

What will a restored river corridor look like?

- The Shiawassee River begins just a few miles upstream from Mill Pond Park and flows downstream to Saginaw Bay. Restoring the headwaters segment of the upper Shiawassee River by removing the Mill Pond Dam will provide critical habitat for many species of wildlife and nature-based recreation opportunities for young and old alike.

- This section of the river is influenced by groundwater fed wetlands due to abundant groundwater flowing through coarse textured soils in adjacent uplands, therefore it is expected that a restored river channel will have cool temperatures and relatively stable flows. The river channel downstream of the Mill Pond Dam is a good example of the expected width and depth that will be restored once the dam is removed. Interestingly, the section of river currently impounded by the Mill Pond Dam historically had a steeper gradient or fall relative to the segment downstream at Eaton Road, therefore flows will likely be swifter, and the stream channel will feature more gravel and cobble than what is observed downstream.

- To optimize habitat in the restored river and prevent erosion as the site recovers, natural material including river rock, natural wood logs and root balls will be strategically placed along and within the stream channel. Restored river habitat in the Shiawassee will benefit Michigan's unique non-game fishes, amphibians, aquatic insects, mussels, snails, and crayfish. Furthermore, the riparian zone adjacent to the restored river channel will provide important habitat and migration corridors used by most terrestrial wildlife during some part of their life cycle. A restored stream channel will also provide significant ecosystem services such as sediment retention, groundwater recharge, transformation and storage of nutrients, and natural flood control. The care we provide for restoring the stream channel and adjacent wetlands here at Mill Pond Park will benefit health and recreational potential of our downstream lakes and river segments.



What will a restored wetland look like?

- A wetland habitat known as a prairie fen will be restored in the riparian zone adjacent to the Shiawassee River stream channel. Prairie fens are unique to the glaciated Midwest, fed by calcium rich groundwater, comprised primarily of grasses, sedges, rushes and wildflowers and provide habitat for numerous species of animals. This restoration will provide landscape connectivity for plants and animals between natural areas upstream and downstream of Mill Pond Park.

- Animals that will utilize the restored fen habitat include the Blanding's turtle, leopard frog and American woodcock. Showy native wildflowers and grasses including marsh blazing star, grass pink orchid and prairie dropseed grass are also likely to colonize the restored fen habitat. These plant species will be supplemented by adding seed of more common native species to the site, and invasive plants will be controlled within the project area to prevent them from colonizing recently exposed soils.

- While a prairie fen is often difficult to navigate due to mucky soils and uneven terrain, this restoration adjacent to community park land will provide recreational opportunities for wildlife viewing and interaction with the natural area along proposed trails.

