

RIVERWOODS STATE NATURAL AREA
CLASS II NATURAL SCIENTIFIC STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Shelby

ACREAGE: 21

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Germantown

OWNERSHIP: State of Tennessee

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Coastal Plain

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1978

DESCRIPTION: Riverwoods is a 21-acre natural area located along the Wolf River in Germantown just outside of Memphis in Shelby County. Riverwoods is situated in a densely urban setting but provides refuge for plants and wildlife. It is a small biological island that was formerly part of a larger forested area.

Riverwoods was donated to the Memphis Garden Club in 1973 and then designated as a state natural area in 1978. In 2006 the Memphis Garden Club, a member of the Garden Club of America, donated the property to the Tennessee Division of Natural Areas. An agreement to manage and open the natural area was entered into between the State, the Memphis Garden Club and City of Germantown. The Memphis Garden Club donated funding to purchase materials to build the kiosk. The Germantown Parks and Recreation Department installed the parking area and built the trail. Today, Germantown manages the natural area in cooperation with the Tennessee Division of Natural Areas.

The vegetation within the natural area is a small remnant mixed mesophytic, oak-hickory and bottomland hardwood forest ecosystem. The topography of the site reveals that floodplain terraces were once periodically flooded prior to river channelization. The upper terrace of the floodplain provides excellent site conditions that support a small scale example of the mixed mesophytic and oak-hickory forest. The understory has been impacted by the invasive exotic pest plant, common privet, a species native to Asia. The spring flowering shrub buckeye is present and provides wonderful spring color. While the area retains local significance, its statewide significance has declined since designation in the 1970's because of rampant growth and urbanization of the surrounding area and impact of exotics. Unfortunately, it is an example of how small urban natural areas are negatively impacted by external threats.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Division of Natural Areas, Jackson Environmental Field Office, 1625 Hollywood Drive, Jackson TN 38305, phone (731) 512-1369. Division of Natural Areas, 7th Floor L&C Annex, 401 Church St., Nashville TN 37243, phone (615) 532-0431. Germantown Parks and Recreation, 2276 West Street, Germantown TN 38138-5955, phone (901) 757-7376.

PUBLIC ACCESS: A parking area, short trail and information kiosk are located on the east side of Kimbrough Blvd.

DIRECTIONS: Exit Interstate 40 at Germantown Road. Follow Germantown Road south under Walnut Grove and across the Wolf River. Turn left at Wolf River Parkway. As Wolf River Parkway curves right, look for a gravel parking area immediately across from the Kimborough Grove neighborhood entrance.