Sunnyside Park Sustainability Initiative

David Lamb- Assistant Director, Bloomington Parks and Recreation

Stacey Libra, PLA- Principal, Indigo Ecological Design

Cecily Cunz, AICP- Sr Environmental Planner, Baxter & Woodman

Agenda

- Project Background
- Vision & Objectives
- Community Impact
- Design Process
- Design Features & Amenities
- Construction Lessons in Progress

Project Background

The project was made possible through a collaborative planning process that included:

- City of Bloomington
- Bloomington Normal Water Reclamation District
- Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal
- Housing Authority of the City of Bloomington
- Friends of the Constitution Trail
- OSLAD Grant Award

Power of Community Partnerships

- Driven by the vision of one passionate leader
- Based on collaborating with local agencies and the community
- Achieve better outcomes for all
- Building trust and long-term stewardship

Timeline


We are here
February 2024
Vision for a Green Infrastructure Park
Fall 2024
OSLAD Grant Application:
Community Benefits
Recreational Needs
October 2025
Incorporation of SITES Certification
Summer 2026 - Ongoing
Construction
Ongoing maintenance & management
Summer 2024
Concept Plan Kickoff with partners, consideration of grant funding: Community CHANGE, Green Infrastructure, OSLAD
January 2025
OSLAD Grant Award
Initiate Design Phase
Spring 2026
Project Bidding
Spring 2027
Substantial Completion

Vision & Objectives

Initial Goals of the Sustainability Initiative

- Regional destination as a “Water Sustainability Park”
- Passive recreation, nature play, & outdoor education
- Designed to serve adjacent public housing residents and broader community
- Emphasize green infrastructure and screen surrounding land uses

