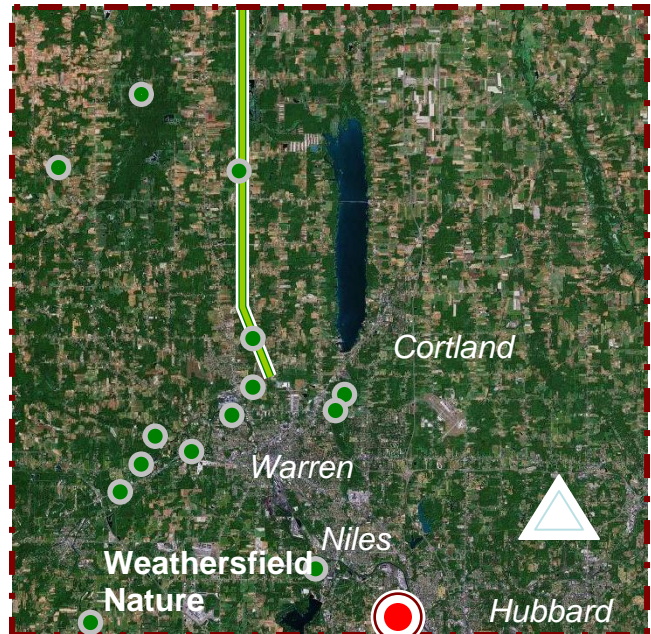


WEATHERSFIELD NATURE PRESERVE

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About Weathersfield Nature Preserve

The Weathersfield Nature Preserve is one of MetroParks' newest properties, as it was donated to the park district from Mr. & Mrs. Treavor G. Berry in 2007. The rather hilly five-acre parcel offers woods with patches of open spaces near Salt Springs Road and on the border of Mahoning County. Also, a small creek crosses the northern half of the property. Because the residential street that had once serviced the site was decommissioned a few years ago, there is no existing access to the site. However, the Ohio Edison substation bordering the property from the east has access to Salt Springs Road. Otherwise, the property is surrounded by forest and brush. Highway-oriented commercial land uses, as well as light office and industrial buildings, exist along Salt Springs Road, and a few residences exist further west of the site. Additionally, the area to the south of the site had once been a residential neighborhood that eventually become abandoned, hence the street decommission. However, a few homes still exist and a few may be occupied despite the lack of roads.



Future Considerations

Weathersfield Nature Preserve

- Almost five acres of hillside landscape featuring thick groves of trees and open meadow near Salt Springs Road.
- Formerly a developed residential site, opportunities exist to enhance natural habitat with native plantings or perhaps wetland mitigation banking if soil types and terrain allow.
- MetroParks may seek an easement from adjacent property owner(s) to attain road access.

First and foremost, MetroParks will seek to acquire an agreement with adjacent land owners in order to gain access to the site. The most sufficient access would be attained from Ohio Edison, a company that has partnered with the Park District in past MetroParks' projects. The property's small size limits the possibilities of ATV usage, mountain biking, or paintball activities,

but conservation opportunities still exist. Given the intense industrial development nearby, preservation of the site offers the area an ecological balance. Two primary conservation projects would be suitable for the site, the creation of a wetland mitigation bank and native plantings.

MetroParks will continue to explore the opportunity of creating a wetland mitigation bank on the property. As required by state law, real estate developers encroaching upon wetlands in Ohio must replace those wetlands two fold somewhere else, typically within the same major



watershed. In lieu of buying additional property to create additional wetland environments, developers may purchase credits from wetland mitigation banks. It is acceptable for wetland mitigation banks to build wetlands upon selling a credit, often utilizing the acquired funds for the development. Prior to selling the credits, however, the wetland mitigation bank must be certain it can produce enough acreage of wetlands to accommodate the requested credit amounts. Nearly all wetland mitigation banks in the nation are managed by not-for-profit entities, including county park districts. Obstacles for a successful project at the Weathersfield site include the existing terrain as well as its limited size. However, detailed investigation of soil compositions will be necessary before determining the viability of such a project along with collaboration with wetland mitigation banking experts.

In the event that a wetland mitigation bank is not feasible, or perhaps in combination with such a project, MetroParks would also consider native plantings and possible forest restoration of the site. While the site would gradually return to a natural state without further human influence, the impact of planting native trees and vegetation could speed the process and encourage a more vibrant green space within a growing commercial and industrial center.

Weathersfield Nature Preserve Implementation Checklist

Phase I - Preserve Establishment

- Investigate opportunities for wildlife and forest restoration
- Explore opportunities for establishing a wetland mitigation banking site
- Mark site with appropriate signage

Weathersfield Nature Preserve Statistics

Acreage: 4.92

Land Cover: Forest

Surrounding L.U. Industrial, Highway Commercial, Electrical Utility, Vacant or Undeveloped

Topography. Gradual incline, streambank

* Secluded Location

Daily Traffic Counts: Salt Springs Road: 20,267