



“East Campus Pond”

The pond located on the East end of campus was constructed in 1961. Three years later two swans were introduced to the pond. These swans were to signify the natural beauty and tranquility that surrounds Oak Ridge National Laboratory. After the introduction of the swans the pond was then monitored and managed for the swans. Non-native fish fauna dominated the pond, and excess food for

the swans attracted many Canada geese. The plantings surrounding the pond were limited to trees.

In 2004, the East Campus started to undergo a make-over. The “Swan Pond” was a part of this make-over. It was decided that the pond should showcase the natural beauty of native plantings and provide a suitable habitat for many native animals, as well as provide a nice place for ORNL employees to use. The first steps for achieving this goal were to remove a majority of the non-native plants and animals. This was done through many stages, by finding new homes for the animals that were present in the pond, and by eliminating non-native invasive plants.

Physical changes were made to the pond in 2005 during the construction of the Visitor’s Center and Cafeteria. These included: removal of the chain link fence surrounding the pond, feeding pier, nesting island, and dead trees. A new sidewalk and boardwalk were added in July through September of 2005. To help make the area more aesthetically pleasing, river rocks replaced riprap along the shore lines. Benches and turtle platforms were added to help accommodate the employees as well as the inhabitants of the pond.

Once the physical changes were completed it was time to introduce native species to the pond. Several animals were placed in the pond, including: Largemouth Bass, Spotted Gar, Bluegill, and native turtles. After the animals were introduced, wetland plants as well as plantings on the banks were added to help improve the habitat and make the pond appear more natural.

Some of the plantings that can be seen along the shoreline are: Purple Coneflower, Butterfly Weed, Red Maple, Blazing Star, Buttonbush, Swamp Mallow, Sycamore, and Black Willow.

Emergent and floating native plants were obtained from local nurseries, or grown from



seed here at ORNL. Some of these include Spike Rushes, American Lotus, Arrowhead, Pickerel Weed, Cardinal Flower, Sweet Flag, and Native Water Lily.

In addition to being a relaxing place for employees to go, the pond also provides a place to conduct research. Many of the young aquatic plants that are placed in the pond are surrounded by fenced in cages. This protects them from predators until they become better established in the habitat. Steps used in the creating of the “East Campus Pond” have been implemented in ponds at K-25.



While much has been done to transform the old “Swan Pond” into a natural native pond, transitions continue. The ultimate goal is a natural setting that showcases native plants and animals in a pleasing, attractive manner.