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# Green Space Stewardship

Protecting our most precious lands

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Green Space Advisory Board: 2009 Citizen Representatives

*Jerry Carvey, Laura Douglas, Paul Funk, Tim Gauthier, Lynn Loeb, Lorraine McGoldrick, Dahlvin Peterson, Linda Raschke, Bill Windscheif*

Youth Representatives: *Aly Difilippo, Amith Nagesh, Leo Oriet*

City Council Representative: *Ravi Yalamanchi*

City Staff Members: *Kurt Dawson, Mike Hartner, Roger Moore*



# Green Space Advisory Board



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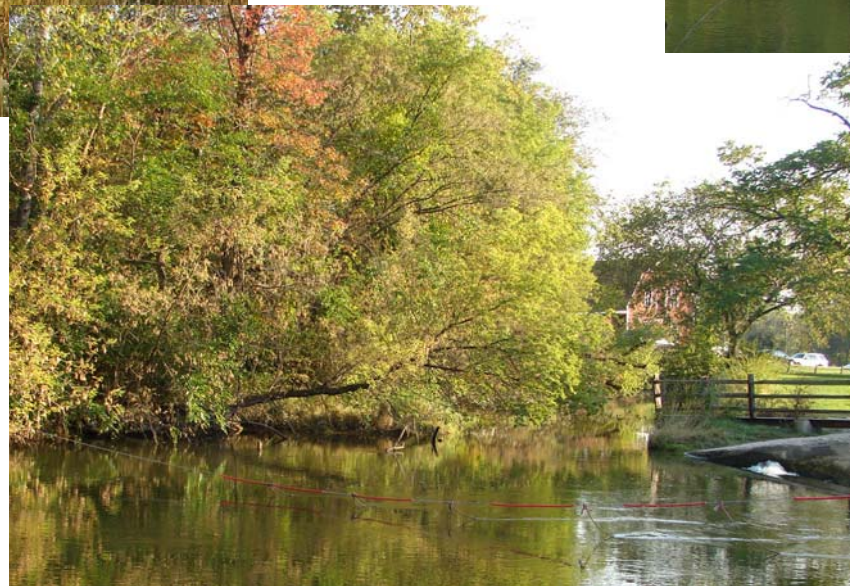
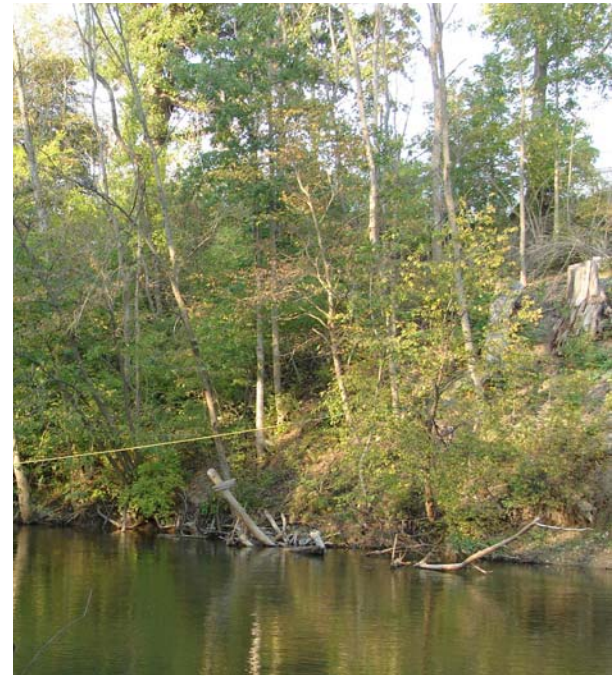
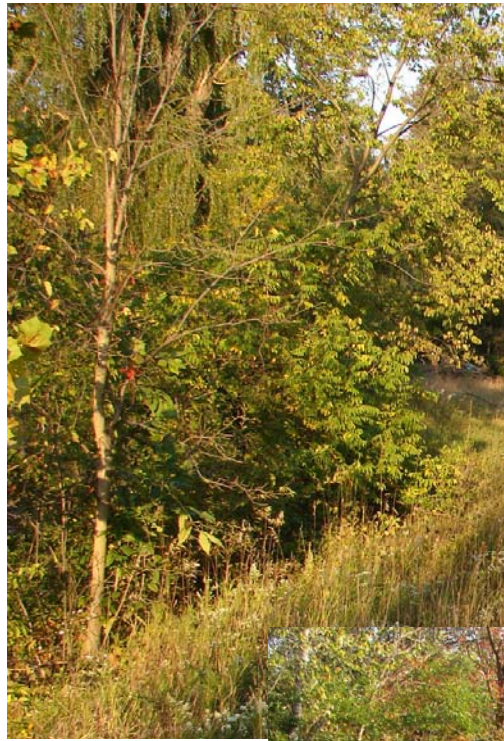
# Protecting Our Investment in Green Space

- Approval of the Green Space millage in 2005 was a smart investment that will yield dividends for many generations.
- But, like other responsible investments, our purchases of Green Space should be carefully maintained and protected.
- GSAB Charter – 2005, City Council Resolution:

