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# The Confluence

*A Conservation, Heritage, & Recreation Corridor*



— M A S T E R P L A N —

*f o r*

T H E C O N F L U E N C E G R E E N W A Y

- S A I N T L O U I S -

M I S S O U R I

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## THE CONFLUENCE GREENWAY

The Confluence Greenway is a collaboration of local citizens and interest groups representing communities in Illinois and Missouri:

Gateway Parks and Trails 2004  
Grace Hill Settlement House  
Greenway Network  
New Spirit  
SW Illinois Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.  
Trailnet, Inc.  
The Trust for Public Land

In cooperation with:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
National Park Service - Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program  
US Army Corps of Engineers

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The Confluence Greenway Master Plan has received generous funding from *The Whitaker Foundation*. Funding for printing was provided by *The National Park Service*.

## The Confluence

1



## Vision

3



## Goals

5



## Context

7



## Master Plan

9



## Eads District

11



## Island District

13



## River Bend District

15



## Implementation

17





# The Confluence



St. Louis lies at the confluence of North America's Great Rivers and at the center of a watershed covering 1.2 million square miles—one eighth of the continent.

**The Confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers**—at the center of the world's third longest river system—is of national and international importance. As the Great Rivers of North America, the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers are among the nation's foremost natural and cultural resources. Their confluence represents the center of a 3,740-mile river system that runs through 31 states and two Canadian Provinces, and a watershed that covers 1.2 million square miles, one-eighth the land area of the North American continent. As such, it is the world's second largest drainage basin.

More than just a unique physical feature—the union of two great bodies of water—the Confluence is also a dynamic intersection of people. For thousands of years the Confluence has drawn people to it, some to stay and meld the character of the region, and some to embark from it, recognizing its position as a crossroads in the middle of the continent. As a result, the Confluence of the Great Rivers has spurred the rise of great intellectual pursuits: to explore through art and science the river's nature and course; to span its breadth; to conserve its banks; to found towns and cities; to navigate its waters and to utilize its channels for transportation, trade and entertainment. An example is America's national epic of exploration, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, conceived by President Thomas Jefferson, which began on May 14, 1804, from the Confluence.

The traces of the Confluence are clearly distinguishable in the landscape—the bridges, the riverfront towns, the lock and dams, the water towers, and in many of the buildings. Similarly, there are traces of the Confluence in the arts and sciences—in paintings, music, theater, ecology, biology and engineering. The Confluence is also the inspiration for many legends and stories. The St. Louis metropolitan region owes its being to the Confluence, and the Confluence Greenway project is a means by which the **people** of St. Louis can acknowledge, celebrate, and care for their **place**. Captivating this spectrum of people and place—past and present—the Confluence Greenway brings to life the history and meaning of this region.

The Confluence Greenway is a 200-square mile system of parks, conservation and recreation areas with trails along 40-miles of both banks of the Mississippi and



"I believe this is the finest confluence in the world. The two rivers are much the same breadth... but the Missouri enters the Mississippi like a conqueror, through which it carries its white waters to the opposite shore"

—French explorer Pierre Francois de Charlevoix, 1722



Missouri Rivers from Downtown St. Louis/East St. Louis, past Alton to the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers and then across to St. Charles. The Confluence Greenway will invite visitors and the community to build a stronger connection with the history and environment of the Great Rivers through multiple interpretive centers and activity zones.

Essential to the rich experience of the Greenway is the broad ensemble of landscapes that front the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The setting for the Confluence Greenway includes natural, undisturbed, and restored wildlife and conservation areas; parks for active and passive recreation; residential neighborhoods; river towns and cities; agriculture and natural open space; and commercial and industrial operations. Each of these diverse environmental settings represents an opportunity for the Confluence Greenway to interpret in unique and creative ways the story of the people and the place. Peeling away the layers of history reveals a myriad of intimate stories. Some stories are lost and some are symbolized—but the place out of which they emerge—the Confluence—remains for all to see and experience.

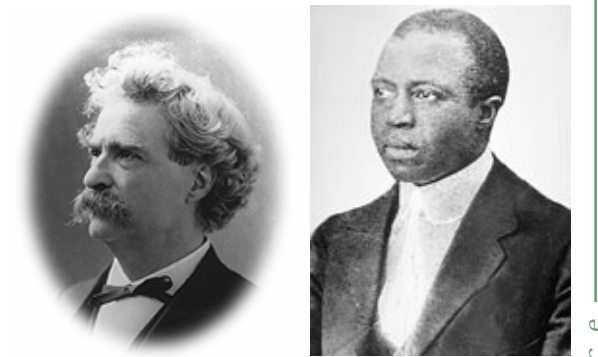
During the twentieth century two grand occasions marked the significance of St. Louis with lasting legacies. In celebrating the centennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the 1904 World's Fair left an expanded and institution-rich Forest Park. In 1965, one year after the City of St. Louis' Bicentennial Celebration, the Gateway Arch opened as the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial symbolizing all of those who passed through St. Louis on the way to uncharted territories in the west.

In commemoration of the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, St. Louis is again looking to create a lasting legacy for the region. Returning to the point of origin of the Lewis and Clark Expedition—the Confluence—a nationally significant park and trail system will be created. Thus, the Confluence Greenway will speak to the essence of St. Louis—the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers—as the symbolic, physical and environmental heart of the region.



(L) The Confluence of the Mississippi & Missouri Rivers

(R) In the spring of 1804, the Corps of Discovery began its expedition west to the Pacific, via the Missouri and Columbia Rivers.



Mark Twain (L)  
Scott Joplin (R)





## Interpretive Themes

- The CONFLUENCE of ideas that have informed the history and culture of America
- The CONFLUENCE of people, cultures and heritages over thousands of years
- The CONFLUENCE of place—the built and natural landscape, with a unique and varied history of river towns interspersed in the bluffs or strung along the floodplains
- The CONFLUENCE of time—the historic and contemporary world—symbolized in the juxtaposition of Cahokia Mounds, a World Heritage site and the center of the prehistoric Mississippian society, and St. Louis, a contemporary city in the making
- The CONFLUENCE of north and south, east and west
- The CONFLUENCE of two of the most significant rivers in America, the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers with a watershed that drains approximately one-eighth the land area of the North American Continent
- The CONFLUENCE of two geological features, the Ozark Dome and the Illinois Basin
- The CONFLUENCE of two topographical features, the Karst Plain and the Burlington Escarpment
- The CONFLUENCE of three ecoregions, the Eastern Broadleaf Forest, the Tall Grass Prairie, and the Lower Mississippi Riverine Forest, reflecting the broad diversity of Midwest landforms, climate, and vegetation
- The CONFLUENCE of two conditions of the river, locks and dams north of the Confluence and the undammed portion of the Mississippi River south of the Confluence

The CONFLUENCE GREENWAY will become a sustainable, nationally significant park and trail system focused on the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, which is endorsed by and cared for by the citizens of the region, and contributes to the quality of life of the region while preserving, enhancing and interpreting the *Confluence of People and Place*.



