

Wildwood Restoration Summary

Problem - Wildwood Park's wetlands have undergone a high rate of sedimentation over the last 100 years. Due to the accumulation of silt, Wildwood Lake's depth has changed from 4 feet to 3 inches. It no longer functions as a large catch basin for storing floodwaters and keeping pollution, mostly sediment, from reaching the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake.

Recreational opportunities and wildlife habitats have diminished from the lake's succession from deep water, to marsh and upland environments.

Solutions

Restoration efforts, both in Wildwood and throughout the watershed, will provide an increase in water quality and flood protection while maintaining optimal recreation areas and diverse wildlife habitat for the Park's 115,000 annual visitors.

1. Implement best management practices to restore Paxton Creek's natural ecological functions

- Joint Pollution Reduction Plan – In 2019 municipalities upstream from Wildwood Lake drafted a joint plan to address how to restore Paxton Creek. Capital Region Water, Lower Paxton Township, Susquehanna Township prepared the plan with the short and long-term goals of reducing sediment by 10% and 35% respectively.
- In 2019, the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) funded a streambank stabilization project in Wildwood. Easily observed from the Nature Center bird viewing windows, a 200-foot section of Paxton Creek's deeply eroded streambank has been restored.
- The Paxton Creek Restoration Master Plan provides a comprehensive strategy to restore the natural ecological function of the creek's southern or lower reach downstream from Wildwood.

2. Determine how to best restore Wildwood

- Feasibility Study of Wildwood Restoration - Completed in 2015 with funding from Friends of Wildwood.
- **Wildwood Restoration Design and Permitting – Currently underway!** Funded from a DEP Growing Greener II grant, this project will detail how to best incorporate Wildwood wetland restoration design with the goal of making a “shovel-ready” project. Completion date is December 2021.
 - Design concepts include:
 - a. Create sediment catch basins around the delta to be maintained every 30 years
 - b. Designate sediment catch areas for future access/ease of maintenance
 - c. Restore the historic Paxton Creek channel and stabilize a floodplain reconnection to manage where the water is going
 - d. Restore the area between the Middle Lot and Susquehanna Spillway to provide deep pools for aquatic habitat and recreation

3. Wildwood Restoration Construction (not yet funded)

- Restore Wildwood's wetlands to again function as an important flood mitigator for the City of Harrisburg; restore wetlands ability to trap sediments and pollutants instead of shunting them to the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay; improve Paxton Creek water quality, an impaired stream; native plantings and aesthetic improvements.

What do you think should happen to Wildwood Lake? Email your thoughts to wwstaff@dauphinc.org