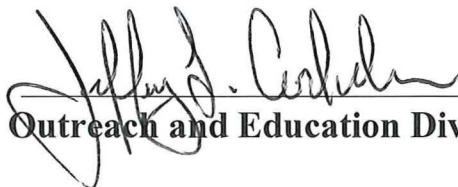


# The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center

## Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2018-2027



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Outreach and Education Division Chief

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center Management Plan  
Approval Page**

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Bob Mattucks, Fisheries Management Biologist

Wendy Sangster, Community Forester

Larry Rizzo, Natural History Biologist

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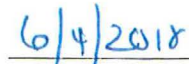
Stephen VanRhein, Community Conservation Planner

Megan Madsen, Maintenance Technician

**KANSAS CITY REGION**

RCT Chair


  
Signature

  
Date

**OUTREACH AND EDUCATION DIVISION**

Outreach and Education Chief

  
Signature

  
Date

## OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center, #9706
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** Owned by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation; leased by the Missouri Department of Conservation since 2000.
- **Acreage:** 9.72 acres
- **County:** Jackson
- **Region:** Kansas City
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Outreach and Education
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Design and Development
- **Statements of Purpose:**

### A. Strategic Direction

The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center will provide Kansas City Metropolitan area residents and schools hands-on interpretive programming, designed around urban interests; provide conservation services and information for all residents; and provide a quiet place of reflection for visitors to enjoy and appreciate nature.

### B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center will provide excellent examples of conservation-friendly practices and design throughout the landscape through small, managed versions of native ecosystems integrated into the urban landscape that support onsite interpretive educational program goals.

### C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

### I. Special Considerations

A. **Priority Areas:** Middle Blue River Urban Waters Federal Partnership

B. **Natural Areas:** None

### II. Important Natural Features and Resources

A. **Species of Conservation Concern:** None observed.

B. **Caves:** None

C. **Springs:** None

### III. Existing Infrastructure

- Visitor Center: 34,000 sq. ft. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible building with six workshops, 1,000 sq. ft. nature shop, Living Machine wastewater

- treatment system, two meeting rooms (with a total occupancy of 73 people), nature library, and 240-seat ADA-accessible auditorium
- Parking lot for 185 vehicles plus eight buses
- Wild Sidewalk: 0.25-mile, ADA-accessible walkway with several short wood chipped trails leading off this trail into different habitats
- East-West Walkway: 0.2-mile ADA-accessible walkway
- Observation platform next to pond (ADA-accessible)
- Lined pond, 0.5 acres
- Covered pavilion with seating for 50 and two wheelchair accessible picnic tables
- Sycamore Station: a wood-chipped trail and nature play area designed for children that includes rock seating and tables, large logs, and natural objects

#### IV. **Area Restrictions or Limitations**

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** Property is leased from the Kauffman Foundation (2000 – 2050) and is subject to lease agreement.
- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** None
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** None

## MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

#### V. **Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations**

The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center (Center) is comprised of a nature center building with several small-scale, re-created natural communities. The area lies in the heart of Kansas City, surrounded by housing, retail, university, research, and non-profit facilities. The area is used by schools and other groups for formal programming as well as by neighbors and the general public who walk the grounds and enjoy nature.

Management of the area centers on providing high quality interpretive programming opportunities for the public. The area is managed to demonstrate the use of native plants in small urban environments, while also reducing maintenance needs of the grounds.

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) The Anita B. Gorman Center is located within a highly urbanized residential/commercial area with close proximity to major roadways, making the area accessible to a large urban populace.
- 2) Achieve multiple educational and resource goals on very small acreage.
- 3) Large Canada goose populations threaten water quality and landscape aesthetics.
- 4) Past planting efforts have included the use of genetically modified plants, which are not reflective of native Missouri habitats.
- 5) Maintain high quality examples of native plants in an urban environment while reducing maintenance needs.

**Management Objective 1: Reduce the local Canada goose population to a level where fecal waste and landscape damage is minimal.**

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors and Kansas City Parks and Recreation to implement methods to help reduce local goose population numbers. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Use natives in the landscape to reduce desirable nesting locations. (Outreach and Education)

**Management Objective 2: Maintain a diverse mix of habitats that serve educational needs and highlight how Missouri's native plants can be successfully used in small urban landscapes.**

Strategy 1: Use the native landscape plan to showcase native plantings. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Restructure the current wildflower meadow to become a pollinator garden in partnership with the Kansas City Native Plant Initiative. Remove woody invasive plants and non-desirable plants; and manage native plants to benefit pollinators. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: Maintain the forest areas to show a variety of native trees and shrubs while adding spring ephemerals, as needed, to maintain seasonal interest. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 4: Renovate the main prairie area to improve species diversity and manageability of the prairie. Utilize prescribed burning and mowing to maintain the prairie thereafter. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 5: Retain riparian plants in the stream area. Reduce the number of species with the middle section transitioning to showcase glade plants. (Outreach and Education)

**Management Objective 3: Maintain small, formal demonstration gardens next to the nature center building that serve educational needs and highlight how Missouri's native plants can be successfully used in small urban landscapes.**

Strategy 1: Maintain the parking lot bioswales to feature a monoculture of native plants nearest to Troost Avenue and becomes more diverse as you approach the building. (Design and Development, Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Showcase best management practices for using natives in a retail setting by using a small suite of plants near the front entrance. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: Maintain the wildlife-viewing courtyard with low-growing native plants and shrubs that will specifically attract birds while providing an inviting view from the interior of the building. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 4: Maintain appropriate borders in areas that tend to erode so that plantings and/or mulch do not encroach on concrete pathways. (Design and Development)

**Management Objective 4: Significantly reduce the use of cultivars on the area.**

Strategy 1: Use true natives in limited numbers when renovating existing vegetated areas to the extent practical. (Design and Development, Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Utilize plants that are best suited for their locations, taking plant height, spacing, and aggressiveness into consideration. (Design and Development, Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: Consider blooming period of each new species added or of each current native eliminated to create the longest blooming period possible in each area. (Design and Development, Outreach and Education)

**Management Objective 5: Control invasive plants.**

Strategy 1: Monitor for and control invasive plants using a variety of management techniques, including (but not limited to) prescribed fire, mowing, digging, chemical treatment, and mulching. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

**VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations**

The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center has no natural aquatic resources, but does have a 0.5-acre lined pond and an artificial intermittent stream that is used in school and public programming to provide opportunities for wildlife viewing. The pond has a small population of fish and healthy dragonfly, bullfrog, and turtle populations. The Center also has nine bioswales in the parking lot that reduce parking lot runoff.

