- 10 (C-16.0) Improve functionality and organization of Casino parking area.

- ### MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:
- (A-4.1-4.3) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (C-1.0-1.2) Establish more dominant "gateway" features for the park, including upgraded entrance signs, enhanced landscaping with seasonal interest, etc. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (C-2.0-2.4) Provide new interpretive signage system and informational kiosks that tie the park better into the mix with other local cultural and historical attractions.
 - (A-6.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.
 - (A-6.2) Remove playground equipment that is not compliant with current regulations; with the exception of the wheel barrow or other "legacy" pieces of equipment
 - Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology.



Legend:

- WPA Pump Shelters / Misc. Features
- Existing Park Trails
- Park Boundary
- Playground
- Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations
- WPA Park Heritage Feature/Destination
- Natural Features
- CS: Comfort Station - (C) (CS-1) WPA Era Structures (CS-2) WPA Era Structures (CS-3) WPA Era Structures
- WS: Warming Shelter



ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Natural Regeneration: 8.5 acres
 Low-Mow Meadow: 5.5 acres
 Wildflower Meadow: 6 acres
 Total : ~20 acres

Natural Regeneration
In these areas, which are currently mowed lawn, natural forests will be allowed to develop. In most cases, suggested natural regeneration areas are adjacent to existing forests and serve to expand continuous forest habitat within the parks. Mowing will cease altogether, and woody plant removal will be limited to non-native species. Young native trees of species found in neighboring forest can be planted to speed natural reforestation, and native meadow grass and wildflower seeds can be planted to replace lawn until the tree canopy matures.

These are areas that may potentially see different use in the future, and are not intended to be reforested. They would be mowed infrequently to prevent woody plants from establishing. Within the 'low-mow' management category, there exists flexibility for tailoring management to a particular park or zone.

In these areas, a tree canopy with lawn grass understorey is more appropriate than a fully natural park character, but existing tree canopy can be improved by adding young trees to replace those that are aging or may be lost to the Emerald Ash Borer. Understorey tree species can also be added in order to create a more complex and diverse urban forest.

In locations with low use but high visibility, such as near park entrances, the Low-Mow Meadow treatment can be modified by the addition of significant native wildflower planting efforts. This will create a higher level of biodiversity and visual interest than simple mowing reduction.



Lawn Reduction
A large percentage of Ellicott Creek Park is currently mowed despite seeing little use for active recreation. Much of this area can be converted to use as wildlife habitat and passive recreation area.

At Ellicott Creek Park, the majority of lawn reduction will be conversion to Low Mow and Wildflower Meadow. In many areas it is desirable to maintain the ability to change uses in the future, making Low Mow appropriate. Low Mow Meadow is also recommended below power lines, where tree growth could be problematic.

Natural Regeneration areas are recommended in locations with extensive tree canopy, particularly in the western edge of the park, where soil conditions are often wet enough to make mowing difficult. Appropriate clearings can be maintained for the existing disc golf course.

Many trees in Ellicott Creek Park are nearing the end of their natural lifespan. Planting native trees can establish the next generation of park trees for both visitors and wildlife to enjoy.

With major creeks on either side, Ellicott Creek Park is an opportunity to showcase practices that protect water quality. This has already begun with the construction of the "Living Shoreline" demonstration project near the Casino building. Additional opportunities include expansion of this Living Shoreline, and potential addition of a bioswale to the Casino parking area.

Aggressive non-native plants are a concern at Ellicott Creek. As mowing is reduced it will be important to continue monitoring for new or expanding invasive species populations, as well as managing those that are currently present.



MASTER PLAN

ELLCOTT CREEK PARK - ELLICOTT ISLAND

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

- MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:**
Specific Action Items: Ex: (A-1)
- 1 (C: 4.0-5.0, P: 1.0-10.0) Preserve, repair, and enhance park Heritage Areas and structures, i.e. the Boathouse Ruins, WPA era shelters, comfort stations, and pump shelters.
 - 2 (A: 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-use, little-trafficked areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures.
 - 3 (P: 12.0) Stabilize the slopes on Ellicott Island; several areas due to high usage by dogs accessing the water are losing vegetation and thus exposing the soil resulting in the slopes eroding into the creek.
 - 4 (P: 14.0) Coordinate with Friends of Ellicott Island Bark Park to maintain and upgrade amenities on Ellicott Island. Park is heavily used and needs to be monitored to provide a safe and sustainable environment.
 - 5 (P: 18.0) Remove existing ball diamond backstops or repurpose ball diamonds. Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara and usergroups/stakeholders to maintain diamonds if there is interest in the use of these amenities.
 - 6 (P: 12.0) Continue coordination with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper on "expanding" Living Shoreline along Ellicott Creek and Tonawanda Creek.
 - 7 (P: 11.0) Restore old gazebo overlook, stone steps, and gardens on north portion of Ellicott Island. Potentially fence off this area as a scenic pedestrian only area.
 - 8 Potential partnership with neighborhood business to provide snacks/drinks at Creekside Stand, or concession stand on Ellicott Island.



- MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:**
- (A: 4.1-4.3) Improve the tree health of the park in particular within maintained areas. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (C: 1.0-1.2) Establish more dominant "gateway" features for the park, including upgraded entrance signs, enhanced landscaping with seasonal interest, etc. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (C: 2.0-2.4) Provide new interpretive signage system and informational kiosks that tie the park better into the mix with other local cultural and historical attractions.
 - (A: 6.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.
 - (A: 6.2) Remove playground equipment that is not compliant with current regulations, with the exception of the wheel barrow or other "legacy" pieces of equipment.
 - Improve overall shoreline accessibility, amenities, and features. Although the park is heavily used, most of the park's activity is not waterfront related.

Legend:

- Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations
- WPA Park Heritage Feature/ Destination
- Natural Features
- WPA Pump Shelters/ Misc. Features
- Existing Park Trails
- Park Boundary
- Playground
- RS: Comfort Station - (P) (C: 2.0) WPA Era Structure
S-1: Shelter - (P) (C: 2.0) WPA Era Structure
WS: Warning Shelter





NATURALIZATION PLAN

ELLCOTT CREEK PARK - ELLCOTT ISLAND

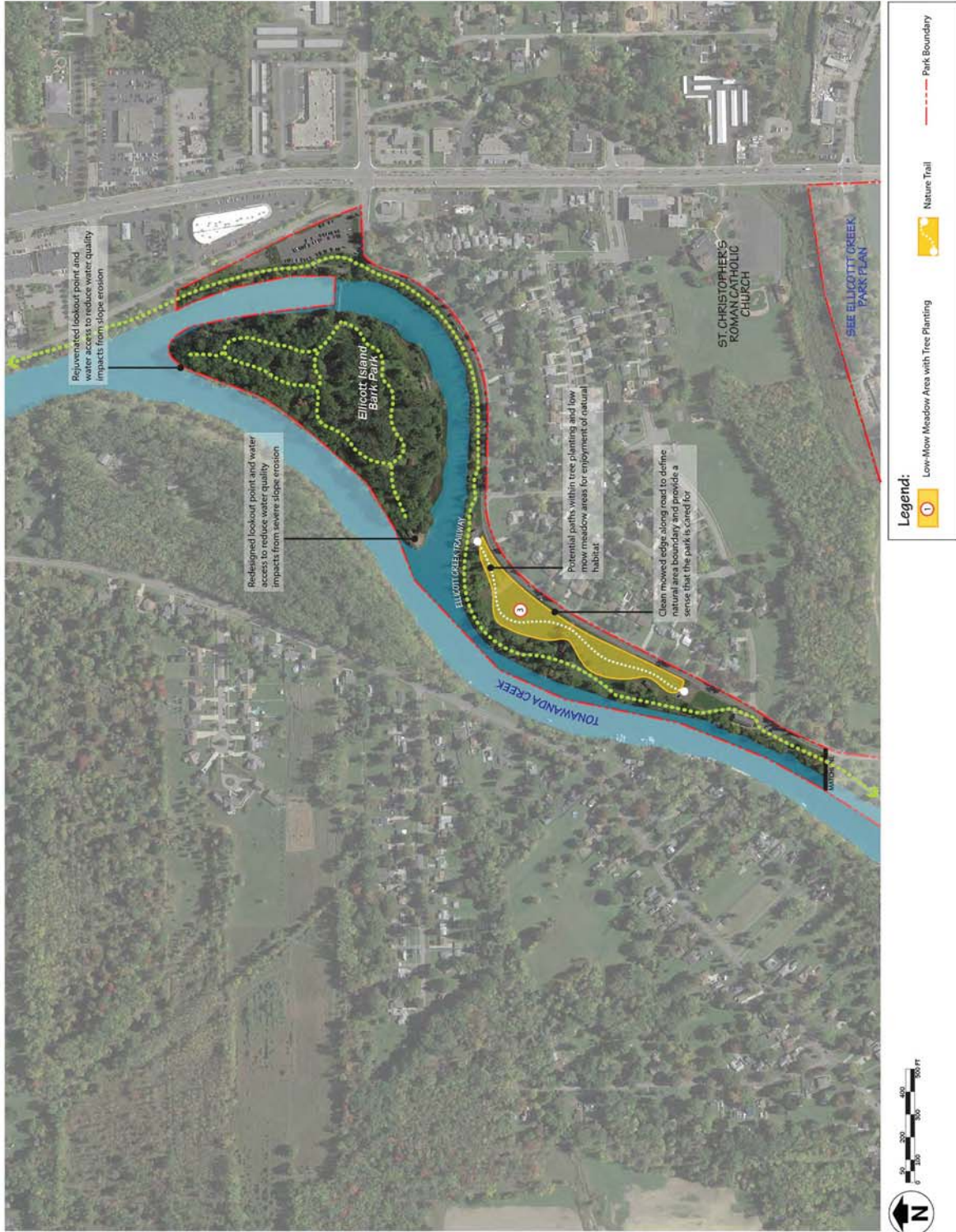
ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MOWING REDUCTION:

Total proposed mowing reduction at
Ellicott Creek Park: 21 acres

TREATMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

- 1 Low-Mow with Tree Planting
In this area, low use presents an opportunity for reduced mowing and improved natural habitat, but it is desirable to maintain open sight lines between Creekside Drive and the Ellicott Creek Trailway. Adding young trees in widely spaced clusters can provide wildlife habitat, stormwater management, and aesthetic enjoyment. The space between clusters would be mowed periodically to prevent woody plants from establishing, and native meadow plants with low height would be encouraged. This strategy maintains flexibility for tailoring management to changing conditions in the future.



NATURALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lawn Reduction

At Ellicott Creek Park, the majority of lawn reduction will be conversion to Low Mow Meadow. Near Ellicott Island, there is an opportunity to combine Low Mow with Tree planting to create a diverse, visually open habitat space. This can allow increased natural benefits without compromising visitor safety and enjoyment by obscuring sight lines from the Ellicott Creek Trailway.