Project Location

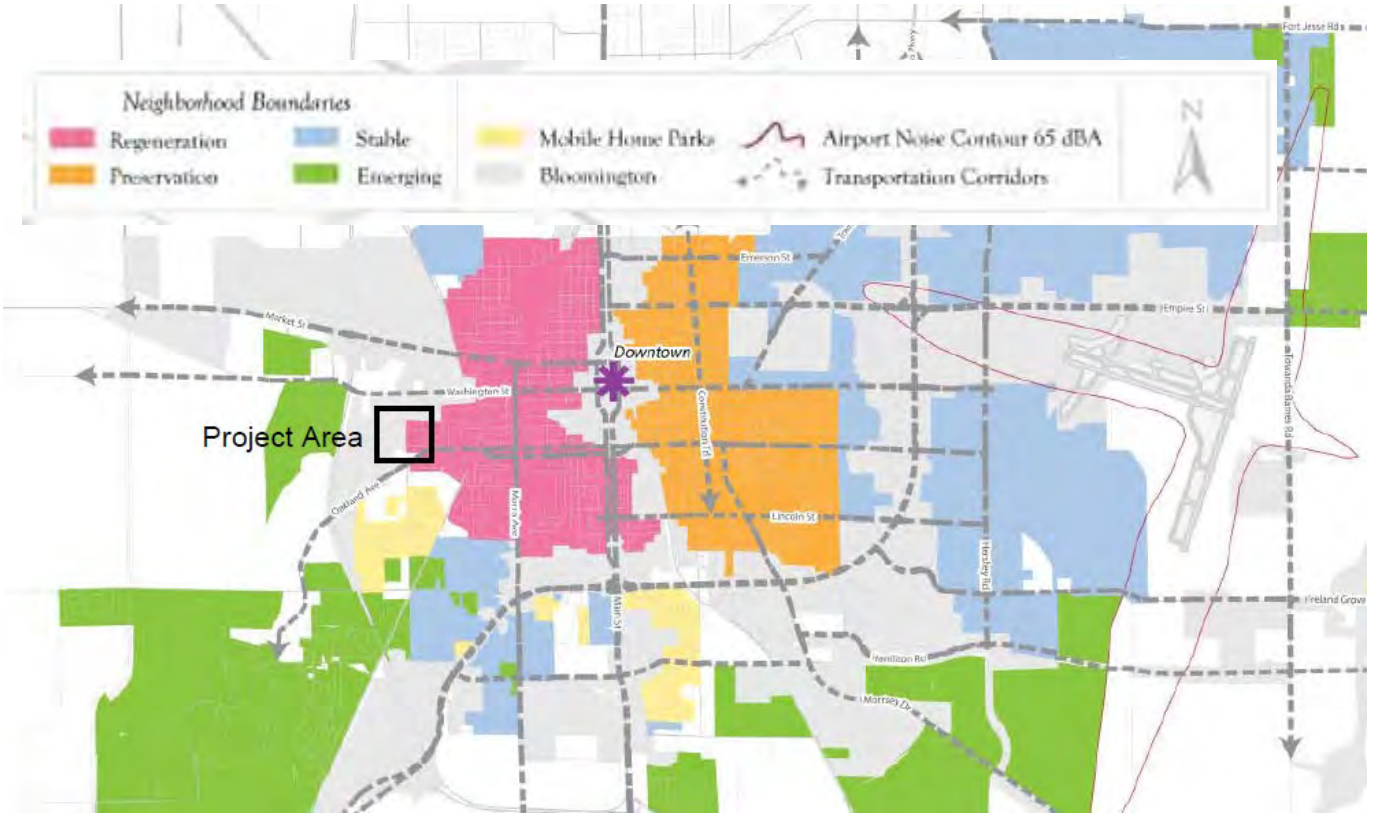


Sunnyside Park Sustainability Initiative is a collaborative effort between the City of Bloomington and the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District to transform a historically underserved area into a 12-acre hub for recreation, education, and environmental stewardship.

Vision & Objectives

Alignment with Bloomington's Comp Plan 2035 & 2018 Comp Parks & Rec Master Plan

- Regeneration Area
- Highest Priority
- Emphasis on collaboration
- Improve Level of Service
- + Trails, fitness equipment, gathering areas, nature play



Community Context

Addressing environmental justice and public health disparities

- Situated between intense industrial uses, the railroad, and the wastewater treatment plant
- Low-income environmental justice community (IEPA)
- Adjacent public housing
- Recurring flooding concerns along Illinois and Indiana Streets



