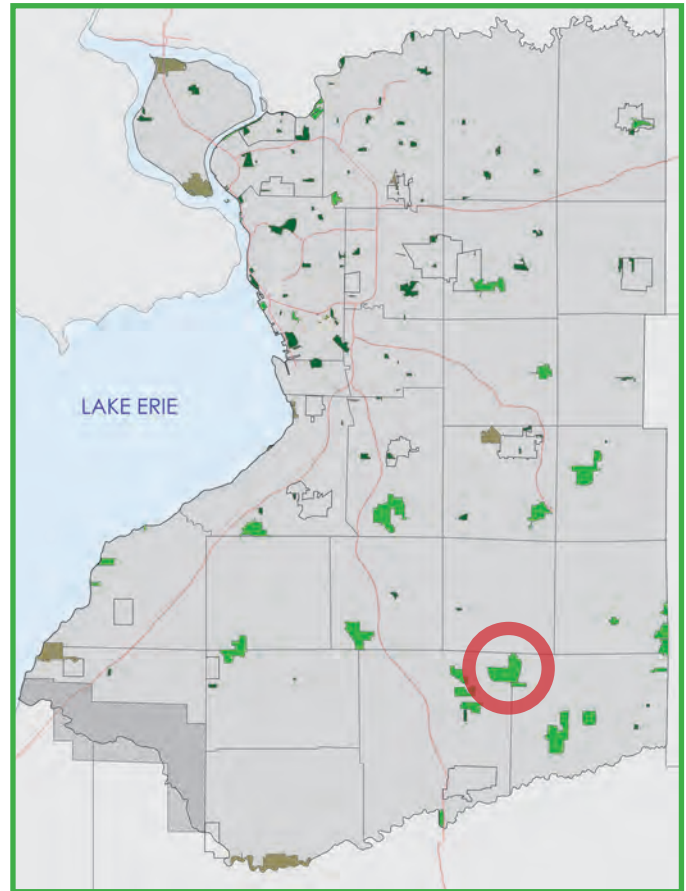


SPRAGUE BROOK PARK

DESCRIPTION

Sprague Brook Park is one of the largest developed County Parks at 967 acres, and is the only facility in the park system offering overnight camping. The park is located in the rural, well-forested Towns of Concord and Sardinia in southeast Erie County, just off Route 240 on Foote Road. Functionally, Sprague Brook Park centers around 130 campsites in three large camping areas. Additional recreational amenities are meant to enhance the camper's use and experience of the park and allow for large group picnics and outings. While some "active" recreation is offered, emphasis is on passive recreation throughout the park's vast open spaces and woodlands. As of late, multi-purpose trails through the direction and construction from the Western New York Mountain Biking Association have become a popular and integral part of the park. Mountain biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing have all become part of the network of available recreational opportunities at Sprague Brook.

Sprague Brook is a park of hidden natural treasures, from flora and fauna to incredible natural scenery along the Brook, in the woodlands, atop the hillsides, etc. One of the most impressive sites is the views to the opposite distant hillside of Kissing Bridge Ski area. The terrain is gently sloping throughout, with some severe topography in the park's northeast section. Three ponds add to the park's beauty and usefulness for park users and wildlife enhancement. Numerous trails traverse the forested areas which have become very popular for mountain bikers. The park is also a popular destination for winter activities, such as sledding and cross-country skiing.