Tree Planting

Many trees in Ellicott Creek Park are nearing the end of their natural lifespan. Planting young native trees can create a new generation of park trees for both visitors and wildlife to enjoy and use well into the future. In areas near Tonawanda Creek, trees can also help to reduce stormwater runoff that may contribute to flooding. Within the Ellicott Island Park, volunteers have already begun a process of reintroducing native plant communities. Continuing to support this effort can lead to gradual increase in natural habitat in Ellicott Creek Park.

Water Quality Protection

With major creeks on either side, Ellicott Creek Park is an opportunity to showcase practices that protect water quality. This has already begun with the construction of the "Living Shoreline" demonstration projects.

Areas of particular concern include bank erosion at the northern and southern-most tips of Ellicott Island, where high traffic from dogs has worn away the vegetation. During heavy rain, these exposed areas can contribute excess sediment to Tonawanda Creek.

Invasive Species Management

Aggressive non-native plants are a concern, particularly in some shoreline areas of Ellicott Island. It is important to continue monitoring for new or expanding invasive species populations, and managing those already present.

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

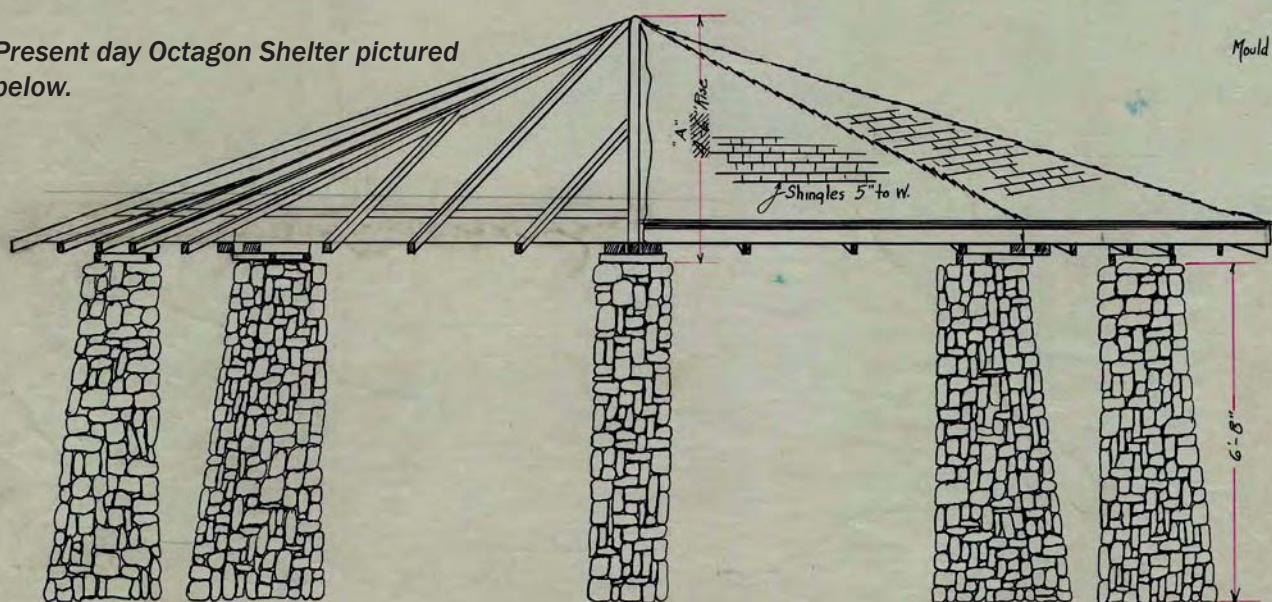
C - Capital project

Historic Structures/WPA/Other Structures:

- (C: 4.0-9.0, P: 1.0-10.0) Preserve, repair, and enhance park Heritage Areas and structures; i.e. the Casino, WPA era shelters and comfort stations, boathouse ruins and pump shelters.
 - Restore old stone picnic shelters and structures before building new picnic shelters and structures. (Consider the heritage “value” of these old park features for future tourism and visitor appreciation).
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: PBN/In-House

Original drawing - WPA Octagon Shelter

Present day Octagon Shelter pictured below.





WPA era Casino

- **(C: 3.0) Prevent further deterioration of the Casino -** including minor roof repairs, gutter replacement, soffit repair, exterior doors, window glass repair, window sill repair.
 - Potentially enhance and restore the Casino into a multi-purpose facility. Include Heritage Parks Visitor Information area /Concession building;
 - Building can be a great potential source for revenue by hosting events/parties, and seasonal activities.
 - Repair and enhance deck/overlook behind Casino.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: PBN/In-House**
- **(C: 15.0) Consider enhancements to the Friendship Center on Creekside Road;**
 - Its proximity to the Creek makes it an ideal location to be a signature park facility;
 - Enhancements could include introducing stone work with 'earth-tone' façade treatments to 'fit' better into the appeal of the County Parks structures and facilities.
 - Improve area behind building; Clear overgrown vegetation to enhance and create views, and provide possible overlook with seating areas.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: Greenway funding/In-House**



Murals at the WPA Boathouse Ruins

- **(P: 11.0)** Restore old gazebo overlook, stone steps, and gardens on north portion of Ellicott Island. Potentially fence off this area as a scenic pedestrian only area.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: PBN/In-House
- Potential partnership with neighborhood business to provide snacks/drinks at Creekside Stand, or concession stand on Ellicott Island.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Private Businesses
- **(A: 1.0)** Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. (2003 Master Plan)
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Gazebo shelter on the northern part of Ellicott Island



WPA Shelter on Ellicott Island

Maintenance/Safety:

- **(A: 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-recreational use areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Establish select zones of ‘no-mow’ naturalized areas where excess lawn is being mowed, especially along the Ellicott Creek shoreline. There are large areas of mowed lawn which have no active recreation; Areas which abut wooded areas can transition into no-mow areas with potential meadows and wildflowers.
 - Include signage like “Regeneration Area”, or “No-Mow Zone” to engage park users to learn about the landscape management technique. Include potential benefits of the practice being used such as: Increasing habitat for insects and wildlife; improved health to adjacent Creeks like Ellicott and Tonawanda Creek; Promoting sustainable landscapes; Improving water quality by filtering pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides that would have otherwise entered the water; Slowing stormwater runoff; Encouraging native plant growth; Providing an environment for observation; etc.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House**



Almost the entire park is mowed



- **(P: 14.0) Coordinate with Friends of Ellicott Island Bark Park to maintain and upgrade amenities on Ellicott Island.** Park is heavily used and needs to be monitored to provide a safe and sustainable environment.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: Friends of Ellicott Island Bark Park/In-House**
- **Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - New renovations can present opportunities to address standards in ADA accessibility. These can include for example, designing sports fields/ courts for greater accessibility and seating, improved accessibility/updated surfaces to children play areas, and potential paving of new trails for people with mixed abilities.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(P: 15.0) Improve pedestrian safety and visibility along main road(s), particularly the trail crossing at Creekside Drive; possible reduction in speed.**
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: NYSDOT/Greenway funding**
- **(C: 11.0-12.0) Restore or reconstruct the various pedestrian bridges that connect to the community.** These important linkages tie the park to its neighborhood users.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: Consultant/Greenway funding**



Existing trails on Ellicott Island



Comfort station and former concession stand on Ellicott Island



Shoreline conditions need to be addressed on Ellicott Island Bark Park



Tennis court parking area

- **(A: 12.0) Restone or pave parking lot near tennis courts.**
Repair pot holes leading to parking area.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 14.0) Improve safety and functionality of parking lot 12 (off main road near soccer fields);** reduce size of the lot, provide asphalt surface, striping, and accessible parking spaces.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Contractor/Greenway funding
- **(C: 16.0) Improve functionality and organization of Casino parking area.**
 - Possibly reduce size of lot to increase green space.
 - Provide possible rain gardens to capture runoff before it enters the creek and to divert it from Casino building.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Casino

Connectivity/Signage:

- **(A: 7.0-7.4) Establish minor gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the park at the following locations:**
 - Old Niagara Falls Blvd.
 - Ellicott Creek Road, kayak launch parking.
 - Ellicott Creek Road, pedestrian bridge near Thistle Avenue
 - Creekside Drive
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Greenway funding
- **(A: 8.0-8.2) Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park:**
 - Provide directional signs to various points of interest.
 - Provide overall park maps showing park features, comfort stations and shelters.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House



Casino signage

- **(A: 9.0-9.4) Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations:**
 - Advance signage on Niagara Falls Blvd, both north and south of the main entrance.
 - Intersection of Creekside Drive and Niagara Falls Blvd.
 - Intersection of Young Street and State Street (Tonawanda Rails to Trails)
 - Twin Cities Highway at E Niagara Street exit
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 1.0-1.2) Establish more dominant gateway features for the park, including upgraded entrance signs, enhanced landscaping with seasonal interest, etc. at the following locations:**
 - Niagara Falls Blvd.
 - Creekside Drive
 - At Thistle Ave and Ellicott Creek Drive pedestrian bridge
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House/Greenway funding
- **(C: 2.0-2.4) Provide new interpretive signage and informational kiosks that tie the park better “into the mix” with other local cultural and historical attractions.**
 - Provide an interpretive “story-line” for the Park’s history, i.e. How and when the park was developed?; What is the history of the Erie Canal through this area?; When was the flood control system established?; What’s the history behind the 3-mile island? What were some significant historic happenings in the area, or in the park?;
 - Provide interpretive signs or markers at key historic and natural sites, such as at the site of the old boathouse, etc.
 - History of WPA structures?
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House/Greenway funding
- **Promote the recreational trail system along the Erie Canal / Tonawanda Creek, including new interpretive signage and wayfinding signage.**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House/Greenway funding



WPA Pump Shelter



Typical entry signage



Ellicott Creek Trailway

Recreation:

- **(A: 6.1) Continue to improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.**
 - Provide or replenish fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.
 - Replace swings/play equipment as needed due to wear and tear.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: In-House
- **(P: 16.0) Work with Niagara Region Disc Golf (NRDG) to repair and restore degraded areas around Disc Golf Holes.**
 - Explore the possibility of updating hole locations, such that they can be easily pulled up from their location and moved to a different nearby area. (Like on a typical golf course)
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: Niagara Region Disc Golf
- **(P: 17.0) Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara to promote and improve recreational opportunities at Ellicott Creek Park.** Ellicott has diverse recreational activities including Cricket and Pickleball. Continue to promote these unique recreational attractions.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Visit Buffalo Niagara
- **(C: 17.0) Provide possible trail/path on south side of Ellicott Creek.**
 - Remove invasive species and design safety buffers on new trail from road.
 - Provide possible overlook and areas with benches to look out at the creek;
 - Path can tie into pedestrian bridge at Thistle Ave.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Greenway funding/In-House
- Continue to promote winter activities within the park.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(A: 6.2) Remove playground equipment that is not compliant with current regulations, with the exception of the wheel barrow or other “legacy” pieces of equipment**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(A: 5.0) Improve fishing access and opportunities to the edge of the canal and creek (s).** This also includes the inner pond area within the Ellicott Creek floodway zone.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Disc Golf is causing damage to the landscape in many cases



