



# **Beaver Creek Restoration and Enhancement Project**

***A Vision for Creating an Ohio Regional Trail in the Beaver Creek Wetlands Corridor***

**(Version 4 – 22 July 2020)**

# Vision, Goals, and Project Scope for Creating an Ohio Regional Trail in the Beaver Creek Wetlands Corridor

## VISION

### **Background/Problem**

Over its first 30 years, via partnerships and direct action, Beaver Creek Wetlands Association (BCWA) has made great progress restoring, and protecting the Beaver Creek Wetlands Corridor (see **Attachment A**). To foster awareness and education of the wetlands, BCWA has also improved the access to some areas in the Wetland Corridor. Currently there are more than 10 miles of hiking trails (including approximately a mile of boardwalk). Most of these trails are fairly short loop trails that explore small portions of the corridor. Unfortunately, most of the wetlands remain rather inaccessible, and many wild places in the wetland corridor are not generally seen. If no one can access these areas, no one knows if good things happen (like a rare nesting bird species). Similarly, with limited access and use, overall awareness of the wetlands and membership in BCWA has decreased over the last 10 years. Seeking new ways to inspire many more people with the beauty and diversity of the wetlands, BCWA develop the concept of an interconnected trail system that runs the entire length of the wetlands corridor. In 2020, the BCWA Trustees endorsed moving the concept forward to a formal planning stage that will involve refining the scope and approach for the trail, initial cost estimating, focused fund raising, and extensive public and partner engagement.

### **Vision**

“Establish a new Ohio Regional Trail in the Beaver Creek Wetlands Corridor with easy access and traversability. The intent is to dramatically expand enjoyment of this unique natural space; to inspire many new people with its beauty and diversity; and to increase awareness of, appreciation for, and support of this regional natural asset.”

## GOALS

The overarching objective is to provide an opportunity for people to have a personally meaningful experience with nature. This will guide our routing of the trail along more curvilinear lines, strategically planned to pass by significant points along the way, engaging people with vistas/memorable backgrounds and beautiful up-close experiences. When it is done, people will have a large, safe, outdoor area to enjoy.

## **High-level Goals**

- A meaningful experience in a special natural place.
- A safe space with easy access and year-round usability.
- A well-maintained trail system that gives people an inspiring place to hike, stroll, walk, or run.
- Continuous improvement in the wetland ecosystem to:
  - protect habitats, prevent floods, preserve drinking water, mitigate climate change.

## **Detailed Goals**

- A project executed as a partnership between BCWA and various agencies and jurisdictions that own and manage the land on which the trail system will be located.
- Partnering with Neighborhoods & HOAs to maximize excitement for and participation in the project as well as to ensure any concerns are addressed (i.e. be a good neighbor)
- A continuous path of trails and boardwalks along the 15-mile corridor between Pearl's Fen in Fairborn and Zimmerman Prairie/Beavercreek Station in Beavercreek.
- A trail "system" that expands the existing 10 miles of disconnected trails to approximately 25 miles of interconnect trails.
- 'Natural' but easily traversable multi-use trails that attract and support hikers, walkers, and runners of all ages.
- A continuous main trail augmented by natural loop trails and spurs that provide an even deeper wetlands experience.
- A trail with some portions that support persons with disabilities.
- A trail with extensive high-quality signage and educational interpretive material throughout to tell people what they are looking at and why it is important.
- A trail that attracts and supports a variety of monthly and annual activities spanning educational and mild recreational uses.
- A trail with careful design of access points and parking (car and bike) that makes it easy and convenient to enjoy the trail.
- A trail design whose construction and sustainment will seek to foster the maximum year-round use while avoiding long-term damage to the wetlands.
- Further improvement and restoration of the wetland corridor during trail construction.

## **Specific Target Groups**

1. Local neighborhoods, employees of nearby businesses.
2. Naturalists/hikers, walkers of all ages, individual and organized trail runners.
3. Millennials, families with young children, retired Baby Boomers.