Park Location Map: Sprague Brook Park is located in southeastern Erie County within the Towns of Sardinia and Concord



Gorgeous views are aplenty as you make your way through the park

PARK SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

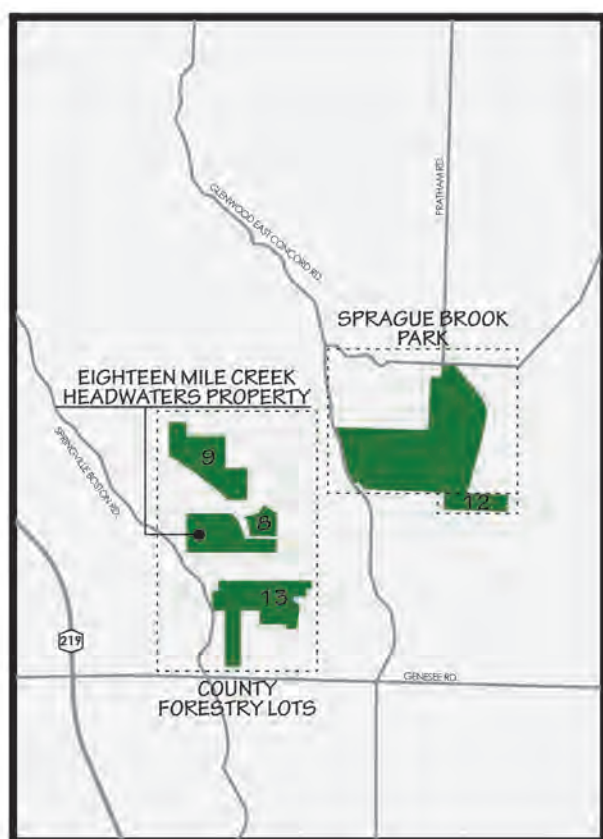
- **Routinely inspect and provide upkeep of all trails;**
 - Remove dangerous tree limbs and other potential hazards;
 - Improve drainage and divert water away from trails where necessary.
- **Provide large trail map at all trailheads identifying only the official marked trails with proper distance postings, trail conditions, and user difficulties.**
- **Continue and expand "re-naturalization" initiative in the park to phase out current practices of regularly mowing large expanses of lawn.**
 - Provide wildflowers and meadow areas near main entrance to park.

PARK AND AREA HISTORY

Sprague Brook Park was acquired by Erie County in 1963 by using state and federal aid programs to assume title to more than 2,200 acres of parkland. In 1964, Erie County bought an additional 86 acres of land for expansion in the Town of Sardinia and Concord for \$1,500.00.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Sprague Brook Park is approximately 28 miles southeast of the City of Buffalo, and is located off the main Route 240 traveling south from Orchard Park and West Falls. The Park is on the opposite hill from Kissing Bridge Ski area, one of the region's popular destinations.



Local context map

RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

Sprague Brook Park is situated in a rural setting with very little demand for recreational facilities. Rather, due to its snowy winters, Sprague Brook serves the south towns as a destination park for winter recreation including sledding, snow shoeing, and cross-country. Given the low population in the immediate vicinity, recreational demand is not as high as many of the county parks in urban areas.



Sprague Brook Casino

RECENT PARKS DEPARTMENT PROJECTS/IMPROVEMENTS

The 2012-2017 Capital Improvements within Sprague Brook Park totaled \$420,507. Recent projects included:

- Resurfaced all 4 tennis courts.
- Continued expansion and upkeep of park trails (WNYMBA).
- Aprons paved around Comfort Stations A and B.
- Converted 32 non-electric campsites into electric.
- Replaced roof on Comfort Station A.
- Renovated Comfort Stations A and B including new lighting and doors.
- Installed new fire alarm systems and doors (2018).

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- Too much of the park's open space is regularly mowed. This detracts from the park's overall theme of nature and wildlife.
- The maintenance facilities should be better screened from the public use areas
- Conflicts with ATV riders
- Some outdated play structures still remain throughout park
- Lack of general park signage, some are hidden and difficult to see.
- RV sanitary dump station is located on the right side of the park loop road, and RV and trailer waste ports are located on the left side of the vehicles.
- Comfort stations and shelters need upgrades and repairs.

