

WELCOME TO THE WATERSHED



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The Park District of Highland Park

This project is possible thanks to our partners:



The City of Highland Park



Great Lakes Restoration Initiative



Gary Borger Chapter of Trout Unlimited

For more information, visit www.pdhp.org/hpravines

PROTECTING OUR GREAT LAKE

In 2010, the Park District of Highland Park received funding from the United States EPA to aid in restoration of fish habitat. This initiative brought many members of the community together to work in the ravines. Together, we made it possible for fish to move into the ravine stream from Lake Michigan during spring migration and find places to lay their eggs in the streams. We continue to monitor water quality, renew stream features, clean up trash and educate our residents about the function and value of the lake and its tributary streams.

Taking stewardship of the ravines, lakefront and the plants and animals they support ensures they will continue to thrive as part of what makes Highland Park a beautiful place to live.



WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place.

John Wesley Powell, scientist geographer, put it best when he said that a watershed is:

“That area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community.”

This watershed connects us as a community to our Great Lake.



EVERYONE IS PART OF A WATERSHED

In Highland Park, rain that falls east of Green Bay Road drains to Lake Michigan.

Along its course and over time, the water has shaped a unique landscape that supports rare plants, tree and shrub communities and wildlife including migratory birds, interesting insects and native fish.

There are eleven named ravines in Highland Park

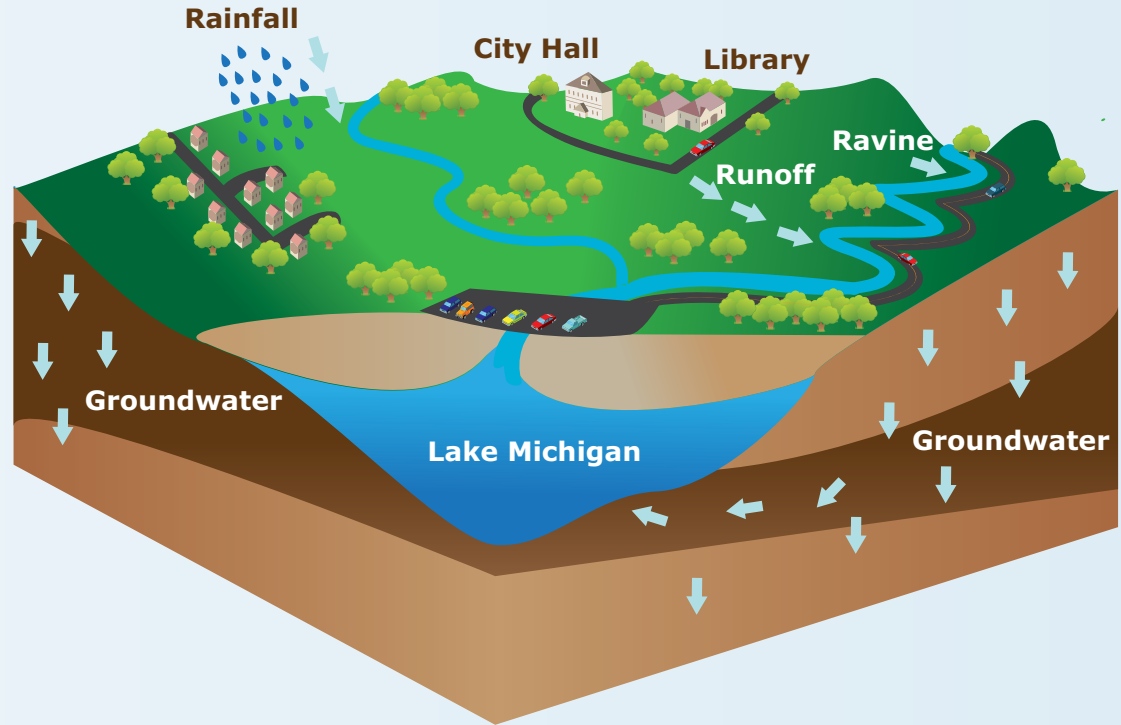


HOW WERE RAVINES FORMED?

Rainfall over thousands of years carved steep valleys in the bluffs that characterize our shoreline.

