

# Report on a Visit to the Trails of Greenberry Park

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On September 8, I walked the trails of Greenberry Park to provide some impressions of their condition and recommendations for improvement. I did this for the Jefferson City Trail Users Group. No visitors were present anywhere in the park on that day, which surprised me since it was Labor Day. I found that the trail makes a loop, starting to the right of the fire ring south of the parking area and ending just behind the maintenance shed by the picnic pavilion north of the parking lot. This is a small park and the entire trail and the side spurs probably total less than one quarter mile. However, it has great potential for wildlife and wildflower viewing, has some impressive, large trees, and it leads to an overlook of the Moreau River.

The treadway was in better shape than I expected. It was generally clear and easy to follow. It is steep in places but not badly eroded or entrenched. There was one large tree over the trail that needs to be cleared from the treadway. The sides of the trail could use some trimming. There is one deep draw that the trail spans with a bridge with a hand railing. The bridge seems well designed but is old and will soon need to be reinforced or replaced. For now, it works.

A short spur trail leads from the loop trail to the bank of the river. (A dead, 12 inch diameter ash tree between the trail and the river poses a hazard and should be removed). The trail ends at a steep earthen bank about 10-12 feet deep. To access the riverside, someone has built a ladder out of 2X4s that has fifteen steps and is about sixteen feet long. It is attached to the bank by a rope tied to a tree root that protrudes from the bank. The second to the last step is missing. The ladder seems fairly new and works well, but it would present a problem for people that are unable to use a ladder, and it is somewhat awkward to get onto the ladder from the trail. There needs to be a better access to the river, but this will be an expensive problem since whatever is built will be washed away by flash floods. I don't think steps and decking would be practical for this reason. The ladder probably worked because during a flood it can either be pulled up out of the floodplain or allowed to drift with the water and repositioned after the flood subsided. It was the cheap and

practical solution when this was a girl scout camp. As a city park, this looks like a liability problem, even though I was glad to be able to get down to the water.

The ladder descends to a small gravel bar with a nice view of the river. The view in all directions looks wild and undeveloped. Most of the bar is being reclaimed by willows and young sycamores. I was surprised to find no litter along the river, and the scene from this spot is scenic and peaceful.

The soil all along the trail is rich and has produced some impressive trees. Along the slopes are a number of very large chinquapin, white, and bur oaks, and shagbark hickory. Many of them are at least two feet in diameter. There also large hackberry trees along the trail. Along the upper bank of the river there are several very large sycamores, more than three feet in diameter. There area also some interesting native shrubs including paw paws and spicebush.

I returned to the loop trail and continued around. The east property boundary seems to be defined by a steep drainage into the Moreau River. Another short spur trail goes to this drainage and to its bottom, which at this point is gravelly. I scared a barred owl out of a tree near here.

Returning to the loop trail, it leaves the bottom and climbs to the pavilion and parking lot.

By far the biggest problem with this trail, and with the entire area, is that is covered with invasive exotic species that area choking out the ground flora and replacing the natural reproduction of the trees with shade-tolerant, exotic plants. The worst of these are shrub honeysuckle and wintercreeper. There is also Japanese honeysuckle. These are the three that I noticed, and they are everywhere. They have been there a long time. Much of the honeysuckle is 8-10 feet tall with 2-3-inch stems. Wintercreeper covers much of the ground and climbs many of the large trees. If these exotics can be removed, many native wildflowers would probably reappear, and others could be reintroduced. This could be a beautiful place to view spring woodland wildflowers from a short, accessible trail. It would also be a wonderful spring birding area with its large trees, rich understory, and proximity to water. It would be full of warblers during migration, and probably is now even with the invasive species understory.

Maybe removing the invasive woody plants would be possible given the small size of the area and the short length of the trail. It would take commitment and determination, and some resources to accomplish this.

## PHOTOS



#1--Ladder to Moreau River





#2--Ladder to Moreau River





#3--Sandy Trail with Invasive Plants



#4--View of Moreau River





#5-- Wintercreeper



#6-- Tree over Gully





#7--Trail intersection



#8--Sycamore Tree





#9--Bridge





#10—Trail Tread





#11—Large Tree





#12--Outdoor Pavilion



#13--Fire Ring