



CLEAN | GREEN | CONNECTED | TRAILS





Great Rivers Greenway (GRG) was established in 2000 to create a clean, green, connected St. Louis region. Today, many new and exciting projects demonstrate the social, economic development and environmental stewardship benefits of a region-wide system of greenways, parks and trails.



SHAPING THE CHARACTER OF THE ST. LOUIS REGION

With more than 150 miles of new trails and greenways completed throughout St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County, GRG is transforming the region to meet the health, fitness and recreational needs of individuals, families and communities.

Designed for bicycling, walking, running or just enjoying the great outdoors, each trail and greenway is known by a different name that reflects the historical or geographical significance of its location or unique characteristics. The Riverfront Trail, Grant's Trail, Riverwoods Trail, St. Vincent Trail, River des Peres Trail, Dardenne Trail at BaratHaven, Missouri Research Park Trail, McKinley Bridge Bikeway & Trestle, Bike St. Louis and others were all developed by GRG.

The blueprint for GRG is to develop a region-wide system of greenways, parks and trails that will encircle the region. Named, The River Ring, the 600-mile web of more than 45 greenways will span two states and an area of 1,216 square miles. In addition to providing new opportunities for recreation, physical activity, and transportation, The River Ring will have tangible social, environmental and economic development benefits.

SOCIAL BENEFITS



Trails and greenways provide numerous health and social benefits. Health benefits range from encouraging physical exercise by expanding recreational opportunities to enhancing people's psychological well-being by connecting with nature and the outdoors. Social benefits include increased community involvement and more livable neighborhoods.

GRG actively supports programs that encourage social interaction. Sponsorships include the annual *Moonlight Ramble* presented by the St. Louis chapter of Hostelling International and local participation with Trailnet on a wide range of special events and trail rides.

Examples of recently completed trails and greenways that exemplify social benefits include the following:

CHESTERFIELD LEVEE TRAIL

The four-mile trail is a creative and adaptive reuse of a levee that was initially designed only to protect the City of Chesterfield and adjacent communities from flooding.

DEER CREEK-SHADY CREEK GREENWAY

The first one-mile segment is highlighted by a new 132-ft. long by 10-ft. wide steel bridge that has flat surface access for the disabled, as well as for bicyclists and walkers. Eventually, the three-mile greenway will span areas of Brentwood, Maplewood and Webster Groves.

RIVER DES PERES GREENWAY

The approximately five-mile River des Peres Greenway links surrounding neighborhoods with parks, business districts, employment centers and other institutions.

SUNSET GREENWAY

The Sunset Trail in the City of Florissant's Sunset Park provides access into Old Town, a vibrant commercial district and site of many local community festivals. The trail also connects St. Ferdinand Park to Sunset Park and the Missouri River Greenway in north St. Louis County.



PUBLIC SUPPORTS TRAILS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Usage Is Strong. More than six in 10 survey participants (61.8%) said that they or a member of their immediate family use walking and biking trails in the three-jurisdiction area.

Taxpayer/Resident Support Is Solid. With regard to taxpayer funding for parks and trails, respondents were asked their opinion of this use of public funds. More than nine in 10 (90.9%) believe it is a “very good use of funds” or “a good use of funds.”

Trails and Parks Are Favorably Rated. Impressively, nine out of 10 survey participants (89.9%) rate area trails and parks on a par with other large metropolitan areas. Of these, two in 10 (20.7%) believe they are better than most other cities.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

A photograph of a group of cyclists on a bridge. In the foreground, several bicycles are parked along a metal railing. A man in a yellow cycling jersey and black shorts stands with his hands on his hips, looking towards the camera. Behind him, another cyclist in a yellow jersey and a man in a white shirt are visible. In the background, another person is standing with a bicycle. The bridge has a complex steel truss structure, and the sky is clear and blue.

Greenways and trails conserve resources and provide nature-based recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. They also can protect Missouri's natural resources, preserve natural habitats and ecosystems and connect communities.