*“Be it resolved that upon passage of the Millage Proposal to Provide Funding to Permanently Preserve green Spaces and Natural Features within the City of Rochester Hills the Rochester Hills City Council will establish an Open Space Advisory Board for the purposes of **planning and developing strategies, recommending acquisitions and maintaining the green space funded through this millage.**”*

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# Protecting Our Investment in Green Space

- Without active protection programs, sensitive Green Spaces are vulnerable to a variety of threats:
    - “Property line creep” which, though often unintentional, exploits public property for a private purpose
    - Vandalism
    - Invasion of non-native plant species
    - Floods and erosion
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# Protecting Our Investment in Green Space

## What are the Elements of a Good Stewardship Program?

1. A good Baseline Assessment
  2. A Management Plan
  3. Recruiting and training a volunteer staff to implement the Stewardship Program
  4. A continual education and communication program with surrounding property owners and the community
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# River Crest – A Stewardship Case Study

- The GSAB wanted to do an actual case study, choosing the River Crest property.
  - Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy (formerly Oakland Land Conservancy) was contacted to bring in the expert help we felt was needed .
  - A group consisting of Six Rivers & GSAB did a field investigation of the approximately 2 acre parcel.
  - What was found:
    - A degraded floodplain forest, with remnants of the mixed hardwood swamp still visible in the northwest portions that border the Ravines Subdivision open space.
    - A small area of dry uplands, a perfect opportunity for prairie or grassland plantings.
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# River Crest – A Stewardship Case Study





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# River Crest – A Stewardship Case Study

- The following stewardship and restoration goals were recommended:
    - Community involvement in caring for open space, encourage volunteerism on the property
    - Increase the functionality of the wetlands and forest along the Clinton River
    - Maintain the health and quality of the Clinton River
    - Eliminate invasive plant populations on the site (buckthorn and autumn olive)
    - Restore native plantings (tamaracks, black ash, etc.)
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# Implementing a Stewardship Program

- Key Components
    - People
    - Data
    - Commitment & Education
  
  - What steps are required to implement a viable Stewardship Program for Green Spaces in Rochester Hills?
    - **Step 1** – Perform Baseline Data Acquisition
    - **Step 2** – Create a Management Plan for the property
    - **Step 3** – Perform site visits to benchmark Baseline Data and implement the Management Plan
    - **Step 4** – Recruit and train volunteers
    - **Step 5** – Provide education outreach that enhances the community knowledge and commitment for the care of Green Space in Rochester Hills
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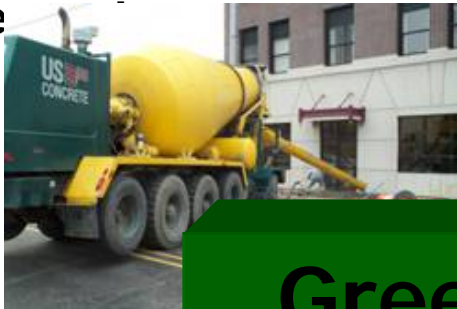
# Paying the Cost of Stewardship

- Stewardship is not free...but the cost of neglecting our investment in Green Space is far higher.
  - What funding sources are possible?
    - Grants and donations
    - Recycle Bank donations (Single trash hauler program)
    - A small portion of the Green Space millage
    - City funds
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GREY infrastructure assets are the interconnected network of roads, sidewalks, utilities, bridges, tunnels, drainage systems, lighting systems, sewer

GREEN infrastructure assets are the interconnected network of parks, trails, forests, natural areas, wetlands and waterways.



**Green Infrastructure  
is a public asset....  
and it has value.**

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# Getting the Most for Our Stewardship \$\$\$

- Utilize expertise from a nationally recognized organization such as the Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy
  - Integrate volunteers (schools, scouts, garden clubs and other community groups) into the stewardship program to encourage community participation and learning while lowering overall cost
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# Benefits of Good Stewardship

- Protection of our Green Space “investment”
  - Higher property values
  - Attract businesses and quality employees into our community
  - Enhanced recreational opportunities, a more scenic city
  - Effective, low-cost flood control and storm water management
  - Widespread education of students and adults through volunteer outreach programs – Green Space as “Nature’s Classroom”
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# What Are We Asking from the Council?

*Draft – Sample Resolution*

**Whereas**, The Green Space Advisory Board (GSAB) has been diligently working to assist Council acquiring open space per the Green Space and Natural Features Millage approved 2005:

and

**Whereas**, GSAB has undertaken a steady effort to research and present the elements of a good stewardship program to protect the City residents' investment in green space;

and

**Whereas**, the four (4) main elements of a good stewardship program are as follows:

1. A good Baseline Assessment of properties purchased with Green Space Millage funds
2. A Management Plan that meets the requirements of the community's stewardship goals
3. Recruiting and training volunteers to implement a stewardship program
4. A continual education and communication program with surrounding property owners and the community;

and

**Whereas**, GSAB recommends that a good start to a stewardship program would be, at a minimum, to conduct a baseline assessment of all properties that an interest in is acquired under this program to protect green space in the City of Rochester Hills.

therefore

**Resolved**, that the City Council concurs with the recommendations of GSAB and requests the Mayor to implement the elements of a good stewardship program for Green Space acquired under this program as funds are identified and become available.

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# Thank you





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- Appendix A – Six River Land Conservancy
  - Appendix B – Rivercrest Management Plan
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