Sled hill at the park

- **(P: 18.0) Remove any remaining existing ball diamond backstops or repurpose ball diamonds.** Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara and usergroups/stakeholders to maintain diamonds if there is interest in the use of these amenities.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: Visit Buffalo Niagara/Community groups**
- **(P: 12.0) Stabilize the slopes on Ellicott Island;** several areas due to high usage by dogs accessing the water are losing vegetation and thus exposing the soil resulting in the slopes eroding into the creek.
 - Continue coordination with Friends of Ellicott Island Dog Park to identify problematic areas and engage consultants to implement methods of stabilization and protection of critical areas.
 - It is recommended to undertake a large scale shoreline restoration project. Provide alternative access points to reduce erosion and the recurrence of future problems while mitigation efforts take place.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: Friends of Ellicott Island Dog Park**
- **(P: 19.0) Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology.**
 - Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas;
 - Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;
 - Prioritize plantings for bird and butterfly habitats;
 - Designate potential native plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats;
 - The County should encourage the development of outdoor classrooms through partnerships with local schools. Outdoor classrooms can be living laboratories for local children to immerse themselves in nature and our local ecosystem.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: NYSDEC/Cornell Cooperative Extension/ECSWD/In-House**

Environment:

- **(A: 4.1-4.3) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas.**
 - Remove dead, dying or diseased trees.
 - Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
 - Provide new tree plantings throughout the park, particularly along the roadway edges.
 - Develop a multi-pronged approach to tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings.
 - Develop annual tree planting program to restore tree canopy and improve natural image of the park.
 - Apply for funding from NYSDEC for example for purchase of trees and materials and for the tree inventory.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNY PRISM/ECSWD/Forestry**



Erosion off the southern tip of the island



- **(P: 20.0) Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park.**
 - Address and remove threatening invasive species.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNY Prism/ECSWD**
- **(P: 12.0) Improve the health of Ellicott Creek and Tonawanda Creek.** Work with NYSDEC, Buffalo Waterkeeper, Soil and Water District and other local stakeholder groups.
 - Focus projects should include stream bank stabilization and erosion control, habitat conservation and restoration, stormwater management, and contaminant reduction.
 - Continue coordination with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper on “expanding” Living Shoreline along Ellicott Creek, along with additional site specific projects as needed.
 - Continued improvements to the ecological status of the creek and naturalization of the surrounding wooded areas can contribute to educational nature programs and trail/water recreation.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, NYSDEC**
- **Improve overall shoreline accessibility, amenities, and features.** Although the park is heavily used, most of the park’s activity is not waterfront related. Ideas would include:
 - Improving fishing access by providing access points to the water’s edge. Selective vegetation pruning or removal and creation of fishing ‘platforms’ which may not need to be more than a compacted stone area to prevent erosion of the shoreline.
 - Enhancing areas for viewing the creeks and canal through selective vegetation pruning or removal.
 - Promote the heritage and recreational relationship between the park and the Erie Canal through visual connections and overlooks, as well as a series of interpretive signs and historical markers.
 - Ellicott Creek Park needs to maximize nearly 17,500 feet of shoreline. Approximately 10,000 feet along Tonawanda Creek, a mile of which is along the navigable channel of the Erie Barge Canal, and 7,500 feet along Ellicott Creek.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: Greenway funding/In-House**

ELLICOTT CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	2.0	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	3.1	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Low Mow Zones” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	3.3	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Provide necessary signage along the “Low Mow Zones” to inform the public the reasons behind the practice and also to identify the areas to park personnel.	High	1-2 Years	In-House, Highway
A	4.1	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. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Prune and/or remove trees if determined to present an increased risk to park patrons and employees.	High	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
A	4.3	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. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Prune trees away from the falling structures to prevent additional damage: WPA Era Comfort Station #1, WPA Era Comfort Station #3, WPA Era Creekside Station	High	1-2 Years	In-House, Forestry
A	6.1	Continue to improve playground safety	Provide or replenish engineered fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.	High	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	10.0	Promote alternative transportation to the park.	Coordinate with the Town of Tonawanda, Parks & Trails NY, NYS Canal Corporation and NYSPRHP to promote Erie Canalway Trail project from City of Tonawanda line along Creekside Dr to the park	High	Ongoing	NA

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



ELLICOTT CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of the Casino - including minor roof repairs, gutter replacement, soffit repair, exterior doors, window glass repair, window sill repair. Design and construct improvements to manage storm water on the north side of the structure.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to perform repairs and storm water mitigation	High	3-5 Years	\$22,000
C	4.8	Shelter #33 - Potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	High	1-2 Years	\$10,000
C	5.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Creekside Station. Replace missing section of roof on south side of concession stand including replacement of deteriorated footing and missing column	Engage contractor to perform repairs	High	1-2 Years	\$25,000
C	6.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Comfort Station #1. Repair roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	High	3-5 Years	\$7,500
C	7.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Comfort Station #3. Repair roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	High	3-5 Years	\$7,500
C	10.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following picnic shelters:	Engage contractor to perform repairs	High	3-5 Years	X
C	10.1	Shelter #14 - Potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	High	1-2 Years	\$10,000
P	12.0	Stabilize the slopes on Ellicott Island. Several areas along the shoreline of Ellicott Island are heavily used by dogs to access the water, the vegetation in these areas has been destroyed exposing the soil resulting in the slopes eroding into the creek.	Coordinate with bark park users to determine the methods, i.e. geotextile fabrics or terracing, to be implemented to stabilize the slopes considering the primary users are dogs. Restrict access on a rotational basis to eroded areas through fencing allowing areas to regenerate.	High	Ongoing	\$35,000

ELLICOTT CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	14.0	Maintain and upgrade amenities on Ellicott Island. Park is heavily used and needs to be monitored to provide a safe and sustainable environment.	Coordinate with Bark park group to close park when necessary to perform repairs and improvements to structures, trails, and other features.	High	Ongoing	Partner
P	16.0	Work with Niagara Region Disc Golf (NRDG) to repair and restore degraded areas around Disc Golf Holes. Explore the possibility of updating hole locations, such that they can be easily pulled up from their location and moved to a different nearby area.	Coordinate with Niagara Region Disc Golf	High	1-2 Years	\$10,500
P	19.0	Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas; Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;	Designate potential native pollinator plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats.	High	Ongoing	Partner
P	20.0	Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park. Address and remove threatening invasive species.	Coordinate with WNY Prism, ECSWD, and others.	High	Ongoing	Partner
A	4.2	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.	Develop an annual tree planting program.	Medium	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	7.0	Establish Minor Gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the park at the following locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	7.1	Old Niagara Falls Blvd	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	7.2	Ellicott Creek Road, kayak launch parking	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House

KEY:

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

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

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ELLICOTT CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	7.3	Ellicott Creek Road, pedestrian bridge near Thistle Ave	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	7.4	Creekside Dr	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	8.0	Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.1	Provide directional signs to various points of interest.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce directional sign panels	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.2	Provide overall park maps showing park features, comfort stations and shelters	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce park maps	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	9.0	Provide directional signage <u>to</u> the park at strategic locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	9.1	Advance signage on Niagara Falls Blvd, both north and south of the main entrance	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	9.2	Intersection of Creekside Dr and Niagara Falls Blvd	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	9.3	Intersection of Young St and State St (Tonawanda Rails to Trails)	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	9.4	Twin Cities Highway at E Niagara St exit	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House

ELLICOTT CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	11.0	Ensure that shelters, comfort stations and buildings are identifiable	Coordination between Parks and Highways to develop and produce the sign panels.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	12.0	Restone or pave parking lot near tennis courts. Repair pot holes leading to parking area.	Coordinate with Parks and DPW	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
C	2.0	Provide interpretive signage in the park:	Coordinate with historical society to develop copy and obtain images for the	Medium	Ongoing	X
C	4.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following WPA Era picnic shelters	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	X
C	4.1	Shelter #4 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	4.10	Shelter #35 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	4.2	Shelter #7 - Replace concrete slab	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	4.3	Shelter #8 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	4.4	Shelter #9 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	4.5	Shelter #26 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	4.6	Shelter #28 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	4.7	Shelter #31 - Replace concrete slab	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$6,600
C	4.9	Shelter #34 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$15,000
C	8.0	Prevent Further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #1 (near Niagara Falls Blvd). Repair or replace roof.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	Ongoing	\$7,500

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ELLICOTT CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	9.0	Prevent Further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #2 (on island). Repair or replace roof.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	Ongoing	\$7,500
C	10.2	Shelter #25 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	12.0	Improve safety on pedestrian bridge over Ellicott Creek near flume area. Replace bridge decking, replace railing system, reconstruct bridge approaches to comply with ADA	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$22,000
C	14.0	Improve safety and functionality of Parking Lot 12, reduce size of lot, provide asphalt surface, striping, accessible parking spaces	Engage a consult to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	6-10 Years	\$33,000
P	1.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following WPA Era picnic shelters:	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Medium	6-10 Years	X
P	1.1	Shelter #6 - Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Medium	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	1.2	Shelter #7 – Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Medium	6-10 Years	\$15,000
P	2.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Creekside Station. Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Medium	6-10 Years	\$15,000
P	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Comfort Station #1. Remove vines from stones and siding, repoint mortar, replace rotting wood timbers	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Medium	6-10 Years	\$15,000
P	4.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Comfort Station #3. Repoint mortar, reconstruction fountain on front side of structure	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Medium	6-10 Years	\$15,000

ELLICOTT CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	5.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Comfort Station #5. Repoint mortar, replace rotting wood timbers	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Medium	6-10 Years	\$15,000
P	13.0	Expand "Living Shoreline" along Ellicott Creek	Continue coordination with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper to develop additional projects along the banks of Ellicott Creek.	Medium	Ongoing	\$75,000
P	15.0	Improve pedestrian safety and visibility along main road(s), particularly the trail crossing at Creekside Drive; possible reduction in speed.	Coordinate with the Town of Tonawanda and NYSDOT	Medium	3-5 Years	\$5,000
P	17.0	Promote and enhance recreational opportunities	Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara	Medium	Ongoing	Partner
A	1.0	Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places	Coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer assigned to Erie County to complete the required nomination forms and submit to a State review board.	Low	Ongoing	In-House
A	3.2	Establish "Low Mow Zones" to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Begin an educational program, through the use of the County's website, to the general public which provides information regarding the "Low Mow Zone" program	Low	3-5 Years	In-House
A	5.0	Improve safety and access for anglers along Tonawanda Creek and Ellicott Creek by providing stable areas of either crushed stone or asphalt millings along the shoreline.	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements	Low	6-10 Years	In-House
A	6.2	Improve playground safety	Remove playground equipment that is not compliant with current regulations, with the exception of the wheel barrow or other "legacy" pieces of equipment	Low	Ongoing	In-House
C	1.0	Establish Enhanced Gateways for the park at the following locations:	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	X