GRG is a leader in integrating environmental stewardship initiatives. As Bike St. Louis and the McKinley Bridge Bikeway demonstrate on a daily basis, well-planned bicycle and pedestrian routes can reduce commuters' reliance on automobiles, which is good for the environment. Other initiatives include using permeable pavers to reduce runoff from rain water and recharge groundwater supply for a new parking lot at the River des Peres Greenway and installing self-composting restrooms at Grant's Trail.



While environmental stewardship is an integral part of every GRG project, the following examples present a good cross-section of the many different ways environmental stewardship has been approached:

BIKE ST. LOUIS

With 77-miles of Bike St. Louis-designated bicycle lanes and on-street routes now available, bicyclists now have great access to a wide range of employment, residential, educational, cultural and recreational centers from St. Louis City and St. Louis County in Missouri to Madison County in Illinois.

DARDENNE GREENWAY AT BARATHAVEN

A three-mile trail provides access to scenic areas along Dardenne Creek in St. Charles County, as well as to a 15-acre stocked lake and forested areas.

MISSOURI RESEARCH PARK TRAIL

Although located deep within an office park, this three-quarter mile trail features a completely natural setting that encompasses two different ecosystems – a forested area in the northern sector and a wetlands area in the southern sector.

RIVERWOODS TRAIL

The 1.5-mile tree-shaded wetland trail along the Missouri River provides excellent access to a little known urban forest full of shady cottonwoods, maples and plenty of wildlife.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



It is widely accepted that outdoor recreation and greenways contribute to the economy and livability of communities. Just as the residential real estate market consistently demonstrates that people are willing to pay more for a home located close to parks and open spaces, commercial property values also are positively impacted. In addition to benefiting citizens and businesses in local communities, greenways, parks and trails also are important for tourism, which has a direct and immediate impact on the local economy.





Several projects recently completed by the GRG demonstrate qualities that signal great opportunities for future economic growth and development. They include:

BOSCHERT GREENWAY

The 1.7 mile trail segment from Boschertown Road to New Town Boulevard, creates a continuous 7.5 mile trail with connections to existing trails in Fountain Lakes Park and Fox Hill Park.

CENTENNIAL GREENWAY AT OLIVE & I-170 INTERCHANGE

In conjunction with a totally redesigned interchange at Olive Boulevard and I-170, the four-block long streetscape on both sides of Olive Boulevard connect commercial districts in University City and Olivette and improve bicycle and pedestrian access.

MCKINLEY BRIDGE BIKEWAY & TRESTLE

A cantilevered lane spanning the Mississippi River connects on the Missouri side to The Trestle, a paved pathway that distinguishes St. Louis as only the third city in the world, after New York City and Paris, to convert a historic elevated steel structure into a linear urban recreation area. The Trestle connects at street level to the popular 11-mile Riverfront Trail and plans are underway for a continuation to a second trestle leading into downtown St. Louis.

ST. VINCENT PARK AND UMSL GREENWAY

Two segments of the St. Vincent Greenway include 1.3 miles through the campus of the University of Missouri-St. Louis and 2.3-miles through St. Vincent Park. Eventually, the St. Vincent Greenway will be a seven-mile expanse from NorthPark to Forest Park, encompassing three major parks, several small neighborhood parks and seven existing MetroLink stations.



The River Ring is a bold initiative to transform the St. Louis area into a clean, green and connected region where its two million residents have access to a connected park and trail system that is close to home, work or recreation destinations.

To deliver its mission, GRG works closely across the region in partnership with municipal, governmental and public agencies, as well as private and nonprofit organizations and neighborhood groups. While each entity has a vested interest in its local project, they all share the vision for how an interconnected network of greenways, parks and trails benefits the whole region.