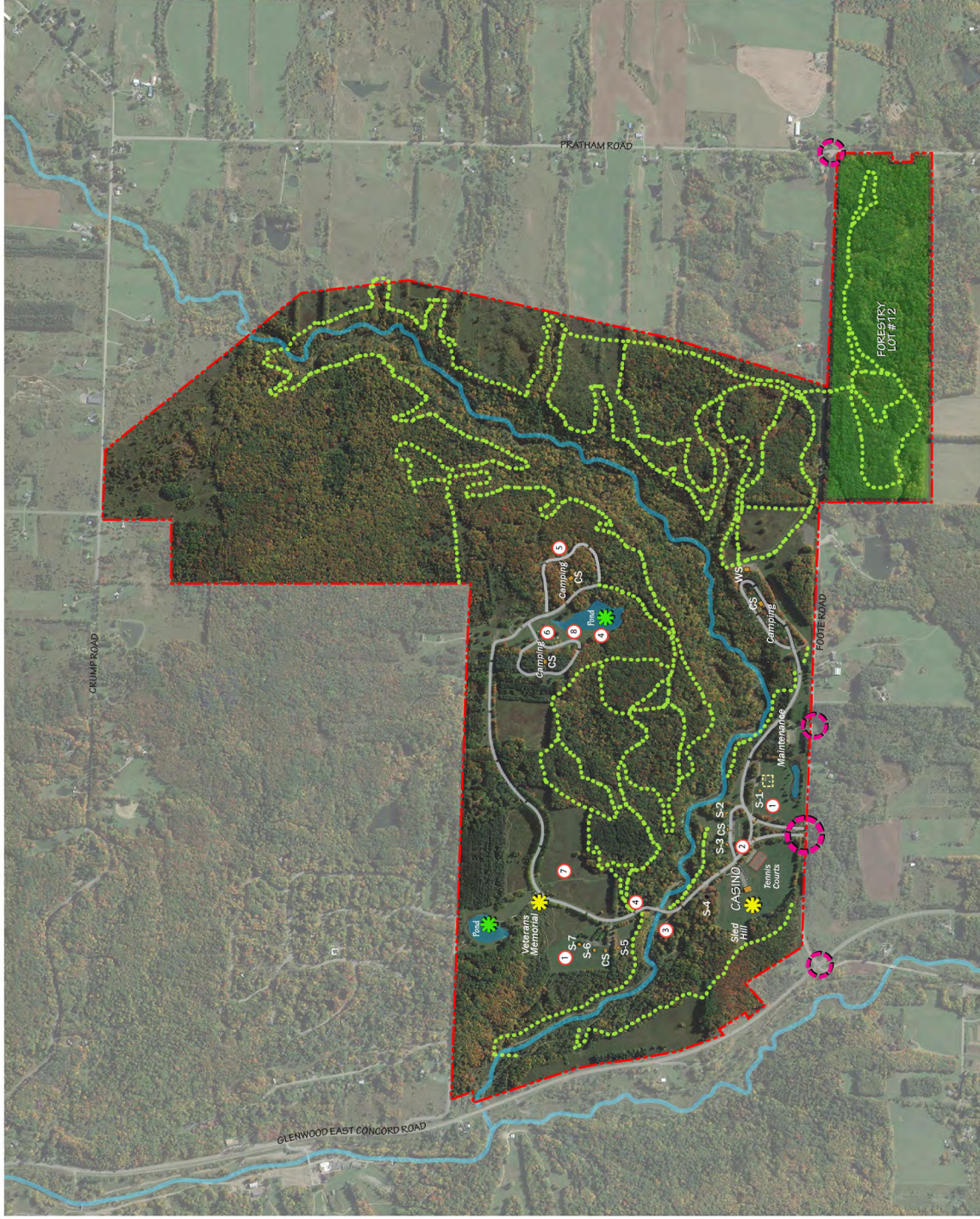


MASTER PLAN SPRAGUE BROOK PARK

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

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

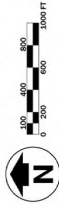
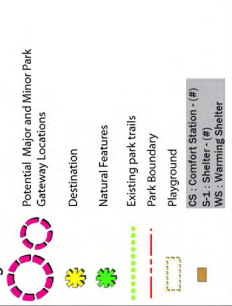
- ① (A.1.0-2.3) Continue and expand "re-naturalization" initiative in the park to phase out current practices of regularly moving large expanses of lawn. Transition the little-used lawn expanses to natural meadows; some areas mowed down once at the end of each season, and others never mowed again.
- ② (A.9.0) Repair wooden timber edging around tree rings in street medians/islands. Timbers are missing and should be replaced.
- ③ (C.4.0) Consider adding additional shelters to the park based on current rentals of picnic shelters if there is demand for it.
- ④ (C.2.0) Provide interpretive signage throughout the park. Coordinate with historical society to obtain images and other relevant content to produce on sign panels. Develop signage typology to highlight flora, fauna, and wildlife within park trails and other destinations of the park.
- ⑤ (C.5.0) Consider expansion of camp sites and facilities, mainly adding more sites to the northernmost campground.
- ⑥ (A.4.2) 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.
- ⑦ (P.3.0) Establish overlook areas in the park to highlight the impressive vistas to the surrounding hillsides, Kissing Bridge Ski Area, etc. Provide benches and seating areas.
- ⑧ Expand recreation/passive area around pond near campsites on the north side of the park, potentially with updated playground equipment, additional benches, picnic tables, etc.



MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:

- (A.3.1-3.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees.
- (A.4.1) 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.
- (A.7.0) Upgrade existing park facilities, renovate and potentially expand existing cross-country ski warming hut.
- (A.8.0) Prevent further deterioration of picnic shelters. Perform necessary repairs and renovation to keep shelters usable and safe.
- Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever is reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)
- (A.5.0) Coordinate with Parks and Highways to provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park. Overall park maps showing drive amenities, camp sites and shelter locations.
- (C.1.0) Engage consultant to establish enhanced gateways for the park at the main entrance. Develop sign model and landscape typology for each location.
- Continue progress with expansion, enhancements, and connectivity among park trails. Provide kiosks with trail maps and rules at select trailhead locations.
- (A.4.2) Remove the numerous old metal playground structures and equipment that dot the landscape throughout the park.

Legend:



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

Structures:

- **(A: 7.0) Renovate and potentially expand existing cross-country ski warming hut.**
