



*Restoring, Protecting
and Sustaining the
Root-Pike Basin Watersheds*

Taming the Erosion in Wildcat Creek

City of Greenfield Leverages the Root River Plan to Help Complete Project URR#17



We love wild rivers. The process of meandering, making habitat and moving sediment are a marvel.

When put under decades worth of highly-urbanized runoff pressure in the form of flashy stormwater volume and velocity, [Wildcat Creek](#) lost its original “wildness”. The streambanks became more under-cut and the riparian buffer was lost to turf and invasive vegetation. Severe erosion deposits unhealthy amounts of phosphorus-laden sediment, habitats are degraded, and water quality suffers.



An eroded stretch of Wildcat Creek in the City of Greenfield's Kulwicki Park

Today, the banks are restored, and the buffer has been planted with a mixture of native vegetation. The stage is set for the streambanks to provide stability to aquatic and terrestrial species, and to lessen the sediment and phosphorus load on the [Root River](#).



A restored stretch of Wildcat Creek in the City of Greenfield's Kulwicki Park

Starting in 2014, the [City of Greenfield](#) began the restoration planning and design with help from [Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission](#), [Milwaukee County Parks](#), [Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District](#) and the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#). Restoration work concluded in 2018.



Project URR-17 is located in the City of Greenfield in the Upper Root River subwatershed

The EPA/DNR-approved [Root River Nine Key Element Watershed Restoration Plan](#) was leveraged and funds were secured from [WDNR River Management Grant](#) and the [Fund for Lake Michigan](#). [Root-Pike WIN](#) and [Sweet Water](#) both brought funding opportunities to the project, and Root-Pike WIN will be contributing the signage. This project is part of a multi-phase effort to improve the condition of Wildcat Creek.



Left: Wildcat Creek - before. Right: Wildcat Creek – after (but before the buffer plants have grown)

The quantifiable outcomes include restoration of 21,250 square feet of riparian habitat, restoration of approximately 0.1 miles of in-stream habitat, and stabilization of 3,650 square feet of streambank. Streambank stabilization efforts will also improve the aesthetic quality of Wildcat Creek and the Kulwicki Park corridor.



Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee
source: USDA



Marsh Blazing Star
source: USFWS



Redfin Shiner
source: UW-Madison

Air, land and water — the endangered rusty-patched bumble bee, marsh blazing star, redfin shiner will be positively affected by the stream and buffer restoration.

We applaud the efforts of the City of Greenfield and their engineering partner, [Ruekert & Mielke, Inc.](#), for taking on this project in the headwaters of the Root River. We can't wait to see the swamp milkweed take hold this summer – and hopefully we'll spot an endangered redfin shiner in one of the bends in the years to come!