

St. Michael Comprehensive Park, Trail and Open Space Plan

Project Profile: Wright County



Guide to Using

Natural Resource Information

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 2003

SUMMARY

Members of the Park Commission, community leaders and citizens created a vision of what they hope the park system might look like in 2050 through the creation of several Concept Plans. They emphasized the need to interconnect the park, trail and open space systems in order to maximize resources and the benefits for biological and human communities.

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

Interconnecting and Continuous Open Spaces

In response to land use changes and a growing community, the City of Saint Michael created a comprehensive plan to assist in decisions related to parks, trails and open spaces. The plan's audience is the Park Commission, community leaders and residents.

During the initial planning meetings, participants created a vision for the community, which included preserving unique characteristics of agricultural lands and the downtown district, and conserving natural resources.

This comprehensive plan attempts to take a large picture view in order to create a vision for the future of Saint Michael's public open spaces. It takes a new look at maximizing resources and viewing wetlands and parks as part of wildlife corridor systems.

"The plan was a beneficial tool for showing both new and long-term residents of St. Michael what the city's plans are for the future and where our focus will be."

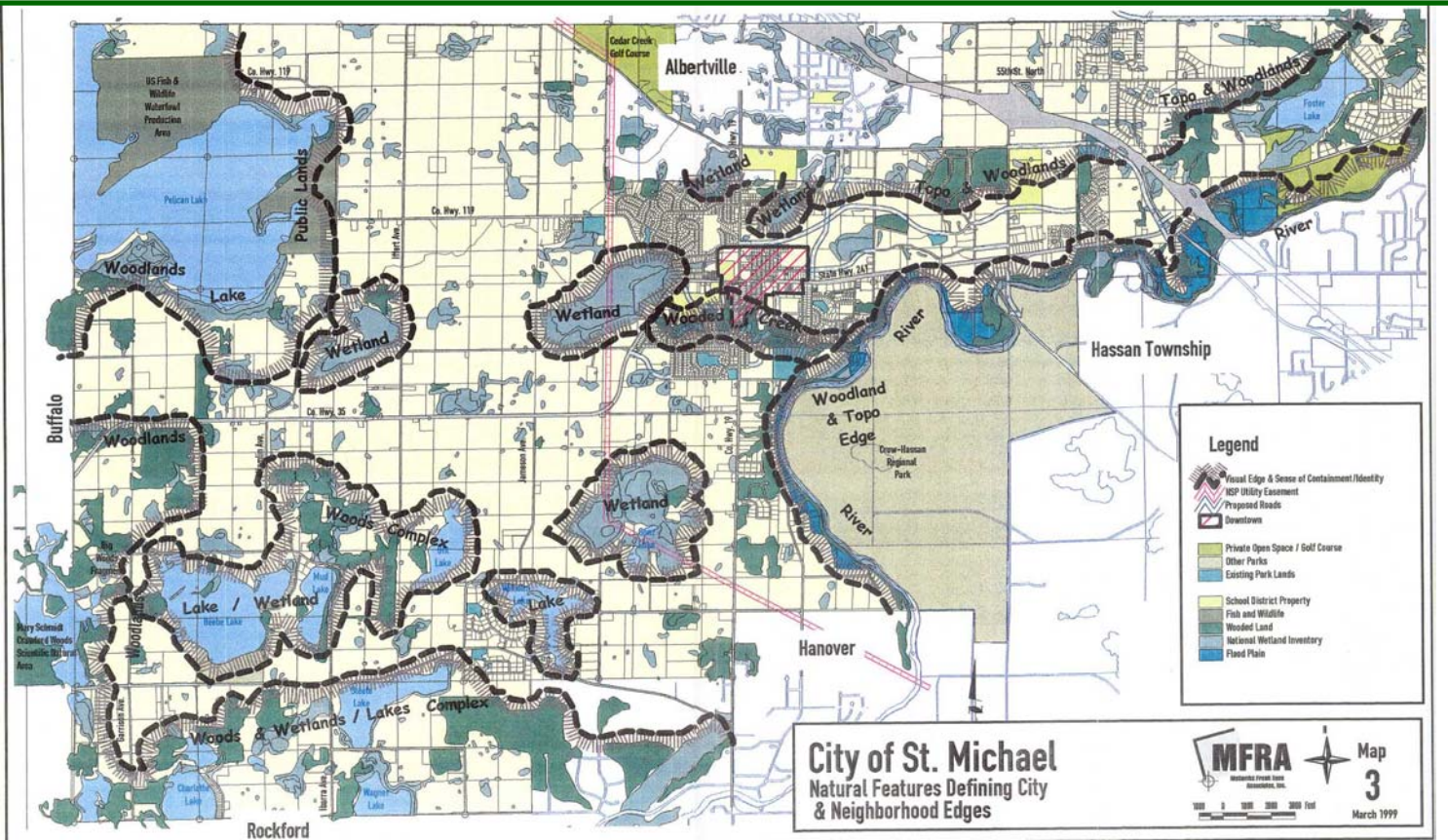
Lorann Eull, Park Board Member



City of St. Michael. Source: MFRA

Natural Resource Inventory

Data from the following sources, as well as others, were included as GIS map layers to visualize existing parks and natural areas, and land use of surrounding areas: National Wetland Index, USGS Topography, woodlands (Aerial photograph), Flood Plains (FEMA), existing and future roadways, county park and trail plans, Scientific and Natural Areas (DNR), Minnesota Natural Heritage Database for Wright County (DNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Lands.



Natural Resource Assessment

Three Concept Plans were designed which consolidated and emphasized the core ideas and concerns of residents. Through a public forum and a field trip, natural resource categories were created in order to decide which areas to preserve. The land chosen for the categories—wildlife areas, areas of visual significance, and areas of high scenic value—will be part of a greenway system.

Implementation

St. Michael has found Planned Unit Development projects to be very effective. Developers are allowed additional density in exchange for dedication of open space areas. Possible legal tools that the city may use for long-term effectiveness include: sensitive natural areas overlay zones, park land dedication, tree preservation, wetland

buffer ordinances, shoreland districts, and conservation easements. The city will also look into the option of land purchases (partially through grants like one they just received from the DNR), registry programs with groups like the Nature Conservancy or the National Register of Historical Places. The city hopes to use the expertise of several non-profits to determine the most appropriate tools to use for each situation.

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These Project Profiles were produced, written, and designed by the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District

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