

4. Valley Lo Golf Course (Map F)

Site number: F-3

Ownership: Private

Overall size: 69.37 acres

Subwatershed: West Fork of North Branch of Chicago River

Mapped Land Cover on Site:

Turf (0.55 acre): Mowed turf in parking lot and along entrance road.

Turf/Ornamental Plantings (21.51 acres): Mowed turf grass associated with golf course; roughs generally turf grass planted with ornamental trees and shrubs.

Wet-Bottom Detention Basin (4.44 acres): Two basins with turf side-slopes; 1) an isolated basin east of West Fork and 2) a basin hydrologically connected to West Fork during high water events.



Typical view of golf course: turf grass with ornamental plantings.

Stream/River (1.57 acres): West Fork flows from north to south bisecting the golf course. Dam at bridge creates open water area surrounded by young trees.

Unassociated Woody Growth (5.30 acres): Young dense woody growth along east side of the West Fork.

Open Water/Lake (28.18 acres): Valley Lo Lake, bordering the south end of golf course with relatively clear water; entire east and south banks are developed (residential) with rip rap or seawalls, west and north banks with small buffers comprised of willow, cattail, and buckthorn.



Valley Lo Lake south of golf course.

Developed (7.82 acres): Club house and parking lots located on south central portion of the site.

Existing Ecological Conditions:

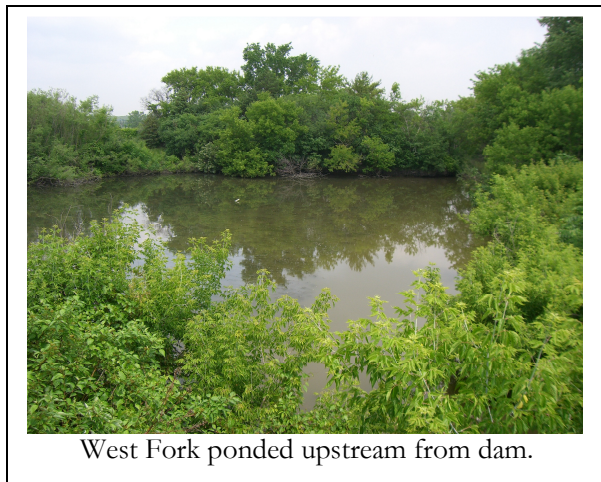
Valley Lo Golf Course exhibits many characteristics of other golf courses in the area. The roughs are mostly turf with mature ornamental trees (honey locust and pines). Two wet-bottom detention ponds are located on the site. The first is located east of the West Fork and has mowed turf grass side-slopes and a rock toe. The second basin functions as a backwater area hydrologically connected to the West Fork during high water events. This basin also has turf side-slopes around the majority of the north bank. The south bank is mostly young buckthorn and box elder. Mild to severe erosion was observed around the banks of the second basin.



The West Fork flows from north to south through the heart of the course. A head dam is located beneath a bridge crossing and backs up the West Fork. The section of the West Fork downstream from the dam is highly entrenched and lined with fill material such as concrete and other debris. Much of the vegetation along the West Fork is degraded secondary woody growth consisting mostly of buckthorn, box elder, river bank grape, and other invasives. Valley Lo Lake borders the south end of the golf course. The small portion of lake shore bordering the course has some willows, cattails, and buckthorn growing. The remaining 90% of the lake shore consists of private homeowner property with mowed turf grass and some rip rap.

Restoration and Management Recommendations:

The portion of Valley Lo Lake that abuts the golf course could be improved by removing invasive species and replanting with a narrow prairie buffer and emergent wetland plants. The residential shorelines are nearly 100% developed and present limited shoreline restoration potential. Rip rap and seawalls are commonly used in this area to stabilize the shoreline. Recommended buffers not only improve water quality and limit erosion, they also provide cover and fish spawning areas.



Native buffers could also be planted round the two wet-bottom detention basins located on the golf course to help decrease erosion and absorb fertilizers prior to entering the water. Where feasible, buffers should be at least 10 feet wide along fairways and up to 30 feet wide when facing roughs.

At points on the West Fork where the river is constricted it could be widened and the banks stabilized and pulled back, if possible. A final restoration opportunity exists along the east side of the West Fork where invasive species such as box elder and buckthorn dominate. These areas could be brushed and interseeded to improve soil holding capacity and general stream corridor conditions. Recommend that the Village works on a joint habitat enhancement project for this area along both sides of the West Fork with Valley Lo Golf Course.