These ravines are the signature feature of the Lake Michigan watershed in our community.

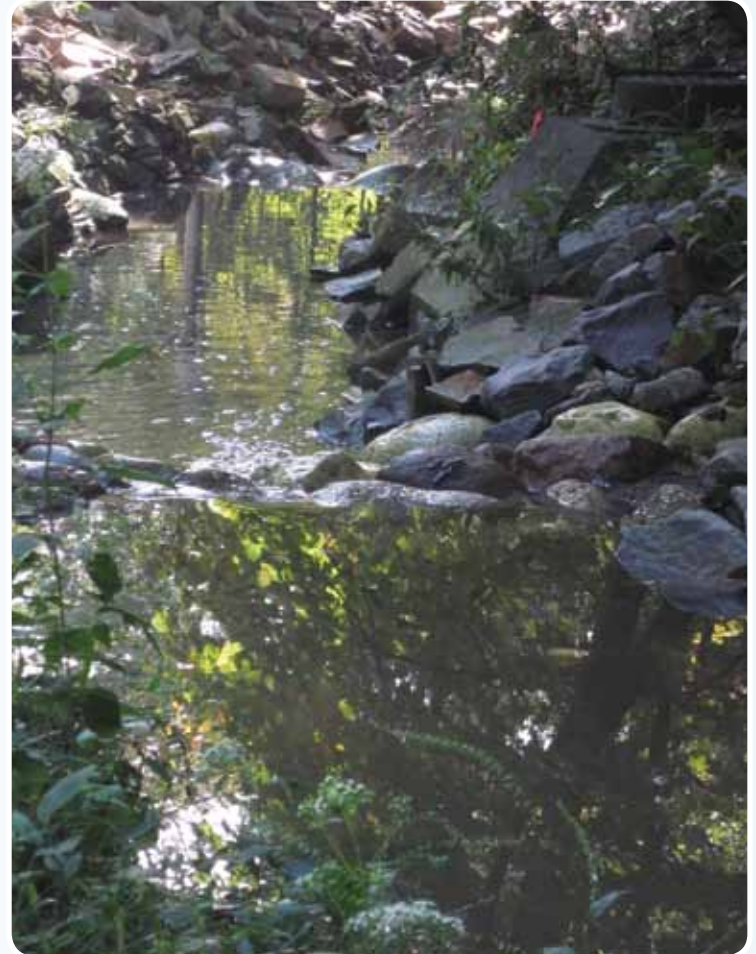
Together with other ravine systems along the north shore, they represent one of the last natural drainages to Lake Michigan in Illinois.



WHERE IS THE WATER?

Sometimes you may notice the ravine bed is dry. Other times, there is a big flow of water. When rainwater falls on hard surfaces such as pavement, it can't soak into the ground and rushes away as runoff. It ends up in the ravines where the sudden heavy flow floods the waterways. Runoff causes soil to erode and wash into the lake as sediment, which is a form of pollution. Road salts, lawn chemicals and trash can be carried by runoff into Lake Michigan.

Ideally, rainfall soaks into the soil and moves slowly underground to the stream channel. When water can run through the ground, it is cleaned and cooled, like a giant water purifier. Historically, these steady supplies of cold, clean groundwater were what made these little streams a healthy and balanced ecosystem.



HOW CAN I HELP?

THERE ARE MANY WAYS
YOU CAN GET INVOLVED
TO SUPPORT THE RAVINES:

- [Volunteer](#) with PDHP Natural Areas to help with restoration and education efforts, or organize your own group to do a neighborhood cleanup.
- Limit or eliminate the use of lawn chemicals, road salts and pesticides on your property.
- Store rainfall in convenient rain barrels and use it to refresh your garden in drier times.
- Use [native plants](#) in your landscape and keep lawns (and lawn sprinklers) away from ravine edges.
- Secure recyclables such as plastic bottles and bags so they don't blow away.
- Make a habit of picking up litter in your neighborhood.

Visit www.pdhp.org/hpravines for more information!



Park District of Highland Park

636 Ridge Road • Highland Park, IL 60035

847.831.3810 • www.pdhp.org