

# Terry Trueblood Wetland Exploration Trail Adaptation Plan

Submitted to: The City of Iowa City

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This adaptation plan is focused on achieving a low-cost means for the City of Iowa City to increase the use and usability of the Terry Trueblood Wetland Exploration Trail (TTWET). This plan seeks to leverage natural, ecosystem, and human assets to create a space that is more ecologically stable and inviting to Iowa City residents, not to mention more reflective of Iowa City's identity as a community built along the river. The site itself is located in a low-lying area along a bend in the Iowa River. This situation presents planners with the site's signal constraint, regular and persistent flooding. In any given year, the site can expect complete inundation for anywhere from one week to several months. In addition to flooding the site also contains a high percentage of invasive species, including Honeysuckle, Japanese Hops, and Narrowleaf Cattail. While these invasive species are well-adapted to site conditions, only few are compatible with local species, thereby presenting an opportunity for the reintroduction of native communities and ecosystems.

This plan contains recommendations for invasive species control, as well as the reintroduction of native plant species. The long-term goal is to promote an enduring, sustainable and native ecosystem for TTWET that increases ecosystem services, promotes wildlife habitats, and provides educational and recreational opportunities for Iowa City residents. In addition to recommending invasive species control and native plant reintroduction, this plan calls for a system of infrastructure-light site improvements to enhance the usability of the site for Iowa City residents. These improvements include signage along the Terry Trueblood Loop Trail inviting people to explore TTWET, but also a system of sign-designated trails for both walking and biking through TTWET. In addition to signs designating the use of the trails, flood-resistant interpretive signage will add an educational element to the experience of TTWET visitors.

TTWET was used as an informal garbage dump prior to its purchase by the city. Detritus on the site continues to present both a hazard for users and detriment to the natural aesthetic of the site. In addition, the site has several large concrete structures that are covered in graffiti. This plan has recommendations for the creation of a local "Friends of TTWET," modeled on the Friends of Hickory Hill. This community group would be tasked with assisting the city in both the cleanup and maintenance of the site. This plan also contains recommendations for the repurposing of the large concrete structures in partnership with local artists. This plan recommends the creation of a community-based, volunteer

group to assist in the long-term maintenance of the site, organization of community events, and the fostering of a sense of stewardship among local residents.

This plan has three primary goals, two of which have been touched upon above:

- 1. Promote resilience, adaptation, and ecological regeneration within TTWET and its surroundings.**
- 2. Facilitate increased human interaction with and understanding of the natural area**
- 3. Create an adaptation plan and planning process template with generalized adaptation strategies and best management practices for other sites along the Iowa River and areas with similar characteristics**

This plan identifies the key ecosystem features of TTWET and makes site-specific recommendations for creating a long-term, cost-effective system of environmental planning and adaptation. In addition, the key strategies and methods advanced by this plan are meant to be transferrable to other sites along the Iowa River corridor. This plan presents a series of principals and methods for adapting TTWET that can be applied to these greenspaces as well. Some of these spaces include Waterworks Prairie park, Peninsula/Thornberry Park, Lower City Park, Terrell Mill park (by the UI boat house), UI Campus, Hubbard park, Riverfront Crossings Park, Sturgis Ferry Park, Napoleon Park, and Mesquakie Park, as well as Ryerson woods and Southeast Wetlands, east of the wastewater treatment plant which are nearby but not on the river. By implementing this adaptation plan, the City of Iowa City will see both a long-term increase in ecosystem services provided by the site, but also increased positive human interaction with the site.