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ELLICOTT CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	1.1	Niagara Falls Boulevard	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,800
C	1.2	Creekside Drive	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,800
C	2.1	Casino on Ellicott Creek	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.2	Boathouse on Ellicott Island	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.3	Creation of Ellicott Island as part of Erie Canal	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.4	History of WPA structures	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	11.0	Improve safety on pedestrian bridge over Ellicott Creek near Thistle Ave.	Engage a consultant to determine if existing railings can be modified to be brought into compliance, or if a new railing system is required. Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,500
C	13.0	Reconstruct Grill #2 (near Shelter #26)	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	15.0	Consider enhancements to the Friendship Center on Creekside Road; Enhancements could include introducing stone work with 'earth-tone' façade treatments to 'fit' better into the appeal of the County Parks structures and facilities.	Engage a consult to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000

ELLICOTT CREEK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	16.0	Improve functionality and organization of Casino parking area. Possibly reduce size of lot to increase green space. Provide possible rain gardens to capture runoff before it enters the creek and to divert it from Casino building.	Engage a consult to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$22,500
C	17.0	Provide possible trail/path on south side of Ellicott Creek. Provide possible overlook and areas with benches to look out at the creek; Path can tie into pedestrian bridge at Thistle Ave.	Engage a consult to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$15,000
P	1.3	Shelter #8 – Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$32,000
P	1.4	Shelter #9 – Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$9,000
P	1.5	Shelter #28 - Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$15,000
P	1.6	Shelter #31 –Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$26,000
P	6.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era grill #1 (near Niagara Falls Blvd). Replace missing stones, repair loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$7,000
P	7.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #1 (near Niagara Falls Blvd). Repair loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$9,000
P	8.0	Prevent Further deterioration of WPA Era Pump Shelter #2 (on island).Repair loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$15,000

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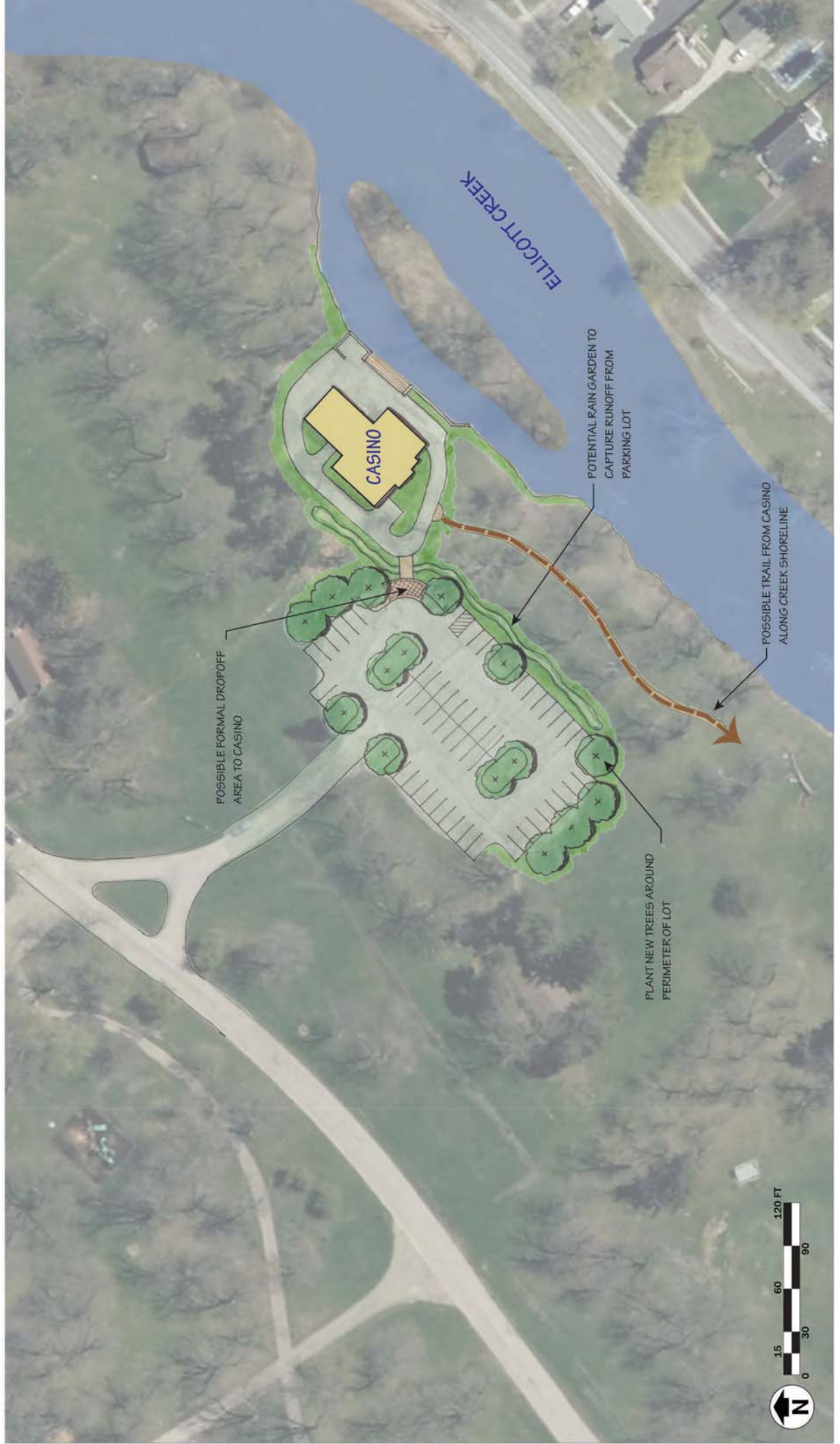
Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	9.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era drinking fountain near Thistle Ave bridge. Replace missing stones, repair loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
P	10.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era drinking fountain near shelter #25. Replace missing stones, repair loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
P	11.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era gazebo shelter on northern side of Ellicott Island. Repair loose stones, clean and repoint mortar, and repair roof.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$35,000
P	18.0	Remove existing ball diamond backstops or repurpose ball diamonds.	Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara	Low	3-5 Years	P.O.B.



SCHEMATIC PLAN

ELLICOTT CREEK PARK - CASINO PARKING LOT

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE





SCHEMATIC PLAN

ELLICOTT CREEK PARK - SOCCER FIELDS LOT

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE



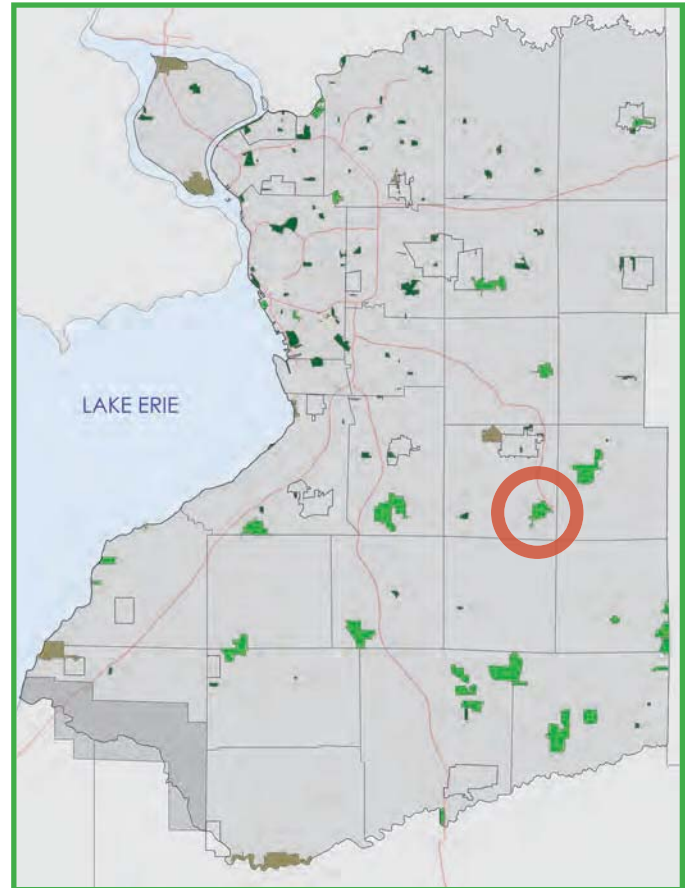
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EMERY PARK

DESCRIPTION

Emery Park is one of the oldest five parks in the County System, being acquired in 1925. This 457-acre Heritage park is a multi-purpose recreation site, however much of the park is wooded and left to passive recreational pursuits. The most notable feature and asset in Emery Park is the ski-slope and lodge right off of Emery Road. The park also features many unique passive and natural areas including multi-purpose trails, waterfalls, large wooded areas, and scenic views. Increasing in popularity as of late at Emery Park is the 18-hole Black Diamond Disc Golf Course constructed by the Niagara Region Disc Golf Association (2008).

A major ravine cuts through the park from the southwest to northeast corners of the park, which helps to define the park's impressive sloping topography and rugged, natural character. This tributary flows into Cazenovia Creek, which cuts through the northeastern corner of the park property. The northeast section is an undeveloped forested area, a natural buffer against the acoustical and visual problems associated with the adjacent Route 400 (a four-lane expressway). The Richardson Cottage, a well-known picnic site, is located on the opposite side of Cazenovia Creek, and is accessed separately off of the Route 400 / NY16 split. The natural character of Emery Park is some of the County System's most beautiful and finest.



Park Location Map: Emery Park is located in the Town of Aurora off of Emery Road



WPA era historic pump shelter

PARK SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

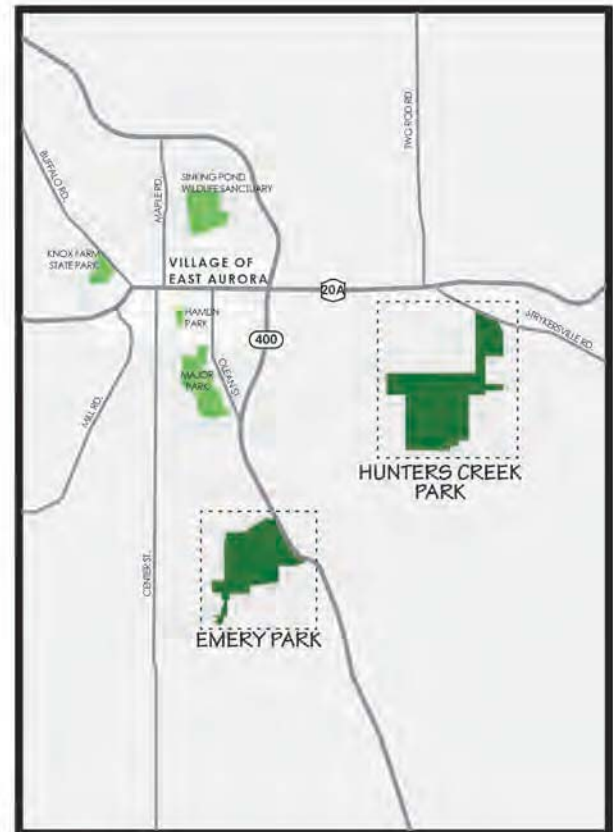
- **Preserve and enhance Heritage areas and special park features**, including: Repoint/clean stonework where needed, replace missing stones, replace or repair roofs, make improvements to concrete/asphalt floors, etc. to all historic structures and facilities, specifically many shelters on the southern side of the park.
- **Reduce lawn mowing** to provide more natural setting in non-use, little-trafficked areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures.
- **Potential relocation of Disc golf holes** to prevent continuous damage to natural areas and wildlife from excessive foot traffic.

