

Restoration and Site Improvement Plan for BirdSong Nature Preserve

Parks & Recreation Commission Charter Township of Superior

Adopted: July 28, 2025

Introduction

On June 23, 2025, the Superior Charter Township Parks & Recreation Commission officially designated 322.34 acres in Section 20 as the BirdSong Nature Preserve. The property is bounded by Cherry Hill Road on the north, Vreeland Road on the south, and lies between Stommel Road and Gale Road.

Of the total acreage, 160.5 acres are currently owned by the Township, with an additional 161.84 acres anticipated to be acquired later this year. The site encompasses a diverse mix of natural features, including high-quality old-growth forest, early successional forest, scrub-shrub wetlands, and cattail marsh. Approximately 168 acres of the preserve—more than half of the total area—is cultivated farmland, with 78 acres being on the parcel to be acquired.

The Commission's goal is to prepare the property for public enjoyment while restoring much of the farmland to grassland and meadow habitat. This document outlines a phased plan to guide staff in implementing site improvements and habitat restoration.

Farmland Restoration

A key step in habitat restoration is the control and removal of invasive plant species. While some autumn olive and honeysuckle are present, the most aggressive and problematic species on the property is buckthorn. If buckthorn is not controlled it will rapidly colonize uncultivated areas, severely degrading habitat quality and complicating long-term stewardship.

To address this, restoration will be done in stages, allowing time and resources to be directed toward invasive species control. Initial removal efforts should focus on areas with lower buckthorn density, such as fencerows and the edges of the old-growth forest. More heavily infested areas will require mechanical treatment, including forestry mulching or similar methods, though selective removal may also be effective.

This phased approach allows for adaptive management. By restoring fields in stages, staff can monitor outcomes and adjust restoration methods or species mixes as needed.

In June 2025, the first 11 acres in the southwest portion of the preserve were seeded with a mix of native forbs and grasses. The seeds were of regional Great Lakes origin since more local genotypes were not readily available. A list of the seed mix is attached. Monitoring these plantings will provide insight into which species perform best under local climate and soil conditions.

To support future restoration efforts, Butterfly Gardens will be established at both preserve entrances using plants of local genotype. These gardens will provide visual interest for visitors, essential nectar sources for pollinators, and a valuable source of seed for ongoing and supplemental restoration efforts. Involving the public in seed collection and dispersal each fall will also foster community engagement and a sense of shared stewardship.

Farmland to Remain in Production

To maintain habitat diversity and to reduce long-term maintenance requirements, selected farmland in the southern half of Section 20 will be kept in agricultural use for the foreseeable future. Open farmland supports species that depend on sparsely vegetated landscapes, including Horned Larks, Sandhill Cranes, Short-eared Owls, and Northern Harriers. Continued cultivation will also keep seasonally wet, low-lying areas clear of dense vegetation, assuring that they remain attractive to migrating shorebirds.

Wetland Restoration

Some portions of the property have been artificially drained using agricultural drain tiles. To restore these areas to their historic wetland condition the Commission's policy is to simply remove or break the drain tiles, allowing the natural hydrology to return to the hydric soils, and to not excavate those areas to create artificial ponds.

Site Improvements

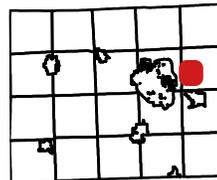
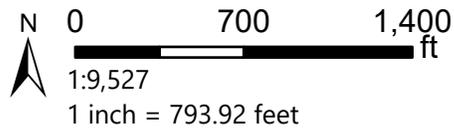
To support public access and education, the following site improvements are planned:

- Two crushed-limestone parking areas
- Interpretive signage
- Informational kiosks
- Park entrance signage
- A network of hiking trails
- Benches along trails for rest and enjoyment
- Campfire gathering area
- Observation platform for wildlife viewing
- Two butterfly gardens (as noted above)
- A Bluebird nesting trail
- Houses for native bees to improve pollination
- Planting native trees

The Parks & Recreation Commission hereby adopts the restoration and improvement schedule outlined in the accompanying maps. These efforts will guide the transition of BirdSong Nature Preserve into a model of ecological restoration and public engagement.