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) The area pond has been recently renovated and vegetation is needed to provide cover for fish and amphibians while reducing maintenance by limiting algae growth.
- 2) Fertilizers and other run-off from the surrounding landscape increases the nutrient load of the pond.
- 3) The pond liner affects the aesthetic appeal of the pond while also creating a distinct challenge, given its tendency to be easily punctured.
- 4) The area provides opportunities for pond study by youth.

**Management Objective 1: Control unwanted aquatic vegetation (such as algae) in the pond by using natural, low-maintenance methods.**

Strategy 1: Introduce tub plantings in the pond while utilizing methods that protect the integrity of the pond liner. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Treat as needed to control excessive vegetation. (Design and Development)

**Management Objective 2: Hide unnatural plastic pond liner.**

Strategy 1: Add larger rocks at edges of pond where liner is visible often. (Design and Development)

**Management Objective 3: Use the pond to educate the public about native aquatic plants and animals.**

Strategy 1: Plant only native plants in the areas near pond. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Use plants to provide habitat for aquatic invertebrates, amphibians, fish, and turtles. (Design and Development)

Strategy 3: Add floating logs to provide additional wildlife viewing opportunities. (Design and Development)

**VII. Public Use Management Considerations**

As part of Kauffman Legacy Park, in a highly urbanized area of Kansas City, the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center is unique because it is easily accessible by personal vehicles, buses, and walking/biking trails. Multiple access points to the grounds present a challenge to staff in providing a focused and accessible message about the center's mission and services, as well as its rules and regulations. Multiple businesses, non-profit organizations, and governmental entities lining Brush Creek pose a challenge to effectively managing the Canada goose population along the creek.

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Multiple access points to the area limit the ability to provide a focused message.
- 2) Troost Avenue road signage does not reflect the identity and purpose of the facility.
- 3) High Canada goose populations soil walkways.
- 4) Domestic dog feces soil grounds.
- 5) Facility attracts bird viewing and photography opportunities.
- 6) Entrance to building is decaying.

**Management Objective 1: Provide public wildlife viewing and photography opportunities.**

Strategy 1: Conduct periodic prescribed burns of the prairie, glade, and bioswales. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Maintain trails to allow the public safe access to view wildlife and connect with nature. (Design and Development)

**Management Objective 2: Provide interpretive opportunities.**

Strategy 1: Update trail signage to reflect current priority interpretive messages. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Provide staff and volunteer-led outdoor programming to organized groups, schools, and the public. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: Provide a nature play area for use by the public and for school programming. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

**Management Objective 3: Provide Troost Avenue road signage that reflects the identity and purpose of the Center.**

Strategy 1: Develop signage that is eye-catching and conveys the Center's identity and purpose to those traveling the Troost Avenue corridor while conforming to local ordinances. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

**Management Objective 4: Provide a public entrance that is easy to see, inviting and provides a staging ground for public programs.**

Strategy 1: Work through the Department's Capital Improvement process to consider developing an entrance that fits with the building design while proving the public with clear views of the entry doors and a covered area for program use. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

**Management Objective 5: Lessen the amount of dog feces on the grounds.**

Strategy 1: Continue to provide and promote use of dog waste bags. (Design and Development)



Strategy 2: Continue to educate dog owners about expectations for dogs at the area. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

## **VIII. Administrative Considerations**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Area management is limited by lease restrictions.
- 2) Continue to maintain facility infrastructure.

### **Management Objective 1: Provide an urban location that limits opportunities for damage to infrastructure.**

Strategy 1: Continue to provide contracted daytime uniformed guards to patrol grounds and building as well as nightly patrols of the exterior of building and grounds, as is required in our lease with the Kauffman Foundation. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Provide security cameras at key locations to help deter potential criminal activity. (Design and Development)

### **Management Objective 2: Maintain a cooperative relationship with the Kauffman Foundation that is supportive of area management goals.**

Strategy 1: Inform Kauffman representatives of any proposed management changes. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Provide Kauffman representatives with guidance on native plant use and water quality when requested by the Kauffman Foundation. (Outreach and Education)

### **Management Objective 3: Ensure area infrastructure is maintained appropriately.**

Strategy 1: Maintain an appropriate distance between plants and building. (Design and Development)

Strategy 3: Ensure that area infrastructures are inspected at least twice a year and appropriate maintenance performed if needed. (Design and Development)

Strategy 4: Use native landscape plan to guide maintenance of grounds. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)



## APPENDICES

### Area Background:

The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center is in Kansas City, southwest of Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard and Troost Avenue. The area was leased to the Missouri Department of Conservation in 2000 from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation for a period of 50 years, with the option for an additional 25 years.

Directions: From I-70, take Van Brunt south. It will turn into Emanuel Cleaver Boulevard/47th Street as it bends to the west. Continue west, passing under Highway 71, then turn south on Troost Avenue to the Center.

### Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Grassland (non-prairie)	7.72	79
Other	2.00	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.72</b>	<b>100</b>

### Public Input Summary:

The draft Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center Management Plan was available for a public comment period Oct. 1–31, 2017. The Missouri Department of Conservation received 28 comments from 27 respondents (Appendix A). The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A brief summary of public input themes, including how they were incorporated or why they were not, can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center Management Plan public comment period.