Original Site Conditions





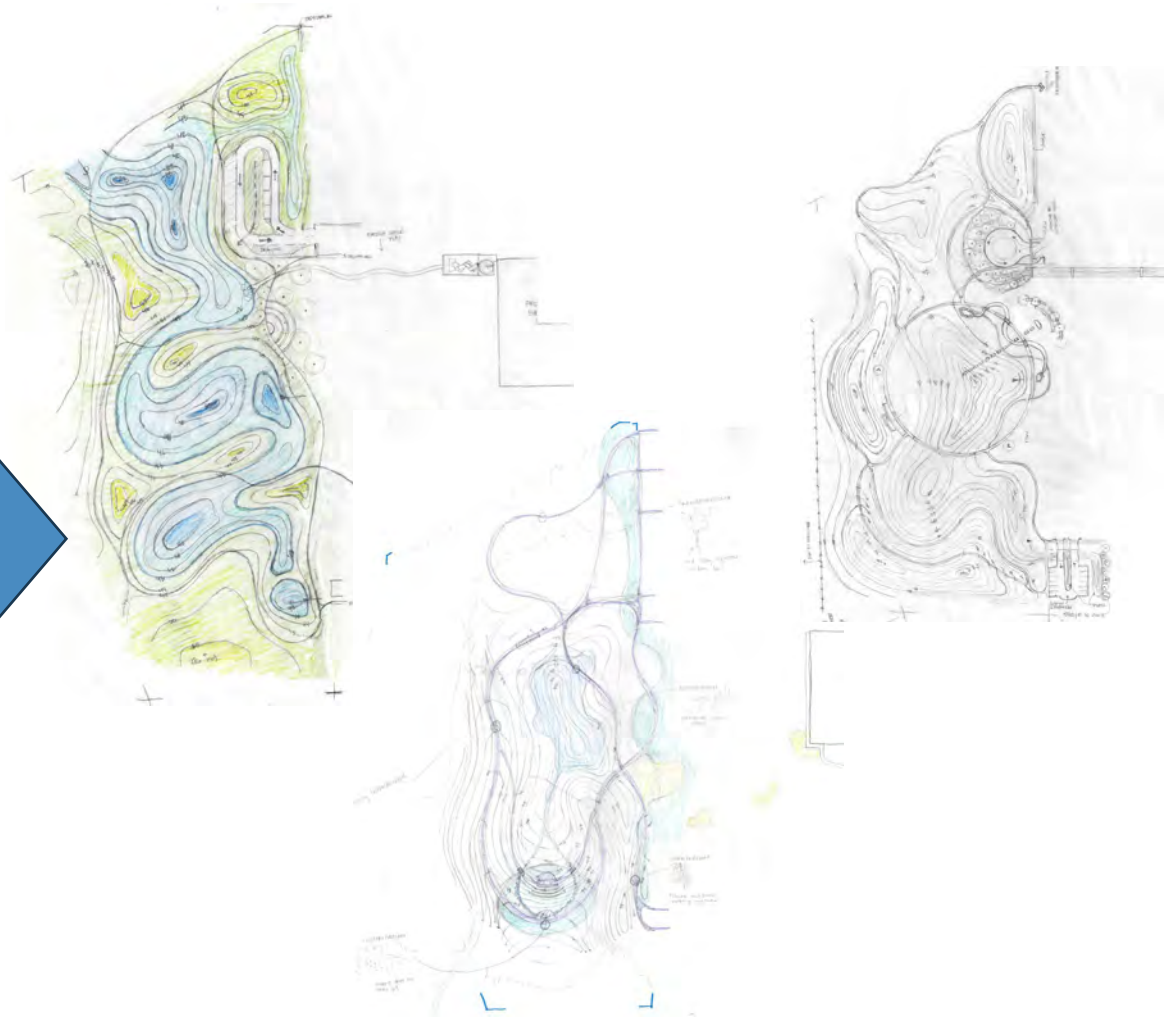
Design Process











Design Process

INDIGO ECOLOGICAL DESIGN





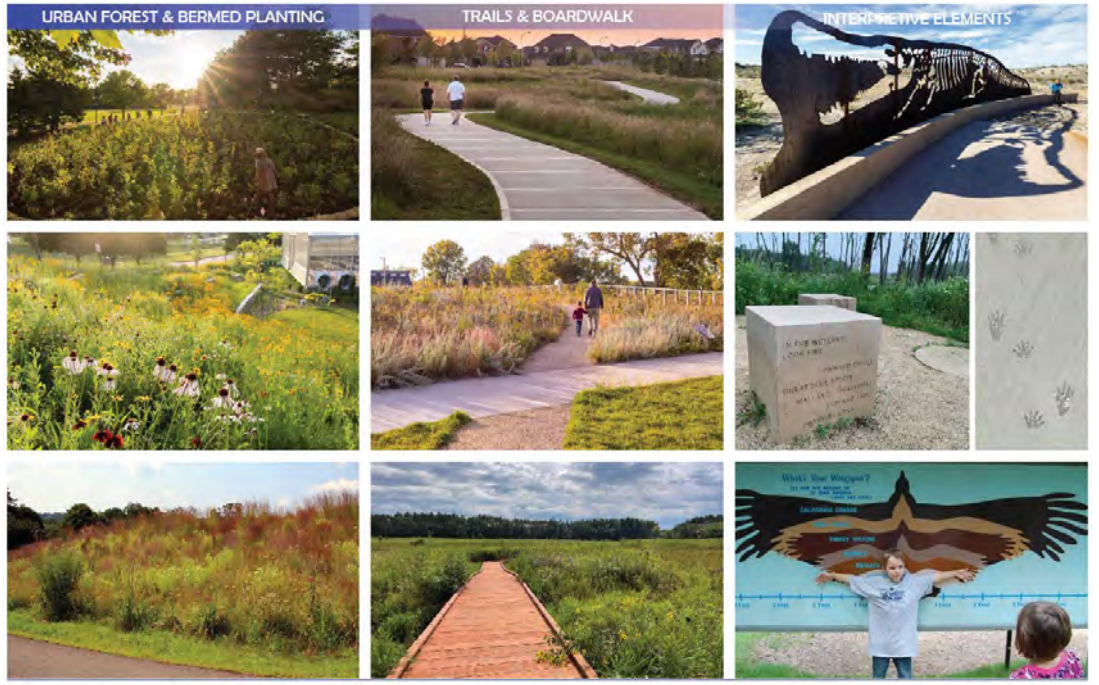


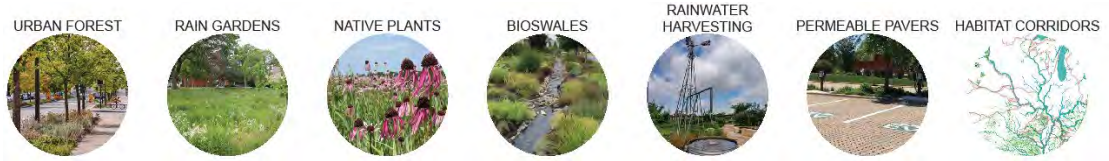
Design Process











Design Features & Amenities

OSLAD Grant

- **Justified in City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan**
- **Helped guide program elements and recreational features**

  Educational signage

  Outdoor classrooms and gym

  Nearly a mile of trails

  Drinking fountains, bike racks, benches
- **Held us to tree planting goals**
- **Assured we were using accessible design and nature-based solutions**

Design Features & Amenities

Overview

- Ecological restoration focus