PARK AND AREA HISTORY

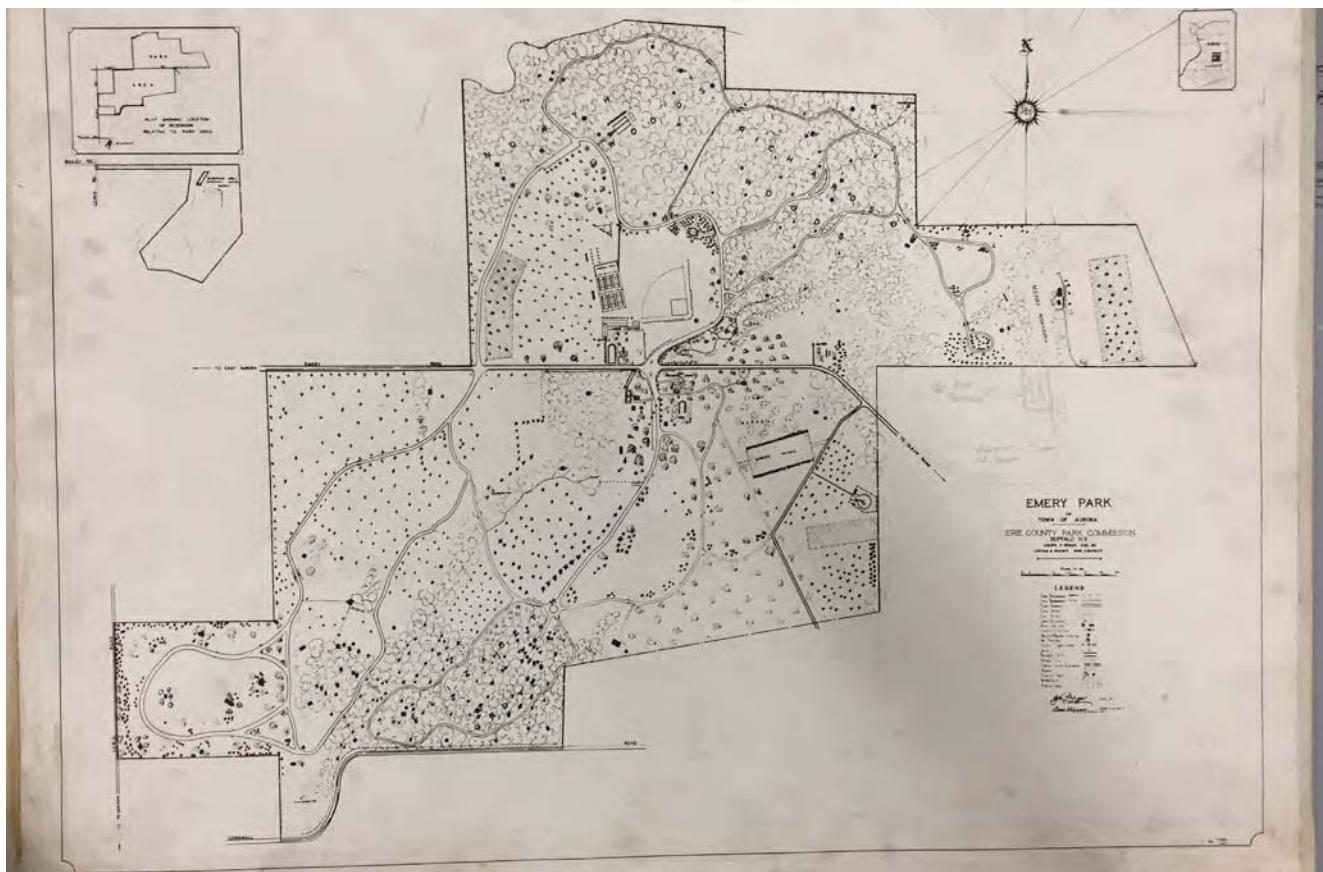
The Emery Inn and barn structures were part of the original Josiah Emery Farmstead. The Emery family lived on and worked on this land for over one hundred years since the early 1800's. In 1925, the Parks Commission of Erie County purchased the land from Helen B. Emery, forming Emery Park. Many of the original park structures and features still remain from the early development years of the late 20's and early 30's when WPA crews worked to establish this unique park. The historic Emery home was converted to a museum and restaurant after 1926, and has unfortunately fell into disrepair and was taken down.. Despite this, Emery Park has evolved into a 490-acre park of unmatched natural beauty.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Emery Park is located in the Town of Aurora adjacent to the hamlet of South Wales. It is located approximately 18 miles south of Downtown Buffalo and is just a few miles south of the Village of East Aurora. The area surrounding Emery Park is largely rural in character with only a scattering of residences throughout the countryside, with the exception



Local context map



1940's master plan



Historic photo near Rock Garden

of the thickly settled hamlet of South Wales. One of the area's notable institutions, the Gow School, is only a short walk away from the park. The Park is easily accessed from the end of the Route 400 Expressway where it transitions to Route 16 in South Wales. Direct access to the park is via Emery Road, which bisects the park in an east-west direction.

RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

Emery Park is situated in a relatively rural setting, with few other recreational facilities around. However, given the low population in the area, the recreational demand is not as high as the more urban facilities, and much of the focus of Emery Park has remained passive in nature.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Emery Park is characterized by a combination of gently rolling grassy areas, forested slopes, and steep rocky gorges. Streams and waterfalls are major natural assets of the park. The park's relatively remote location lends itself well to an emphasis on naturalization and passive recreation. More central areas, nearer to major park buildings, are currently most used. It may be possible over time to consolidate park shelters so that maintenance becomes simpler, and mowed clearings less needed.

Some park roads, particularly in the north section of the park, have already been closed to vehicles. It may be possible to transform more roads into nature trails, thereby increasing recreational value and reducing environmental impacts, including those related to road maintenance. If possible, unneeded pavement should



Playground Emery Park



Quoit Beds Emery Park



View from Elizabeth Grove - Emery Park

be removed so as to reduce erosion due to runoff. Throughout the park, there are areas of lawn that can be converted to natural forest or meadow habitat. Many of these are small roadside pockets that serve no current purpose. Invasive species are not a serious issue at Emery Park at this time. Careful surveillance response is important in preventing non-native establishment and maintaining the high quality of the park's natural spaces. There are significant areas of erosion and soil compaction in the north forest section associated with disc golf holes.

RECENT PARKS DEPARTMENT PROJECTS / IMPROVEMENTS

The 2012-2017 Capital Improvements within Emery Park totaled \$1,762,760. Recent projects included:

- Stohrer's Lodge – Replaced roof, windows and doors, painting and associated carpentry.
- Maintenance Buildings – Replaced two roofs (including abatement) and windows on building.
- General repair/improvements to parking lots and roadways.
- Shelter #12 – WPA Era Stone Structure renovated utilizing existing stone ends, including new roof and concrete floor.
- Building demolition – 5 structures removed
- Demolished and removed Emery Inn.
- 6 Shelters – Complete roof tear-offs, creation of suitable parking areas, masonry/concrete work, new truss's, etc.
- Richardson Cottage and Shelter – New roofs, extensive foundation repairs on cottage, complete remodel inside and out, new blacktop road and parking area installed.
- Japanese Garden Shelter repurposed into pergola.
- Improvements to Storage Building.
- New guardrails installed near Ski Lodge.
- Installing magic carpet at Emery Park ski lift (2018)



Pump shelter with hole in the roof



Old set of swings in the woods



Emery Ski Lodge



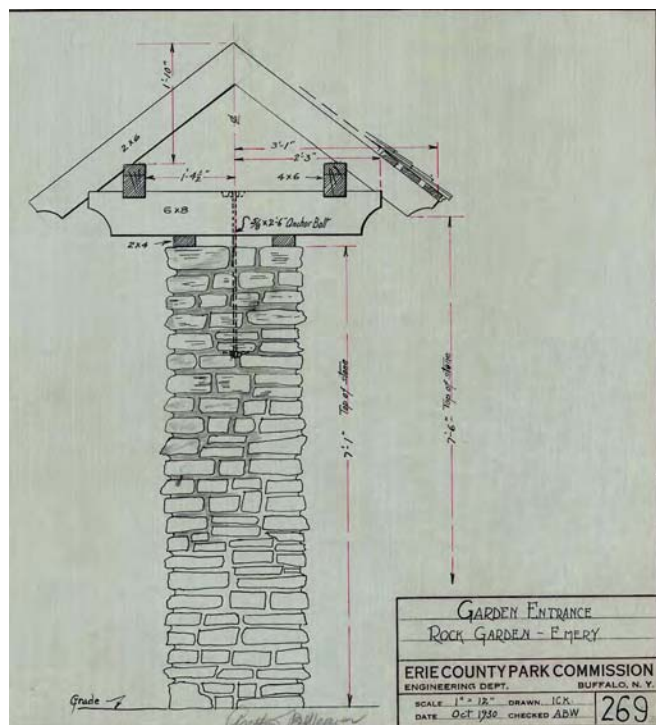
WPA Pump Shelter

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- The park is showing deterioration in its older, historic stone structures.
- There is a lack of directional and interpretive signage highlighting the wonderful park structures and natural features.
- Currently, most of the open space in the park is mowed, including areas that are beyond the recreational use areas.
- Better linkages should be made within the park between the northern and southern sections of the park, on either side of Emery Road.
- There is an apparent underutilization of some of the park facilities.
- There are numerous outdated play structures that do not meet current safety or accessibility codes.
- Many shelters on south side of the park are seeing deterioration and vandalism.
- Erosion concerns along creeks.
- All shelters should be numbered. Many are missing numbers.
- Many Disc Golf holes are causing damage and issues in natural wooded areas of park.
- Lack of additional recreational opportunities.
- Difficult to find/locate trails; Lack of formal trailheads
- Tennis courts are showing wear
- Emerging invasive species



Repurposed pergola structure



Original drawing for the Garden Entrance at the Rock Garden; The same structure is photographed on the right





MASTER PLAN EMERY PARK (NORTH)

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: *Specific Action Items - Ex. (A1)*

- 1 (C: 4.0-5.0; P: 1.0-6.0) Preserve and enhance "Heritage" areas and special park features, including: Restore historic stone structures, shelters, buildings and stone arch bridge, stone gateways, steps and bridges, old stone incinerators, etc.
- 2 Preserve and enhance stone shelters adjacent to tennis courts. Repurpose as potential interpretive stations highlighting park history and the ecology of the park.
- 3 (A: 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-use, little-trafficked areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures.
- 4 (A: 16.0) Undertake roadway repairs and repaving throughout the park. Improve ditches and culverts wherever necessary. If roads are deemed not needed due to shelter removal, etc., they can be maintained as "trail only" path.
- 5 (C: 13.0) Improve safety along northerly gorge/ravine trail system; i.e. setbacks and permanent railings. Provide new scenic overlook at falls.
- 6 (A: 10.0) Although Emery Road cuts the park in half, establish a smoother, "seamless" transition between the north side and the south side of the park.
- 7 (A: 15.0) Improve or replace fences along Emery Road - Repair or replace entrance gates.
- 8 (C: 11.0) Provide access to waterfall area off of Richardson Road near shelter 100.
- 9 Enhance viewing opportunities to many of Emery Park's scenic, historic and natural features, including the impressive ravines and remote rugged terrain.
- 10 (P: 7.0) Potential relocation of disk golf holes to prevent continuous damage to natural areas and wildlife. Possibly shift some holes away from wooded areas into already mowed lawn areas.