 - If partnership funding and resources are available, provide new warming hut.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **(A: 8.0) Prevent further deterioration of picnic shelters.** Perform necessary repairs and renovation to keep shelters usable and safe.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 4.0) Consider adding additional shelters to the park** based on current rentals of picnic shelters if there is demand for it. Shelter locations could include;
 - Off main park road near bridge over Sprague Brook. Picnic tables already in this location.
 - Near campsites and pond area
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(P: 4.0) Design and provide 'Adirondack style Lean-tos',** if usergroups such as an Eagle Scout group or the Adirondack Mountain Club can provide funding and support, and if deemed appropriate in select areas of the park.
 - 'Lean-tos' could be adjacent to camping areas and be rented out for camping purposes.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Usergroups



Warming shelter



Park could accommodate additional shelters in the future



Shelter #3



Potential 'Lean-to' design - Image credit: Adirondack Mountain Club



Grouping of picnic tables

Maintenance:

- **(A: 1.0-2.3) Continue and expand “re-naturalization” initiative in the park to phase out current practices of regularly mowing large expanses of lawn.** Transition the little-used lawn expanses to natural meadows; some areas mowed down once at the end of each season, and others never mowed again.
 - Establish meadow/wildflower appearance near main entrance off of Foote Road; this area is passive in nature with no active recreation.
 - 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.
 - Restore and connect grassland/meadow habitat in the northwestern area of the park to support valuable host plants and nectar sources for pollinators and declining species of grassland birds. (Restore native plants and remove knapweed and tree rows within grassland)
 - 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.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(P: 2.0) Routinely inspect and provide upkeep of all trails;**
 - Remove dangerous tree limbs and other potential hazards;
 - Improve drainage and divert water away from trails where necessary.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNYMBA/In-House**
- **(A: 5.0) Provide large trail map at all trailheads** identifying only the official marked trails with proper distance postings, trail conditions, and user difficulties.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNYMBA/In-House**
- **All trail markings/signage need to be clearly understandable from a non-experienced trail user (hikers, mountain bikers)**
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: WNYMBA/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 improved accessibility/updated surfaces to children play areas, and potential paving of new trails for people with mixed abilities.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**



