

LUCIUS E. BURCH, JR. STATE NATURAL AREA
CLASS I SCENIC-RECREATIONAL STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Shelby

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Ellendale

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Coastal Plain

ACREAGE: 728

OWNERSHIP: Shelby County

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1988

DESCRIPTION: Lucius Burch Natural Area is a 728-acre natural area located in Germantown and Shelby County and is a part of a larger 6,000-acre county park. The natural area is a remnant of historic river meanders, bald cypress-water tupelo swamps, bottomland hardwood forests, and open river channel habitat. Unfortunately, much of this ecosystem has been significantly altered as a result of change in hydrology and the invasion of common privet, an invasive exotic pest plant. Lucius Burch Natural Area offers passive recreation activities such as day hiking, bird watching, and wildlife viewing within the metropolitan Memphis area. The natural area is a relatively large unfragmented forest that follows the banks of the Wolf River. It provides a refuge for forest dwelling birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians within an urbanized environment.

Lucius Burch Natural Area is a place where impacts on the resource can be interpreted and used as an educational tool to demonstrate the ecological effects of river channelization (straightening of the river channel) and the impacts of invasive exotic pest plants. This outdoor living classroom is reacting to the change in environmental conditions since it was channelized. Test plots for the removal and treatment of common privet can be found in the natural area. Common privet is native to Asia and has been widely used as hedges in urban landscaping. It has spread throughout the understory at Lucius Burch and has displaced many native species. Its impact is indicative of a problem facing all urban natural areas where adjacent landowners introduce invasive exotic pest plants. These landscaping practices create the seed source from which invasive exotics are distributed into natural areas by animals, wind, or water. Privet has invaded at Lucius Burch since drier site conditions were created by the channelization of the Wolf River. This invasion often occurs when a natural ecological disturbance regime has been altered or where the native landscape has been severely changed by development. Historically, the site was bottomland forest and a part of the Wolf River floodplain. This is evident by the occurrence of large cypress trees that are periodically encountered in relatively dry habitats. The state listed Copper iris (*Iris fulva*) is also found here.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Shelby Farms Park, 500 Pine Lake Dr., Memphis, TN 38134, phone (901)-382-0235. 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 (731) 532-0431.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Public access is provided at multiple locations. Contact Shelby Farms Park for trail maps, park hours, and natural area information.

DIRECTIONS: Take I-40 to Memphis, exit I-40 onto I-240, exit Walnut Grove Road East. On Walnut Grove Rd., cross the Wolf River and follow the signs for Shelby Farms Park.