A historical timeline and collage of images. The timeline at the top shows key events: 700 ad (Mississippian - Woodland Indian Culture), 1350 (Cahokia Indians), 1500 (French - Spanish Settlement), 1600 (American Expansion), 1699 (Construction of Monk's Mound), 1764 (Quebec Priestess Settle Cahokia), 1803 (Louisiana Purchase), 1804 (Lewis & Clark Expedition), 1904 (World's Fair & Olympics), and 2004 (Confluence Celebration). Below the timeline is a collage of images including a landscape with mounds, a historical building, a map, a painting of a river scene, a painting of a group of people, a modern cityscape, and a map of the confluence area.



(L) The Confluence Greenway is located in the center of the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. It covers 200 square miles and includes the confluences of the Mississippi & Illinois Rivers and the Mississippi & Missouri Rivers

(R) The Confluence and the World Heritage Sites of the Continental United States





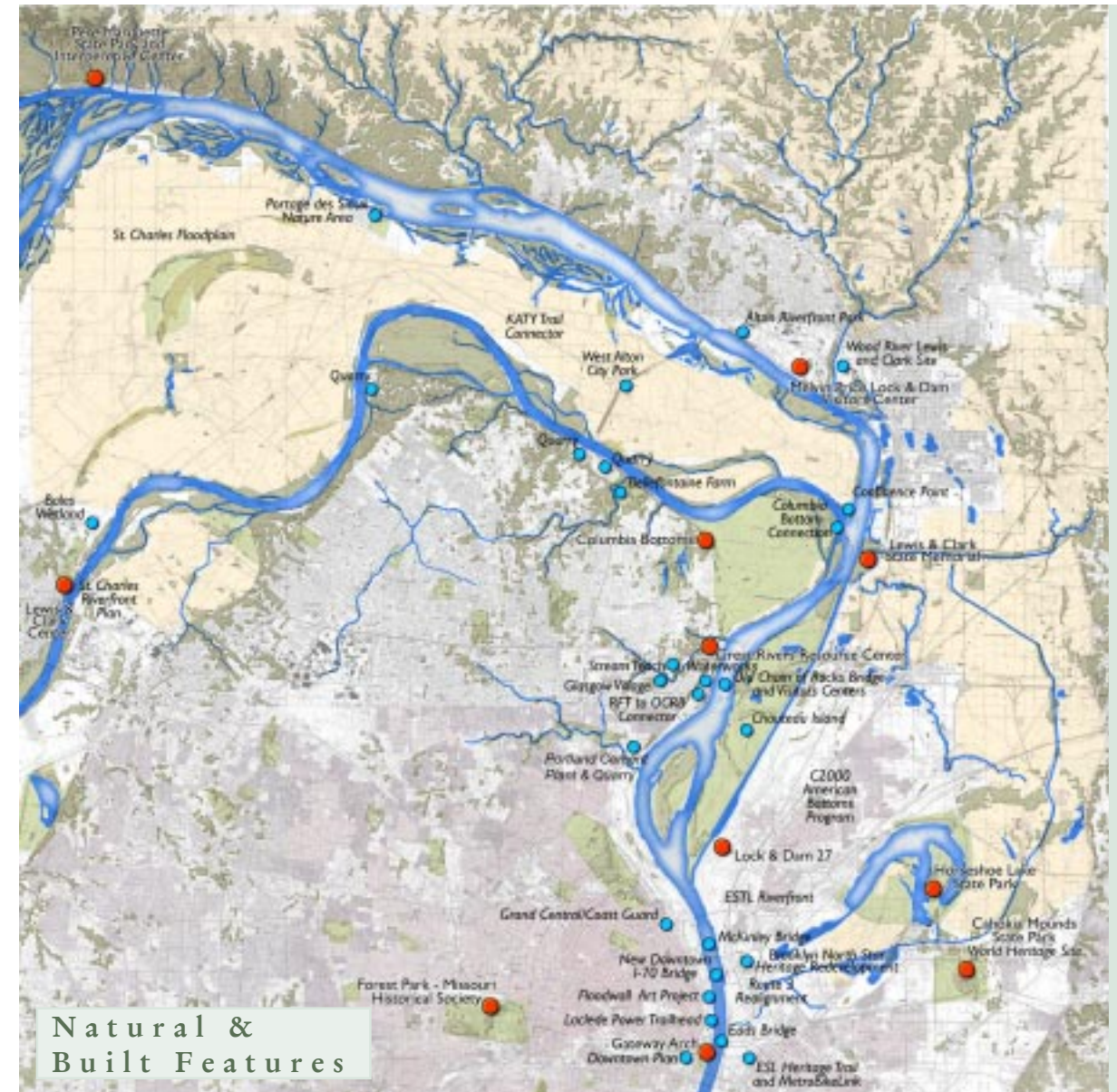
# Goals

## Goals

- Develop a unique and authentic river and open space experience that builds upon the historical, cultural, and natural resources of the area
- Develop a linear system of riverfront parks and trails
- Connect communities, parks, natural areas, and historic sites to the river
- Expand and enhance opportunities for interpretation, education, and recreation
- Conserve open space and scenic quality
- Preserve and enhance natural resources
- Protect and enhance water quality
- Foster local economic and community development
- Develop long-term partnerships and an ethic of stewardship to build, manage, and maintain the greenway system

To give further definition to the vision statement a series of goals and objectives have been developed. These goals and objectives were confirmed in stakeholder meetings and public surveys. The results of two surveys, one in 1997 and another in 1999, indicate that a vast majority of the residents, approximately 82% of the metropolitan area, view land, water, and habitat conservation, as well as park improvements, as important to the region. This has been further endorsed by a February 2000 survey in Madison, St. Clair and St. Louis Counties, and the City of St. Louis, showing that greenways and the Confluence Greenway are tremendously popular and would attract approximately 11 million visitors every year.