Scenic overlook within established meadow areas

- **(A: 9.0) Repair wooden timber edging** around tree rings in street medians/islands. Timbers are missing and should be replaced.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 3.0) Consider either relocating the sanitary dump station to the left side of the loop road, or adding a drive lane on the right side of the dump station.**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Consultant/In-House

Signage:

- **(A: 5.0) Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park.** Overall park maps showing drive amenities, camp sites and shelter locations.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Highway
- **(C: 1.0) Establish enhanced gateway for the park at the main entrance.**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Consultant/In-House
- **(C: 2.0) Provide interpretive signage throughout the park.** Coordinate with historical society to obtain images and other relevant content to produce on sign panels.
 - Develop signage typology to highlight flora, fauna, and wildlife within park trails and other destinations of the park.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House

Connectivity:

- **Continue expansion, enhancements, and connectivity among park trails.** Coordinate with WNYMBA.
 - 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/WNYMBA



Park signage off of Foote and Glenwood East Concord Road



Scenic Byways signage



Camping sites

Recreation:

- **(A: 4.1) 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**
- **(C: 5.0) Consider expansion of camp sites and facilities,** mainly adding more sites to the northernmost campground.
 - County should explore the feasibility of other areas where camping may be appropriate.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(A: 4.2) 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 a play event. 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. Potential opportunities exist to 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: Medium**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **Promote winter use through expansion of cross-country ski trails, sledding, winter camping, etc.**
 - Consider location for potential depressed ice skating area similar to Como Lake Park.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House/WNYMBA**



An old non-compliant seesaw in poor shape

- **(C: 6.0) Consider dual-striping one or more tennis courts** to allow for pickleball or other court sports to expand recreational opportunities.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(P: 3.0) Establish overlook areas in the park** to highlight the impressive vistas to the surrounding hillsides, Kissing Bridge Ski Area, etc. Provide benches and seating areas.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House/WNYMBA
- **Promote the use of Sprague Brook Park for important seasonal events.** Consider upgrading existing facilities to accommodate different events. Work with stakeholders and local user groups to analyze the feasibility of hosting events such as festivals, etc.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 7.0) Remove old half-court basketball courts and revert to natural area, if usage is limited.** If basketball remains a desired recreational activity, explore the possibility of consolidating courts and engage consultant to create a full size asphalt court.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Recently resurfaced tennis courts



View down the main park road towards Kissing Bridge

- **(C: 8.0) Expand and enhance recreation/passive area around pond near campsites on the north side of the park,** with updated playground equipment, additional benches, picnic tables, etc.
 - Remove existing benches which are deteriorating.
 - With resources or grants available consider placing a small facility or pavilion near pond area to be a revenue generator for company retreats, rentals, events, etc. Capitalize on the scenic location with access to the pond and nearby trails.
 - **Priority:** Low
 - **Partner:** Local Stakeholder Group/In-House
- **Offering concessions at the Casino during the winter.** (Selling of County made maple syrup) Capitalize on the many winter seasonal events that take place.
 - **Priority:** Low
 - **Partner:** Private Businesses/In-House



Small halfcourt basketball court and rusted backboard/rim



View along the pond edge

Environment:

- **(A: 3.1-3.2) 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: 5.0) 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**



Much of the park is forested, but there are many trees in maintained areas of the park as well.