### *Terrestrial Resources*

**Opposes replacing native plantings with monoculture plantings or mulch. Would like to see more native plantings, pollinator gardens, and natural areas. Suggests replacing parking lot bioswales with native plantings and would like to see more woodland native species.**

The parking lot bioswale closest to Troost Avenue will be planted with little bluestem this spring. Natives will not be replaced with non-native monocultures, and mulch will continue to be used to help control weeds and to highlight specific plants in the more formal beds. We will continue to add spring ephemerals to the woodland area, as needed, to ensure visual interest

throughout the growing season. Additional beds will not be added to ensure that staff can maintain current plantings at the level our visitors expect.

**Values the native plantings at the conservation center for their beauty, diversity, wildlife value, landscaping inspiration, and educational value (e.g., providing native habitat demonstrations).**

We strive to provide a variety of plantings for this purpose.

**Does not understand the purpose of the new raised beds.**

These new beds are intended to educate visitors on specific prairie plants, which are hard to identify within the naturalistic prairie to the west. This area is still being developed, but will have interpretive signage when complete.

**Would like to see improvements made to the wooded path area, such as providing better pruned canopy structure.**

We will continue to prune trees along the path and will attempt to do so in a way that maintains the best health of the trees. We will make every effort to make good pruning cuts and consider the long-term structure of the trees. Note that the wooded paths are meant to demonstrate a natural community and are not meant to be part of the “small, formal demonstration gardens next to the nature center building” referred to in Management Objective 3. The wooded paths are intended to look natural and not landscaped.

**Suggests using tall shrubs (instead of low-growing plants) in the courtyard to prevent birds from striking windows.**

Bird strikes on the northwest- and west-facing windows of the courtyard are predominantly caused by raptors (Cooper’s hawk, sharp shinned hawk, and red-tailed hawk) swooping in on feeding songbirds causing them to scatter in a frenzy striking the windows (and brick walls). The stunned birds then become food for the hawks. The hawks provide additional wildlife viewing as it is rare to get such a close-up view of the raptors in the city.

The ability to view wildlife from indoors for school programs and public programs was the original intent of the building design and courtyard. Originally, there were viburnums and dogwoods planted in front of the southwest windows. There were still window strikes with the taller vegetation and because the shrubs blocked views from the interior they were removed. We left the shrubs against the brick walls to provide additional shelter.

Raptor silhouettes were applied to the windows to discourage strikes with limited effectiveness. Feeders closest to the windows have been removed and this has reduced strikes. We also intend to move the feeders closest to the east windows to further reduce strikes.

The current plans for the courtyard area are to increase wildlife viewing opportunities by reducing the height and density of all the vegetation in the courtyard while providing adequate cover and food resources.

**Appreciates the plan's emphasis on providing pollinator habitat.**

Thank you for your support of these efforts.

**Appreciates that the plan includes the removal of cultivars.**

Thank you for your support of these efforts.

**Suggests concealing the silver stock tanks in the prairie.**

While the galvanized culvert material we are using for this area stands out now, it was chosen because it will dull over time and blend well with the landscape while providing the definition we desire for these plantings.

*Aquatic Resources*

**Would like to see improvements made to the pond (removing geese and addressing algae).**

The Department has been working with the city to lower the Canada goose population along the Brush Creek corridor. We anticipate these efforts will reduce the impact the population has on our water quality of the pond in the next few years. We will also be adding plants to the pond to help with the algae issue we have had in the summers.

**Suggests eliminating fertilizer from the center's lawncare and working with the neighboring landowner to reduce run-off of fertilizer into the area pond.**

Fertilizers are applied at a minimal rate and treatments are applied as recommended, according to the label of the product to reduce an excess of run-off. Our neighbor to the south has also reduced fertilizer use in recent years.

**Opposes prior removal and draining of the natural pond (which occurred years ago).**

Unfortunately, there were problems with the construction of the original pond that kept it from holding an appropriate amount of water. We chose to line the new pond with large rocks so that student groups could more easily reach the pond for educational activities.

*Public Use Management*

**Values the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center for the free educational and outdoor opportunities it provides for urban children and adults. The center is a much-needed outdoor resource and place of respite. Supports maintaining and improving this facility as much as possible.**

Thank you for your support. We strive to continually improve both our educational programming and outdoor resources.

**Disappointed that classrooms are often closed and interpretive staff are often not available. These resources should be available full-time.**

The classrooms are closed for the safety of our visitors and our display animals when staff is not actively working in the classrooms. Interpretive staff are available to talk with visitors when not in a program. Simply ask at the front desk.

**Concerned that some visitors do not pick up after their dogs.**

We are as well, but staff continue to educate visitors on this issue and we continue to provide bags to make it easy for pet owners to clean up after their pets.

**Suggests opening the greenhouse to public and making it available for interpretive opportunities.**

The greenhouse is used for occasional interpretive programs for the public, for growing select plants for public programs and growing select plants to plant on-site, as well as short-term storage of plants purchased to be planted on-site.

**Suggests adding signage near the native/prairie plantings to explain why the grasses are more natural (and less manicured) looking.**

We are currently working to provide new interpretive signage to this area and others.

*Administrative Considerations*

**Suggests partnering more with nonprofits and local Master Naturalists/Master Gardeners in managing the conservation center. Suggests consulting more with experts from groups such as the Kansas City Native Plant Initiative in managing and designing the conservation center.**

We have been working with the Missouri Master Gardeners, Missouri Master Naturalists, Kansas City Native Plant Initiative partners, and university students throughout the past year to provide additional assistance with maintaining the gardens. We expect to continue these partnerships and continue to look for additional avenues of volunteer support.

**Feels that the conservation center has not been properly maintained and has been understaffed in recent years. The area needs more staff that are knowledgeable about native cultivar plantings.**

In the past year additional positions have been added to assist with both the interior and landscape maintenance.