These goals and objectives form the basis of this Master Plan and clearly define the framework and identify a philosophy for implementing the Confluence Greenway. They have been carefully developed to ensure that the Confluence Greenway is ecologically sensitive, historically and culturally sympathetic, economically sustainable, and fully accessible to all people. These goals and objectives will also guide on-going design and development efforts, and the maintenance and management of the Confluence Greenway.



“After all these years, I can picture that old time just as it was then..... the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along shining in the sun.”  
—Mark Twain,  
Life on the Mississippi





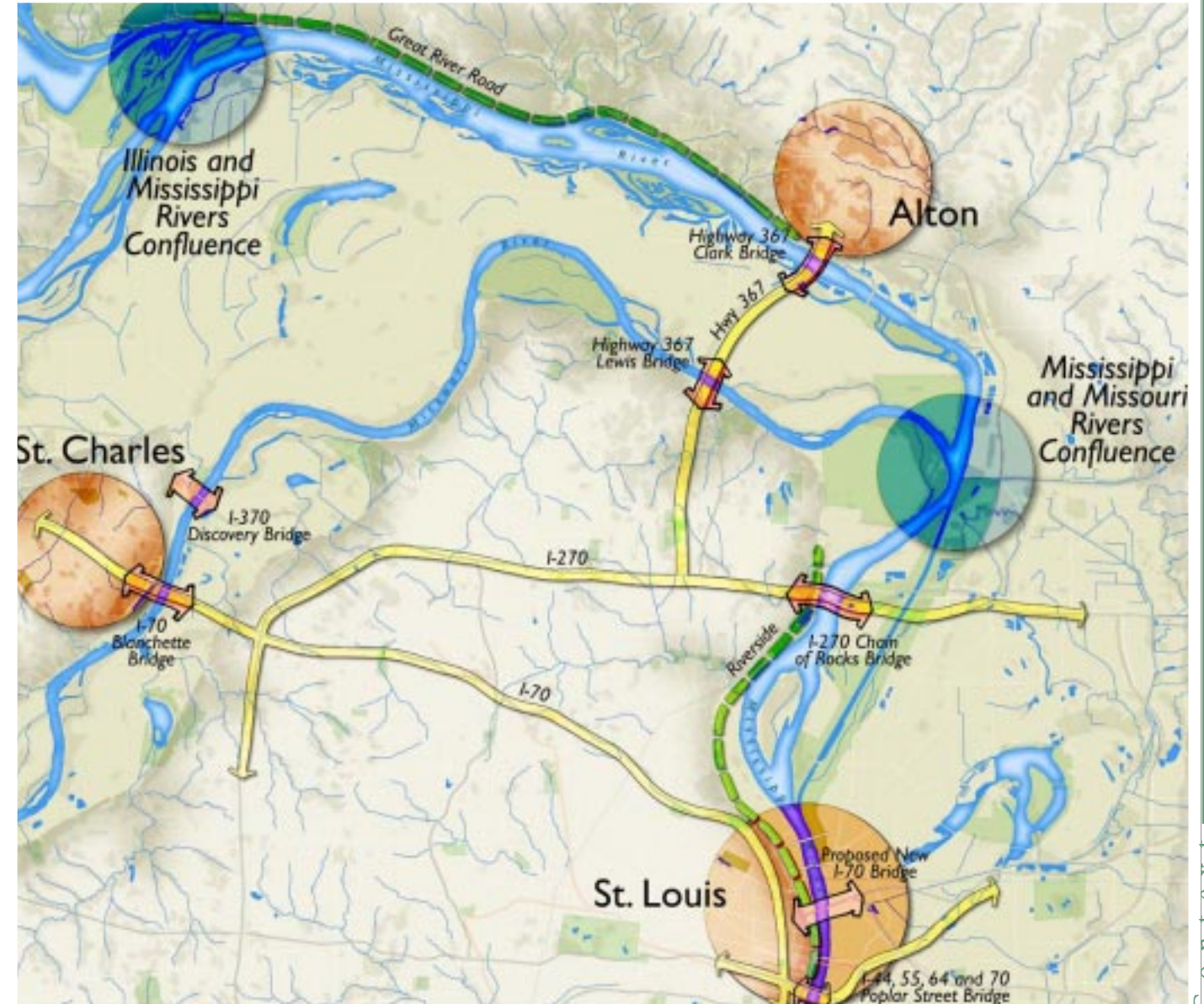
St. Louis developed where it is for two main geographical reasons: it is at the center of the continent and at the confluence of North America's two Great Rivers, the Missouri and Mississippi. Located close to a variety and abundance of natural resources, and one of the world's most productive agricultural landscapes, St. Louis became a thriving center for trade and transport—of goods, culture, and ideas.

Many transportation routes began in or passed through St. Louis, establishing it as an important crossroad. But with major changes in technology and transportation, there have been dramatic changes in these corridors. Some have been transformed from their primary purpose of transporting goods into a means of travel, supporting recreation, tourism and educational experiences. Today, St. Louis is a center for an emerging network of recreational trails, scenic byways, and historic corridors.

The Confluence Greenway is situated at the center of the geographic and historic center of the St. Louis region. It is bordered by six of the twelve metropolitan area counties: the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County in Missouri, and St. Clair, Madison, and Jersey Counties in Illinois. Three hubs and two river confluences define the boundaries of the Confluence Greenway. St. Charles, Alton, and downtown St. Louis and East St. Louis are significant hubs and “gateways” through which to experience the Greenway. The confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers marks a terminus of the Greenway while the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi characterize its center and focus.



The Confluence Greenway will speak to the essence of St. Louis—the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers—as the symbolic, physical and environmental heart of the region.



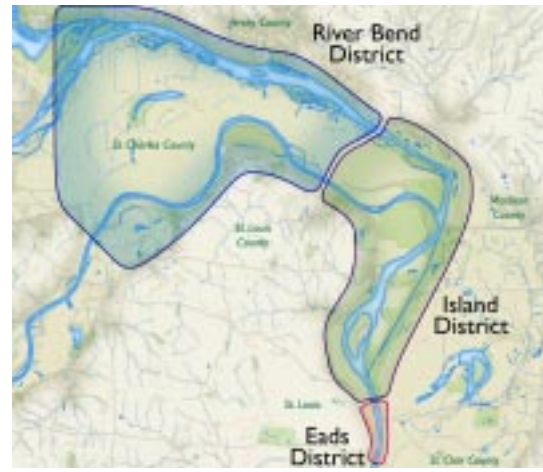
Experiencing the Confluence: Urban centers and major transportation routes in the St. Louis area offer opportunities for people to experience and access the Greenway.

