

Community Value of Churchill Park



Storm water collection and filtration

Water is an important feature of this park. Run-off from neighborhoods to the south and Geneva Road run into south end of

the park. Many small streams flow through the wooded areas and enter the pond system in the northern half of the park. Water also enters the eastern pond from wetland and drainage areas to the east.

When the water enters the park, it travels through many wetland plants. These plants help soak up extra water to help prevent flooding. As the water moves through them, many pollutants and sediment settle out allowing cleaner water to continue moving through the park.

Aquifer recharge

As rainwater falls onto the land, or drains into the park from surrounding areas, the wetlands present help slow the water down. This helps with erosion. Wetlands are also like sponges. The water is slowly soaked into the ground and helps to refill/recharge groundwater supplies (aquifer).

Habitats for many plants and animals

Many different species call this park home. Unique plants are found throughout the park. These plants provide food, water,



shelter, homes for many animals. Several birds nest here and many others pass through to rest and eat while on their migration journey. Many turtles and frogs use the ponds. Hundreds of insects and invertebrates are present. Mammals such as deer, opossum, skunk, rabbits, muskrats, coyotes, mice, voles, squirrels and raccoons can be seen here.

Stewardship Opportunities

Over the years, the landscape has changed dramatically. Prior to settlement, the land was most likely prairies and wetlands. Once European settlers began settling the land, the wetlands were drained or excavated into ponds. The prairies were plowed and converted to cropland.



In photos taken in 1939, there was not a tree on the park's site due to farming activity. There were two houses built in the 1940s on the northern section of the park. When the park district bought the southern half in the early 1970s, the land slowly started reverting to a natural state. However, this is also when many invasive plant species were introduced into the area.

The wooded area has become infested with non-native, aggressive species: common buckthorn; bush honeysuckles; and garlic mustard. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the park district purchased the northern half. With that purchase, ecological restoration efforts began. Native plants were reintroduced in the prairie and wetland areas.

Today, we are continuing these efforts to restore the land to a pre-settlement condition. Each month, people come to help remove the non-native species, help plant native ones, clean up trash, fix trails, and collect seeds of native plants.

Learning Place

Many groups of students visit the park to learn about local ecology. The last two years, the fourth graders of District 41 come to the park on field trips. Many teachers from Churchill School next door take their classes to the park. Several boy and girl scouts visit and earn their badges.

Passive Recreation

People come to the park to hike, walk their dogs, take pictures, enjoy a picnic at the shelter, look for wildlife, ride their bike, fly kites and much more.

