



While Highlands Park has a functioning wetland, the plan is to enhance the vegetative community and expand the boundaries to best utilize the available space. This increased area will both improve the habitat quality and allow a greater buffering capacity for storm water run-off and filtration. Scattered open water areas will function as habitat for fish and waterfowl, as well as act as a trap for suspended sediments.

The existing wetland feeding Spring Run was considered a low quality wetland that provided minimal wildlife habitat, hydrological and water quality functions. Over the years, erosion control practices used by development to the north deposited silt promoting invasive cattails to take over the site. Spring Run was identified as a priority stream segment for restoration and protection as it is not in attainment of Environmental Protection Agency warm water habitat standards. The Department received a \$131,328 Section 319(h) implementation grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. The goals of the Highlands Park Wetland Expansion and Enhancement project are to replace low quality wetland acreage through on-site creation of new wetland acreage, and to provide greater wetland functions and values than exist in the previous cattail dominated wetland. Volunteers planted upland and wetland seeds and seedlings in the fall. The original bridge deck was replaced with recycled wood/plastic decking to match the new decks and increase longevity of the structures.



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