St. Louis Regional Greenway Plan (R)





# Master Plan



The Confluence Greenway Master Plan is divided into three districts: Eads, Island and River Bend.

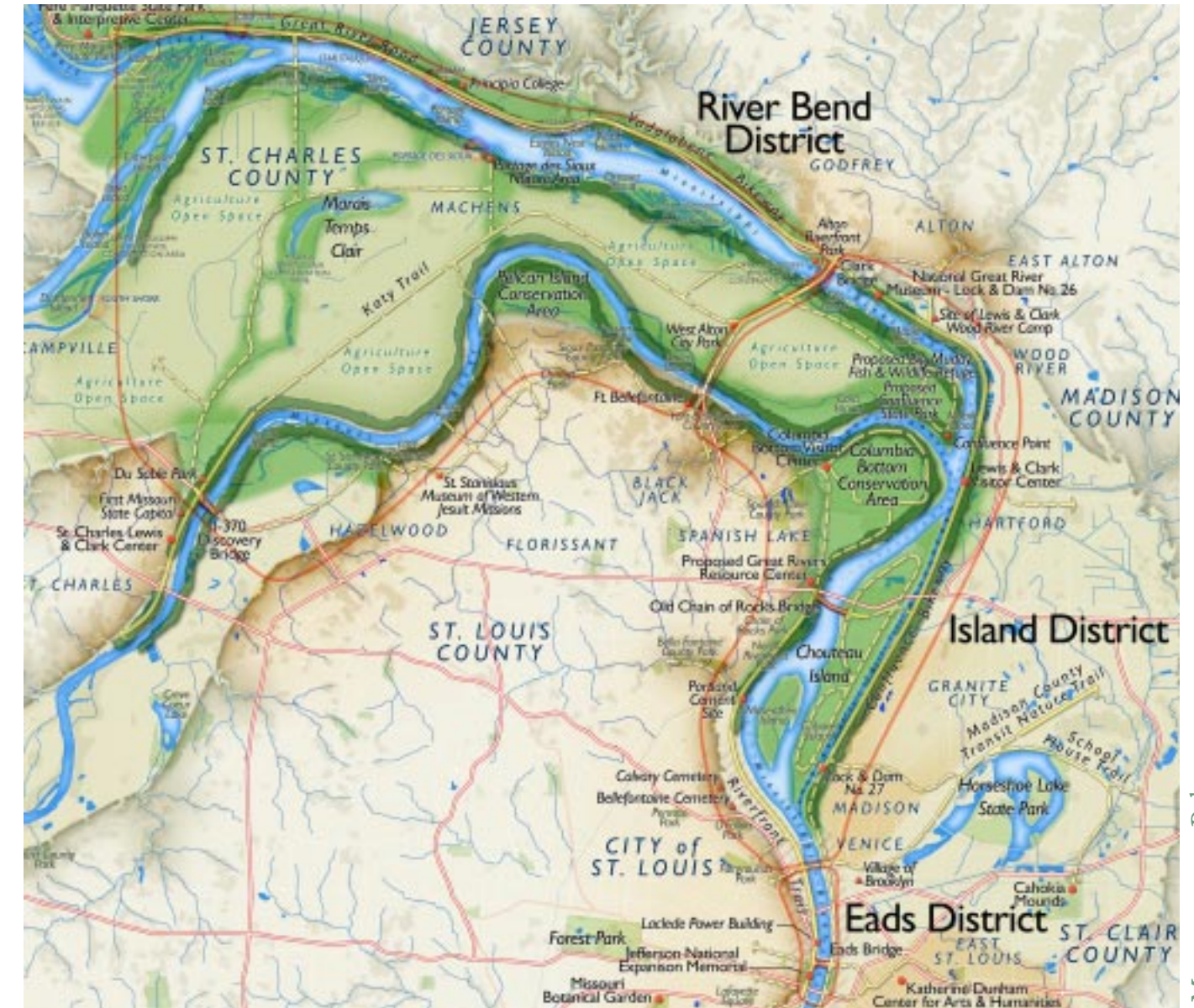
The Confluence Greenway Master Plan celebrates the meeting of the Great Rivers as the symbolic, physical, and environmental heart of the St. Louis region. It is an ambitious plan that raises the status of the Confluence to national significance while connecting the people of the region back to the rivers. It is a sustainable plan that promotes environmental sensitivity, conservation, and stewardship. And it is a unifying plan that connects the people and communities of the region, encourages tourism and economic development and improves the quality of life.

Numerous greenway elements overlap in the 200-square mile Master Plan. Although the Plan's primary focus is on the rivers, the landscape along and between the rivers is where many greenway elements occur. A variety of landforms, natural communities, uses, corridors, connections, and important sites—encompass the types of greenway elements that make up the Master Plan.

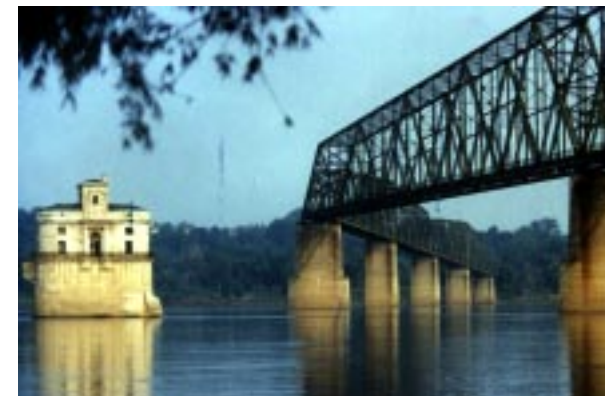
There is a great variety of types of open space, and density and intensity of land use envisioned for the Greenway. The Plan respects existing industry in urban areas and agricultural open space in rural areas while promoting a vision for interconnected habitat and wildlife conservation. The Plan also acknowledges that there are appropriate levels of intensity for experiencing the Confluence. While some urban centers offer opportunities to draw thousands of people to the river's edge, other sites along the Greenway are environmentally sensitive and need protection from inappropriate human activities.

Natural corridors follow river edges and connect fragmented habitat areas. A network of pedestrian and bicycle corridors creates a comprehensive system for the people to experience the Confluence and connect to its unique natural characteristics and experience the variety of human intervention along the rivers. Special sites, facilities, and institutions exist along the Greenway, or nearby, that contribute to the interpretation of the Confluence of people and place.

