

Reach 1 River Improvements

Many people enjoy walking or biking along the river that runs through the center of Glenview. But as “natural” as it may seem in its present state did you know that 100 years ago it looked very different?

Our river – the West Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River – originally meandered through town, providing valuable habitat for wildlife and creating wetlands that helped filter and clean our water supply. But as Glenview changed and developed over time, the river changed too. Its original path was forced into a straight, man-made channel, where it remains to this day.

But that has changed for ‘Reach 1’ of the river – the 3,000-foot part that runs between Willow Road and the Techny Basin. Thanks to federal stimulus funding received through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, this portion of the river once again meanders through wetland terraces, open water pockets, and a more natural environment, enhancing its value as part of our “green infrastructure” as it increases biodiversity, improves water quality, and reduces erosion.

Made possible through a \$654,841 Water Pollution Control “enhanced loan” (meaning that 25 percent does not need to be repaid and the balance has no interest), construction of the project began in July 2010. In spring 2011, new plants were brought in. Re-naturalization of this important natural resource will continue as the plantings mature and the habitat develops.

It’s all part of the Village’s West Fork River Corridor project to improve habitat along the river in Glenview. So far, steep slopes and invasive plants along the river have been replaced by gentler grading and native vegetation at two other locations near the Techny Basin and at West Fork Green in Glenview’s downtown. In June 2010, these combined efforts received a Silver Ribbon Award from the Friends of the Chicago River organization’s inaugural Chicago River Blue awards program.

Location: West Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River, south of Willow Road for 3,000 feet

Start of construction: July 2010

Construction complete: Spring 2011

Benefits:

- Less pollutants through reduced erosion and improved wetlands
- Aeration from pool-and-riffle turbulence and velocity changes increases aquatic habitat diversity
- Enhanced riparian habitat

West Fork: The West Fork is one of three forks of the North Branch of the Chicago River. The Middle Fork and East Fork (primarily known as the Skokie River) are the others.

Watershed: An area of land in which all of the surface and belowground water drains to the same place. 71% of Glenview is in the West Fork watershed.



Top: Reach 1 once again meanders
Bottom: Vegetation planted in 2011



The Village of
Glenview