

Maple Grove Forest Inventory, Assessment, and Conservation

Project Profile: Hennepin County



Guide to Using

Natural Resource Information

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 2003

SUMMARY

Responding to citizen concerns and rapid development, the City of Maple Grove in Hennepin County conducted a series of inventories and assessments starting in 1988. In 1995 the City passed a \$5 million bond referendum and has protected over 250 acres of forest and open space. The City continues to protect natural areas using a variety of innovative techniques.

Guide to Using Natural Resource Information

This Project Profile is part of the Guide, which is a useful resource to learn how to create and use natural resource information

The Guide illustrates:

- why natural resources are important
- how your community benefits from natural resources
- how to collect natural resource information, and
- how to use natural resource information to make environmentally sensitive and fiscally responsible local land use decisions

Contact the DNR at the numbers at the back of this Profile to order the Quick Guide Brochure or the whole Guide on CD

Forest on the Fringe

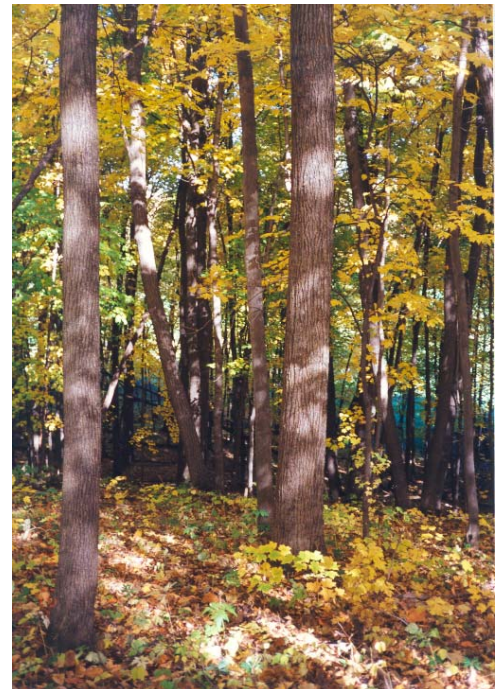
Maple Grove got its name because of the majestic trees and woodlands within the community. Rapid development in the 1980s prompted citizens, staff, and elected officials to take a closer look at their resources.

"A City with baseline information for the entire community can be most responsive to their community as a whole and have a scientific focus on the quality of forests and open space they wish to preserve. Most of this work has been spearheaded through the efforts of the City of Maple Grove's Arbor Committee," says Patty Anderson, City of Maple Grove Parks and Recreation Department.

The Arbor Committee is a Council appointed citizen group advising the Council on forest preservation. They were instrumental all the way through this process to encourage the Council to seek several options to inventory, assess, and preserve the natural resources of the community.

Preserving our Heritage

"Maple Grove has almost doubled its population over the last fifteen years, and it will continue to grow. But as we grow, there will be green space for the citizens to enjoy thanks to residents who supported the efforts of the Arbor Committee and City Council. Over 250 acres of forest and open space have been preserved and protected from development. Also there are beautiful wooded neighborhoods that are protected by the Tree Preservation Ordinance," states Irene Koski, Maple Grove City Council Member.



Natural Resource Inventory

1988 Base Line Data Collection – “Forest Cover Classification and Map Compilation” A complete fly over of the City was done and all forest stands over 1 acre in size were identified from the aerial photography. The data were field verified to insure 90% accuracy. The importance of this initial inventory was clear, as expressed by Mary Parenteau, Maple Grove Arbor Committee Chairperson, “With the overlay of forested areas over the City base map, it was clear where the forest stands in the City were, a predominantly high amount right where all the development was happening.” The Council took the time to see what could be preserved through an ordinance and if there were funds available, what forests were the best investment to assure forests and open space for generations.

Natural Resource Assessment

1989 Assessment of the Forests - Consulting foresters systematically inspected each forest stand identified in the 1988 study and recorded data about the dominate species, stand age, stand height, diameter, number of trees per acre, basal size, number of den trees, condition and vigor, damage, suitability, and amenity rating for 1,700 acres of forests. This assessment resulted in the creation of the T-Zone ordinance below.

1994 –Evaluation and Ranking of Forest Stands – The highest quality woods within the larger Elm Creek corridor were evaluated further to assess their ecological integrity and further prioritize the areas for preservation.

“The Council knew they could not save all the trees from development, but they were interested in preserving some natural resources for generations to come. The inventories, assessments, and input from lots of folks helped to identify the best choices.”
Irene Koski, Maple Grove City Council Member

Implementation

Tree Preservation Zone Ordinance - T-Zone Information. Section 375:109. "T", Tree Preservation District. (Added, Ord. No. 90-17, Sec. 1; Amended, Ord. No. 93-33, Sec. 1). Subd. 1. Purpose. The intent of this ordinance is, through the preservation, protection, maintenance and management of the community's existing forest resource, and the planting of trees . . .

Bond Referendum – Based on the recommendations of the 1994 assessment, the City held a Special Bond Referendum in 1995 for 5 million dollars to be used toward the purchase of forested land and open space from willing sellers. The Bond referendum passed and has protected over 250 acres of forests and open space.

Forest and Open Space

Management Plan – A plan was developed to guide specific natural resource stewardship, public use, and signage.

Public Education – The Maple Grove Legacy Tree Registry program began in the year 2000 and with a deadline of October 1st of each year, the citizens of Maple Grove have an opportunity to nominate the native trees within the City limits that they feel add something to their quality of life.

Department of Natural Resources
Central Office
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040
(651) 296-6157 (Metro Area)
1-888-MINNDNR (646-6367) (MN Toll Free)
www.dnr.state.mn.us



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Frank Kampel, City of Maple Grove, Arbor Committee Liaison, 763-494-6365, fkampel@ci.maple-grove.mn.us