Legend:

- Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations
- WPA Park Heritage Feature/Destination
- Natural Features
- WPA Pump Shelters/Misc. Features
- Existing Park Trails
- Park Boundary
- Playground

CS-A Comfort Station - (W) CS-A WPA Les Sculpture
CS-B Comfort Station - (W) CS-B WPA Les Sculpture
WS - Warming Shelter

- 1 Repurpose or restore baseball diamond based on usage and partnership opportunities.
 - 2 (C: 6.0) Tennis courts should be resurfaced and restriped. There are currently 6 tennis courts; Explore the potential to provide additional recreational opportunities like a multipurpose sports court for basketball and pickleball.
 - 3 Improve fishing access and opportunities to the edge of Cazenovia Creek and possibly the old park reservoir.
 - 4 (C: 9.0-9.4) Improve and formalize key parking areas; Reduce parking lot surface and increase green space if possible. If drainage concerns exist, provide potential rain gardens to capture stormwater. Potential parking areas include:
 - o Ski Lodge parking lot
 - o Ski Lift parking lot
 - o Parking area at Arbor Garden
 - o Stohrer's Lodge Lot
- MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:**
- (A: 4.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees.
 - (C: 2.0-2.5) Provide interpretive signage in the park; Provide an interpretive "story-line" for the Park's geological and post-settlement history.
 - Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)
 - (A: 6.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.
 - (A: 6.2) Improve playground facilities throughout the park.
 - (A: 8.0-8.4) Provide consistent wayfinding signage and directional signage within the park.



NATURALIZATION PLAN EMERY PARK - NORTH

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

TOTAL PARK MOWING REDUCTION:

Natural Regeneration: 12.5 acres
Low-Mow Meadow: 3 acres
Wildflower Meadow: 5 acres
Total: ~20.5 acres

TREATMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

- 1 Natural Regeneration**
In these areas, which are currently mowed lawn, natural forests will be allowed to develop. In most cases, suggested natural regeneration areas are adjacent to existing forest, and serve to expand continuous forest habitat within the parks. Mowing will cease altogether, and woody plant removal will be limited to non-native species. Young native trees of species found in neighboring forest can be planted to speed natural reforestation, and native meadow grass and wildflower seeds can be planted to replace lawn until the tree canopy matures.

- 2 Low-Mow**
These are areas that may potentially see different use in the future, and are not intended to be reforested. They would be mowed infrequently to prevent woody plants from establishing. Within the "low-mow" management category, there exists flexibility for tailoring management to a particular park or zone.

- 3 Wildflower Meadow**
In locations with low use but high visibility, such as near park entrances, the Low-Mow Meadow treatment can be modified by the addition of significant native wildflower planting efforts. This will create a higher level of biodiversity and visual interest than simple mowing reduction.



NATURALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lawn Reduction

The northern portion of Emery Park is mainly forested, providing valuable recreation opportunities and natural habitat. The majority of lawn reduction in this area will be Natural Regeneration.

Transforming the little-used northernmost road loop within the park into a foot trail could increase visitor opportunities for enjoyment of the forest while also improving connection between forest sections.

Select areas surrounding the more active zone can be converted to Low Mow or Wildflower Meadow without compromising flexibility for the future.

Tree Planting

The natural forest area is one of the main attractions of Emery Park. Planting young native trees in select areas can begin a process of increasing this valuable forest area.

Forest Floor Restoration

On the north side of Emery Park, certain areas of forest floor are suffering from significant soil erosion, soil compaction, and loss of understory vegetation due to heavy foot traffic. Redirecting activities away from steep or otherwise sensitive areas will allow a process of restoring the high quality habitat that has been lost to begin.

Water Quality Protection

Cazenovia Creek runs through the northeast part of the park, and suffers from localized bank erosion and disturbance due to foot traffic. Relocating the nearby disk golf hole away from the creek may significantly reduce this issue.

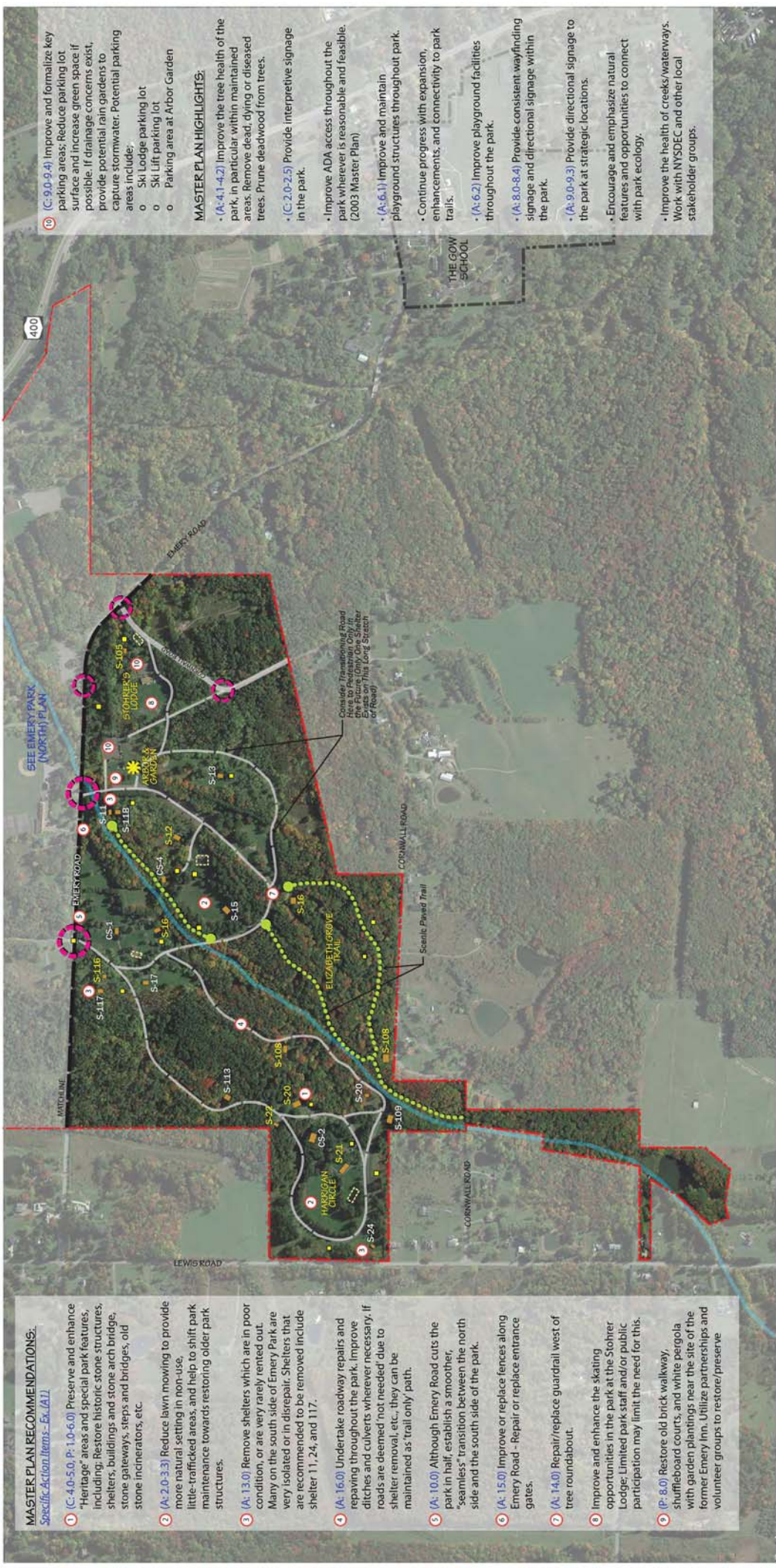
Invasive Species Management

Aggressive non-native plants are currently having a relatively low impact at Emery Park, compared with many public parks. It is important to keep monitoring for changes so that the current level of quality can be protected.



MASTER PLAN EMERY PARK (SOUTH)

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE



MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: *Specific Action Items - Ex. 4.1.1*

- (C 4.0-5.0, P 1.0-6.0)** Preserve and enhance "Heritage" areas and special park features, including: Restore historic stone structures, shelters, buildings and stone arch bridge, stone gateways, steps and bridges, old stone incinerators, etc.
- (A 2.0-3.3)** Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-use, little-trafficked areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures.
- (A 13.0)** Remove shelters which are in poor condition, or are very rarely rented out. Many on the south side of Emery Park are very isolated or in disrepair. Shelters that are recommended to be removed include shelter 11, 24, and 117.
- (A 16.0)** Undertake roadway repairs and repaving throughout the park. Improve ditches and culverts wherever necessary. If roads are deemed not needed due to shelter removal, etc., they can be maintained as trail only path.
- (A 10.0)** Although Emery Road cuts the park in half, establish a smoother, "seamless" transition between the north side and the south side of the park.
- (A 15.0)** Improve or replace fences along Emery Road - Repair or replace entrance gates.
- (A 14.0)** Repair/replace guardrail west of tree roundabout.
- (P 8.0)** Improve and enhance the skating opportunities in the park at the Stohrer Lodge. Limited park staff and/or public participation may limit the need for this.
- (P 8.0)** Restore old brick walkway, shuffleboard courts, and white pergola with garden plantings near the site of the former Emery Inn. Utilize partnerships and volunteer groups to restore/preserve.

- (C 9.0-9.4)** Improve and formalize key parking areas; Reduce parking lot surface and increase green space if possible. If drainage concerns exist, provide potential rain gardens to capture stormwater. Potential parking areas include:
 - o Ski Lodge parking lot
 - o Ski Lift parking lot
 - o Parking area at Arbor Garden
- MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:**
 - **(A 4.1-4.2)** Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees.
 - **(C 2.0-2.5)** Provide interpretive signage in the park.
 - Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)
 - **(A 6.1)** Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.
 - Continue progress with expansion, enhancements, and connectivity to park trails.
 - **(A 6.2)** Improve playground facilities throughout the park.
 - **(A 8.0-8.4)** Provide consistent wayfinding signage and directional signage within the park.
 - **(A 9.0-9.3)** Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations.
 - Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology.
 - Improve the health of creeks/waterways. Work with NYSDEC and other local stakeholder groups.

