



## EXPERIENCE: PLANNING PROJECTS

### WATERSHED CONSERVATION AND PLANNING

**Little Blue River Watershed Management Plan:** The purpose of the watershed management plan for the Little Blue River watershed is to guide the decision makers in Jackson County and the Jackson County Stormwater Commission on actions to take for the betterment of the watershed and community. The watershed management plan will assist the Stormwater Commission by:

- Identifying places for Best Management Practices (BMPs) on public lands,
- Identifying critical protection areas and strategies to protect the lands,
- Identifying strategies to conserve and enhance the critical protection areas,
- Educating decision-makers regarding watershed protection.

The scope of the Little Blue River Watershed Management Plan includes utilizing the information and data currently available in a rapid assessment to identify the areas and actions with the highest potential for maximum effect in the watershed. Outcomes include:

- 61 locations for stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs);
- 56 critical natural areas for future protection of water quality and watershed resources; and
- strategies to implement across political boundaries to achieve the greatest protection while fostering economic development.

Recommendations for the Stormwater Commission include a formal multi-jurisdictional framework to accomplish projects involving and affecting several communities. Stormwater management strategies were assessed for their potential success in Jackson County. Six policy and ordinance strategies and six land management strategies were selected. Specific public education and involvement techniques were identified for the Stormwater Commission to pursue.



**Jackson County, Stormwater Commission Green Infrastructure Plan:** Green Infrastructure recommendations were developed to guide the decision makers in Jackson County and the Jackson County Stormwater Commission on actions to take for the betterment of the community, its natural resources, and its important places. The green infrastructure plan identifies critical areas that if protected from development will provide multiple benefits to the community: improve stormwater quantity and quality into receiving streams, provide opportunities for recreation and alternative transportation, connect people to the important places in Jackson County, improve the quality of life for residents, and compliment economic development.

Critical areas for protection were identified as part of Mid-America Regional Council's Green Infrastructure program by integrating Mid-America Regional Council's Natural Resource Inventory database with mapping layers depicting likely development and the potential for hazard mitigation. Utilizing the Geographic Information System (GIS) database, natural areas with high quality were selected. Modeling was used to identify the areas of the watershed projected for development in the near future. These two criteria were merged to form a GIS database mapping layer of high quality natural areas that would potentially be lost to development.

Stakeholders in Jackson County participated in a Green Infrastructure Plan workshop to identify the critical areas for preservation or conservation. This information was consolidated for final analysis and development of recommendations. A total of 56 specific projects in Jackson County were identified, which included twenty-nine conservation projects, thirteen restoration projects, and fourteen connectors.

**Blue River Summit, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:** Organized and facilitated the Blue River Summit. The Summit was a regional effort in the Kansas City metropolitan area to foster increased understanding of the Blue River Watershed's resources, challenges and opportunities. The Summit included approximately 200 representatives from governmental and private sector organizations and individuals. It resulted in the identification of improvement strategies and the development of a cooperation framework for future work in the watershed.

**MARC Green Infrastructure Plan, Preserving the Possibilities:** Developed a conservation plan and implementation framework to help the region build the human and economic capacity to achieve significant conservation of priority resources. The approach is designed to produce specific conservation targets and real, achievable implementation program through a business plan model. The program will build on the MARC Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) and the MetroGreen regional greenways plan, and the other local and regional plans and conservation studies.

The Program will produce several major deliverables:

- Conservation Goals and Principles to guide the Program and other regional and local efforts.
- Regional Conservation Priorities Map that identifies a network of regionally significant natural resources.
- Conservation Policies with broad applicability across the region.
- Multimedia Marketing Plan to conduct outreach to local stakeholders in target communities, and to obtain region-wide feedback and support for the Program.
- Business Plan to help the region build the human, economic, and organizational capacity to achieve conservation targets.



### **Upper Blue River Watershed Initiative:**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded initiative was an 18-month joint effort between Johnson County Kansas Stormwater Management Program; Kansas City, Missouri; and Jackson County, Missouri. The initiative is one of the first attempts at regional watershed planning crossing city, county and state lines in the Kansas City metro area.

Through the initiative, strategies were developed that can reduce flood damage, improve water quality, create recreational/educational opportunities and protect/enhance habitat and open space in the Upper Blue River watershed. The long range goals of this project are to provide direction and target resources for better watershed management and avoid costly solutions in the future.

Responsibilities for this project included writing the grant application, framing the work plan, completing the Request for Proposal (RFP) and serving as the staff representative for the Jackson County Stormwater Management Commission in the planning process.

You may download the project's completed document at:  
<http://stormwater.jocogov.org/Projects/ubrwi.shtml>