

Natural Areas Management Plan

Natural areas can provide essential ecosystem functions such as the filtering of urban run-off, the storing and slowing of storm water, and improving local air quality. Natural areas are home to native vegetation and animal life and they are vital to many species of migratory birds.

1. identify all parties involved and any land use restrictions
 - conservation easements
 - state designated nature preserve
 - donor wishes
 - municipal policies and or ordinances – including the PUD if applicable
2. identify property owners surrounding the natural area
 - are adjacent lands in a natural state
 - are there opportunities to implement practices on adjacent lands to protect and buffer the natural area
 - are there potential connections that can be made to other natural areas (corridors)
3. property inventory (maps and lists)
 - significant landforms
 - bedrock and surficial geology
 - soil types
 - hydrology, water quality, and aquatic features
 - land cover, including delineation of aquatic features
 - native plant communities
 - rare species occurrences
 - other native plant and animal species
4. identify any significant historical and or cultural features
5. identify exotic and invasive species present
6. identify management goals
 - identify habitat goals – ultimately, what do you want this property to look like
 - identify level of development for property (master plan for the site)
 - identify location of trails/site amenities/recreational improvements making sure that locations do not comprise ecological integrity of the site
 - identify permitted uses/unpermitted uses
7. create an action plan to reach management goals
 - divide property into management units corresponding to natural resource areas/native plant communities/land cover
 - identify a timeline for implementation
 - identify methods for invasive control/removal
 - identify areas for habitat restoration/methods for habitat improvement/additional plantings/prescribed burns
 - identify method to enforce permitted uses/unpermitted uses
8. evaluate
 - periodically update plan
 - ecological changes may occur
 - evaluate the health of the property
 - BMP's in the field may change
 - outside influences on the natural area may change