**Suggests providing more opportunities for the community to provide input on how the conservation center is managed (specifically on the removal of native plantings).**

We accept comments from the public about both the landscape and program offerings on an ongoing basis. Comments can be left at the front desk or sent to [discoverycenter@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:discoverycenter@mdc.mo.gov).

**Maps:**

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map

**Additional Appendices:**

Appendix A: Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

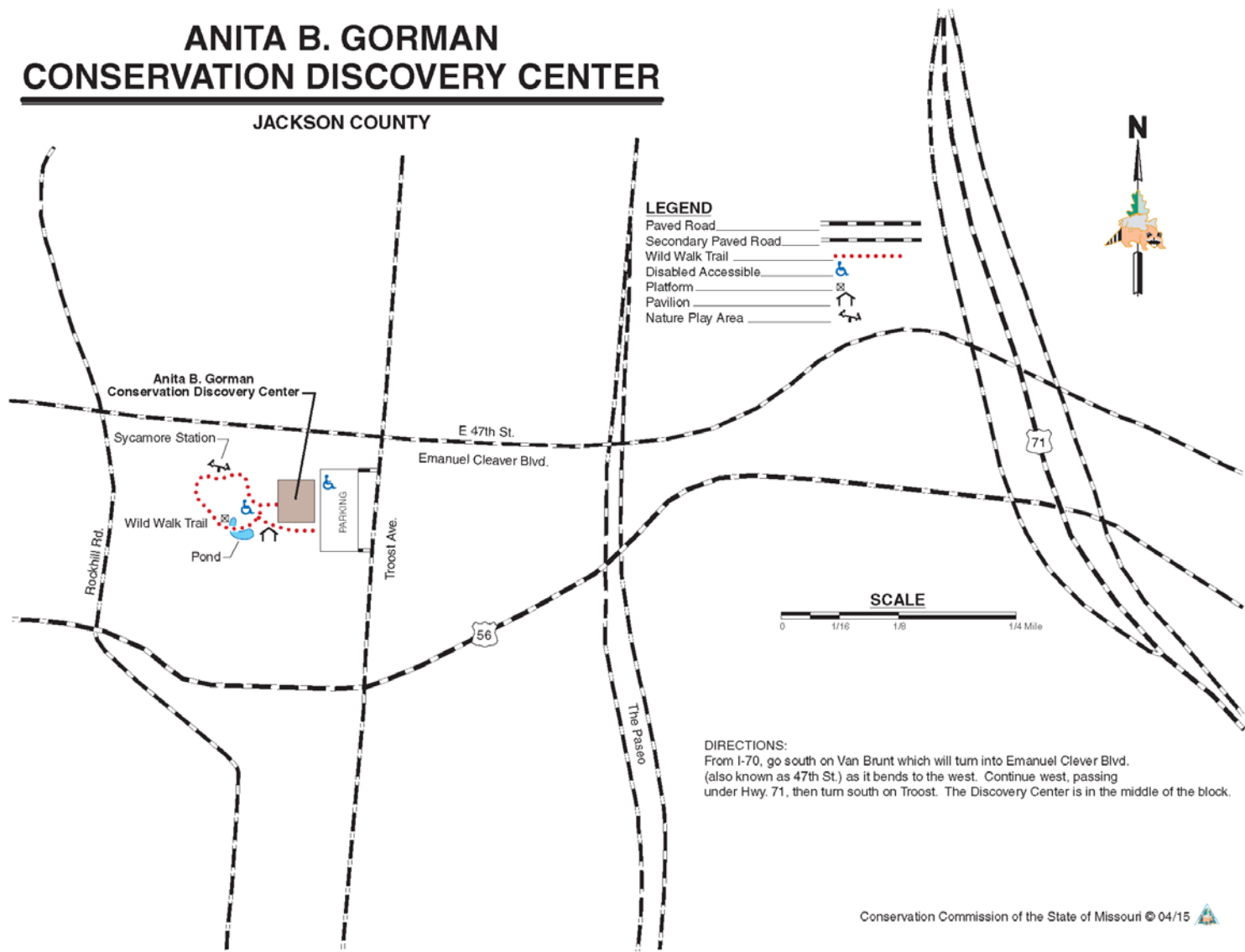




Figure 2: Aerial Map

## Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center Aerial Map

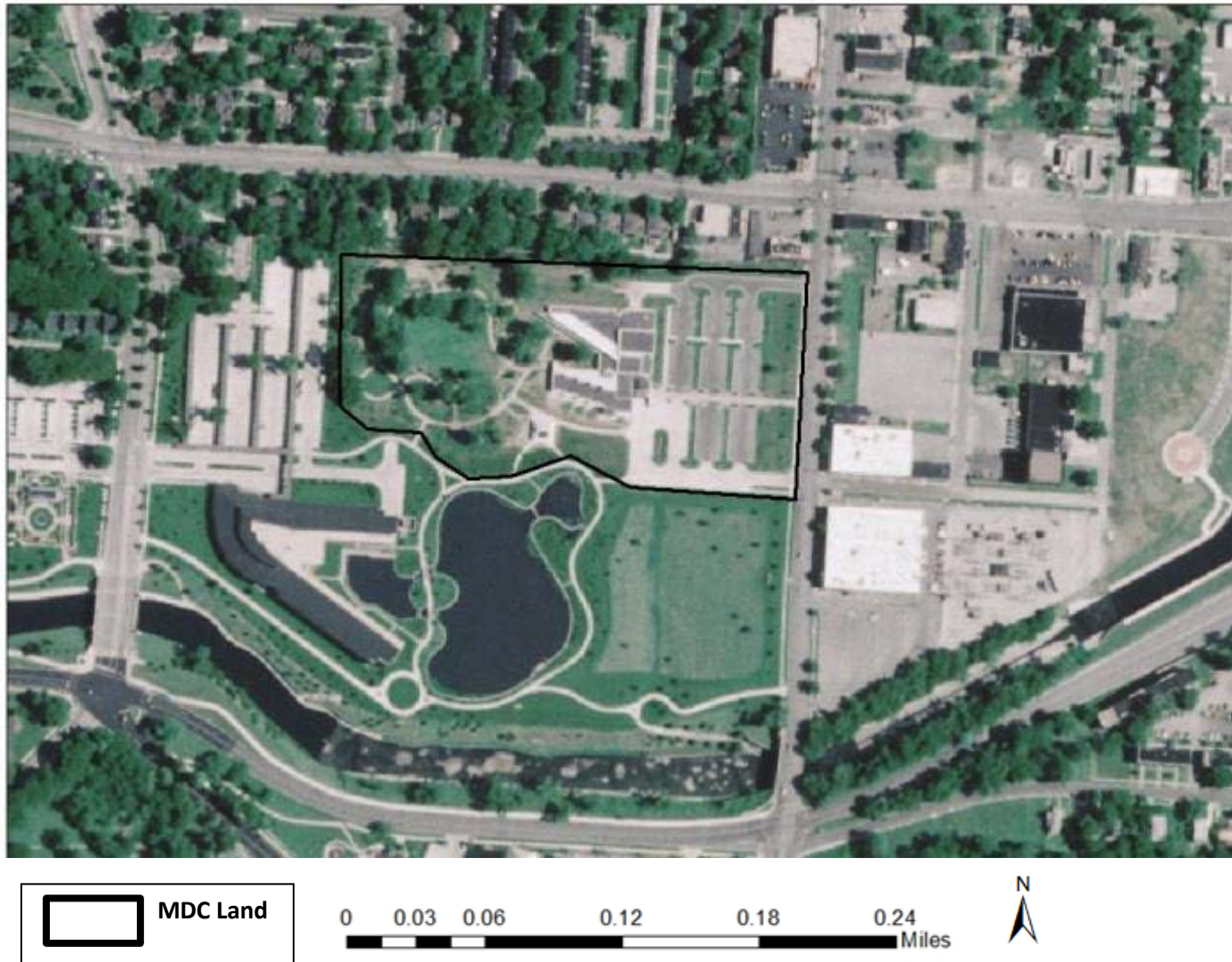


Figure 3: Topographic Map

# Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center Topographic Map

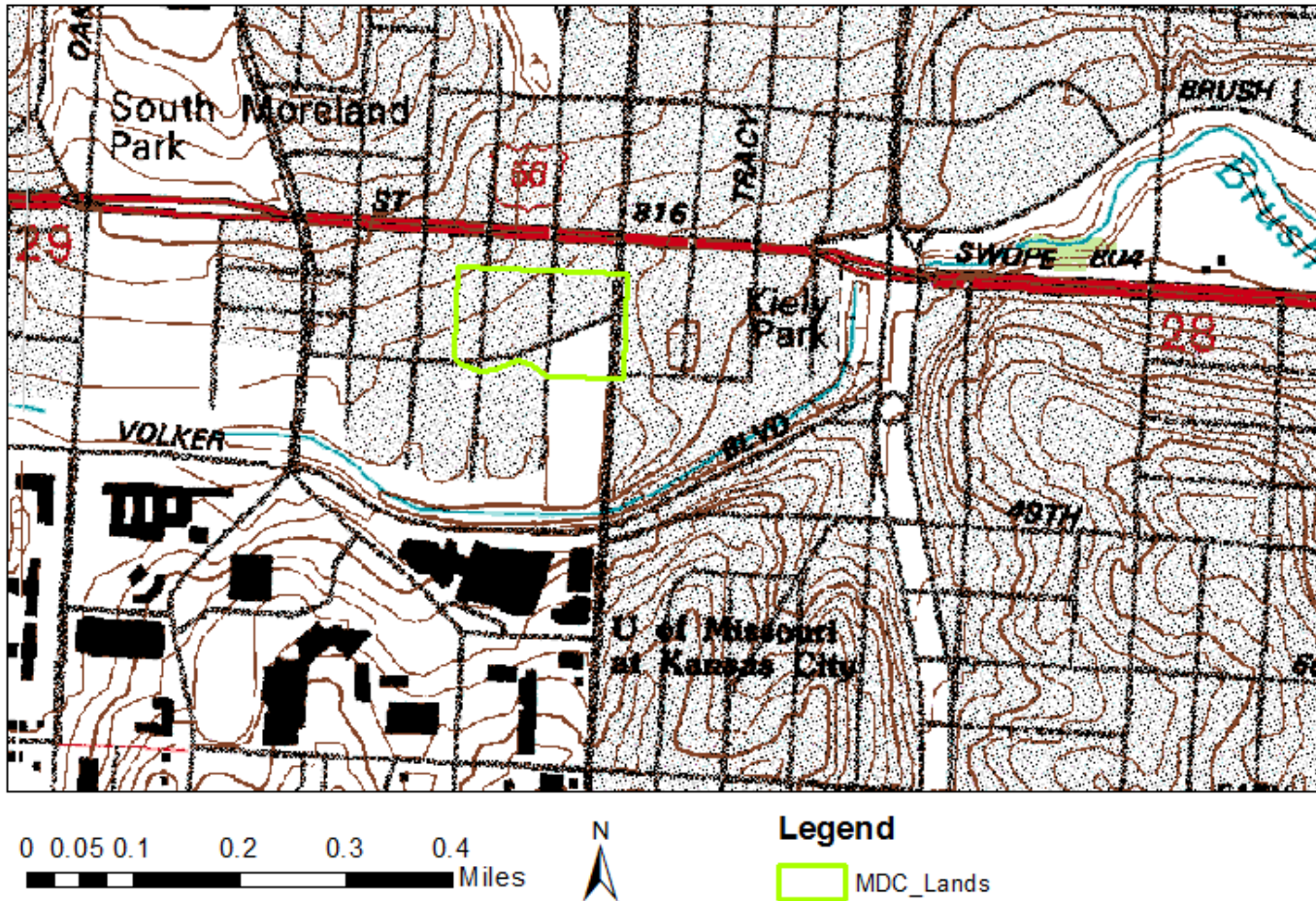




Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map



## Appendix A: Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (Oct. 1–31, 2017):

<p>Please leave the many native plantings at The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center! They are diverse, and beautiful. My husband and I often go to the Center when we want ideas about what to plant in our yard because we like the wildlife these plantings attract. I've seen MANY species of birds at the Center. This will change if you dig up the native habitat and replace it with monoculture and smaller plantings. Please allow the native habitat to flourish, and please don't remove one of the few places in the city the public can go to enjoy these types of plants.</p>
<p>Please reconsider the removal of natives, and installation of MONOCULTURE. I hope You will increase the use of native plant species and habitat. Please eliminate cultivars.</p>
<p>Please keep the native plant areas at Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center, we need to educate people on the importance of conserving natural habitats for birds and animals and insects. Changes in habitat can lead to extinction if there is not enough to sustain the animals. Many creatures must have specific foods to survive and breed. Our own existence is tied to the wellbeing of our birds, animals, good insects, and native plants. For instance; birds are pollinators, they spread seeds, and they eat billions of tons of insects each year, if they die out, insects will eat all our crops and we starve. Most people don't connect these facts so it is up to us to educate them so we may all survive.</p>
