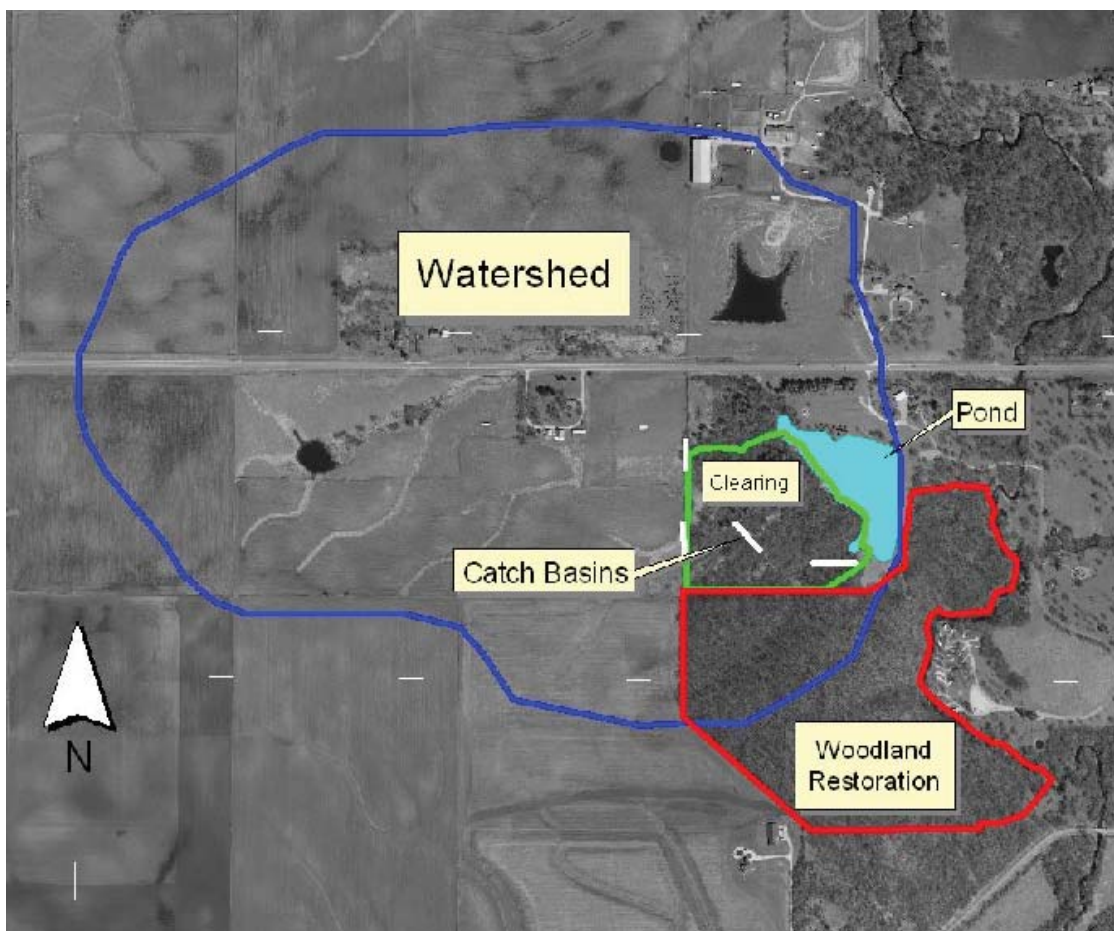


Thomas Mitchell Park Improvements 2009-2011

Two major improvements will be taking place in the next three years which will improve the quality of the woodlands and pond in Thomas Mitchell Park. This 175-acre park features a 6-acre lake that has been a favorite fishing spot for many years. Unfortunately, during the summer of 2007, an algae die off caused a fish kill that left very few fish remaining in the pond. The pond is extremely shallow due to erosion and sediment run off from the Thomas Mitchell pond watershed.

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a lake or stream. To improve Iowa's water quality, we need to clean up watersheds to keep sediment, nutrients and bacteria from washing into streams and lakes. The 286-acre Thomas Mitchell Park pond watershed is illustrated below.



Improvement Funding Opportunities

Concerned with the future of the pond, Polk County Conservation applied for a Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB) grant in the summer of 2008 and was awarded more than \$246,000 for watershed and pond improvements. WIRB grants are distributed through the Iowa Department of Land Stewardship.

A Woodland Stewardship grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in the amount of \$6,870 was also received for Timber Stand Improvement to be done in the Camp Creek Watershed. These woodland improvements will benefit watershed protection, wildlife habitat, aesthetics, and recreation.

Woodland Restoration/Timber Stand Improvements

Any action that improves the woodland growing conditions, and may include activities such as removal of crown competition, vines, invasive species, and undesirable species.

Goals

- ◆Remove invasive species- Tree or shrub that enters a native system, prospers, and replaces native species. Examples include: bush honeysuckle, multiflora rose, autumn olive, buckthorn, black locust, etc.
- ◆Remove weed trees- Removal of undesirable trees to allow desirable trees to grow. Weed trees in this woodland include: Honey Locust, Ironwood, Prickly Ash, Boxelder, and Siberian Elm
- ◆Remove diseased trees
- ◆Encourage oak regeneration
- ◆Crop tree release- Creation of free growing space around select trees for benefits such as aesthetics, water quality, mast production (wildlife), and/or timber production. Examples include: Oak, Shagbark Hickory, Walnut, etc.
- ◆Interplant with selective tree species
- ◆Re-introduce prescribed fire to the woodland

Unhealthy Woodland
(invasive species present)



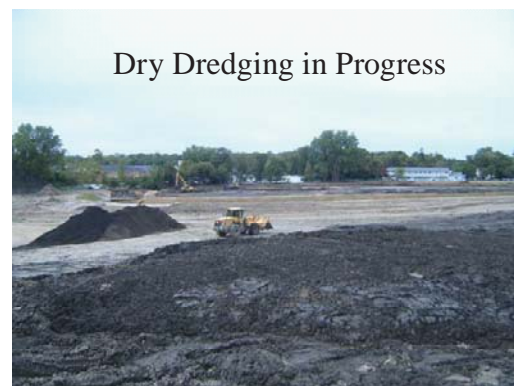
Healthy Woodland
(invasive species removed)

Pond Restoration / Improvements

To reduce nonpoint source pollution, especially sediment, numerous water control structures will be built in the watershed which drains into the Thomas Mitchell pond. These structures, coupled with other natural resource restoration work, will improve water quality and provide valuable recreational opportunities.

Goals

- ◆Build four-seven water control structures (see page 1 map)
- ◆Construct and connect new tile lines
- ◆Re-establish native vegetation
- ◆Prepare pond for dredging/dredge pond
- ◆Restock pond
- ◆Reduce sedimentation by 90%
- ◆Extend the life of the pond for 100 years



What you can expect to see...

- Winter 2009- limited removal of invasive species, weed and diseased trees in the woodland
- Winter/Spring 2009- intense removal of vegetation for tile lines
- Fall 2009- connect tile lines, installation of the water control structures, pond draining
- begin to reestablish vegetation
- Fall 2009/Winter 2010- intense removal of vegetation for timber stand improvement
- Spring-Fall 2010- dredge pond
- Spring-Summer 2011- restock fish and restore natural vegetation
- Fall 2011- project completion

For more information about this project, contact Polk County Conservation at 515-323-5300.