Legend:

Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations

WPA Park Heritage Feature/Destination

Natural Features

WPA Pump Shelters/Minor Features

Existing Park Trails

Park Boundary

Playground

CS-1: Comfort Station - (P) (CS-2) WPA 5.5 Structure

S-1: Shelter - (P) (S-2) WPA 5.5 Structure

WS: Warning Shelter





NATURALIZATION PLAN

EMERY PARK - SOUTH

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

TOTAL PARK MOWING REDUCTION:

Natural Regeneration: 12.5 acres

Low-Mow Meadow: 3 acres

Wildflower Meadow: 5 acres

Total: ~20.5 acres

TREATMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

1 Natural Regeneration

In these areas, which are currently mowed lawn, natural forests will be allowed to develop. In most cases, suggested natural regeneration areas are adjacent to existing forest, and serve to expand continuous forest habitat within the parks. Mowing will cease altogether, and woody plant removal will be limited to non-native species. Young native trees of species found in neighboring forest can be planted to speed natural reforestation, and native meadow grass and wildflower seeds can be planted to replace lawn until the tree canopy matures.

2 Low-Mow

These are areas that may potentially see different use in the future, and are not intended to be reforested. They would be mowed infrequently to prevent woody plants from establishing. Within the "low-mow" management category, there exists flexibility for tailoring management to a particular park or zone.

3 Wildflower Meadow

In locations with low use but high visibility, such as near park entrances, the Low-Mow Meadow treatment can be modified by the addition of significant native wildflower planting efforts. This will create a higher level of biodiversity and visual interest than simple mowing reduction.



NATURALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lawn Reduction

The southern portion of Emery Park is currently mainly forested. The majority of lawn reduction in this area will be Natural Regeneration. There are many small roadside areas within this section of the park where mowing can be reduced, and native trees reintroduced. In some areas, transforming open spaces that are little used into new forest habitat can begin a process of enhancing what is one of the park's main attractions.

In select areas surrounding the more active zones, Low Mow or Wildflower Meadow can be created in order to increase natural habitat area without compromising flexibility for the future.

Tree Planting

The existing natural forest area is one of the main attractions of Emery Park. Planting young native trees in select areas can begin a process of diversifying and adding resilience to this valuable forest resource.

Water Quality Protection

Small headwater creeks run through Emery Park. Increasing natural habitat area can contribute to protecting these important parts of the watershed.

Invasive Species Management

Aggressive non-native plants are currently having a relatively low impact at Emery Park, compared with many public parks. It is important to keep monitoring for changes so that the current level of quality can be protected.

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

Historic Structures/WPA/Other Structures:

- **(C: 4.0-5.0, P: 1.0-6.0)** Preserve and enhance “Heritage” areas and special park features, including;
 - Old Japanese Rock Garden, etc.
 - Restore historic stone structures, shelters, buildings and stone arch bridge, stone gateways, steps and bridges, old stone incinerators, etc.
 - Restore old stone picnic shelters and structures



Shelter #117: Recommend demolition



Shelter #13: Recommend demolition



Shelter #11



WPA round comfort station

before building new picnic shelters and structures. (Consider the heritage “value” of these old park features for future tourism and visitor appreciation).

- Preserve and enhance stone shelters adjacent to tennis courts. Repurpose as potential interpretive stations highlighting park history and the ecology of the park.

■ Priority: High

■ Partner: PBN/UB/In-House

- **(A: 13.0)** Remove shelters which are in poor condition, or are very rarely rented out. Many on the south side of Emery Park are very isolated or in disrepair. Shelters that are recommended to be removed include shelter 11, 24, and 117.

■ Priority: Medium

■ Partner: In-House

- **(C: 2.0-2.5) Provide interpretive signage in the park:**
Provide an interpretive “story-line” for the Park’s geological and post-settlement history;
 - i.e. How and when the ravines were formed?; When was the area first settled?; What’s the history behind the Emery Inn and the farm structures? What were some significant historic happenings in the area, or in the park?; When were the old stone structures built?; etc.
 - Harrigan’s Circle; i.e. How did it get the name? Who is Harrigan?; Hard to interpret exactly where Harrigan’s Circle is for average park user.
 - Geology and ravine formation
 - History of the Emery Family
 - History of WPA structures
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **Develop framework/design guidelines for the future construction and restoration of picnic shelters.** Many shelters are of different colors, building materials and form, making for a collection random architecture/building types. Some do not fit in with historic WPA essence of the park.
 - Develop more shelters like the recent renovations of Shelter #12, by maintaining WPA stone work, earthtone colors, and timber materials.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Storher's Lodge: During construction and present day facility

- **(A: 1.0) Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House

Maintenance/Safety:

- **(A: 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-use, little-trafficked areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures.**
 - One significant area to begin the naturalization process would be west of the Maintenance facilities behind the tennis courts.
 - Establish select zones of 'no-mow' naturalized areas where excess lawn is being mowed. There are large areas of mowed lawn which have no active recreation; these areas, especially those which abut wooded areas can transition into no-mow areas with potential meadows and wildflowers.
 - Include signage like "Regeneration Area", or "No-Mow Zone" to engage park users to learn about the landscape management technique. Include potential benefits of the practice being used; i.e. Increasing habitat for insects and wildlife; Saving energy and reducing CO2 emissions by not using mowers and equipment; Promoting sustainable landscapes; Improves water quality by filtering pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides that would have otherwise entered the water; Slows stormwater runoff; Encouraging native plant growth; Providing an environment for observation; etc.
- **(A: 5.0) Improve awareness of steep slopes, uneven terrain, etc. for park patrons through signage.**
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: In-House
- **(A: 15.0) Undertake roadway repairs and repaving throughout the park. Improve ditches and culverts wherever necessary.**
 - If roads are deemed 'not needed' due to shelter removal, etc., they can be maintained as 'trail only' path. Some are already blocked off like this.
 - For abandoned roadways, remove existing blacktop surface and replace with natural landscaping treatments. Or just let them naturalize on their own.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House



Large expanse of lawn at Emery



Parking near gazebo structure

- **(C: 9.0-9.4) Improve and formalize key parking areas; Reduce parking lot surface and increase green space if possible.** If drainage concerns exist, provide potential rain gardens to capture stormwater and thus improve nearby streams and creeks. Potential parking areas include;
 - Ski Lodge parking lot
 - Ski Lift parking lot
 - Parking area at Arbor Garden
 - Stohrer's Lodge Lot
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **At all designated park trails, trail safety improvements should be made.** (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
- **Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - New renovations can present opportunities to address standards in ADA accessibility. These can include for example, designing sports fields/courts for greater accessibility and seating, improved accessibility/updated surfaces to children play areas, and potential paving of new trails for people with mixed abilities.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House



Drainage issues on the northern ravine trail



Scenic waterfall on the north side of the park

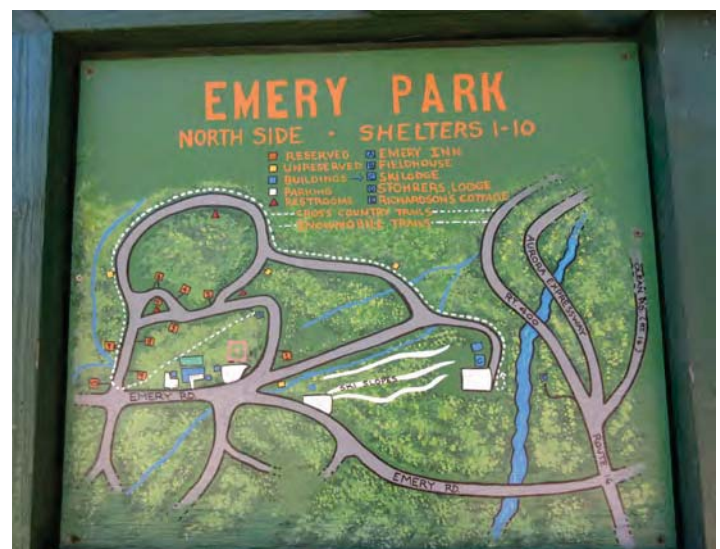
- **(C: 10.0) Repair/replace guardrail west of tree roundabout.**
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/DPW
- **(C: 12.0) Improve/repair or replace fences along Emery Road - Repair or replace entrance gates.**
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 13.0) Improve safety along northerly gorge/ravine trail system, i.e. setbacks and permanent railings.**
Provide new scenic overlook at falls;
 - Improve and enhance nature trail system throughout the park with new interpretive signage and new trail connections, including providing a looped trail near the ski lodge and future connection to South Wales.
 - Provide new park benches along the nature trails in strategic locations.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 11.0) Enhance viewing opportunities to many of Emery Park's scenic, historic and natural features,** including the impressive ravines and remote rugged terrain. Provide possible new "strategically-placed" overlook platforms and viewing areas to these features with adequate methods of pedestrian safety to give the park more exposure to the public.
 - Provide ADA access wherever possible to important and scenic vista locations.
 - Provide access to waterfall area off of Richardson Road.
 - Install staircase and railing to allow access to creek and potential overlook area.
 - Provide secondary overlook at the top of the gorge. Potentially clear brush/branches to provide scenic view of waterfall and ravine. Provide railing.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House/Grants



Emery Park entry



Existing signage



Existing signage

Connectivity/Signage:

- **(A: 7.0-7.5) Establish minor gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the following park locations:**
 - Richardson Cottage
 - East park border along Emery Road
 - West park border along Emery Road
 - South park border along Cornwall Road
 - Stohrer's Lodge entrance off of Cornwall Road
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House

- **(A: 8.0-8.4) Provide consistent wayfinding signage and directional signage within the park:**
 - Provide directional signage to various points of interest
 - Provide overall park maps showing park features, comfort stations and shelters
 - Elizabeth Grove Trail
 - XC Ski Trail
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **(A: 9.0-9.3) Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations:**
 - Intersection of Olean Road and Emery Road
 - Intersection of Center Street and Emery Road
 - Intersection of Olean Road and Richardson Road
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **(A: 8.5) Provide and install a large trail map, identifying only the official marked trails with proper distance postings, trail conditions, and user difficulties.**
 - 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
- **(A: 10.0) Although Emery Road cuts the park in half, establish a smoother, “seamless” transition between the north side and the south side of the park.**
 - Pedestrian trails should link across the road in a visible and safe fashion;
 - “traffic-calming” measures should be considered for traffic along Emery Road.
 - Lower the speed limit of Emery Road within the park.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House



Waterfall near Emery Road

- **(C: 1.0-1.1) Establish enhanced gateways for the park at the following locations:**

- Main park entry roads along Emery Road
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**

- **Establish a stronger linkage between Emery Park and the hamlet of South Wales, including the Gow School, through wayfinding signage, maps, etc.; Provide clear linkages from Emery Park to area bicycle routes and trails.**

- **Priority: Low**
- **Partner: In-House**

Recreation:

- **(A: 6.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.**

- Provide or replenish fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.
- Replace swings/play equipment as needed due to wear and tear.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House**

- **(P: 7.0) Potential relocation of Disc golf holes to prevent continuous damage to natural areas and wildlife.**

- Possibly shift some holes away from wooded/forested areas into existing mowed lawn areas. Disc golf at Ellicott Creek Park and Como Lake

Park is played across their mowed lawn areas, and result in far less damage to the landscape. Work with Niagara Region Disc Golf to redesign the course into less environmentally sensitive areas. Provide alternate hole locations to reduce compaction.