<p>As a regular visitor to The Discovery Center, the removal of native plants in the recent past is very disheartening and disappointing. The landscape at The Discovery Center should be planted with native plants from this region of the country. The demonstration of habitats historically found in the KC region is critical education for residents and visitors. Using native species with more formal growth habits at the entrances and front of the building is appropriate, while allowing areas at the back to exhibit the plants in their natural beauty. The parking lot bioswales should be replanted with native grasses, sedges, and select forbs so that these stormwater BMPs function properly, as well as provide examples to the public. Of course, shorter plants to meet line-of-sight, code requirements, and neighbor property blending can be achieved with careful plant selection.</p> <p>The use of non-native plant species in the landscape at The Discovery Center is an insult to mission of MDC, the public who needs nature to thrive, and person for whom the center is named.</p> <p>Other tools to maintain the landscape at The Discovery Center ought to be implemented, such as public-private-nonprofit partnerships under a Memorandum of Understanding or similar contractual agreement. Parks in other parts of the U.S. (i.e., New York City area) are designed, improved, and maintained using such as agreements, including private funds.</p>
<p>Whichever plan is chosen, please include 100% native plants and trees! A conservation discovery center would be a fraud if it used anything BUT natives!</p>
<p>Please - retain Natives and let them look like a natural area! Not beds of monoculture. Not grass. This is a beautiful area and truly represents what a wild native area looks like. Here in an urban sitting. Nature does not make "pretty" beds of monoculture plants and certainly not fancy cultivars and the newest introductions created in test tubes. I have enjoyed a few visits there and have suggested to others. What was recently done on the East side of the MDC office in St. Joseph resulted in a disgraceful example of what Nature does not do.</p>

I am a Master Gardener, Master Naturalist and a Regional Coordinator for Missourians for Monarchs - Naturalists and Gardeners

Perhaps it is time to leave this location for a much safer and easier place to maintain. I would never have been to this location unless planed meeting hadn't forced me to come here. I never felt safe and it sounds like to much work is needed to keep it functional.

I like the place but am questioning the new raised "beds" which are clearly not finished and their purpose. I visit maybe once per week. The pond is an eyesore and the goals are laudable. Loose Park had success removing geese traffic by using a dog and handler. Judy Penner could be consulted at the Loose Park Garden Center Office. In the wooded path area, canopy needs some structure provided by pruning arborists who know what they are doing. Certified - ISA or KAA. This area could showcase more natives and could do a better job of showing woodland natives in bloom sequence. Always necessary to show how a native landscape does not have to be a weedy mess. This is the most talked-about turnoff when a native landscape discussion evolves.

