

# Dickens Farm Park Master Plan

Longmont, Colorado



Boyd Wright, Native Aquatic Species Biologist, CPW

*Underutilized urban open space becomes an ecologically functioning and inviting park that can be enjoyed by hikers, bikers, paddlers, and wildlife.*



from top: Iowa darter (*Etheostoma exile*); Creek after flooding

The adoption of the St. Vrain Greenway Master Plan in 2004 set the stage for the creation of a recreational greenway along the St. Vrain Creek corridor that would connect the City of Longmont and the town of Lyons, Colorado. Today, eight miles of the envisioned greenway have been completed, including a section that passes through the heart of downtown Longmont. An integral component of this section is a 58-acre site now known as Dickens Farm Park. Originally home to a gravel mining operation, the site included three gravel pits that had become

degraded ponds, and an eroding riverfront offering little in terms of aquatic and terrestrial habitat, recreation, or beauty.

Bordered by Main Street on its western edge, Dickens Farm Park presented tremendous potential for both urban renewal and ecological enhancement. As a key member of the master planning team focused on site ecology, Biohabitats provided detailed assessments of the riparian vegetation and physical condition of the creek, performed a jurisdictional wetland delineation and prepared the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit application. Biohabitats then developed concepts for stream and wetland restoration. Biohabitats also worked closely with Colorado Parks & Wildlife fish biologists to develop opportunities to protect,

restore, and regenerate native fish habitat for the state-listed Iowa darter (*Etheostoma exile*), stonecat (*Noturus flavus*) and common shiner (*Luxilus cornutus*). Biohabitats re-assessed the site after it experienced record floods in 2013, and made design recommendations that adjusted the plan to the new creek alignment.

In addition to the ecological enhancements, the master plan calls for hiking trails, picnic pavilions, playgrounds, and an in-channel water park for paddlers and tubers. When complete, the park's proposed recreation features and restored natural habitat are expected to attract two million visitors annually.

### SERVICES

- Inventory & Assessments
- Planning
- Concept Design
- Parks

*conservation planning  
ecological restoration  
regenerative design*



800.220.0919  
www.biohabitats.com

