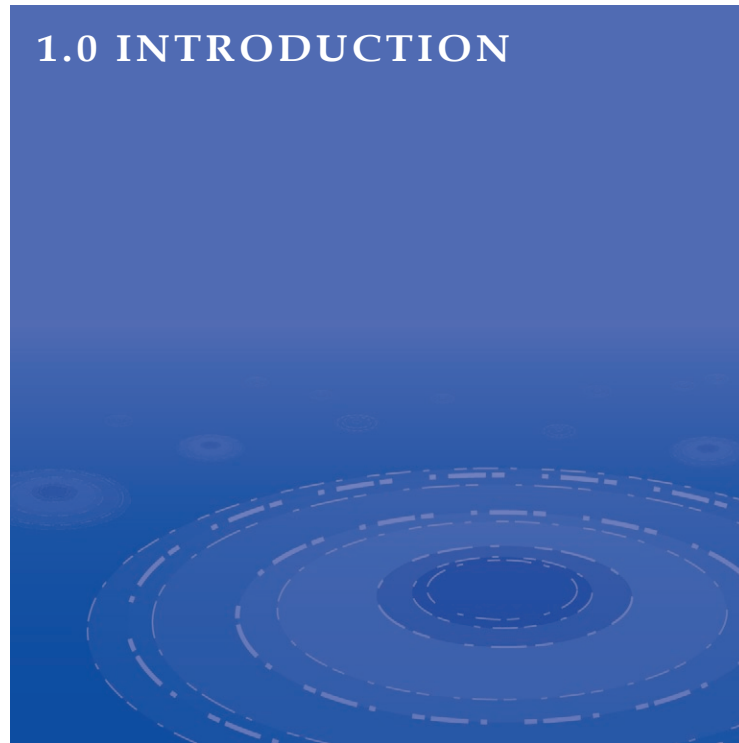
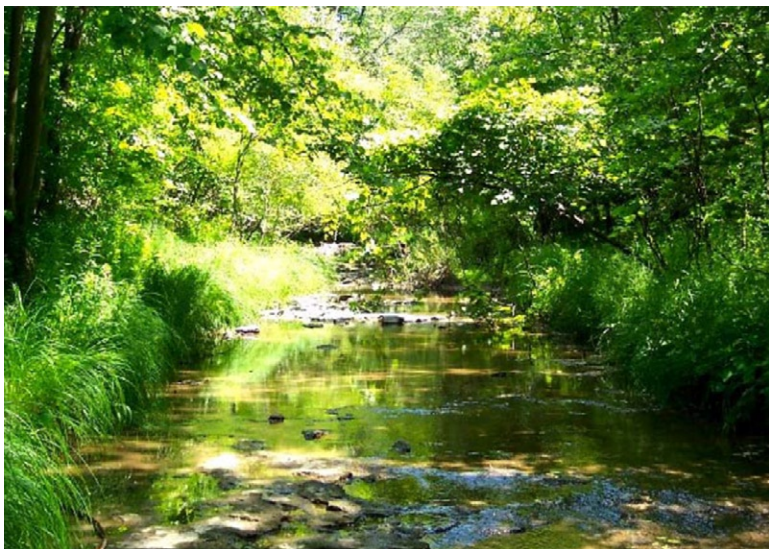


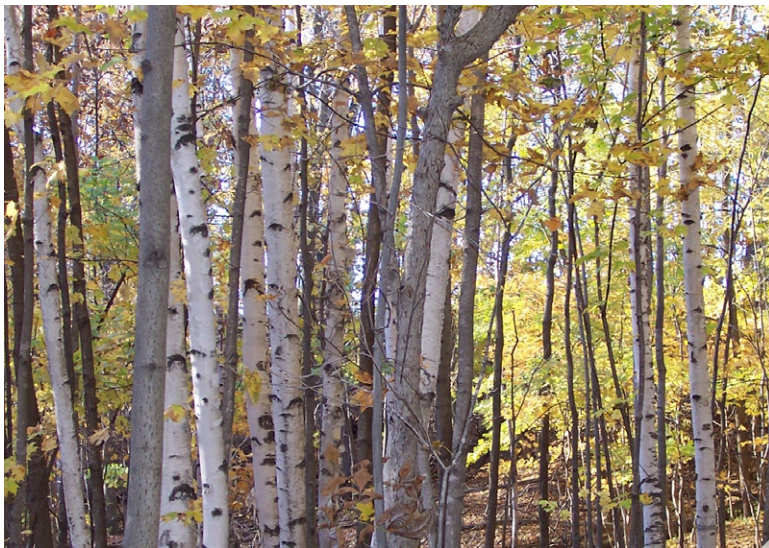
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW



*Summer solitude along Baird Creek*



*The Greenway's ever-changing seasonal splendor*

The Baird Creek Greenway encompasses over 500 acres along a scenic, wooded stream valley on the east side of the City of Green Bay, Wisconsin. The portion of the Greenway under public ownership is currently contiguous from the East River to Huron Road, with approximately 100 acres of private inholdings. As an irreplaceable community asset, the Greenway provides a natural oasis within the urban fabric that is used for many recreational activities including hiking, jogging, bird watching, cross country skiing, and biking.

