

Name: **Purgatory Park**Neighborhood Park Service Area: **19**Classification: **Community Preserve** Approx. Size: **155 Acres****Basis for Park Need/Primary Program Focus**

The primary function of Purgatory Park is to preserve natural open space in a developed part of the city and to provide passive recreational opportunities.

Interrelationship with Other Parks

Purgatory Park is a key natural open space in both this NPSA as well as the entire city. In concert with Boulder Creek park and the local schools, a full-palette of recreational opportunities is available in this NPSA.

Park Features/Amenities

As illustrated by the aerial photograph, park features include:

- 1) Extensive nature trails loop through and traverse the park and connect with the city-wide trail system
- 2) Two parking areas for a total of 27 cars and 1 H.C. space
- 3) Picnic shelter and picnic spaces
- 4) Park building containing restrooms, drinking fountain and park trail information
- 5) Open natural areas

Visual Characteristics

Purgatory Park is one of the major open space attractions in the city and well-liked by residents. The extensive open spaces and extensive trails are highlights of the park. The park is accessible by vehicle from Excelsior Blvd. on its northern edge. The drive into the park is curvilinear and terminates at the parking lot, where a park shelter building with restrooms is located. Trail information is also provided at this location. Although there is a small parking lot at the park entrance, trail access is from the parking lot at the end of the road. The area around the parking lot also includes a picnic shelter and scattered picnic tables, which have some vertical separation from one another to increase privacy. These areas also have mature trees around for shade and additional separation.

Once inside the park, a variety of ecological systems can be found – ranging from wetlands to woodlots and prairies. Purgatory Creek also runs through the park and is a major highlight and point of interest. In most cases, the adjacent developed land uses are barely evident from within the park. The trails offer very scenic views of the various ecological areas and provide a loop back to the parking area as well as linkage to the broader trail system. Also worth noting are the numerous footpaths that are evident throughout the park, causing some erosion problems.

Ecological/Natural Resource Issues

Analysis of the ecological features of the park was completed in 1995. Section VII provides a complete summary of the conditions found and should be referred to for additional information. It is important to note that the park is intertwined with other community open space and protected areas, including the Edenbrook Conservation Area. All told, the open space lands along the creek eventually reach down to Lotus Lake, Staring Lake, and, ultimately, the Minnesota River. Considering the extent of Purgatory Creek and the lands and waterways it affects, the ecological issues are of paramount concern.

Trail Access

Trail access is extensive, with the main trail connecting to the loop trail north of Excelsior Blvd. and to the south into open areas and Edenbrook Conservation Area. There are also several trail access points that connect the park trail to various neighborhoods and the school property.

Development Program

Given its classification as a community preserve, development within the park will always be simple and passive in character. The most important feature is the trails, which need some attention with respect to erosion and stability. Otherwise, development will be limited to typical upgrades of existing amenities and adding well-placed sitting areas, overlooks, and observation blinds.

Maintenance

As a nature preserve, maintenance activity will be focused on stewardship of the resource itself.

Programmed Uses

Aside from interpretive programs, programmed use of the park is not expected.