- **(A: 10.0) Enhance and restore natural habitat around ponds.**
 - Reduce intensive mowing which occurs right up to the pond edge. Allow for the development of shoreline vegetation.
 - Consider planting native grasses and plants around areas of the perimeter.
 - Seek input from Erie County Soil and Conservation District.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House/ECSWD**
- **(P: 6.0) 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: 1.0) Improve the health of Sprague Brook. 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.
 - Potential projects could be similar to 'Living Shoreline' project at Ellicott Creek Park.
 - **Priority: Medium**
 - **Partner: ECSWD/NYSDEC/Waterkeeper/In-House**



Pond near camp sites



Sprague Brook



View of Sprague Brook from the main park road overpass

SPRAGUE BROOK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	1.0	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	2.1	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	2.3	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	3.1	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	4.1	Improve playground safety	Provide or replenish engineered fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.	High	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	10.0	Enhance and restore natural habitat around ponds. Reduce intensive mowing which occurs right up to the pond edge. Allow for the development of shoreline vegetation. Consider planting native grasses and plants around areas of the perimeter.	Coordinate with mowing crews on proper management and care.	High	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

SPRAGUE BROOK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	2.0	Routinely inspect and provide upkeep of all trails; Remove dangerous tree limbs and other potential hazards; Improve drainage and divert water away from trails where necessary.	Coordinate with WNYMBA	High	Ongoing	P.O.B.
P	5.0	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	6.0	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	3.2	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	5.0	Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park. Overall park maps showing drives, amenities, camp sites and shelter locations at all trailheads.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	6.0	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	7.0	Renovate and potentially expand existing cross-country ski warming hut.	Parks crew task	Medium	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
A	8.0	Prevent further deterioration of picnic shelters. Perform necessary repairs and renovation to keep shelters usable and safe.	Parks crew task	Medium	Ongoing	P.O.B.



SPRAGUE BROOK PARK: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	9.0	Repair wooden timber edging around tree rings in street medians/islands. Timbers are missing and should be replaced.	Parks crew task	Medium	1-2 Years	P.O.B.
A	2.2	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	4.2	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
C	1.0	Establish Enhanced Gateways for the park at the main entrance	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. Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$10,500
C	3.0	Improve the sanitary dump station, currently on the wrong side of waste ports on most trailers and RV's	Engage a consultant to develop plans, and a contractor to construct improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$60,000
C	4.0	Consider adding additional shelters to the park based on current rentals of picnic shelters if there is demand for it.	Shelter locations could include; Off main park road near bridge over Sprague Brook. Picnic tables already in this location. Near campsites and pond area	Low	6-10 Years	\$200,000

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

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	5.0	Consider expansion of camp sites and facilities, mainly adding more sites to the northernmost campground.	Engage consultant to strategize potential areas	Low	6-10 Years	\$5,000
C	6.0	Consider dual-striping one or more tennis courts to allow for pickleball or other court sports to expand recreational opportunities.	Engage contractor to perform improvements	Low	3-5 Years	\$3,000
C	7.0	Remove old half-court basketball courts and revert to natural area, if usage is limited.	Parks crew task	Low	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
C	8.0	Expand and enhance recreation/passive area around pond near campsites on the north side of the park, with updated playground equipment, additional benches, picnic tables, etc.	Partner with usergroups/In-House	Low	3-5 Years	\$15,000
P	1.0	Improve the ecological status of Sprague Brook 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	Partner
P	3.0	Establish overlook areas in the park to highlight the impressive vistas to the surrounding hillsides, Kissing Bridge Ski Area, etc. Provide benches and seating areas.	Coordinate with WNYMBA	Low	6-10 Years	\$5,000
P	4.0	Design and provide 'Adirondack style Lean-tos' , if usergroups such as an Eagle Scout group or the Adirondack Mountain Club can provide funding and support, and if deemed appropriate in select areas of the park.	Work with potential partner	Low	3-5 Years	Partner



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