

Municipal Farm Project

*Middle Blue River (Kansas City, Missouri);
2013 – Present*

Summary

The Municipal Farm site is a historic and environmental landmark in Kansas City. The location is home to significant natural wetlands, uplands, and streams. However, neglect and contamination – resulting in many brownfield sites – has left the site largely unused. Now, Urban Waters partners are working to transform the 445-acre plot into a hub of connectivity for urban agriculture, ecological restoration, and outdoor recreation.



Community members participate in efforts to restore the natural environment on the historic Municipal Farm site. (Photo credit: Middle Blue Urban Waters Partnership)

Federal Agency Partners include:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); National Park Service (NPS); U.S. Forest Service (USFS); U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Midwest Water Science Center; and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), US Fish & Wildlife Services (FWS)

Non-Federal Partners include:

Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), Heartland Conservation Alliance (HCA), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), City of Kansas City, Missouri (KCMO), Boys Grow, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Conservation Fund (TCF)

Goals

The vision is to create a hub of connectivity to celebrate the site's history, restore, and enhance the natural environment, strengthen the economy, and create opportunities for learning and recreation. Further, the Municipal Farm project seeks to:

- **Restore the Natural Environment**—Preserve, restore, and enhance natural assets and ecologically sensitive areas, including riparian forests, upland habitats, and wetlands – and remediate brownfield contamination,
- **Promote Energy Efficiency & Sustainability**—Link resource use to resource renewal, and create a mutually beneficial relationship between the site and its surroundings for future land use development,
- **Improve the Economy**—Demonstrate long-term economic health, nurturing new businesses and quality jobs, and
- **Create Recreational Opportunities**—Promote healthy activities by creating a network of hiking and biking trails; places to boat, fish, or swim; links to a larger system of trails and greenways; and access to cultural activity centers.

Major Actions to Date

Since 2013, the Municipal Farm project has made significant progress to transform and restore the neglected land, while working to attain the community's vision. Key successes and actions include:

- Characterization of brownfields sites to prepare for investment and development,
- Integration of green infrastructure with habitat restoration,
- City-adopted Sustainable Re-Use Plan to guide future development of site,
- Creation and implementation of Conservation Plan for 10 acres of Boys Grow agricultural site,
- Awarded \$500,000 in MDNR Groundwater Compensatory funds to restore and protect 18 acres of wetland habitat,
- Secured \$70,000 through Boys Grow for infrastructure investments,
- Invested \$99,738 from NFWF Five Star Grant to educate youth, engage the community, and protect 20 acres of habitat

In summary, the project has made strides to revitalize the city-owned property and bring social, health, and economic benefits to residents, while providing improved open space and connectivity.