BirdSong Nature Preserve



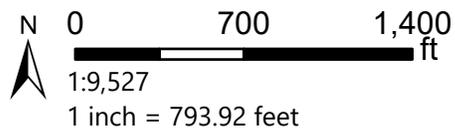
Created 7/7/2025



This is user-generated output from a Washtenaw County mapping application and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. Parcels may not be to scale and should not be construed as a "survey description." Conclusions drawn from such information are solely the responsibility of the user. Any assumption of legal status of this data is hereby disclaimed.



BirdSong Nature Preserve

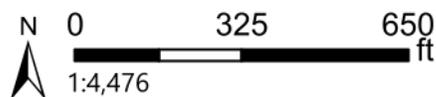


Trail Development

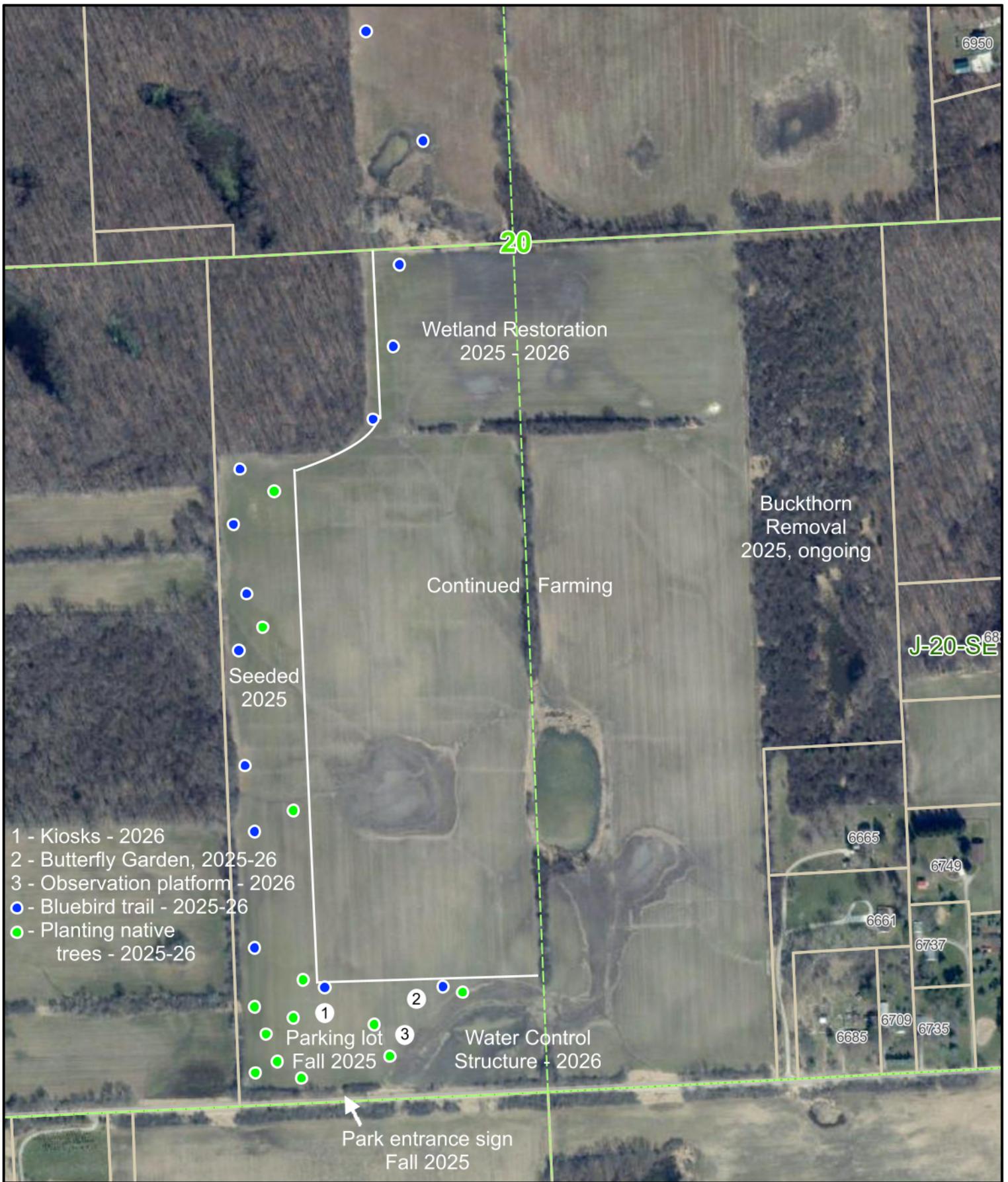




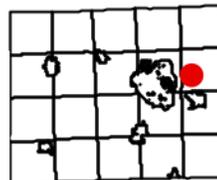
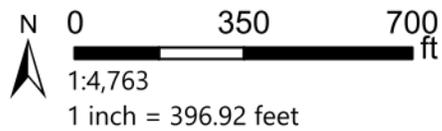
BirdSong Nature Preserve
 North portion
 Schedule of Improvements



This is user-generated output from a Washtenaw County mapping application and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. Parcels may not be to scale and should not be construed as a "survey description." Conclusions drawn from such information are solely the responsibility of the user. Any assumption of legal status of this data is hereby disclaimed.



BirdSong Nature Preserve
 South portion
 Schedule of Improvements



Created 7/7/2025



This is user-generated output from a Washtenaw County mapping application and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. Parcels may not be to scale and should not be construed as a "survey description." Conclusions drawn from such information are solely the responsibility of the user. Any assumption of legal status of this data is hereby disclaimed.

	FORBS	oz/lacre
1	<i>Amorpha canescens</i> (Leadplant)	0.75
2	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i> (Common Milkweed)	4
3	<i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i> (Partridge pea)	10
4	<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i> (Lance-leaved coreopsis)	1