- Green infrastructure as an amenity
- Education through play, art, and signage
- Connection to neighborhood and regional trail system
- Design for all ages and abilities with a range of activities



Design Features & Amenities

INDIGO ECOLOGICAL DESIGN

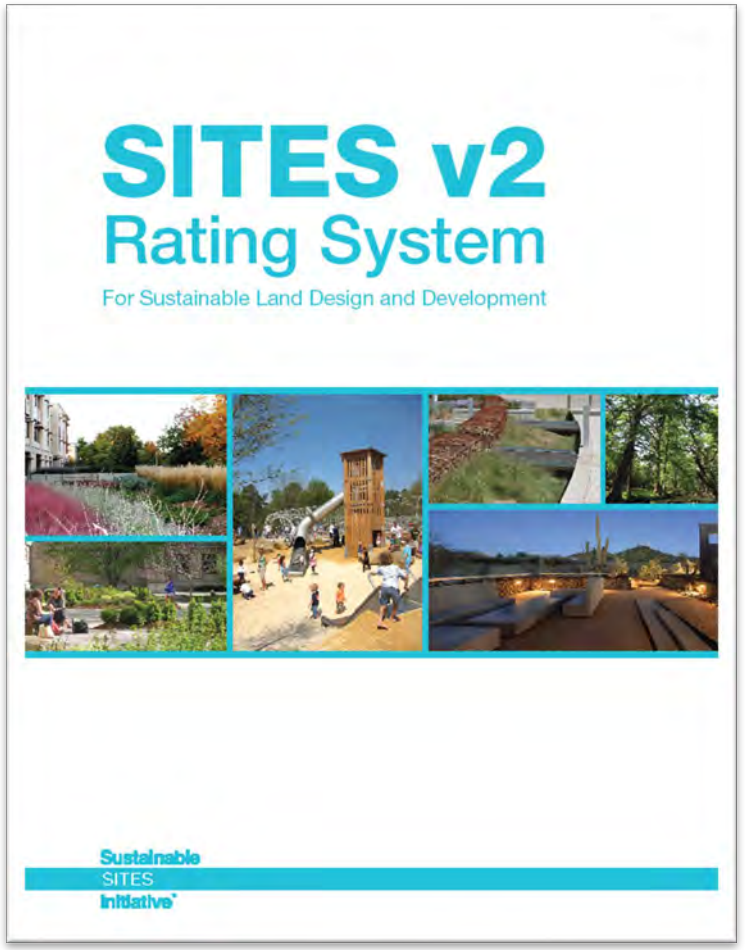


Design Features & Amenities

INDIGO ECOLOGICAL DESIGN

Pursuing SITES Certification

- Locate project within existing developed areas and public transit networks
- Develop and communicate a soil management plan
- Eliminate water used for irrigation
- Managing precipitation beyond baseline
- Utilizing 100% native plants, outside of existing park turf restoration
- Utilizing 100% solar lighting
- Promoting sustainability awareness, education