## **TIMING AND SCOPE**

### **Timing**

Trail locations and Phased have not been finalized and will be collaboratively determined with the various agencies and jurisdictions that own and manage the land on which the trail system will be located. BCWA's desire is to use a phased implementation with completion approximately five years after a deliberate planning phase is finished (deliberate planning begins in May 2020 and ends in November 2020). The following phasing is contemplated, but subject to refinement:

- Phase 1 - "Phillips/Rotary Parks to Hunter's Ridge/Dane Mutter Prairie" (Nov 2020 to May 2021)
- Phase 2 - "Hunter's Ridge/Dane Mutter Prairie to Siebenthaler Fen" (Jun 2021 to May 2022)
- Phase 3 - "Siebenthaler Fen to Koogler Wetland Prairie Reserve" (Jun 2022 to May 2023)
- Phase 4 - "Koogler Wetland Prairie Reserve to Community Park" (Jun 2023 to May 2024)
- Phase 5 - "Rotary Park to Beaver Creek Station/Zimmerman Prairie" (Jun 2026 to May 2027)\*
- Phase 6 - "Community Park to Cemex and Garland Reserves" (Jun 2024 to May 2025)
- Phase 7 - "Cemex and Garland Reserves to Pearl's Fen" (Jun 2025 to May 2026)

\* Timing for this Phase may be adjusted (will be revisited during Phases 1 and 2).

**Attachment B** shows how a phased implementation might progress through sections of the wetland corridor.

### **Scope - Key Project Activities**

In addition to overall project management and coordination, the following activities will need focused and dedicated effort to successfully achieve the objectives and vision.

- Signage and educational interpretive material
- Fundraising and finance
- Route planning and trail design

- Engineering, cost estimating, and implementation planning spelling out responsibilities of BCWA and various agency staffs
- Wetland restoration and invasive species mitigation/removal
- Alignment and completion of already funded trail enhancements
- Trail construction oversight (contract and volunteer)
- Trail maintenance planning
- Activities sponsorship/planning (some led by BCWA, but many led by others)
- Membership participation (e.g. trail naming contest, volunteer building, etc.)
- Public engagement and support
  - Mainstream and social media, fairs/events, etc.
  - “Endorsements” from township/city Boards of Trustees, Planning Councils, etc.
- Partner engagement and formal commitments

All of these efforts will need to be synchronized. This synchronization will occur continuously, with the planning team meet approximately bi-weekly. A Trail Partner Advisory Group is also envisioned to address cross-cutting issues that impact multiple partners. This Group will meet Quarterly or as needed.

### **Scope – Preferred Trail Standards**

#### *Desired Boardwalks:*

- Boardwalk Design – Maximize curvilinear lines, judicious use of turnouts with benches, use raised kick rails, and minimize handrails to only those areas needed
- Boardwalk Width – 5’ to 6’
- Boardwalk Planking Materials – Trex

#### *Desired Surface Trails:*

- Surface Trail Design – Maximize curvilinear lines (feel of a meandering trail)
- Surface Trail Width – 6’ to 8’
- Surface Trail Material – Gravel/fine with erosion fabric; grass in prairie areas

# Attachment A – Beaver Creek Wetland Corridor Map



**BEAVER  
CREEK  
WETLANDS  
ASSOCIATION**  
SINCE 1988

- 1 Oakes Quarry Park
- 2 Cemex Reserve
- 3 Fairborn Community Park
- 4 Fairborn Marsh
- 5 Koogler Wetland/  
Prairie Reserve
- 6 Beaver Creek  
Wildlife Area
- 7 Siebenthaler Fen
- 8 Beaver Creek  
Wetland Nature  
Preserve
- 9 Phillips Park
- 10 Rotary Park
- 11 Creekside Reserve
- 12 Hagenbuch Reserve &  
Monarch Waystation



**Attachment B – Maps Showing Preliminary Trail Phasing (note trail locations notional)**