I hope you will reconsider the removal of natives and installing monoculture. We need more biodiversity not less and we need to reintroduce and increase the use of natives for the sake of our environment and all the species that depend on it (since we depend on them). If conservation organizations don't lead the way in this, what hope do we have? As a Missouri resident, this is important to me.

I have enjoyed being at the Anita Gorman Discovery Center on the average of 5-14 days a year. I am concerned that the Center has been haphazardly removing native plants and going to monoculture. It seems to me the part of educating public would be that monocultures are more susceptible to disease and losing the entire planting (think elm trees that used to line streets or the ash trees that may have taken their place. What if instead of planting all one type we had used many types? Our streets would look very different. It makes no sense the Center wants to go to monocultures.

The Discovery Center is uniquely poised to demonstrate the beauty and benefits of Missouri's native plants, as it is so accessible in a populated urban area. With an increased awareness of planting natives stemming from the decline in the monarch population, now is an ideal time to encourage people to take the next step and incorporate food and nectar plants into their landscape. I would personally make the 45+ minute trip from my home to see how natives are utilized in this relatively small space, and would openly encourage others with an interest in natives to do the same.

The Gorman Center is a gem and an asset to Kansas City. I have lived in Kansas City for most of my life, even though i am now on the Kansas side of the line. I strongly encourage everyone involved to do everything necessary to maintain and improve this facility.

I wish there were more native plants and habitat. Perhaps the goal is for a monoculture park, but why not go down the street half a mile for that? As a Conservation area this plan leaves quite a bit to be desired; less grass, less mulch, and more diverse natives and habitat!

I am so glad to see these types of conservation discovery places in this area. I really appreciate our native flora and it's promotion, and would like to see more of it. Sorry about the geese! There's just no excuse for the dog poop--is it illegal not to pick up after your pet? It is in Lawrence.