The Baird Creek Greenway Ecological Assessment and Management Plan completed in 2003 documented 17 different plant communities located within the Greenway. These communities include northern dry-mesic forest, hemlock forest, wet white cedar forest, seep wetland, sedge meadow, floodplain forest, and remnant prairie, among others. Many of these habitats are sensitive to human disturbance, and require protection and management to be sustained over time. Studies of Baird Creek by St. Norbert College, the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, and others have also found various sensitive fish species living in the stream, including redbreasted dace and fantail darters.

The City of Green Bay is undergoing rapid development on its eastern boundary, creating both opportunities and challenges for Baird Creek. The Greenway is uniquely situated to provide hands-on environmental education and exploration for a rapidly growing population, as well as a passive recreational resource. However, increased foot and bike traffic, stormwater runoff, and pressure from invasive species threaten to degrade the ecologically sensitive habitats and stream. The Baird Creek Greenway Master Plan was undertaken to address these challenges, with an emphasis on preserving the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the Greenway and facilitating sustainable public use for future generations.



## Creating a Master Plan for the Baird Creek Greenway

The Baird Creek Greenway Master Plan emerged from an interactive public process stretching over six months, with many stakeholders volunteering their time and enthusiasm to the planning effort. Aiming to mobilize this broad public support, the master plan is intended to guide the implementation of key facilities and restoration activities of the Greenway over the next decade and beyond. The plan addresses the portion of the Greenway located within the Green Bay City limits from Henry Street to Northview Road, and builds upon the considerable groundwork of past planning efforts by the City of Green Bay Parks Department, the [Smart Growth 2022 Plan](#), the [Baird Creek Greenway Ecological Assessment and Management Plan](#), and other research studies. Future efforts may extend the master plan beyond the City limits into the headwaters of Baird Creek.

The master planning process was led by the Baird Creek Preservation Foundation (BCPF). Established in 1997 to acquire a diverse, old growth forest in the Greenway that was threatened by development, the BCPF works today to enhance the Greenway's value as an ecological, educational, and recreational resource for Northeastern Wisconsin. Their efforts include controlling invasive species, assisting the City of Green Bay with property acquisition, and protecting and restoring the Greenway's natural communities. In this master planning effort, the BCPF Board of Directors worked with City staff, project stakeholders, and citizens to create a plan that would garner the public support essential for long-term success.