There are three general zones of the Confluence Greenway that feature distinctly different attributes. The Eads, Island, and River Bend Districts illustrate different river characteristics, natural features, landform, development intensity, and land uses that require specific and contrasting Master Plan strategies.



- Legend**
- Interpretive Center
  - ▲ Confluence Historic Site
  - Other Confluence Destinations
  - ▬ Major Pedestrian River Crossing
  - ▬ Proposed Water Taxi Route
  - ▬ Existing & Funded Corridors
  - ▬ Potential Corridors
  - ▬ "Working" Riverfront
  - ▬ Riparian River Edges
  - ▬ Historic River Villages
  - ▬ Rivers, Lakes & Major Wetlands
  - ▬ Agriculture Open Space
  - ▬ Naturalized Open Space
  - ▬ Bluff Defining Uplands & Bottomlands
  - ▬ Existing Parks





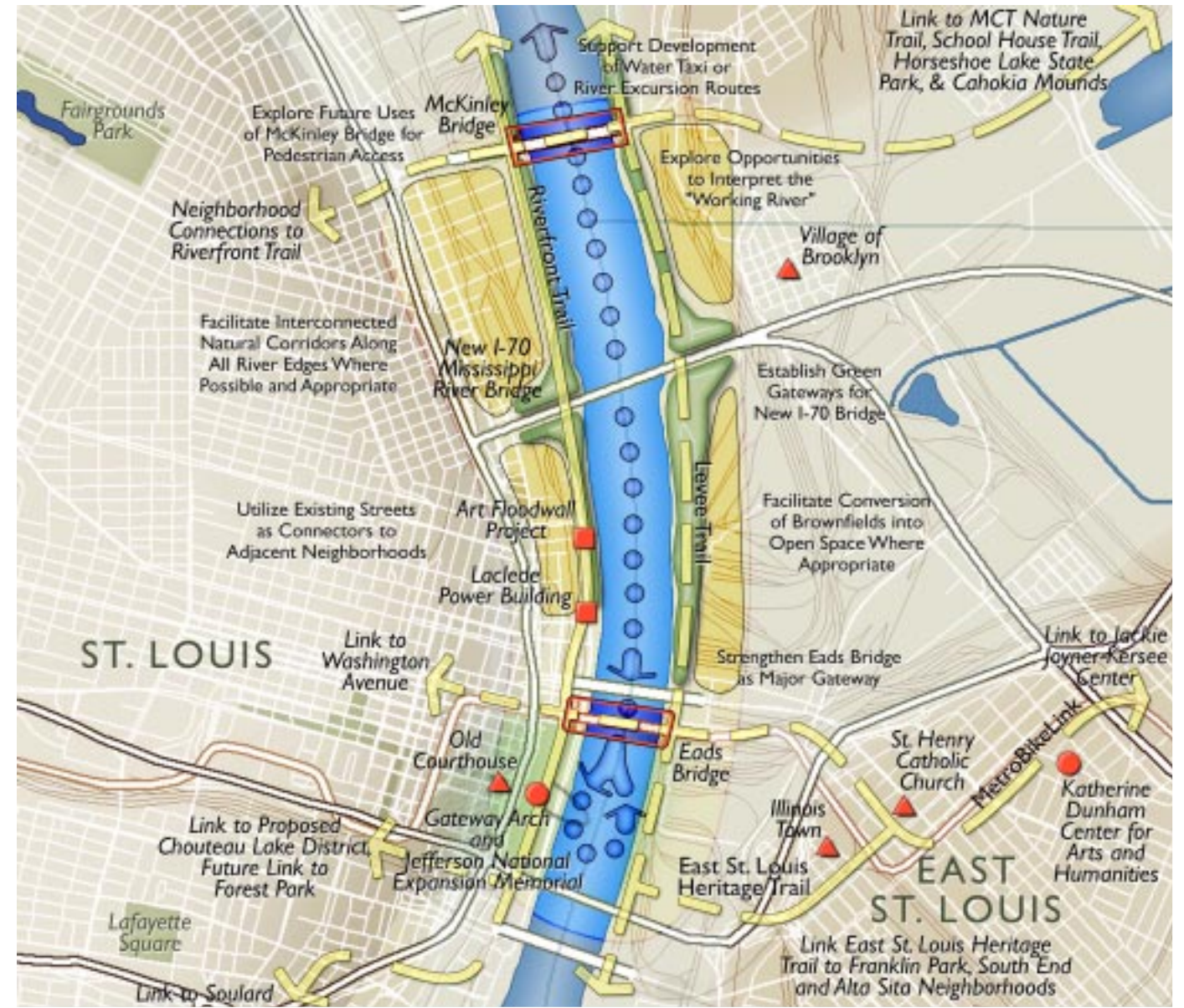
# Eads District

## Initiatives: 2000-2010

- Complete the restoration of Eads Bridge as a bike and pedestrian connection between Missouri and Illinois including connections to the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, the MetroLink system, and East St. Louis Riverfront
- Complete the renovation of the Laclede Power Building as the primary trailhead for the Riverfront Trail and the offices of Trailnet and Confluence Greenway
- Complete the trail on both sides of the river to form a loop from downtown St. Louis and East St. Louis (Eads Bridge/Arch) to Old Chain of Rocks Bridge; Link East St. Louis/Eads Bridge to Lock and Dam 27
- Facilitate linkages to adjacent communities/neighborhoods such as North St. Louis and to other major historic/natural sites such as Cahokia Mounds and Horseshoe Lake
- Facilitate the development of a water-taxi system from Downtown St. Louis to the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge
- Complete the development of the Floodwall Art Project
- Implement key projects and programs from the Public Art, Interpretation, and Signage Master Plan
- Extend the Katy Trail so that it starts at the Arch
- Continue to develop and expand the trail rangers program
- Implement improvements to the Riverfront Trail per the Master Plan

Eads Bridge, one of the region's oldest and most identifiable landmarks, is an icon that represents St. Louis' heritage as an industrial railroad city that flourished thanks to the Great Rivers. It is also the physical and symbolic east-west connection—linking East St. Louis to St. Louis, Illinois to Missouri, and the Atlantic to the Pacific (via the Transcontinental Railroad). Eads District is characterized by dense urban development, two centuries of river-related industry, and a viable "working river" that is one of the country's largest and most active inland ports. The Master Plan takes advantage of the intense level of development and proposes numerous connections into adjacent neighborhoods and urban districts.

As a means of interpreting the history, culture, and heritage of the region, the plan recognizes the long-term existence of riverfront industry. Trails along both the Illinois and Missouri sides of the Mississippi follow corridors that provide visible connections to the river and industrial sites. Access to significant interpretive and cultural centers such as the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial and the Katherine Dunham Center for Arts and Humanities are priorities of the plan. A major achievement of connecting the east and west banks of the river will be realized with the completion of bicycle and pedestrian access across Eads Bridge.





# Island District



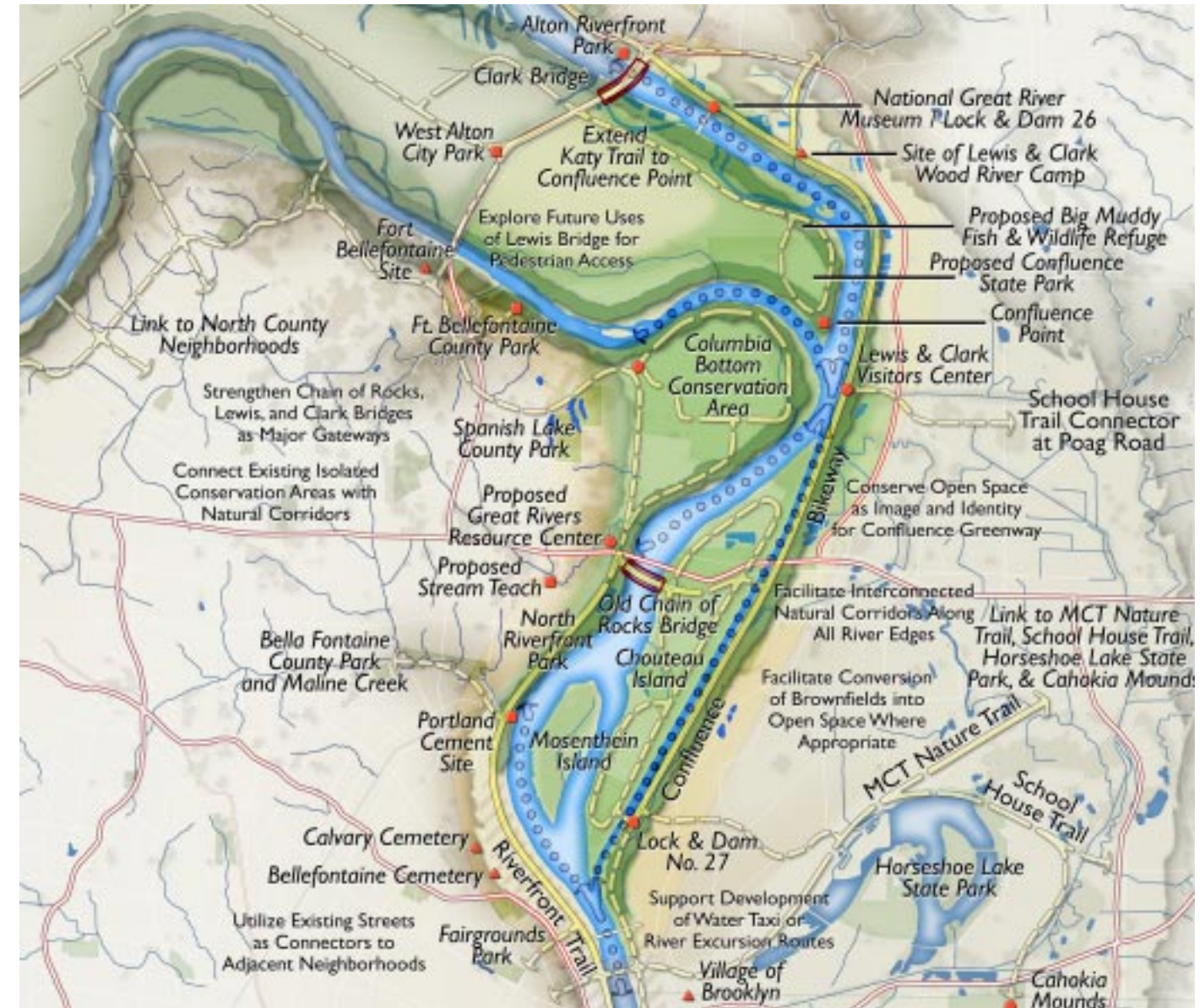
## Initiatives: 2000-2010

- ▣ Complete the restoration of the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge
- ▣ Complete the development of the restaurant complex and site improvement plan at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge including both the Missouri and Illinois sides
- ▣ Implement key projects from the Chouteau Island Master Plan
- ▣ Implement the Master Plan for the Great Rivers Resource Center
- ▣ Support the development of the Lewis and Clark Visitors Center
- ▣ Support the development of the National Great Rivers Museum at the Melvin Price Lock and Dam 26
- ▣ Extend the Riverfront Trail into Columbia Bottom
- ▣ Extend the Katy Trail to Confluence Point
- ▣ Facilitate linkages to adjacent communities/neighborhoods such as North St. Louis, North St. Louis Counties, Hartford, and Wood River and to other major historic/natural sites such as Fort Bellefontaine and the Lewis & Clark Visitor Center
- ▣ Extend the water-taxi system from Downtown St. Louis to Columbia Bottom and Confluence Point
- ▣ Support the restoration and facilitate expansion of Columbia Bottom
- ▣ Support the acquisition and development and facilitate the expansion of the proposed new state park at the Confluence and the proposed Big Muddy Fish and Wildlife Refuge
- ▣ Participate in the 2004 Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Celebration
- ▣ Continue the annual Chouteau Clean-up and expand Eagle Days
- ▣ Support a community-based tree planting program

Following the river corridors from Alton south to McKinley Bridge, the Island District includes the confluence of the Great Rivers and a natural stretch of the Mississippi. Just below Confluence Point, the Chain of Rocks Canal bypasses several miles of the Mississippi providing barges and other river traffic year-round access past the Chain of Rocks. One unintentional consequence of the canal is that it preserved a section of the river that is not managed to support extensive barge traffic. This section remains in a natural condition, in contrast to the rest of the river that must be managed to permit barge traffic.

Extensive open space occurs along this segment of the Mississippi as well, making it a valuable conservation area and, because it includes the Confluence, a site of great natural—and national—significance. The proposed new state park at the Confluence, Big Muddy Fish and Wildlife Refuge, Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, Chouteau Island, Gabaret Island, and Mosenthein Island are at the heart of the Master Plan and ultimately an unparalleled natural resource for the region.