- **Priority: High**
- **Partner: Niagara Region Disc Golf**

- **Continue progress with expansion, enhancements, and connectivity to park trails.**

- Consider the design of some ADA accessible trails where possible.
- Provide kiosks with trail maps and rules at select trailhead locations.
- Provide interpretive signage along the trails highlighting flora, fauna, and wildlife.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**

- **(C: 6.0) Tennis courts should be resurfaced and restriped.**

- There are currently 6 tennis courts; Explore the potential to provide additional recreational opportunities like a multipurpose sports court for basketball and pickleball.
- Consider dual-striping a court or two to provide additional recreational opportunities like Pickleball.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: Contractor/In-House**



Disc golf usage and foot traffic causing damage to the surrounding landscape



Old metal slide



Existing baseball diamond located near maintenance buildings



Shuffleboard and Gazebo

- **(A: 6.2) Improve playground facilities throughout the park. Remove and replace oldest, non-compliant structures with newer equipment.** Consider earthtone colors in the Heritage park setting rather than bright, primary colors. Refer to system wide playground recommendations.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(P: 9.0) Repurpose or restore baseball diamond based on usage and partnership opportunities.** Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara to explore tournament and recreation prospects.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House/Visit Buffalo Niagara
- **Improve fishing access and opportunities to the edge of Cazenovia Creek and possibly the old park reservoir.**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **Consider the safety conditions at the existing ski facility;**
 - In the future transition the existing ski hill into a snow- board and sledding facility. Future safety improvements may be needed to provide the optimal conditions for these desirable winter activities.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(A: 14.0) Utilize skating area as available at the Stohrer Lodge;** Limited park staff and/or public participation may limit the need for this.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(P: 8.0) Restore old brick walkway, shuffleboard courts, and white pergola with garden plantings near the site of the former Emery Inn.**
 - Utilize partnerships and volunteer groups to restore/preserve unique area of the park.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Private Businesses/Community Groups
- **(P: 10.0) 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

Environment:

- **(A: 4.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas.**
 - Remove dead, dying or diseased trees.
 - Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
 - Provide new native tree plantings throughout the park, particularly along the roadway edges (Consult County Forester and local experts to determine appropriate species to benefit wildlife).
 - Develop a multi-pronged approach to tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings.
 - Develop annual tree planting program to restore tree canopy and improve natural image of the park.
 - Apply for funding from NYSDEC for example for purchase of trees and materials and for the tree inventory.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNY PRISM/ECSWD/Forestry**
- **(P: 11.0) Address and remove threatening invasive species** like Common Buckthorn, Garlic Mustard, Chinese Privet, Purple Loosestrife, and Poison Ivy which are starting to gain ground in many areas of the park.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNY Prism**
- **(P: 12.0) Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology.**
 - Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas;
 - Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;
 - Prioritize native pollinator friendly plantings for bird and butterfly habitats;
 - Designate potential native plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats;



Scenic trail off of the Elizabeth Grove Trail

- The County should encourage the development of outdoor classrooms through partnerships with local schools. Outdoor classrooms can be living laboratories for local children to immerse themselves in nature and our local ecosystem.
 - **Priority:** High
 - **Partner:** NYSDEC/Cornell Cooperative Extension/ECSWD/In-House
- **Improve the health of creeks/waterways. Work with NYSDEC 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:** Low
 - **Partner:** NYSDEC/Waterkeeper/In-House



Cazenovia Creek

EMERY PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	2.0	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Natural Regeneration Areas” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	3.1	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish “Low Mow Zones” identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	3.3	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Provide necessary signage along the “Low Mow Zones” to inform the public the reasons behind the practice and also to identify the areas to park personnel.	High	1-2 Years	In-House, Highway
A	4.1	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. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Prune and/or remove trees if determined to present an increased risk to park patrons and employees.	High	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
A	5.0	Improve awareness of steep slopes, uneven terrain, etc. for park patrons through signage.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	High	1-2 Years	In-House
A	6.1	Improve playground safety	Provide or replenish engineered fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.	High	Ongoing	P.O.B.
C	3.3	Shelter #8 - Potential structural issues	Engage a consultant to review the structure and determine a course of action.	High	1-2 Years	\$15,000
P	6.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Stone Bridge. Reconstruct portions of failed bridge.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	High	3-5 Years	\$20,000
P	7.0	Reconfigure the disc golf route to avoid environmentally sensitive areas.	Coordinate with Niagara Region Disc Golf regarding a new course layout. Accommodate alternative hole positions to reduce compaction / erosion from repetitive foot traffic.	High	1-2 Years	\$17,500

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



EMERY PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	11.0	Address and remove threatening invasive species like Common Buckthorn, Garlic Mustard, Chinese Privet, Purple Loosestrife, and Poison Ivy which are starting to gain ground in many areas of the park.	Work with WNY Prism and other partners to remove and address issue	High	1-2 Years	Partner
P	12.0	Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas; Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;	Designate potential native pollinator plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats.	High	Ongoing	Partner
A	4.2	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. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Develop an annual tree planting program.	Medium	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	7.0	Establish Minor Gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the park at the following locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	7.1	Richardson Cottage	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	7.2	East park border along Emery Rd	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	7.3	West park border along Emery Rd	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	7.4	South park border along Cornwall Rd	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	7.5	Stohrer's Lodge entrance off of Cornwall Rd	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House

EMERY PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	8.0	Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park: including large park trails map at main trailheads	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.1	Provide directional signs to various points of interest.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce directional sign panels	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.2	Provide overall park maps showing park features, comfort stations and shelters	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce park maps	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.3	Elizabeth Grove Trail	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce trail maps and markers	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.4	XC Ski Trail	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce trail maps and markers	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.5	Provide large trail map showing all trails at main trailheads	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce trail maps and markers	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	10.0	Improve pedestrian safety, between the north and south portions of the park, along Emery Rd	Reduce the speed limit on Emery Rd to 15 MPH within the park boundary	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House
A	12.0	Ensure that shelters, comfort stations and buildings are identifiable	Coordination between Parks and Highways to develop and produce the sign panels.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	13.0	Remove shelters which are in poor condition, or are very rarely rented out. Many on the south side of Emery Park are very isolated or in disrepair.	Shelters that are recommended to be removed include shelter 11, 24, and 117.	Medium	Ongoing	In-House
A	15.0	Undertake roadway repairs and repaving throughout the park. Improve ditches and culverts wherever necessary.	For abandoned roadways, remove existing blacktop surface and replace with natural landscaping treatments. Or just let them deteriorate on their own.	Medium	Ongoing	In-House
C	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following WPA Era picnic shelters	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	X

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



EMERY PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	3.1	Amphitheater Shelter - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.2	Shelter #105 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.4	Shelter #16 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	3.5	Shelter #23 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	4.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Quoit Bed Shelters, 5 structures. Replace roofs	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$12,500
C	6.0	Seal and stripe (6) tennis courts	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$4,800
C	7.0	Improve pedestrian safety along Emery Rd. Construct high visibility cross-walks, advance warning and crosswalk signage.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	3-5 Years	\$5,700
C	8.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following picnic shelters:	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	X
C	8.2	Shelter #11 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	8.3	Shelter #13 - Replace concrete slab	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	8.4	Shelter #20 - Replace roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$10,000
C	9.0	Improve and formalize key parking areas; Reduce parking lot surface and increase green space if possible. If drainage concerns exist, provide potential rain gardens to capture stormwater and thus improve nearby streams and creeks. Potential parking areas include;	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	6-10 Years	X
C	9.1	Ski Lodge parking lot	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	6-10 Years	\$30,000

EMERY PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	9.2	Ski Lift parking lot	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	6-10 Years	\$15,000
C	9.3	Parking area at Arbor Garden	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	6-10 Years	\$10,000
C	9.4	Stohrer's Lodge Lot	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	6-10 Years	\$15,000
C	10.0	Repair/replace guardrail west of tree roundabout on south side of park	Engage a contractor to perform the repairs	Medium	1-2 Years	\$1,000
A	1.0	Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places	Coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer assigned to Erie County to complete the required nomination forms and submit to a State review board.	Low	Ongoing	In-House
A	3.2	Establish "Low Mow Zones" to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Begin an educational program, through the use of the County's website, to the general public which provides information regarding the "Low Mow Zone" program	Low	3-5 Years	In-House
A	6.2	Continue to improve playground safety	Remove playground equipment that is not compliant with current regulations, with the exception of "legacy" pieces of equipment	Low	Ongoing	In-House
A	9.0	Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House
A	9.1	Directional signage - Intersection of Olean Rd and Emery Rd	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House

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



EMERY PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	9.2	Directional signage - Intersection of Center St and Emery Rd	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House
A	9.3	Directional signage - Intersection of Olean Rd and Richardson Rd	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House
A	11.0	Reduce damage to turf areas and reduce erosion by providing a resilient surface, such as crushed stone or millings at each shelter location.	Utilize parks staff to perform repairs	Low	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	14.0	Utilize skating area as available in the park at the Stohrer Lodge; Perform necessary improvements	Limited park staff and/or public participation may limit the need for this.	Low	3-5 Years	In-House
C	1.0	Establish Enhanced Gateways for the park at the following locations:	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	X
C	1.1	Main park entry roads along Emery Rd	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$53,400
C	2.0	Provide interpretive signage in the park:	Coordinate with historical society to develop copy and obtain images for the interpretive content.	Low	Ongoing	X
C	2.1	Geology and ravine formation	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.2	CCC and its relationship with the park	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.3	History of the Emery's	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500

EMERY PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	2.4	History of Harrigan	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.5	History of WPA structures	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	5.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era "Round" Comfort Station. Repair roof	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Low	6-10 Years	\$12,500
C	11.0	Provide access to waterfall area off of Richardson Road. Install staircase and railing to allow access to creek and potential overlook area. Provide secondary overlook at the top of the gorge. Potentially clear brush/branches to provide scenic view of waterfall and ravine. Provide railing.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$100,000
C	12.0	Improve/repair or replace fences along Emery Road - Repair or replace entrance gates.	Engage a contractor to perform the repairs	Low	3-5 Years	\$15,000
C	13.0	Improve safety along northerly gorge/ravine trail system, i.e. setbacks and permanent railings. Provide new scenic overlook at falls	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$5,000
P	1.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following WPA Era picnic shelters:	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	X
P	1.1	Amphitheater Shelter - Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	1.2	Shelter #105 - Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	1.3	Shelter #108 - Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000

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EMERY PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	1.4	Shelter #21 – Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	1.5	Shelter #22 - Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	1.6	Shelter #23 – Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	2.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Elizabeth Grove Cottage. Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Incinerators. Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	4.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era “Round” Comfort Station. Reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	5.0	Prevent further deterioration of WPA Era Comfort Station A. Clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$20,000
P	8.0	Restore old brick walkway, shuffleboard courts, and white pergola with garden plantings near the site of the former Emery Inn.	Partnership opportunity with local schools, private businesses, and other local stakeholder groups	Low	3-5 Years	\$10,000
P	9.0	Repurpose or restore baseball diamond based on usage	Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara	Low	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
P	10.0	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 potential partner	Low	3-5 Years	Partner