There has been concern over the removal of native plant species and the use of nativars at the Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center for a while now. As an oasis in the middle of the urban

core, the Discovery Center has an important role as a beacon educating and demonstrating how providing for wildlife and nature no matter how many developments and streets surround you. Unfortunately, this example has been in a steady state of decline at the Discovery Center. Last year we received a call that the natives were being dug out of the bioswales as a precursor to spraying them and introducing a monoculture. Concerned citizens got this stopped but they have since removed the switchgrass closest to Troost and replaced it with mulch. Other bioswales are a ninebark cultivar monoculture. The hope is these areas can be used to demonstrate native plant diversity and thriving natural communities in an urban setting. The bioswales closest to the building are brilliant- alive with diversity and pollinators, but they have consistently been the target of decreasing resources and to be honest, an understanding by MDC for their purpose. Hence, weeds have moved into some areas and rather than pull weeds the plan has consistently been to move to decreasing diversity.

Previously bushes lining the courtyard area that were used by nesting birds and as cover when the neighborhood Cooper's Hawk makes a visit. They were all removed this past winter. When we inquired we were told us they were removed because they might bring ants. Yes. Ants.

The dismay increases when reading the conservation plan as much of it discusses removing native plants and introducing monocultures. The Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center is the one chance many inner city residents and youth have to experience natural communities and yet the plan seems to focus on less wildlife value and less diversity. It is a lovely facility that supports warblers in its trees during migration and mink in its pond and is used by conservation groups and nature lovers far and wide for the diversity and connection with nature it provides. We had hoped the plan would be to embrace and expand upon that connection. It is good to see the plan include the removal of the cultivars. That is very much appreciated.

The community has tried to become involved. We met with Aaron Jeffries, Claudine Lamb and others on our concerns. We organized volunteer workdays- over 20 volunteers showed up in 100 degree heat because of their love of this center and it's grounds. The result was a rebuff letter from Aaron dismissing our concerns and inclusion of our voice with future plans for the Discovery Center grounds. It is good to see the Kansas City Native Plant Initiative (KCNPI) mentioned in the plan. I would encourage the staff to utilize their expertise and consult beyond just the one garden where they are mentioned. One of the KCNPI members is the world renowned architect, Bob Berkebile, that designed the Discovery Center and it's native habitat grounds. It would be good to consult him on several of the goals mentioned in the conservation plan. He has offered his help several times and most facilities would be envious of his generosity. Did you know the Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center was the prelude building to what would become the LEED certification program! and the man behind that has offered his help many times without much interest on behalf of MDC.

The real issue with the landscaping is twofold. First the maintenance of the grounds has been understaffed since Matt Bunch and the contract with Powell Gardens ran out. There was little, and mostly no maintenance for a couple years. It has been sparsely staffed since then. A prominent member of the community had concerns about the bioswales near Troost and that

has been the catalyst and quite frankly, consistent excuse, for removing natives and going to monoculture.

Second, grounds management and planning does not appear to come from a place of understanding natives, nature and ecosystem services. Case in point - areas designated as rain gardens have been taken out and replaced by rock with drains and landscape fabric. We know that this implementation will absorb less rain water, fill with debris and weeds and probably be sprayed with herbicide. This typical urban approach only increases the load on Kansas City's very aging sewer system and adds chemicals to the now increased run off. Through this action we have not only lost the opportunity to display the solution we want more homeowners and businesses to implement (rain gardens with natives) but we have contributed to the problem (increased runoff, herbicide use, debris in the sewer system) and eliminated pollinator and wildlife habitat. It should not be lost that the intersection by the Discovery Center, Cleaver Blvd. and Troost, floods frequently during rain storms.

I understand there needs to be decisions on resources but if there is any MDC site worthy of a knowledgeable, fully staffed ground crew, this would be it. The maintenance issue was a result of a staffing issue, both in manpower, skill set and knowledge. With the proper staff level, education, experience and focus, the grounds at the Discovery Center could be a revolutionary example for the discovery of nature and use of native plants.

The Discovery Center has top notch interpretive programs and staff. Please continue that. The Discovery Center has the added asset of many of their education staff also being certified teachers. Sadly however, having the teachers in the rooms full-time has been discontinued. It was such a pleasure to be able and take your child at any time and they could see the animals and experience the interpretive nature tools in each classroom. Now the classrooms remain locked or occupied by a class greatly limiting the ability to experience each classroom and all it has to offer. This gives a 'closed for business' vibe in that area of the building. Not only does having the classrooms accessible benefit visitors, but surely the education staff would enjoy that environment over a tiny office, secluded from their passion of teaching.

Also on that note, there is no longer use and access to the greenhouse. In a city with only 18.6% urban canopy cover and losing 0.5% annually to invasive species such as the Emerald Ash Borer and an aging storm water system that is overwhelmed and inadequate, this is an enormous opportunity missed and a wasted resource. That classroom also opens out in the landscape. Granted that side of the building may need some additional attention, but how great would it be to use the greenhouse and the thriving area just outside that hosts pollinators, caterpillars and other species, to demonstrate the important role these plants play in our ecosystem while also facilitating the core ideas in Kansas City's Green Infrastructure and canopy goals ?

Please challenge the team to go back to the drawing board and find a way to increase and maintain the biodiversity and habitat the Discovery Center can provide. Do not let the lazy maintenance of monoculture and turf lull you into settling for less than this center can and was meant to provide for the community and nature. Then please look objectively at the assets of your staff, the lovely classrooms and greenhouse and find ways to utilize those to capacity. Kansas City needs and deserves that. The Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center is beloved by

the community and is an outstanding asset. Through the careful considerations and resources it deserves, please give it a purpose and a mission befitting its leadership role in Kansas City and beyond.

(Phone Call) Mary Nemecek called to follow-up with submitted comments regarding the Discovery Center area plan. She requested an in-person meeting to further discuss native plants at the Discovery Center. She is concerned that staff continue removing native plants with no input from the community. Community members are willing to help care for native plantings. This area has so much potential as a showcase for native plant landscaping.

In regards to the 'Strategic Direction' I believe this really needs to be taken to heart by all of the divisions that work within this organization.

MGMT Considerations: Challenges and Opportunities: 4) There are hybrid plants there, but no genetically modified plants as far as I know, this sounds a bit reactionary.

