

Report on [Kestner Park Native Garden](#) for WOK's March 17, 2026 Meeting  
Submitted by Craig Waddell



Visitor at the Kestner Park Native Garden

1. Kestner Park area in 1964, site of Copper Range Railroad Roundhouse

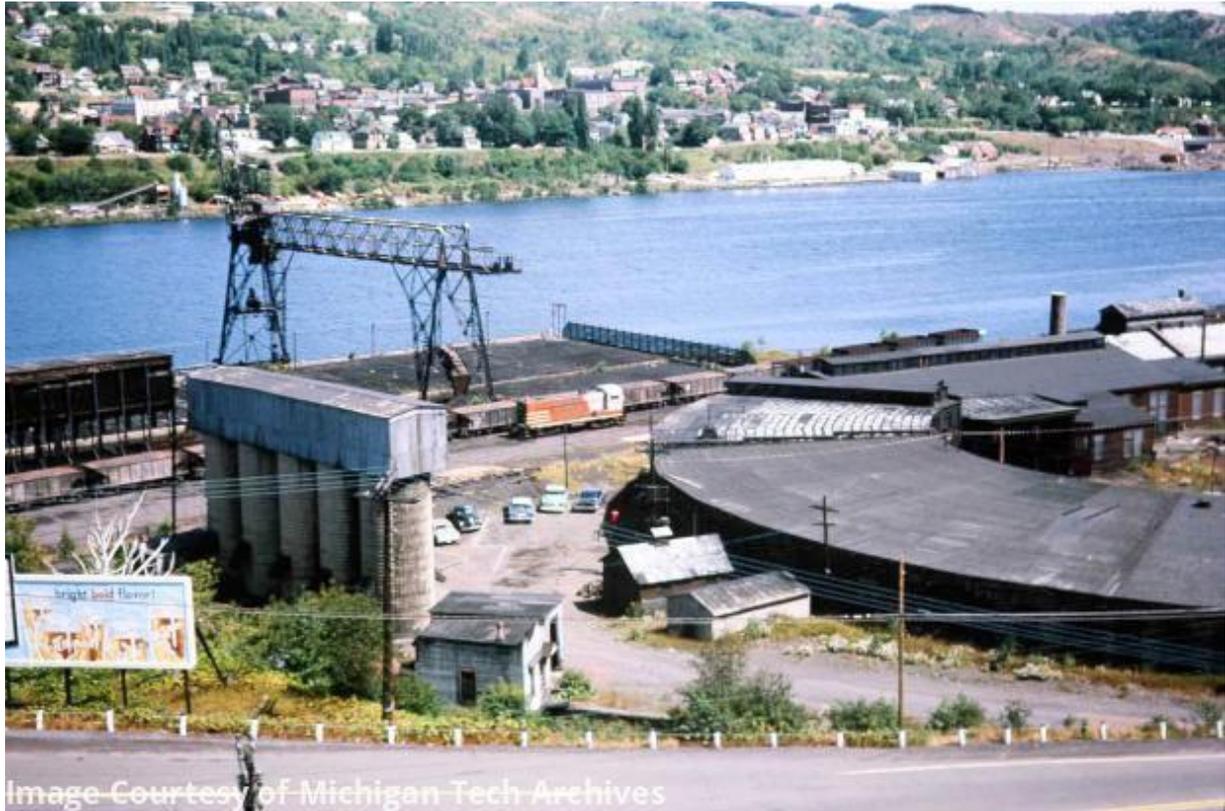


Image Courtesy of Michigan Tech Archives

2. Image of site in 1988, in the process of being converted into a municipal park. Outlet of Huron Creek is relocated from Houghton Beach to its current location.



3. In 2015, the City of Houghton Beautification Committee created the original garden. In 2018, a scout troop took over, then in 2019-2020, COVID hit.

In 2022, WOK took responsibility for the garden. Since then, we've removed many non-natives and have planted over 500 native plants.



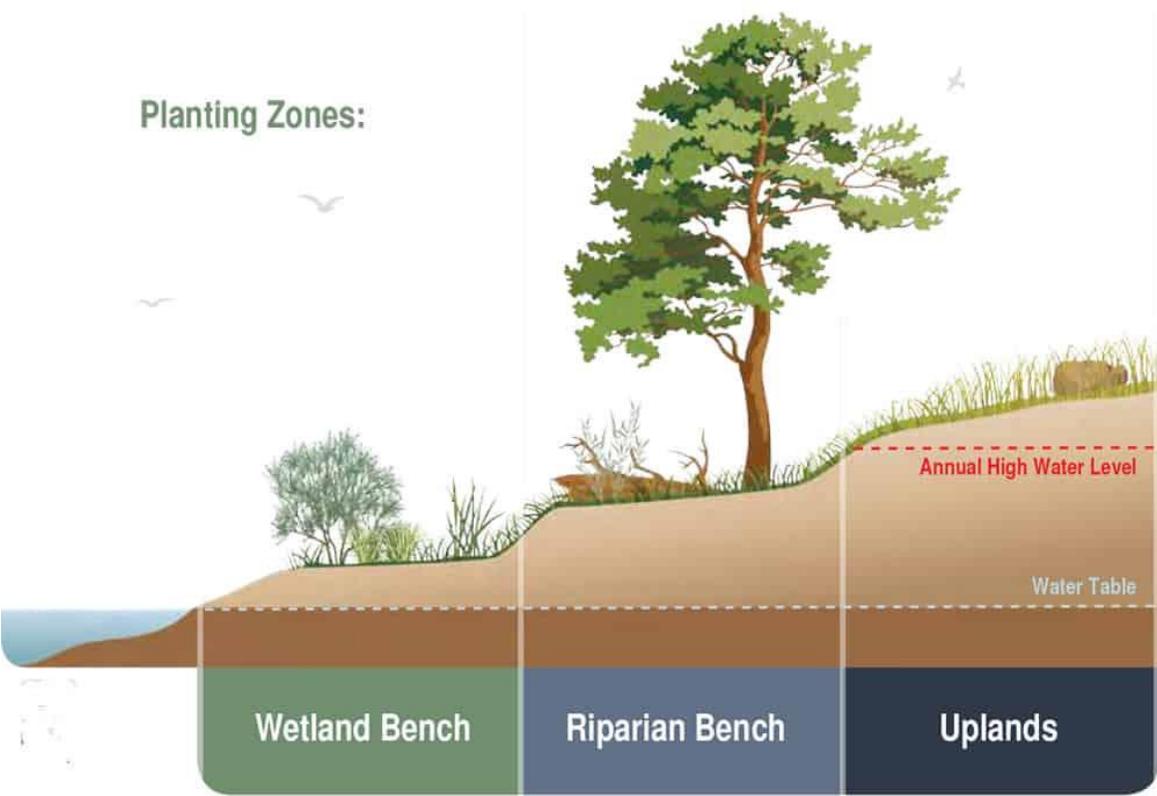
4. Aerial view (ca. 2017) of area proposed to include in planning (with Angel Miller's Scout Troop 5625): from south footbridge to north footbridge and from, asphalt parking lot on the east to concrete sidewalk on the west.



5. Native-plant demonstration garden: “park” and “garden” (vs. wilderness) both suggest human created and maintained areas. Hence, for example, lots of “cues to care,” including signs, shredded Western Red Cedar mulch border, and pruned trees.



6. Riparian buffer added to help protect the banks of Huron Creek.



7. Maintenance (and viewing) strip allow volunteers to work on and visitors to view the west side of the garden without trampling plantings.

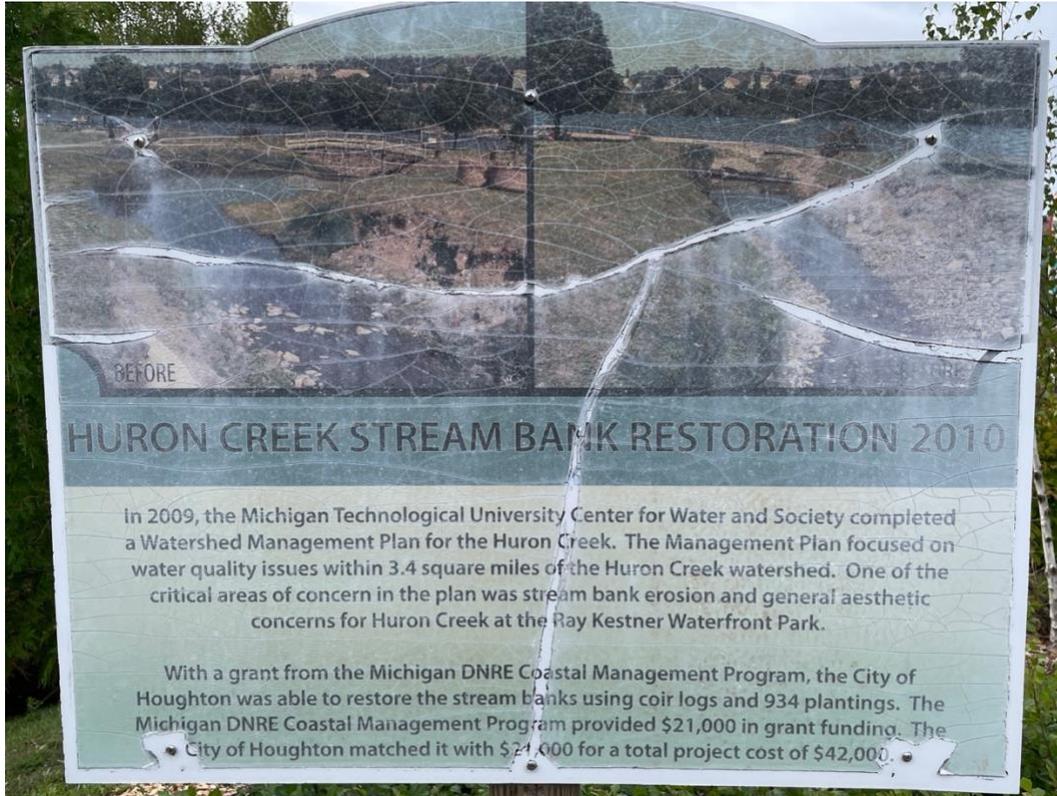


8. Efforts to reducing creek-bank erosion.



Biodegradable, coir-fiber erosion-reduction mat.

9. Sign replacement (from Industrial Graphics).



10. Improvements planned for 2026:

Add an interpretative sign for the granite glacial erratic (which Houghton DPW moved to this location for us).



Add a [Songbird Post Cap?](#)



Add a [metal garden trellis](#)? (Many color options.) Should help invite visitors into the garden.



11. Thanks to:

- Dr. Sigrid Resh (and August), Keweenaw Invasive Species Management Area (KISMA)
- Dr. Rod Chimner, Michigan Tech Wetland Ecologist (for example, with help with the riparian buffer design)
- Angel Miller, Troop Leader, Scout Troop 5625
- Jeannie DeClerck, Master Gardener (working with Scouts on garden design)
- Teresa Shoup, for help with watering.
- Michelle Wietek-Stephens, U.P. Native Plants
- The City of Houghton: Beautification Committee, DPW, City Manager
- And especially, WOK leaders and volunteers

