

Den Rock Park

Enhancing and Protecting Lawrence's Wooded Legacy



Groundwork Lawrence has partnered with the [City of Lawrence](#) to manage the design and construction of phased improvements to Den Rock Park, the City's only large wooded area. This 120-acre park is the only one of its kind in an otherwise densely developed and historically industrial city. Den Rock Park is replete with woodlands, wetlands, and granite outcroppings (for which the park was named) that have become a regional destination for rock climbers all over New England. In addition to enhancing the park's natural habitat for flora and fauna, the recent improvements at Den Rock Park have begun to raise awareness about Den Rock's recreational offerings among Lawrence residents, many of whom never knew the park was part of the municipal parks system due to its remote location in the southeastern corner of the city.

In 2004, Groundwork Lawrence partnered with the City of Lawrence and Steve Cosmos of [Cosmos Associates](#) to manage the design and construction of the new visitor parking area and signage based on an earlier design completed by ICON Architects. These improvements have made Den Rock Park more accessible to visitors and improved the views into the park from adjacent Route 114. Precision Group was the general contractor for this project. In 2005, Groundwork partnered again with the same team to complete comprehensive trail improvements at the park. This work was done in collaboration with the [Groundwork Lawrence Summer Green Team \[hotlink\]](#) program, which employs Lawrence youth to assist with environmental improvement projects around the city. Under the supervision of Certified Arborist Guy Shepard of SM&B Environmental Services, the Green Team completed work on a number of smaller projects, some of which are visible from the Den Rock Park entrance:

- The Green Team spent eight weeks weeding and landscaping the parking lot, picking up trash throughout the park, and trimming overgrown and low-hanging branches along the trails. The Team trimmed the trees to a uniform height, then cut and stacked the branches to create brush piles that offer habitat for woodland animals.
- The Green Team also went on a birdwatching expedition led by the Mass Audubon Society [hotlink] and put together a list of birds that are native to the park. Four existing trails in the park were named after the birds they found. The Green Team painted more



than 35 new trail signs, which have been installed throughout the park. Previously, there were only two blazed trails and no trail names or signage.

- New wood chips and water bars have been installed at the entrance trails to prevent runoff and erosion, which was gradually degrading these trails and making it difficult to walk on them;
- A new full-color trail guide and map has been developed for the park. These maps are available in hard copy at the new entrance kiosk, which was also installed as part of this project. Click [here](#) to view the [Den Rock Park Guide](#).

Groundwork Lawrence Role:

- Landscape design
- Construction management
- Fundraising
- Partnership development
- Integration of local youth with the project

Project Impacts:

- Entrance trails enhanced with wood chip cover
- Erosion control as a result of water bars installed on several trails
- Paving, landscaping, and drainage of new parking area
- New signage at park's entrance
- New information kiosk at trailhead
- New signage along trails
- Development and production of Den Rock Park trails map
- Six Lawrence youth employed for eight weeks to work on the project
- Enhanced habitat for flora and fauna
- Enhanced public access and awareness

Project Funding:

- [Lincoln Properties](#)
- [City of Lawrence](#) / [State of Massachusetts](#) Trails Grant
- In-kind donation of wood chips by [National Grid/Massachusetts Electric](#)

Project Partners:

- [City of Lawrence](#)
- [State of Massachusetts](#)
- [Cosmos Associates](#)
- Precision Group
- SM&B Environmental
- [National Grid/Massachusetts Electric](#)