Name -
Zeke Sarvis

Date of Visit -
Sunday, October 27th 2019

Name of Public Land Visited -
Griffy Lake Nature Preserve

Agency that Manages the Area -
City of Bloomington

Natural Environment
The Griffy Lake Nature Preserve is a 1,200 acre strip of land, including the 109 acre Griffy Lake. It is a varied terrain, with the lake itself sitting nearly in the center of the preserve. Many creeks emanate from the Lake, which is created by a man made dam that was constructed in 1925, into the surrounding woodland (Griffy Lake Trail Map Brochure). The preserve itself is forested and mildly hilly. The wildlife is varied and typical of Indiana forest and lake habitats. Common species of fish that can be found in Griffy lake include the Black Crappie, Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Redear Sunfish, Longear Sunfish, and Green Sunfish, among others (Department of Natural Resources, 2016). The lake also supports a variety of aquatic vegetation, though much of it is dominated by the invasive Eurasian watermilfoil, and Coontail, which is also considered a nuisance (Department of Natural Resources, 2016). Common fauna that inhabit the area are Geese, a variety of Squirrels (though all I saw was the Grey Squirrel), and of course Deer, which have recently become a nuisance. Several signs also noted to beware the presence of Copperhead snakes, though fortunately I encountered none myself. The park is
host to an incredible variety of trees, including but not limited to: Loblolly pine, Eastern Redbud, PawPaw, American Beech, Northern Japanese Hemlock, Dawn Redwood, Shingle Oak, Tuliptree, Eastern Hemlock, and others (Kavanagh/Leung, 2018).

**Facilities and Services**

The Griffy Lake Nature Preserve boasts numerous activities and services. The main attractions of the preserve are the lake itself, with which a variety of recreational endeavors can be undertaken, and the many hiking trails in the surrounding forest. The park offers boating, boat rentals, fishing, geocoaching, and a plethora of other, scheduled, outdoor programs (Griffy Lake Trail Map Brochure). Fishing at Griffy lake is governed by the rules and regulations set forth by the Department of Natural Resources, and fishing licenses are not sold on site. The park strictly prohibits any horseback riding, mountain biking, or offroad vehicular endeavors. However, the park boasts an impressive number of trails, with over 11 miles of established trail for you to enjoy. In addition, there are scheduled outings, hikes, and community activities for you to participate in, and you can even contact the parks department to set up an individualized activity! As far as staff, the actual facility is very lightly manned. I saw only 2 employees during my time there, and they were both stationed at the Boathouse. The park has picnic tables and benches stationed around various places in the park. Grilling is allowed, but grill stations are not provided, and ground fires are prohibited. Camping is also permitted, and one is not allowed to keep their car there overnight (Griffy Lake Trail Map Brochure).

**Purpose**

Currently, Griffy lake exists primarily to serve as a recreational area, however, it also functions as a backup water reserve. The southwest portion of the park is also designated a state nature
preserve. Griffy Lake was originally created as part of an effort to curb water shortages in the city of Bloomington. A dam was constructed in 1924, and the city of Bloomington acquired a nearby water treatment plant in 1934. However, in 1995 the water treatment plant was decommissioned, and Griffy lake shifted to a recreationally focused state owned reservation (Griffy Lake Trail Map Brochure). I believe the Griffy Lake Nature Preserve is more conservation than preservation. The area is maintained for recreational use, rather than being kept pristine. The lake is periodically restocked with fish, and remains as a backup water source. Additionally, the lake itself was created by a man made damn. While efforts are being made to keep the natural state of the park healthy and environmentally sound, it is by no means an effort to keep the area naturally pristine and undisturbed as in the case of preservation.

My Impression

I quite enjoyed my time at Griffy Lake Nature Preserve. I think the area is well managed, and strikes a good balance between letting you enjoy the natural environment, and offering guided, structured activities and services. The area is very beautiful, and I intend to return sometime soon.

References Cited

“Griffy Lake Trail Map Brochure” City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation

