

Landscapes of Resilience: Joplin and New York City



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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUBJECT: TKF Foundation provides funding for butterfly garden and overlook at Cunningham Park

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Stories of courage, heroism and resilience will be part of a new educational space and healing garden at Cunningham Park, thanks to the TKF Foundation's Open Spaces Sacred Places initiative. The Foundation's OSSP fosters natural settings for the public in helping them cope with stress and burdens resulting from disasters.

During the second anniversary event of the May 22, 2011 tornado, Traci Sooter, Director of Design/Build programs at Drury, announced on behalf of the TKF Foundation that Joplin and New York City will receive a portion of a \$585,000 grant for the communities to each create an open space in recovery and healing. A multi-disciplinary research and design team proposed the "Landscapes of Resilience" project that will study the role of open spaces in recovery from both the Joplin 2011 tornado and Superstorm Sandy that hit New York City and surrounding area, killing 72 people and causing extensive damage in October 2012.

Joplin's Butterfly Garden and Overlook will be located in the northeast section of Cunningham Park, within three lots the City recently purchased following the tornado. Cunningham Park is the City's oldest park and has hosted many events and gatherings on its grounds through the years. Although destroyed by the tornado, Cunningham Park became the central gathering spot for the City's daily press briefings and the community gathered together at the Park for the moment of silence one week after the devastating tornado.

City officials appreciate the work of many in seeking this grant to help the citizens who endured much stress and turmoil after the tornado that killed 161 people and destroyed much of the city's urban forest, including 116 trees in Cunningham Park.



“Joplin has a story to tell,” said City Manager Mark Rohr. “It’s not just the story of the tornado, but the heroic acts of our citizens and their neighbors took to help themselves and, more importantly, each other. We are a community that has shown much resolve in moving forward in our recovery and healing. This grant from the TKF Foundation will help us create a beautiful setting for all to not only remember, but to refresh and renew themselves after having been through so much. We are thankful for the honor of being selected as part of the Open Spaces Sacred Places initiative.”

The grant provides \$200,000 for the construction budget of Joplin’s Butterfly Garden and Overlook. Other budget allocations go toward specific segments of the Landscapes of Resilience project including research efforts for a five-year period, as well as the necessary equipment, documentation and staff resources to implement the project. Travel expenses and construction of an OSSP within the New York City area round out the budget. The NYC site has not been determined as of yet.

The project team for the Butterfly Garden and Overlook includes several organizations who are committed to helping Joplin, and who recognize the healing power that nature can provide. These include Drury University; Cornell University, Civic Ecology Lab; U.S. Forest Service, Northern Research Station; Forest ReLeaf of Missouri, and Great River Associates. Other organizations will also be involved as the project relates to Superstorm Sandy and the New York City project.

During the anniversary event, students from Drury University were at Cunningham Park gathering stories from those affected by the tornado. These stories and related items could be incorporated into the educational space being developed for the Overlook project.

Established in 1996, the TKF Foundation is a private non-profit that funds publicly accessible urban green space. The Foundation partners with organizations to create Open Spaces Sacred Places that increase a sense of community and contribute to a deepening of human connections.

More information about Joplin’s Butterfly Garden and Overlook can be found on the City’s website at www.joplinmo.org as well as www.drury.edu/butterflygardenandoverlook.

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