

A Deeper Shade of Green



**Kate Corwin, President
Green Works in Kansas City**

Mission



Environmental Education and Workforce Development for Urban Youth

Began in Fall of 2007 with a purpose to leverage a growing green economy to address:

- high unemployment
- high drop-out rates
- limited career opportunities for urban youth



Kansas City's Environmental Issues/ Job Opportunities

- Sewer project – \$3B projected cost
- Close to violating EPA Clean-Air standards
- Transition to mass transit, biking and walking
- Weatherization and green energy
- Declining urban forest



Our Model

- **Educate** students on local environmental issues
- **Involve** them in meaningful service projects



- **Prepare** students for the workplace
- **Connect** students to opportunities to share what they have learned and advocate for their communities

Environmental Connection Opportunities for Students (ECOS)

- Science-based curriculum covering Kansas City's environmental issues.
- Field trips, service projects, guest speakers and science journals.
- Job skill training, money management training and paid summer internships.



Vibrant Cities and Urban Forests

#9 – Ensure equal access to urban forestry and green infrastructure resources.



Educate
Involve



Vibrant Cities and Urban Forests - #9 cont.

- Public Service Announcement for Parks & Rec.
- Water conservation education fairs
- Brush Creek focus group/Jackson County Transit planning
- Assisting with plans to “green” the Brush Creek Community Center



Vibrant Cities and Urban Forests

#2 – Foster urban forestry and natural resources stewardship and volunteerism.

Volunteers!

- Serve as mentors for our students during their summer internships
- Help with service projects
- Assist in the classroom



Vibrant Cities and Urban Forests

#3 – Create sustainable jobs in urban forestry and green infrastructure fields.

Internships

- 120 hours, paid \$8/hour by Green Works
- Students are considered volunteers at the site





Vibrant Cities and Urban Forests

#4 – Cultivate strategic partnerships between public and private sectors.

Project Partnerships

Brush Creek Oxbow Park Project Partners:

- Private - Burns & McDonnell Engineering and Vireo Landscape Design
- Public - KCMO Parks & Rec., EPA, and Missouri Department of Conservation
- NGO - Little Blue River Watershed, The Shade Tree Fund

Brush Creek Oxbow Park

- Brush Creek runs through some of KC's wealthiest neighborhoods, and some of the poorest.
- Subject to combined sewer overflows and untreated urban runoff.
- Natural oxbow formation on the creek that consisted of mowed fescue, cattails and invasive Johnson grass.





Brush Creek Oxbow Park

To date –

- Removed nearly 2000 cubic yards of sediment
- Repaired storm water inlet
- Removed 1 acre of honeysuckle and accumulated trash
- Planted 3,000 native plants and shrubs and 50 trees
- Installed bird and bat houses and signage





Brush Creek Oxbow Park

Future plans

- Try some planting techniques to discourage geese along the trail, with signage
- Plant butterfly garden and prairie
- Paint storm drains
- Remove more honeysuckle









What I Hope You Remember

- Students really like to plant and they are proud of their work!
- Students become advocates for native landscaping and trees.
- Students change their behavior and influence their friends and family.
- Students take their role in representing their communities seriously.

Trigger Question

- Can you think of a current or planned project that could benefit from the inclusion of a greater diversity of people?
- What techniques and strategies can you use?
- Who can you partner with?



www.greenworkskc.org
kate@greenworkskc.org