

Existing Conditions

Setting

The McWaters Park in North Bennington, Vermont is a four-acre parcel that extends 1125' along the Walloomsac River to the south and River Road to the north. The Henry Bridge, a historic covered bridge, lies directly to the southwest. Prior to being made a park, the land was primarily used as agricultural land. Adjacent properties are mostly residential and wooded.

Topography

Three levels characterize the topography of the site. From River Road, the land slopes down steeply to the south where it becomes flat, although not level. The south edge of the park slopes more gently to the Walloomsac. Towards the southwest end of the park, the land is closer to the level of the road; a deep bowl dominates the westernmost end of the park. The northern slope has large quantities of stone. The entire park lies within the 100-year flood zone and is partially in the floodway.

Soils

The Natural Resources Conservation Service identifies the soil as 85% Pootatuck fine sandy loam, which typically forms in floodplains. The depth is more than 80" to a restrictive feature. The depth to the water table is 16-30". Soil reaction ranges between 4.5 and 7.3 pH. The cation exchange capacity ranges between 0 and 6.2 meq/100g.

Three soil tests by the University of Vermont reveals the soil as

- 1) a poorly drained clay with a pH of 7.3 from the mid-field area
- 2) a well drained sand with a pH of 7.1 from the riverbank
- 3) a moderately well drained loam with a pH of 7.0 from the grassy upper area

Field observations suggest that much of the soil is heavily compacted.

Vegetation

The vegetation on the park falls into 4 characteristic types. 1) The center of the property forms the dominant vegetation. It is a mown area of grasses and other low-growing plants. 2) The riverbank is characterized by a variety of water-loving plants, including black willow, sumac, red-twig dogwood, butternut, box elder, cherry, wild grape, and the invasive exotics honeysuckle, *Rosa rugosa*, and Japanese knotweed. 3) A small grove of cottonwoods and a few other trees dominates the west end of the park. The eastern end also has some trees and small shrubs. 4) Along the bank from the road, opportunistic plants dominate, including colt's foot, bedstraw, *Rosa rugosa*, and raspberries.

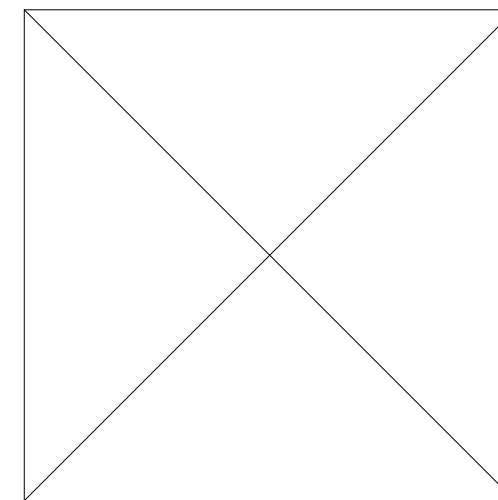
Climate and Microclimate

The area is dominated by pleasant, cooling breezes from the west in the summer. Bitter northwesterlies can hit during the winter. The river has a minor mitigating effect. The cottonwoods shade and cool the western end of the property while the rest of the park is mostly sunny. The northern slope provides protection and absorbs the warmth of the sun.

Built Environment

The built environment includes a partially completed parking area to the northwest and a picnic area southeast of that under the cottonwoods. A sizeable drainage swale divides the two areas. A narrow earthen ramp permits mowing vehicles to access the mown area from the parking lot. Another drainage swale runs east to west north of the ramp. A second and steeper earthen ramp permits access near the northeastern end of the park. Several culverts pass under the road and permit water to enter the property from the north. Below the surface, a sewer line runs from the northeastern end of the park, through the center, and to the northwest. Two manholes access the sewer line. Running through the middle of the park from north to south is a water line with a fire hydrant across the road and two water valves on the property.

Drawing based on aerial imagery from 4/7/2009, accessed from Google Earth on 1/16/2012, drawing by Ned Wood, and approximate site measurements. Not a legal survey. For demonstration purposes only. All measurements should be ground-truthed prior to installation.



1 Acre

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**Edible Forest Garden
 McWaters Park
 North Bennington, Vermont**

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Date: 3/20/12