



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Town of Normal announces ecological restoration work to begin at Hidden Creek Nature Sanctuary

Normal, IL – January 9, 2019 – The Town of Normal Park Maintenance staff will begin ecological restoration work this month at Hidden Creek Nature Sanctuary located at 100 W. Sycamore Street.

The Town acquired the property that would become the Hidden Creek Nature Sanctuary in 1998. Wood-chip paths were developed through the east side of the park, the area adjacent to the Constitution Trail, with the understanding that the area will become a “nature preserve for wildlife habitat.” Unfortunately, non-native plant species have slowly invaded the park which now consists of heavy brush that has become uninviting and unsafe for park users, mainly due to the overgrowth of Amur Honeysuckle, an aggressive invasive shrub.

In FY2016-17, the Town Council approved funds for an Ecological Restoration Master Plan for Hidden Creek Nature Sanctuary. Ecological consultants, Ecology + Vision LLC, was awarded the project and the site assessment was conducted in October of 2017. The Ecological Master Plan provided recommendations for restoration efforts to this natural area and for future management practices.

Park Maintenance staff is now prepared to begin implementing the aggressive first steps of this restoration project. All the existing invasive brush will be removed along with some of the undesirable understory trees. The native tree canopy will be evaluated and those with structural damage will be removed. All non-native ground cover will also be eradicated. After this process is complete, replanting of some native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees is anticipated to begin this spring. Due to the scope of work, this project will take several growing seasons to complete. The continual planting and seeding of native plants along with eliminating any non-native regrowth will be needed for this restoration project to be successful. Once the ecological restoration project is fully established, it will increase the quality of this wildlife habitat within the Town of Normal.

Since Hidden Creek Nature Sanctuary is adjacent to the Constitution Trail, trail users are encouraged to watch the transformation of the park. Inquiries about the plans to restore this treasured nature area can be directed to Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Gene Kotlinski.

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About the Town of Normal Parks and Recreation Department

The Town of Normal Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains a wide variety of recreation facilities including 18 municipal parks that span 700 acres of open space. Facilities that are managed by the Department include the Champion Fields Softball Complex, Community Activity Center, Connie Link Amphitheatre, Fairview and Anderson Aquatic Centers, Ironwood Golf Course and Constitution Trail. The Department also provides and manages over 400 individual recreation programs that serve more than 10,000 people annually. To learn more about the Department visit NormalParks.org, [Facebook.com/NormalParks.org](https://www.facebook.com/NormalParks.org) or follow us on Instagram @NormalParkandRec.