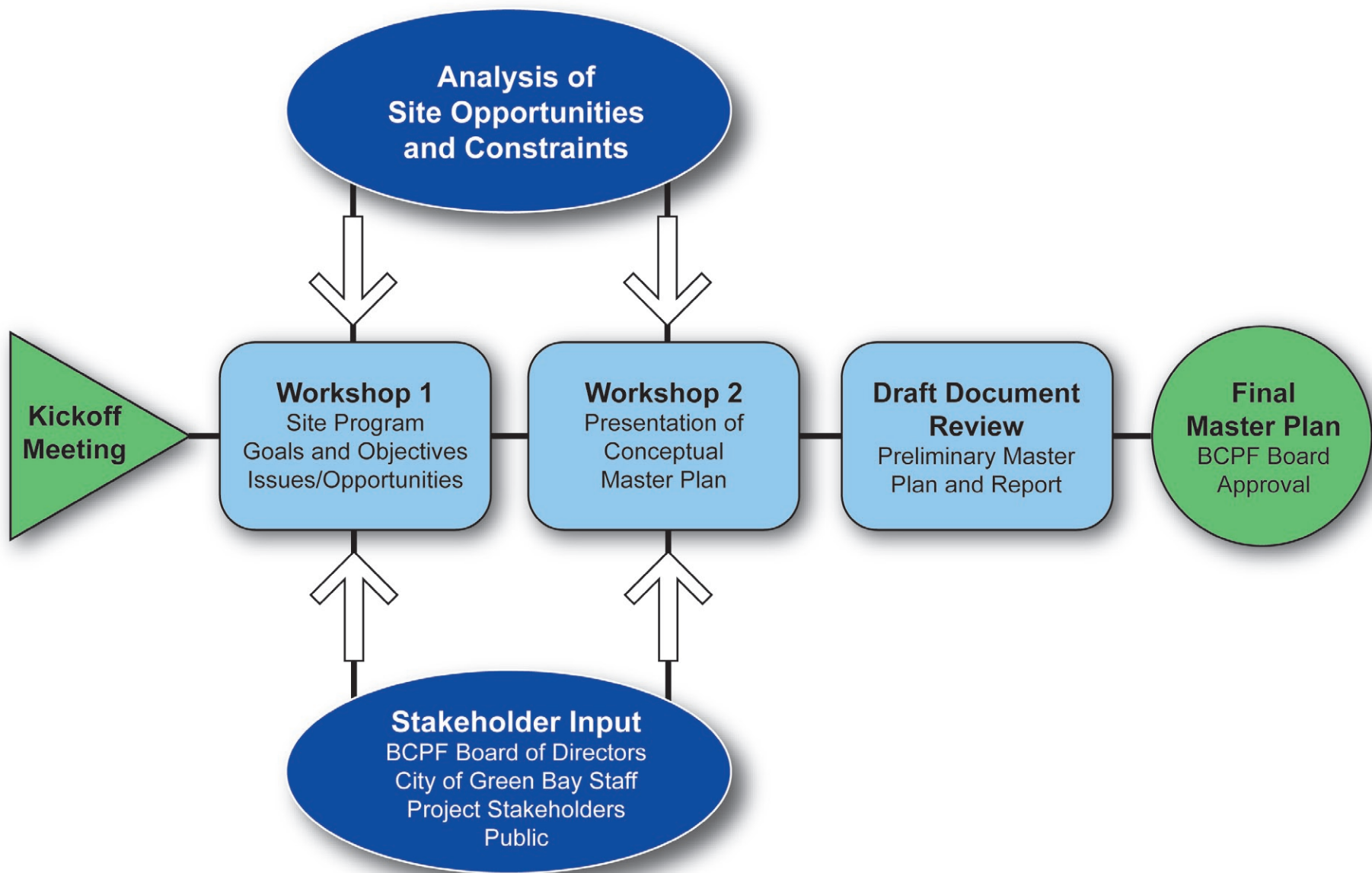
Through generous donations from the community, the BCPF hired the consulting firm JJR to facilitate the master planning process. This document is the culmination of the master planning activities that began in April 2006. It presents the analysis of existing facilities and natural communities, the intended uses for the Greenway, and the layout of the proposed trail system including trailhead facilities and signage. It also includes recommendations for trail evaluation and maintenance, phasing of habitat restoration activities, suggestions for stormwater management, and strategies for interfacing with adjacent development. Finally, plan implementation is discussed, including future land acquisition, funding sources and partnerships, and probable construction costs.



*Unique wetland habitats to explore*



*Increasing public environmental awareness (Photo courtesy BCPF)*



*Master Plan process diagram*



## 1.2 PROJECT PROCESS

Preparing the Baird Creek Greenway Master Plan involved a highly interactive and collaborative process aimed at soliciting a broad spectrum of perspectives from many individuals. The process involved three general phases: (1) analysis of site opportunities and constraints, (2) creation of the draft master plan, and (3) review and refinement of the draft plan into the final master plan and document. At each point during the process, comments were gathered through meetings, e-mails, letters, phone calls, and one-on-one conversations. This input was crucial, enabling the planning team to craft a program and plan that addressed both user needs and environmental issues.

### Phase 1: Analysis of Site Opportunities and Constraints

To create an effective master plan, workshop participants needed to fully understand the opportunities and limitations presented by the existing facilities and natural resources of the project site. With assistance from the BCPF, the City of Green Bay, and the local chapter of the Wisconsin Off-Road Bicycling Association (WORBA), the planning team assembled and reviewed existing site information, including topography, surface drainage patterns, utilities, trails, vegetation, and restoration and stewardship activities. From this research, a series of maps were created that displayed the Greenway's regional context, physical site characteristics, and opportunities and limitations for locating desired master plan components. Finally, a qualitative assessment of the habitats between Huron and Grandview Roads was performed to guide the placement of trails and other facilities as the Greenway expands upstream. Overall, the information collected and graphically summarized in this project phase allowed meeting participants to visualize how the existing environment and infrastructure of the Greenway could inform the creation of the master plan.

### Phase 2: Draft Master Plan

Concurrently with the analysis of site opportunities and constraints, a participatory process was used to identify and prioritize the intended program elements for the master plan and locate them on the site. The process began in April 2006, at a kickoff meeting with the BCPF Board of Directors. The planning team and BCPF board members reviewed available resources and information, toured the Greenway, identified preliminary master plan goals, and discussed specific site problems and opportunities.

