BROOKHAVEN CREEK RIPARIAN AREA
Part of Nature's Water Filter
STORMWATER AND SURFACE WATER
Stormwater is rainfall or melted snow that runs off roofs, yards, parking lots and streets. It drains directly into nearby streams, rivers and lakes.
The stormwater from local neighborhoods around Rock Creek, Prairie Creek, and William Morgan Parks discharges into Brookhaven Creek and eventually into the Canadian River. From there it continues downstream to supply other communities with drinking water.
ROCK CREEK PARK
Rock Creek Park is where Brookhaven Creek begins. There are two wetlands which overflow under Rock Creek Road.
PRAIRIE CREEK PARK
In order to improve the quality of the Brookhaven Creek riparian area, some of the riparian vegetation has been restored in the park.
WILLIAM MORGAN PARK
This park contains a large riparian area which slows down stormwater, protects the banks, and shades the creek keeping the water cool.
TO CANADIAN RIVER
WHY BROOKHAVEN CREEK?
Brookhaven Creek runs more than four miles through west Norman. This vital creek and surrounding natural riparian area provide wildlife habitat, protect water quality, and allow for critical habitat interconnectivity for migratory wildlife.
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BROOKHAVEN CREEK RIPARIAN AREA
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MALLARD
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
WHAT IS A RIPARIAN AREA?
The land and plants next to Brookhaven Creek make up the riparian area. Riparian areas provide many valuable benefits and functions.
RIFFLES
The sections of the creek that have rocks in them are called riffles. The riffles break up flowing water, adding much needed oxygen for aquatic critters living in the creek. Small fish and aquatic insects, called macroinvertebrates, live among the rocks and vegetation in the creek.
WILDLIFE CORRIDORS
Urban development often breaks up wildlife habitat into small fragments or patches. Riparian areas can act as corridors for wildlife to travel between larger patches of habitat.
Brookhaven Creek, which runs four miles through the west side of Norman, provides critical habitat interconnectivity for wildlife.
Check out the mud at the edge of the creek to find tracks of some of these wildlife travelers.
RACOON
NO MOW ZONE
Keeping healthy vegetation along the creek bank helps:
• Slow stormwater
• Reduce erosion
• Remove pollutants
• Protect water quality
• Provide wildlife habitat
By maintaining a "no mow zone" next to the creek, we can protect this vegetation and help improve water quality in Brookhaven Creek.
RIPARIAN VEGETATION
Riparian vegetation is adapted to growing in wet conditions. While you explore Prairie Creek Park, keep an eye out for these plants in the riparian area.
SPIKE RUSH
SYCAMORE
CATTAIL
BALD CYPRESS
RED FOX
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CATTAILS
A Vital Component of Healthy Ecosystems and Clean Water
Male red-winged blackbirds have red shoulder patches to impress the brown-streaked females. The females use old cattail stalks to make a nest and the young are fed insects found within the marsh and prairie.
Cattail moths are an important food source for birds, bats, frogs, and toads. The caterpillars use cattail seeds as a food source and use the fluff to stay warm in the winter. Birds also use the fluff to build nests.
Common yellowthroat warblers are frequently found in marshes and cattail patches, such as those found here in William Morgan Park. The male has a distinctive song, wichity-wichity-wichity.
Dense stands of cattails dampen wave actions, creating a stable nursery for the eggs of toads and frogs. Frogs and toads attract predators such as wading birds, like herons, as well as snakes and raccoons.
Cattails can absorb pollutants, like heavy metals and excess fertilizer, which protects water quality in Brookhaven Creek.
Submerged cattail stalks provide a surface on which aquatic insects, like diving beetles, lay their eggs. These insects are, in turn, food for fish, frogs, toads and birds.
Cattails serve as food pantries for muskrats. This water-loving rodent eats all parts of the plant and builds its haystack house out of cattail stalks. Muskrats use this house to stay warm in cold weather.
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WILDLIFE YOU MAY SEE
Watching wildlife can be a lot of fun! Many wildlife creatures are elusive and wary so you will need to move slowly and quietly. Early morning and late afternoon are usually the best times to see wildlife. A pair of binoculars is helpful.
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
BLUE DASHER
GREAT BLUE HERON
RED-EARED SLIDER
LEOPARD FROG
BLUEGILL SUNFISH
SIGNS OF LIFE
Even if you do not see the animal, you may see signs of its presence, such as tracks, scat (droppings) or feathers. And listen... in nature you can hear a symphony of sounds.
RIPARIAN ZONES
William Morgan Park is located in the Brookhaven Creek watershed. Brookhaven Creek runs more than four miles through west Norman. This vital creek and surrounding natural riparian area provide wildlife habitat, protect water quality, and allow for critical habitat interconnectivity for migratory wildlife.
BEAVER VS MUSKRAT
Beavers and muskrats are both mammals that live in and around waterways. A great way to tell them apart is to check the tail: muskrats have a long, thin tail while beavers have a wide, flat tail. Muskrats are also much smaller weighing 2-4 lb. while beavers can weigh 30-40 lb.
RACCOON
OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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BEAVER
MUSKRAT