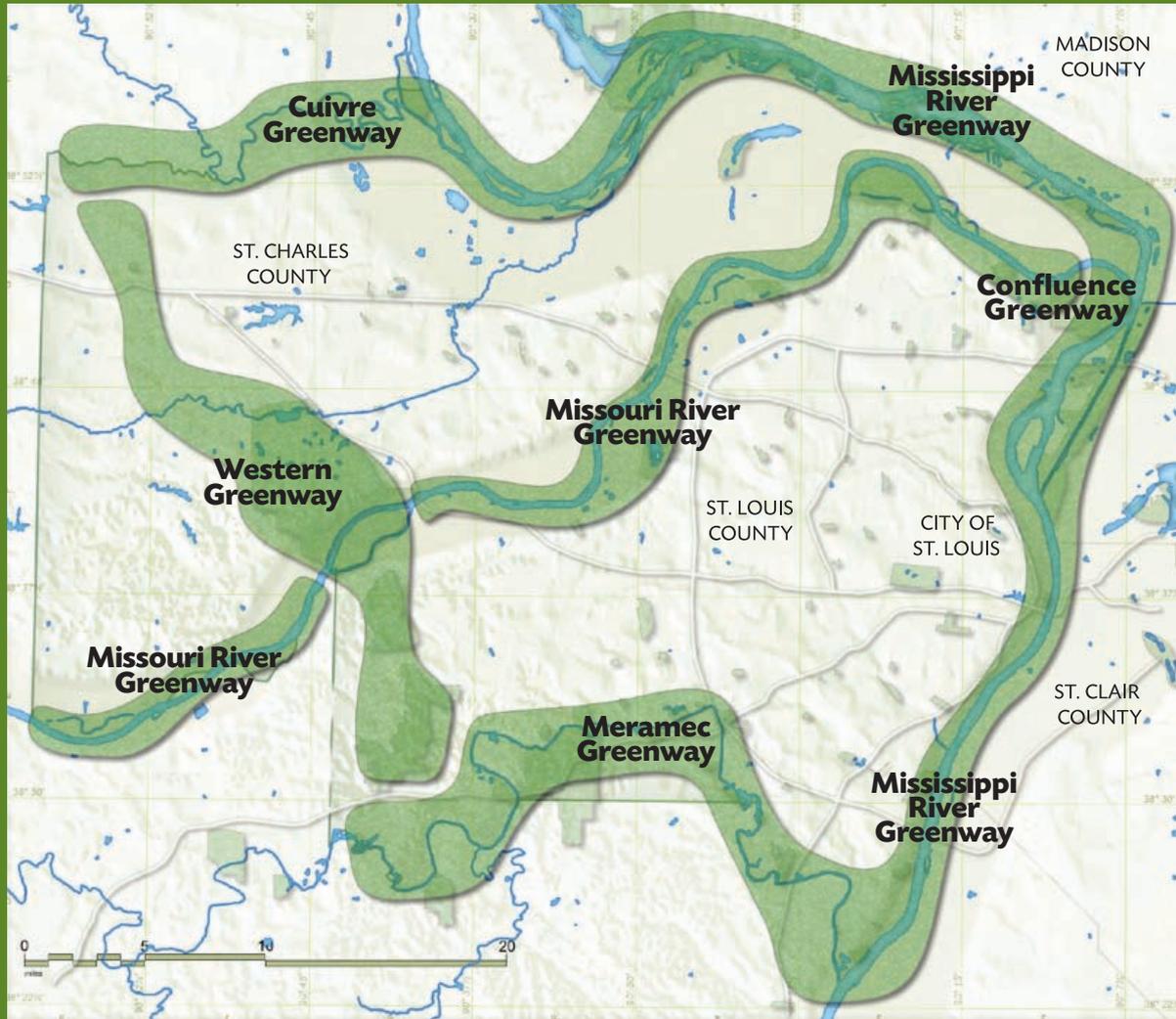
Creating an interconnected system of greenways, parks and trails will greatly enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. New parks and miles of trails will connect communities and neighborhoods, bringing people together, stimulating economic development and inspiring innovative green space initiatives.