The planning team then facilitated Workshop 1, a series of meetings with City staff, project stakeholders, and the public. Goals and objectives for the master plan, desired program elements, and strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats to the Greenway were discussed. Over 40 participants attended this programming workshop, including stakeholders from the following groups:

- Baird Creek Preservation Foundation
- City of Green Bay Staff (representing the Mayor's Office and the Departments of Parks, Planning, and Public Works)
- University Researchers
- Local Schools
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, & Consumer Protection
- Brown County Staff
- Baird Creek Greenway Neighbors
- Elected Officials
- WORBA
- Private Citizens

Based on the goals and uses established at Workshop 1 and the results of the analysis of site opportunities and constraints, the planning team created a conceptual master plan for the Baird Creek Greenway. The



*Public listening session discussions during the Programming Workshop*

conceptual plan and the analysis graphics were then presented to the Board of Directors, Green Bay City staff, stakeholders, and public in a second workshop session. Feedback from the meetings was used to refine the draft plan and create a preliminary report document, which was reviewed by BCPF Board members and City of Green Bay staff.

## **Final Master Plan**

The final phase of the master planning process consisted of refining the project documentation, including this report document and a digital presentation. The comments received from stakeholders were incorporated into the writing and illustrations provided in this document. Although the report represents the “final” plan created by this master planning process, the plan should continue to be assessed and refined throughout the restoration of the Greenway’s habitats and the development of its trails and facilities. This will ensure that the plan remains flexible, responding to new strategies, ideas, and needs that will help create a more sustainable Greenway.



*Conceptual master plan presentation*

## 1.3 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Preliminary goals and objectives for the Baird Creek Greenway Master Plan were drafted based on comments received from the BCPF Board of Directors during the initial kickoff meeting. The preliminary goals were presented to City staff, project stakeholders, and the public during the Site Program and Goals Workshop. With feedback from these groups, the following project goals and objectives were formally established:

**Primary Project Goal: Protect, preserve, and enhance the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the Baird Creek Greenway for both present and future generations to enjoy.**

- Objective A: Design all site facilities, including buildings, trails and access points, to limit impacts on the Greenway's habitats and hydrology, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs).
- Objective B: Preserve established habitats in ESAs and re-establish native plant communities in areas degraded by prior land use, invasive species, or erosion.
- Objective C: Protect the integrity of the Baird Creek aquatic ecosystem by stabilizing banks through best management practices (BMPs), enhancing in-stream habitat, reducing erosion on tributaries, and working towards the establishment of water quality goals.
- Objective D: Extend the Greenway through acquisition of the stream corridor and other adjacent natural areas upstream.

**Supporting Goal #1: Provide low-impact recreational uses throughout the Greenway that are compatible with the overall project goal.**

- Objective A: Promote safe public access and use of the Greenway.

- Objective B: Provide a hierarchy of trail access to and throughout the site, separating active trail users from more passive activities.
- Objective C: Design trails to protect environmentally sensitive areas, habitat restoration work, stream integrity, and native wildlife.
- Objective D: Connect the Greenway to other regional open space and trail networks.
- Objective E: Review proposed high-impact uses for the Greenway on a case-by-case basis to determine suitability.

**Supporting Goal #2: Create a sense of community ownership of Baird Creek's natural habitats, promoting stewardship projects within the Greenway.**

- Objective A: Continue to organize events that provide the public with opportunities to better the Greenway for future generations, including invasive species removal and Earth Day garbage collection.
- Objective B: Promote the Greenway as an educational resource, working with local schools and universities to develop curricula and conduct environmental research projects.
- Objective C: Create demonstration areas to display invasive species removal and habitat restoration efforts, energize public interest and participation in projects, and assess different restoration techniques.
- Objective D: Create "Adopt-a-Trail" stewardship groups that would be responsible for trail clean-up efforts throughout the year.





*Hands-on learning opportunities for all ages (Photo courtesy BCPF)*

**Supporting Goal #3: Foster a partnership between the Baird Creek Preservation Foundation, City of Green Bay, Brown County, UW-Green Bay, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, & Consumer Protection, and other agencies to improve the health of the Greenway ecosystem.**

- Objective A: Focus on watershed-based initiatives that will lessen impacts of land use on Baird Creek, building upon current Smart Growth and Storm Water Management Plans.
- Objective B: Prioritize efforts to implement BMPs at sites with severe, active erosion and to address rapidly developing areas.
- Objective C: Work with the Towns of Humboldt and Eaton to (1) recognize the importance of the upstream watershed and wetlands to overall stream health and (2) expand the Greenway into the headwaters of Baird Creek.
- Objective D: Maximize resources and public tax dollars by collaborating to pursue other funding sources on a local, state, and federal level.