5	<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i> (Plains Coreopsis)	0.4
6	<i>Dalea purpureum</i> (Purple prairie Clover)	2.5
7	<i>Desmodium canadense</i> (showy tick-trefoil)	2
8	<i>Echinacea pallida</i> (Pale Purple coneflower)	3
9	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> (Purple coneflower)	7
10	<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i> (Spotted Joe Pye Weed)	0.3
11	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i> (Boneset)	0.2
12	<i>Helenium autumnale</i> (Sneezeweed)	0.35
13	<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i> (Maximillian sunflower)	3
14	<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i> (Ox-eye or Early sunflower)	6
15	<i>Liatris spicata</i> (Dense blazing star)	2
16	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i> (Wild bergamot)	0.7
17	<i>Oenothera biennis</i> (Common evening-primrose)	0.5
18	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i> (Foxglove Beardstongue)	0.35
19	<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i> (Mountain Mint)	0.2
20	<i>Ratibida columnifera</i> (Mexican Hat/Upright Pr.coneflow)	0.5
21	<i>Ratibida pinnata</i> (Yellow/gray headed/Prairie coneflowe)	0.9
22	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> (Black-eyed susan)	0.6
23	<i>Rudbeckia triloba</i> (Brown-eyed susan)	0.4
24	<i>Solidago nemoralis</i> (gray goldenrod)	0.15
25	<i>Solidago rigida</i> (Stiff goldenrod)	0.5
26	<i>Symphotrichum oolentangiense</i> (Sky Blue aster)	0.2
27	<i>Symphotrichum laevis</i> (Smooth Blue aster)	0.5
28	<i>Symphotrichum nova-angliae</i> (New England aster)	0.5
29	<i>Verbena stricta</i> (Hoary vervain)	0.2
30	<i>Veronica fasciculata</i> (Common Ironweed)	0.5
31	<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i> (Culver's root)	0.07
32	<i>Zizia aurea</i> (Golden Alexander)	3