Design Features & Amenities

INDIGO ECOLOGICAL DESIGN

Ecological Restoration

- 1.4 acres wet-mesic prairie
- 5.4 acres dry-mesic prairie
- 0.4 acres woodland
- 250 native trees
- >150 native shrubs
- >4,000 native plant plugs
- 113 native species in total

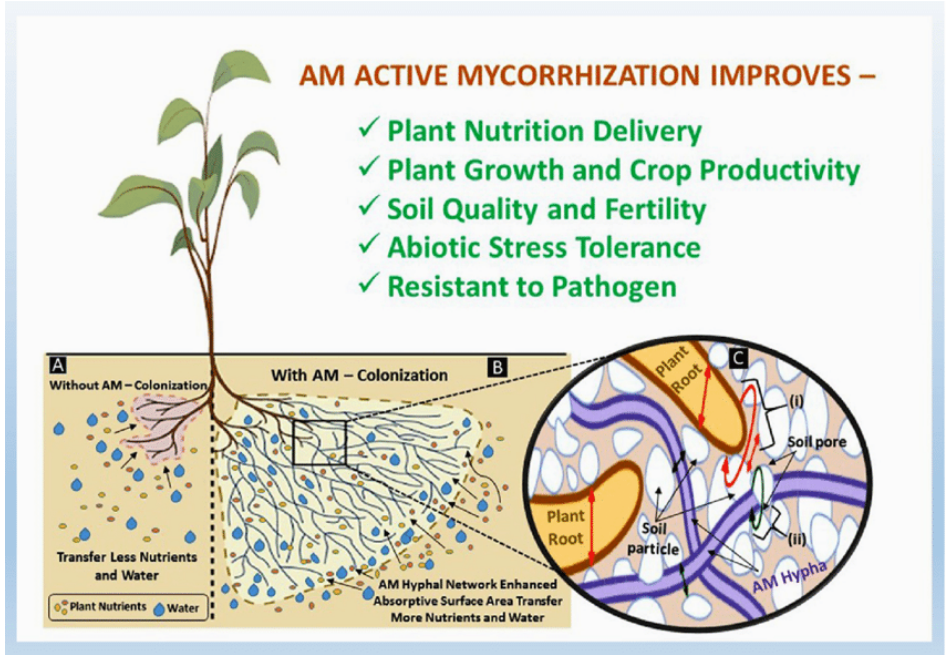


Design Features & Amenities

INDIGO ECOLOGICAL DESIGN

MycoBloom

- Native mycorrhizal fungi used to restore native fungal diversity
- An aid where soil has been disturbed/ biologically degraded
- Helps plants access water and nutrients, acts as a natural fertilizer
- Speeds recovery and helps keep out invasive species



Source: Researchgate.net

Design Features & Amenities



Green Infrastructure

- Naturalized stormwater basins
- Bioswales
- Permeable pavers





Design Features & Amenities

Green Infrastructure Benefits

Storm Event	Reduction in Peak Flow Rate to Sugar Creek	Reduction in Discharge Volume to Sugar Creek
2-Month	66.9%	66.7%
2-Year	19.4%	68.2%
10-Year	19.3%	56.2%
100-Year	10.2%	41.9%

- **2-Year storm event >> 50% chance of that storm occurring in any given year, while 100-year storm event has a 1% chance of occurring**
- **Significant reductions in both peak flow and discharge volume**
- **Achieved via infiltration and evapotranspiration of green infrastructure**

Design Features & Amenities

INDIGO ECOLOGICAL DESIGN

Nature Play







Design Features & Amenities



- Amphitheater
- Outdoor Classroom
- Monument stone



Design Features & Amenities

INDIGO ECOLOGICAL DESIGN

Outdoor gym – unique for Bloomington

- 12 weightlifting, cardio, and plyometric elements
- Leg, chest and shoulder press, lat pull down, & row machine - real weights
- Located next to existing basketball court and playground





Design Features & Amenities

ADA Accessibility and universally inclusive design

- Trails and boardwalks
- Outdoor gym
- Facilities and parking







Interpretive Features:
Condensation & Precipitation



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Transpiration & Evaporation



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Soils & Infiltration



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Reclamation & Water Treatment



