

## **Valley Water Mill Habitat Assessment and Preservation, Springfield, Missouri**

WWE designed a five-acre showcase-demonstration wetland project at the inlet to a lake for the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks. Valley Water Mill is a 100-acre, publicly owned site on the north edge of Springfield. The parcel is of great scientific interest because it contains a prominent fault zone where streams sink into underground channels, and a wide variety of natural and man-made features, including a seventeen-acre lake, wetlands, spring-fed stream, caves, sinkholes, glades and forests. The site is of historic interest because it was the location of a pre-Civil War grist mill. Valley Water Mill was developed into a public, educational amenity with a 2-½ mile walking trail looping around the entire site, four “learning stations” at the spring, wetland, lake and stream. A state-of-the-art LEED “Gold” educational building known as the “Watershed Center” is located at the site, along with many kinds of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) for educational purposes.

WWE developed designs for the site to restore and preserve wetland hydrology and inlet channel stability. Special attention was paid to the preservation of the habitats of the area’s diverse wildlife species. Plans were developed for wetland grading, wetland planting and sediment excavation. Design elements included restoration of inlet channels and sloughs. Challenges included variable hydrology with difficult-to-engineer vegetative response, as well as coordination with numerous stakeholders and consultants.



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