The Old Chain of Rocks Bridge is a distinguished and recent Confluence Greenway success. Once an important Route 66 Mississippi River crossing, and later abandoned, today it is one of the world's longest pedestrian bridges.



- Legend**
- Interpretive Center
  - ▲ Confluence Historic Site
  - Other Confluence Destinations
  - ▣ Major Pedestrian River Crossing
  - ▤ Proposed Water Taxi Route
  - ▥ Existing & Funded Corridors
  - ▦ Potential Corridors
  - ▧ "Working" Riverfront
  - ▨ Riparian River Edges
  - ▩ Historic River Villages
  - Rivers, Lakes & Major Wetlands
  - Agriculture Open Space
  - ▬ Naturalized Open Space
  - ▭ Bluff Defining Uplands & Bottomlands
  - ▮ Existing Parks



Island District



# River Bend District

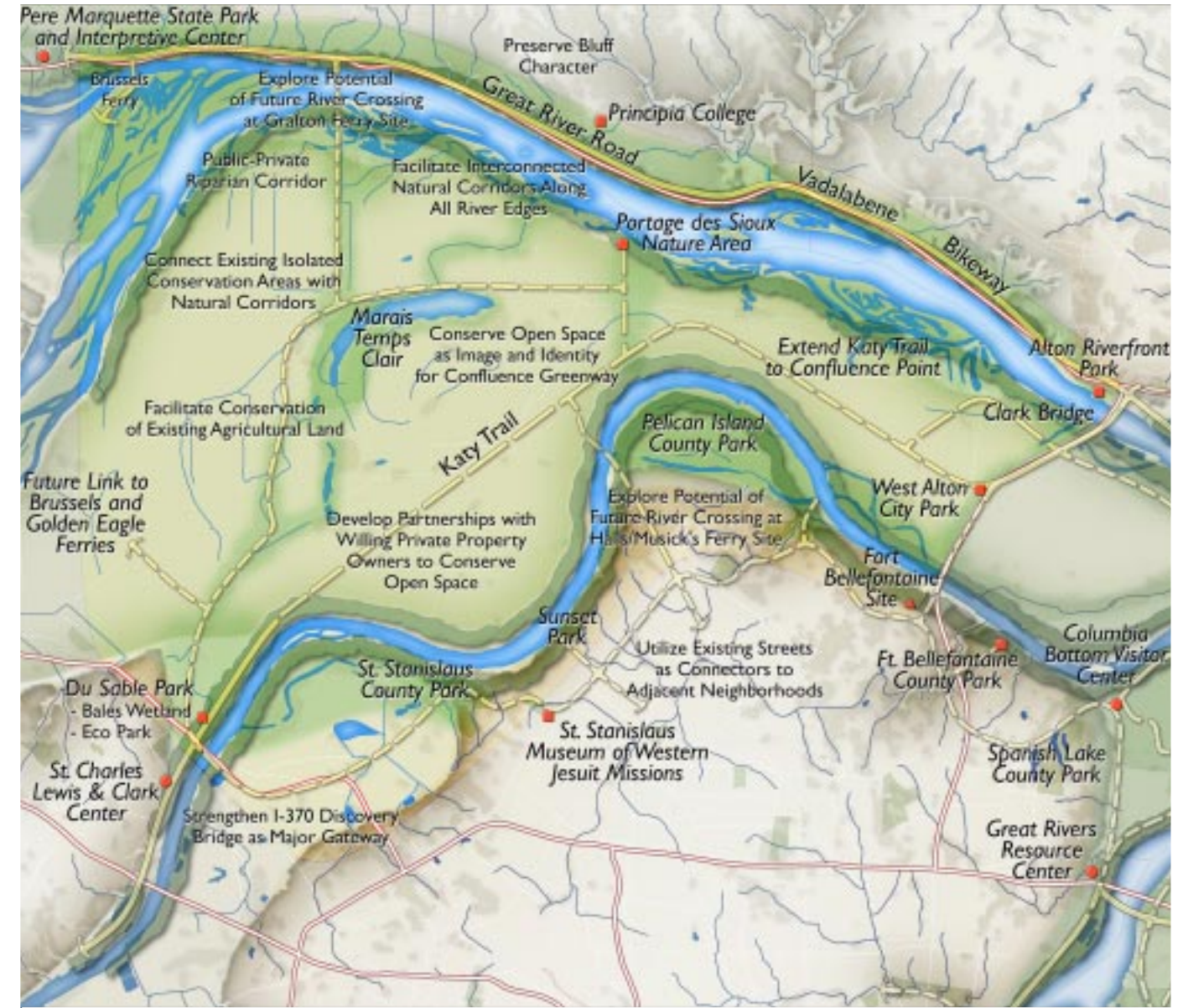


## Initiatives: 2000-2010

- ▣ Complete development of loop trail around West Alton, including possible use of existing farm levees
- ▣ Support the extension of the Katy Trail from Machens to West Alton
- ▣ Facilitate the development of the Portage Des Sioux Nature Area
- ▣ Support the development of the West Alton City Park
- ▣ Facilitate riparian edge protection and expansion
- ▣ Facilitate wetland conservation enhancement, and expansion
- ▣ Facilitate native plant protection and expansion
- ▣ Support the existing Bluff Conservation Program
- ▣ Develop a Land Conservation Program
- ▣ Support the annual St. Charles Eco-park Clean-up

The Mississippi and Missouri River bluffs define the limits of River Bend District. More agricultural and rural than the other districts, River Bend includes the St. Charles lowlands between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. These lowlands are primarily agricultural open space with numerous conservation and wetland sites along the rivers. Historic St. Charles and the Illinois-Mississippi Rivers' confluence anchor the western edge of the district.

Extending from St. Charles into River Bend District is the Katy Trail. This nationally acclaimed rails-to-trails project links the Confluence Greenway westward along the Missouri River 200 miles across the state to Clinton, Missouri, and is a newly-designated section of the American Discovery Trail. Along with the Great River Road and connections to Route 66, the Katy Trail is an important component in making the Confluence a centerpiece in an emerging national network of historic corridors and recreational trails.



