



Nature-Based Play:
A Recipe for Community Health
East Central Parks District

Resilient Communities Project

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The contents of this report represent the views of the authors, and do not reflect those of RCP, CURA, the Regents of the University of Minnesota, or the City of Brooklyn Park.



The Method

Research

- Resilient Communities Project
- The City of Brooklyn Park
- Nature-based play
- Assigned East Central Parks

Park Visits

- Each park visited by two group members
- Park visit packet completed
- Photos

Evaluation

- Group discussion
- Review Photos and Notes
- Compare/Contrast
- Determined Need and Potential

Evaluation Worksheet

Park: _____

Size: _____

Traditional Features (ball fields, swing set, etc.)

Check each element that is present in the park. Make notes as needed below.

Nature-Based Play Elements:

- Natural Spaces
- Trees and foliage
- Open, unlandscaped fields in the area
- Minimal design structures but still functional
- Natural Structures
- Rocks to climb and play on
- Shaded spaces
- Natural Habitats
- Water Feature
- Gardens (With paths)
- Sand, mulch, recycled rubber etc
- Places for climbing and crawling
- Gathering spaces
- Messy materials (mud, sand, twigs, etc.)
- Levels (stone walls, stairs, etc.)

Physical Features

- Hard-surface play area
- Hard-surface paths
- Dramatic play structures
- Trees and natural areas
- Active-play equipment
- Large soft areas (grasses etc.)
- Fences gates walls
- Semi-private spaces
- Pet/animal friendly places
- Flower gardens/greenhouses/butterfly gardens
- Transitional spaces
- Access amenities
- Accessibility

Does the Area:

- Encourage play?
- Stimulate senses?
- Perk curiosity?
- Support active play?
- Support child-adult interaction?
- Involve art or music?
- Support group games?
- Support creativity?
- Engage in the environment?
- Involve science?

What elements are missing but could be added?

Work Breakdown Structure

Date	Task Assignment	Delegated to:
Oct. 3, 2016	Initial Research in NBP and Brooklyn Park	All
Oct. 10, 2016	Complete Worksheet and Assigned Parks	Barb, Jeffery, Zoë
Oct. 17, 2016	Project Review Meeting with Tony	All
Nov. 7, 2016	Complete Observation of Parks	All
Nov. 9, 2016	Meet to Determine Opportunities for new NBP Elements in the Parks	All
Nov. 17, 2016	Complete write-ups for each park	Barb, Corey, Jeffrey
Nov. 23, 2016	Complete Renderings	Zoë
Nov. 28, 2016	Compile information into Report	Zoë
Nov. 30, 2016	Complete and Practice Powerpoint Presentation	All
Dec. 12, 2016	Present Findings to Class	All
Dec. 16, 2016	Present Findings to Brooklyn Park	Barb, Zoë

Nature-Based Play

Definition:

“Outdoor areas designed for play, comprised of features existing in or formed by nature. “These components represent the larger wild environment in a way that feels safe and manageable to young visitors and their parents while inviting imagine and explorative play.”

Why NBP matters:

When children engage in nature based play there is a marked increase in imaginative, cooperative and energetic participation. These findings are measured against children’s play in traditional metal and plastic structures in the majority of playgrounds today.

Park Visit Results

Noble Sports Park

4701 87th Ave.

- 5.8 acres
- Parking Lot
- Picnic Area
- Restroom Facilities
- Storage Building
- Full Basketball Courts
- Tennis Courts
- Baseball Diamonds
- Softball Diamonds
- Soccer Field
- Sand Volleyball



Edinbrook Park

2900 Edinbrook Parkway

- 5.8 acres
- Parking Lot
- Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- Full Basketball Court
- Game Court
- Softball Diamond



Edinbrook Park



Maitland Park

8900 Vickers Crossing

- 8.5 acres
- Playground
- Walking Trail
- Picnic Area
- Pond
- Woods with Animal Trails



Maitland Park



Royal Oaks Park

2900 Edinbrook Parkway

- 9.2 acres
- Grass Field
- Half Soccer Field
- Baseball Diamond
- Playground
- Picnic table/Grill
- .32 mile walking trail



Royal Oaks Park



Brook Oaks Park

1750 87th Trail, Brooklyn Park

- 11.4 acres
- Picnic Area
- Playground
- Full Basketball Court
- Woods



Brook Oaks Park Trail System



- Connection to the Brooklyn Park Trail System
- Increased Access to wooded area of the park
- Potential to add climbing structures, etc. along the trail for increased interest
- Geocache Sites

Willowstone Park

909 95th Ave, Brooklyn Park

- 18.4 acres
- Parking Lot
- Activity Building
- Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- Sliding Hill
- Lacrosse Field
- Tennis Courts
- Full Basketball Court
- Softball Fields
- Skating Rink



Willowstone Native Plant Garden

- Pollinator Plot
- Provide habitat for animals
- Prairie Restoration
- Interpretive Signs



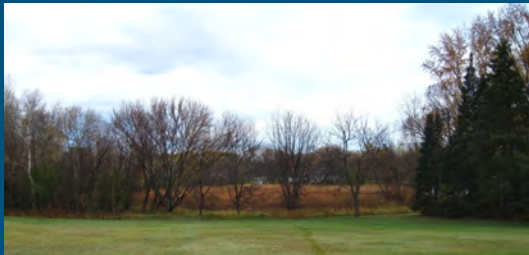
Additional Options for Willowstone Park



Jewell Park

Jewell Park- 1400 89th Avenue

- 14.5 acres
- Parking Lot
- Activity Building
- Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- Sliding Hill
- Soccer Fields



Jewell Park Boardwalk

- Boardwalk and Trail System
- Balance Logs
- Interpretive Signs



Jewell Park Thicket

- Natural Play Fort
- Easy to Supervise
- Slackline
- Designed for younger children



Project Experience

- Positive Experience with Brooklyn Park
- Real world experience
- Forging new connections
- Scheduling
- Growth experience
 - Technology
 - Research
 - Evaluation
 - Reporting

