

PARK ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Section V: Natural Resource Areas

Overview

Natural resource areas are lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. These lands also preserve habitat for wildlife and afford visitors opportunities to enjoy viewing fauna in their natural environment within the city limits. These natural areas can come in the form of natural drainage-ways, creeks, wetlands, and significant stands of native vegetation.



Grindstone Nature Area

This new park category was recently added to the park inventory and was not included in the *2002 Facility Needs Update*.

Current Status - Natural Resource Areas

There are seven parks categorized as natural resource areas in the park inventory: Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary, Capen Park, Forum Nature Area, Garth Nature Area, Grindstone Nature Area, Waters-Moss Memorial Wildlife Area, and Wilson Park. This new classification is testimony to how saving and restoring natural areas has become valued in Columbia.

The 2010 Park Sales Tax includes funding for phase I development of the Waters-Moss Memorial Wildlife Area.

Recommended Acquisition List - Natural Resource Areas

There are currently no recommendations of specific areas for the City to pursue land acquisition for a natural resource area as there are no specific deficiencies identified. However, the Department should keep an eye on development around town, particularly as trails develop along stream corridors and look for trail buffer parcels that can serve to preserve the natural character of the city's stream corridors, provide habitat for wildlife, and also serve an important environmental role with storm water absorption and retention.

There is a multi-agency partnership planning effort in which the City of Columbia is currently engaged to develop an open space/green infrastructure plan for Columbia and Boone County. In 2012, the City executed a contract with Greenbelt Land Trust for Mid-Missouri for the development of this plan to be known as "Our Natural Legacy." This planning effort is in support of Goal 5.2 of the City's Vision Plan that states, "Land will be preserved throughout Columbia and Boone County to protect farmland, scenic views, natural topographies, rural atmosphere, watersheds, healthy streams, natural areas, native species, and unique environmentally sensitive areas." Identified strategies under this goal include the need to evaluate land preservation areas in Columbia and Boone County and to develop funding mechanisms to finance land preservation. It should be noted that the results of these efforts could impact future land acquisition for natural resource areas.

There is \$1,525,000 earmarked for park land preservation from the 2010 Park Sales Tax. A portion of those funds could be used to purchase a natural resource area should an attractive opportunity arise.