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Pollinators & Native Plants



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Runoff & Stormwater



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Watershed



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Groundbreaking Ceremony

June 16, 2026







Construction Lessons in Progress

- **Benefit of construction led by an ecological restoration contractor**

  Layered timing of installation of restoration vs. features



Construction Lessons in Progress

- **Surveys don’t perfectly capture existing conditions**
  - Water main not per maps
  - Tree locations





Construction Lessons in Progress

- **Communication and participation through the construction process leads to better outcomes**

  Updated planting and seeding strategy based on actual vs designed hydrology





Construction Lessons in Progress

SITES coordination

Communicate SITES goals and requirements – keep in mind with field changes

Contractor requirements – soil testing, material costs, imported soil receipts

Integrated Project Team sign-off on SITES credits

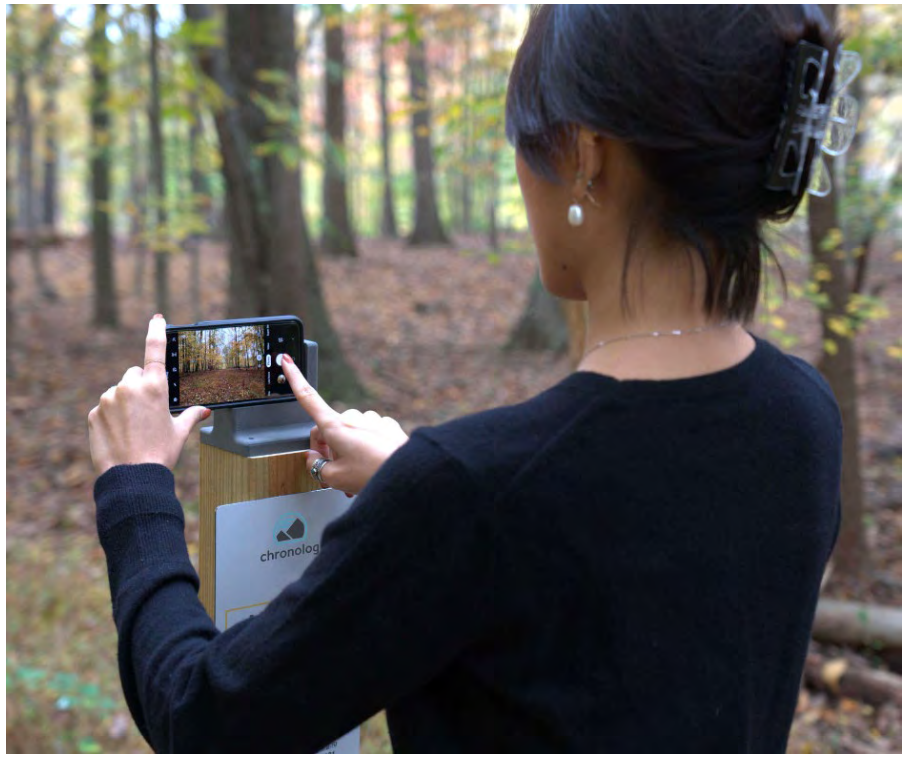
Post-construction photos of SITES documented elements

8	0	0	**7: CONSTRUCTION**	**Possible Points:**	**17**
Y			**CONSTRUCTION P7.1**	Communicate and verify sustainable construction practices	
Y			**CONSTRUCTION P7.2**	Control and retain construction pollutants	
Y			**CONSTRUCTION P7.3**	Restore soils disturbed during construction	
4		0	**CONSTRUCTION C7.4**	Restore soils disturbed by previous development	**3 to 5**
	0	0	**CONSTRUCTION C7.5**	Divert construction and demolition materials from disposal	**3 to 4**
4			**CONSTRUCTION C7.6**	Divert reusable vegetation, rocks, and soil from disposal	**3 to 4**
		0	**CONSTRUCTION C7.7**	Protect air quality during construction	**2 to 4**



Construction Lessons in Progress

- **Built in contingency has made modifications to project and field adjustments much smoother**















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OPEN SPACE LANDS
A COOPERATIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PROJECT

Bloomington
ILLINOIS

BNWRD
BLOOMINGTON & NORMAL
WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT

Thank you!

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BAXTER & WOODMAN
Consulting Engineers


Questions?