

FOREST PARK FOREVER

# Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan

St. Louis, Missouri



*A natural resources management plan guides ongoing stewardship of one of the nation's largest urban parks.*

Recognizing that the Park's rich history, regional ecological and cultural significance, and Biohabitats' deeply held conviction that parks should embody ecological democracy, the team developed an approach that rested on three elements. The final plan needed to move natural resource management firmly to the forefront of urban ecological theory and practice, provide a scientifically defensible framework for how natural resources factor into future management decisions, and cultivate long term stewardship.

opportunities for restoration and enhancement, and areas of high ecological concern.

Biohabitats applied the science of ecology to build a framework based on restoration, management, and maintenance strategies that will work for Forest Park in the long term. Implementing this plan will allow Park managers to enhance ongoing resilience by proactively address invasive plants, wildlife management, integrated water strategies, and conservation priorities.



The park's monuments, historic buildings, wildlife, waterways, and landscapes combine to form a unique cultural institution that is vitally important to the entire St. Louis region.

Through the lifespan of the park, its natural areas have been impacted by what makes it the crown of the community: its popularity. When Forest Park Forever, a nonprofit conservancy that partners with the City of St. Louis to steward Forest Park, sought a plan to ensure the Park's ongoing health, diversity and sustainability, they turned to a planning team led by Biohabitats.

At 1,300 acres, Forest Park is one of the largest urban parks in the U.S. More than a scenic backdrop to St. Louis that draws 12 million annual visitors, the Park is regarded as a community catalyst. It is a gathering place for people of all ages, races, and economic backgrounds.

Envisioned as a multi-phased series of collaborative efforts, the project began with the creation an ecological baseline of the Park's physical conditions. This was done using GIS, aerial photographs, and existing environmental mapping and data. Field work characterized landscape disturbance, health of the existing ecosystems (prairies, waterways, and forests) and

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