Terrestrial, MO 3, Strat 3, the wildlife viewing also has to pair with the number of bird strikes. before the shrubs grew tall bird strikes were a very common occurrence, tall shrubs are needed to mitigate this

Aquatic, C and O, 2) Eliminate the fertilizers that are applied to the turf (mowing contractor), and work with the neighboring property manager (Kauffman) to eliminate the fertilizer being applied to the turf directly south of the pond.

In full disclosure I managed the grounds from June 2004 to April 2008. There were many obstacles to overcome, but in the end more native Missouri vegetation was added, and the invasive plant species that were all over the property were eliminated or kept at bay. Best horticultural and arboricultural management practices were put in place to insure vegetation was not 'uncomfortable' for the visitor. Emphasis was put on true native Missouri species with visual and ecosystem services being at the forefront. I believe the department has the ability to continue this legacy, but it must work with outside partners. This landscape should be a crown jewel for Missouri plants, and there are people within this community and within your department that know how to do this.

I appreciate the plan and agree with the emphasized areas. This is a real gem and asset to Kansas City. Reducing the goose population would aid greatly in achieving walkability and interest in the park and surrounding area. The algae bloom is currently out of control in the pond, which hosts a delightful array of frogs, turtles, and the occasional pair of duck. I hope the emphasis on pollinators includes a continued resource for the many butterflies that visit as well!

Maintaining a diversity of native plants in the landscaping around the ABGCDC is VERY important. If MDC's goal is to promote the use of natives, then the Department should be willing to demonstrate to folks examples of these plants in a variety of settings and uses. There is, simply, no reason why the beautiful plantings around the grounds cannot be maintained or expanded. There is plenty of volunteer help available, the ABGCDC staff just needs to request it from the KS and MO Master Naturalist chapters, as well as area Master Gardeners.

I just want to commend the effort being put forth in planning for the future of The Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center! Its INCREDIBLY UNIQUE mid-town KC setting serves a population of children AND adults that MOST DESPERATELY NEED EVERYTHING that it can offer!! What an outstanding and amazing opportunity it provides-WITHOUT CHARGE-for learning about Nature and outdoor skills, as it also offers a much-needed respite from the world of concrete and traffic! Keep up the excellent work!!



as a taxpayer who appreciates the scientifically proven benefits of native plants to the ecosystem, it is my request that the wonderful landscape of anita b gorman not become planted in monocultures. please continue to remove the non-native plants which were idiotically chosen earlier. let citizens see the way our gorgeous native plants express themselves naturally- a design esthetic can be met by planting groups of monocultures within the same bed. but planting solely one species in an entire bed is not natural looking and less beneficial for the fauna that utilizes the flora. this space is one i often recommend for natives newbies to tour in order to see what the plants will look like when mature. one addition i recommend is SIGNAGE! there is currently no signage explaining to the passing public that these are native plants or prairie plantings etc. when Sprint first constructed their world headquarters in johnson county ks many were confused by the unmowed grasses and less formal looking plants- signage was added and then people appreciated what they were seeing. please invest in signage rather than in moving the flora into unnatural configurations or replacing with non-natives. SIGNAGE SIGNAGE SIGNAGE is always important when using native plants in an area where public viewing is a factor!

I am grateful for this natural oasis in the heart of the city and for your efforts to restore as much of the prairie and meadow to native plants. The silver stock tanks in the prairie are quite an eyesore in the midst of all that natural beauty. I understand what you're trying to do, but can you build up the mulch around them so they are not so conspicuous?

I live near the ABGDC and used to love the grounds and walk them nearly daily. Over the last several years, I have become less and less interested as the landscape has been chopped up, plants removed (e.g. healthy swamp white oak, bioswale diversity, prairie diversity), a natural bottomed pond was removed. We used to see green herons at the pond regularly, and now have noticed a decline of birds. By contrast, I also regularly visit the MDC Office campus in Kirksville, where my Mother in Law lives. That campus is much more coherent and similar to the original MDC campus. While it had the advantage of an existing small woodland to begin with, the prairie and pond there were planted and are spectacular. This most recent plan continues with the framework of disconnected, chopped up gardens and does not plant coherently for wildlife. We have few exemplars of gardening for wildlife in KC, and the MDC Discovery Center can certainly be one.

I hope you reconsider the removal of natives and installing monoculture and hope that they increase the use of native plant species and habitat for nature!

I have been visiting the Discovery Center for 15 years. It once was a beautiful oasis in the city that attracted birds and butterflies. I lived to walk its paths and have seen some great birds there. However, what once was a beautiful conservation area has become a park. It no longer attracts a wide variety of birds. Your efforts over the last several years to cull out the native plants, trim back the bushes, drain and sanitize the pond has made it a sad and horrible place to visit. Shame on you.

We like your plan to add more native plants and pollinator gardens especially with the community gardens and fruit orchard nearby! We have started adding pollinator gardens to most of our large community gardens so this is a perfect match.

The Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center has served the community very well since it's first opening. It provides a functional and enjoyable community meeting space. But more than that, it serves as an example of what thoughtful habitat restoration in an urban space can be - a natural resource, a learning space, and a way for urban dwellers to be in touch with natural communities. When we have conversations with the community about restoring

habitats along our urban streams, we can point to the Discovery Center as an example of what we could accomplish on a larger scale. Thanks to MDC for your continued support of this highly-valued facility.

I am very disappointed in the direction the Discovery Center is taking the past few months with regards to the landscape and with staff. They are removing native plants and replacing them with turf grass, rocks, and unsightly mulch. The area is looking more like a park and less like a natural area...the wildness of the landscaping was what made this place so special. The pond has seen major neglect as well and is constantly covered with algae and other plants...it's so bad that you can't even see the water in most of it. Staff used to be available when they were in the classrooms, but now the rooms are all locked and staff is nowhere to be seen most of the days. I've loved this place since it was first built, but lately it seems much different and I'm not happy about it.