

**Urban Forestry Management and Education Project**  
**[Through an Urban Forestry Grant and WI-DNR]**  
**Urban Ecology Center**

**1.0 Goal**

The goal of the Management Plan for Riverside Park is to maintain an urban forest (defined as “the aggregate of all vegetation and green spaces within communities that provide benefits vital to enriching the quality of life”) for education and research. The mission of Urban Ecology Center (UEC) is to preserve, enhance, and use the natural resources of Riverside Park, the Milwaukee River, and adjacent green spaces, as well as provide environmental science and awareness programs.

**2.0 Area Description and Historical Use**

The UEC has a long-term preservation lease with Milwaukee County on 15.2 acres of mostly forested land in Milwaukee’s Riverside Park along the Milwaukee River. The park itself was designed in the late 1800’s and intended to provide a natural oasis in the city for persons of all backgrounds. Activities in the park included swimming, boating, skating, and curling. In the mid to late 1900s, Riverside Park fell into a state of disrepair until a group of citizens took action. This group evolved into the Friends of Riverside Park and, eventually, the Urban Ecology Center.

**3.0 Philosophy of Management**

This plan is written as a “hundred year management plan.” While this seems like a long time to write a plan for, ecologically speaking it represents a brief moment. The idea of drafting a “hundred year management plan” is to create the plan with the natural succession of the plant communities in mind (i.e. the plant combinations will be allowed to evolve naturally towards the “ideal” plant community which would grow under the given environmental conditions). This plan is meant to examine the influences the UEC would like to enact in order to encourage the plant succession to take a particular path or be maintained in a particular natural state along that path.

**4.0 Management Plan**

The Management Plan for the natural portion of Riverside Park has been created through the division of the park into different plant areas. The plan then determines the appropriate plant community for each area, which could mean enhancing an already natural state or redirecting an area that has been invaded by non-native species. Due to the nature of a non-profit organization, UEC’s financial resources can be limiting. For this reason, the management plans tend to be flexible to accommodate the quantity of monies available. In addition, there are 15 ecological areas outlined in this Management Plan. The overall focus of this Management Plan is to maximize the diversity of the types of native Wisconsin plant communities in the Riverside Park natural area. They will exist as a living example of various habitats and an educational tool for the surrounding communities and thousands of students involved in the UEC’s programs each year.