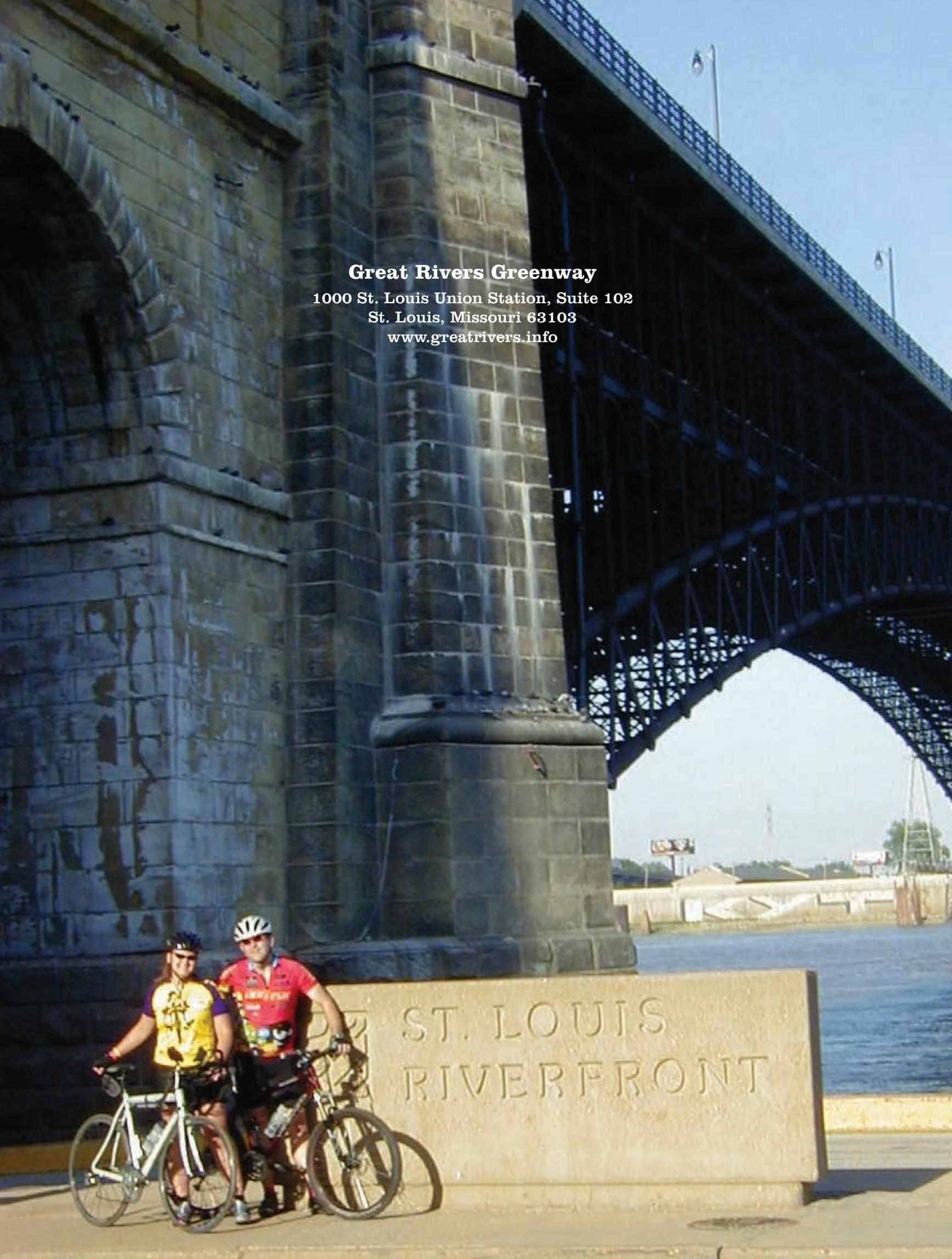
As the regional plan for the River Ring takes shape, St. Louis is emerging as an inspirational model for comparable green space initiatives nationwide.

Please visit **www.greatrivers.info** for additional information about upcoming events, current projects, trip planning, trail maps, photo journals and much more.

Photo Credits: GRG Staff / Trailnet / Mike DeFillipo / HNTB Engineering / Friends

THE RIVER RING





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ST. LOUIS
RIVERFRONT