**Legend**

- Interpretive Center
- ▲ Confluence Historic Site
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- ▬ Naturalized Open Space
- ▭ Bluff Defining Uplands & Bottomlands
- ▮ Existing Parks



# Implementation: 2000-2010

## Probable Cost: 2000-2010

OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION	\$22,500,000
NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION	\$9,000,000
PARKS & TRAILS	\$37,500,000
INTERPRETIVE & VISITOR CENTERS	\$12,000,000
PROGRAMS	\$5,500,000
SUB-TOTAL	\$86,500,000
SUPPORTING PROJECTS & INITIATIVES	\$23,500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$110,000,000</b>

Note: This does not include annual costs for operations or program management



## Planning:

- Develop a comprehensive geographic information system (GIS)
- Facilitate the development of a research program to gather the necessary information of the cultural and natural resources in the project area
- Develop a Master Plan to extend the Confluence Greenway to the Meramec River Greenway
- Facilitate the development of a Master Plan for Chouteau Island
- Develop a Public Art, Interpretation, and Signage Master Plan

## Projects:

- Complete the restoration of Eads Bridge as a bike and pedestrian connection
- Complete the restoration of the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge and adjacent site improvements
- Implement key projects from the Chouteau Island Master Plan
- Implement the Master Plan for the Great Rivers Resource Center
- Support the development of the Lewis and Clark Visitors Center
- Support the development of the National Great Rivers Museum at the Melvin Price Lock and Dam
- Complete the trail on both sides of the river from downtown St. Louis and East St. Louis to the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge
- Extend the Riverfront Trail into Columbia Bottom
- Extend Katy Trail to West Alton and Confluence Point
- Facilitate linkages to adjacent communities/neighborhoods such as North St. Louis, Hartford, and Wood River and to other major historic/natural sites such as Cahokia Mounds, Fort Bellefontaine and Horseshoe Lake
- Facilitate the development of a water-taxi system
- Facilitate the development of the Portage Des Sioux Nature Area and the West Alton City Park
- Support the restoration and facilitate expansion of Columbia Bottom
- Support the acquisition and development, and facilitate the expansion of the proposed new state park at the Confluence and the proposed Big Muddy Fish and Wildlife Refuge
- Complete the development of the Floodwall Art Project
- Implement key projects and programs from the Public Art, Interpretation and Signage Master Plan

## Programs:

- Participate in the 2004 Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Celebration
- Continue the annual Chouteau Clean-Up program and expand to other portions of the Confluence Greenway
- Continue to expand Eagle Days
- Facilitate, in partnership with other institutions, jurisdictions and cities, the development of one new event and/or educational program
- Continue to develop and expand the trail rangers program
- Support the existing Bluff Conservation Programs to preserve key viewsheds
- Investigate the possibility of national designations for various aspects of the Confluence Greenway, such as Scenic Byway, Route 66, Great Rivers Road, Lewis and Clark Trail, etc.
- Develop a Land Conservation Program
- Support a community-based tree planting program
- Facilitate native plant protection and expansion
- Facilitate riparian edge protection and restoration
- Facilitate the correction of point-source water quality problems
- Facilitate wetland conservation, enhancement and expansion
- Improve the public's understanding and knowledge base of the river system and promote public stewardship of the resource

## Partnerships:

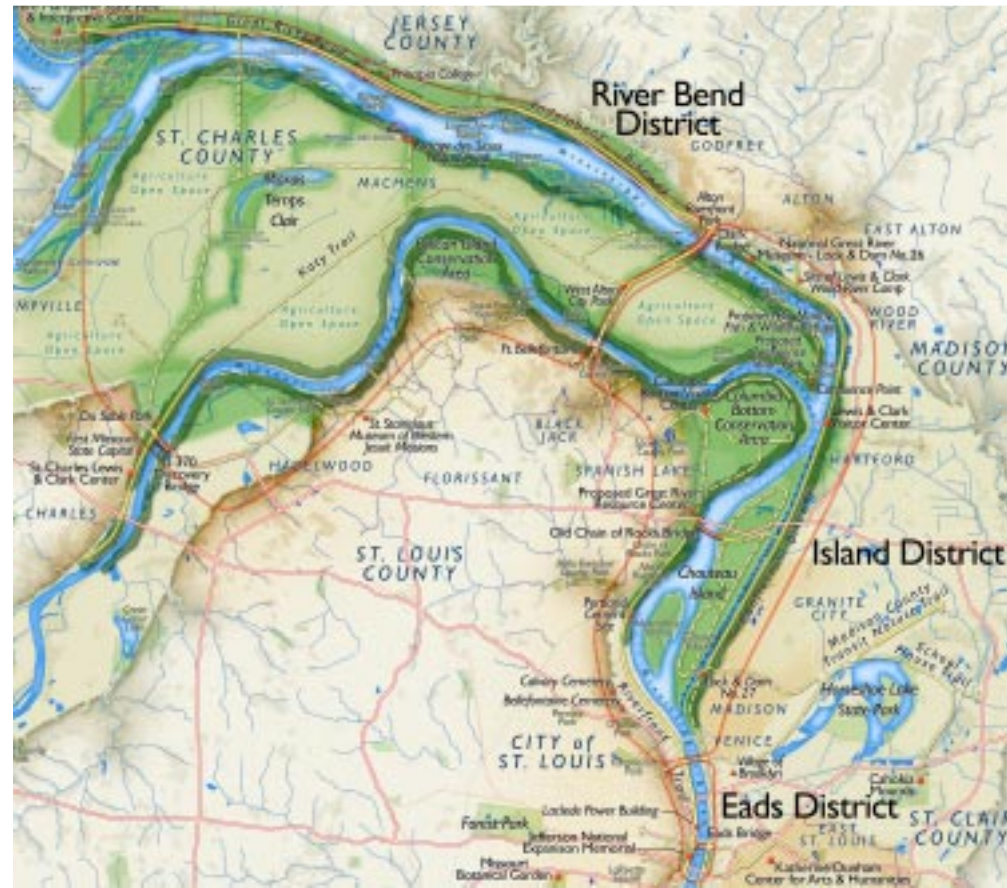
- Develop a program and schedule for the endorsement of the Confluence Greenway Master Plan by the necessary partners, local jurisdictions, and interest groups
- Develop a "Friends of the Confluence" organization to provide on-going volunteer and other forms of assistance
- Develop a Technical Partnership Committee that reflects the broad constituent group necessary to implement the plan
- Continue to build a small Confluence Greenway staff group that is reflective of the necessary technical, outreach and management expertise to implementing this plan on a daily basis. Expand the Confluence Greenway Advisory Board
- Develop an implementation funding strategy and campaign





# Notes

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April 30, 2001



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