



Lower Black River Heron Rookery Restoration City of Lorain, Ohio



Funding provided by USFS and Ohio DNR under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

The Lower Black River Heron Rookery Restoration Project was funded by a \$250,000 GLRI grant, which was awarded to the City of Lorain in 2012. The grant funded the removal of steel mill processing byproducts (e.g., slag) historically disposed of in the project area, reconnection of the floodplain, and restoration of the area. Over 100,000 cubic yards of slag were removed from a 4-acre area adjacent to the existing heron rookery. The removal of the material addressed water quality concerns and reconnected the area to the 100-year floodplain, increasing the floodplain capacity of the Black River.



Steel mill slag removal

Restoration involved a “recipe” for soil amendments designed to encourage the development of a floodplain forest. The recipe called for placement of topsoil, “ripping” of the existing subsoil and placed topsoil, tilling in triple-shredded hardwood compost, and placement of leaf/grass compost. Over 1,500 native trees and shrubs were planted on the Site along with native a native seed mix. Planted tree species included red maple, swamp white oak, pin oak, American elm, tulip poplar, American sycamore, Eastern cottonwood, box-elder, and silver maple. Shrub species included black willow, silky willow, silky dogwood, and American elderberry. Portions of the Site are expected to develop into floodplain wetlands whereas other areas will support a more facultative vegetation community.



Plantings are designed to create floodplain habitat similar to the existing conditions in the heron rookery.



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