

Heartland

CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

2018 Annual Report

Our Mission: Heartland Conservation Alliance proactively conserves, protects, and restores natural lands and open space within the Kansas City region, benefitting the community and future generations by improving water quality, creating recreational opportunities, protecting life and property, and preserving our natural and cultural heritage.

HCA accomplishes its goals through collaboration with a network of public and private organizations and agencies that share its goals, values, and objectives, and through public outreach and education.



(LEFT) Rockhurst student volunteers warm up after collecting trash along Brush Creek during the fourth annual MLK Nature Walk.
(CENTER) Since 2015, HCA has hosted five AmeriCorps VISTAs, pictured here leading a community workday at Municipal Farm in November.
(RIGHT) US Fish and Wildlife Service joined the Blue River Urban Waters Federal Partnership in 2018 and jumped in to assist with community engagement in Blue Valley neighborhood.

An Alliance For the Future

Letter from the Executive Director

When asked about my work, one of the things I share is that dirty rivers and creeks aren't our problem; rather, they are a symptom. I have dedicated the past ten years to working to heal the deep and long-standing abusive relationship between people and nature – especially with our rivers. We are not the masters of our natural resources. Neither are we victims of floods, fires and drought; rather, they are the backlash of our abuse. Still, we know we can learn to change how we think about nature, and we can learn to see these resources as Erik Klinenberg describes them, as the social infrastructure that undergirds our collective lives. We can be stewards and we can work with nature so that we all thrive.

For me, this has been an incredible journey of learning from the conservation community in Kansas City, and working to build relationships. When we created Heartland Conservation Alliance, with the goal of connecting people and places upstream and downstream, we began working to teach and inspire each other to change the way we understand and the way we treat our rivers. We have more to learn about caring for our rivers, and we have more to learn about caring for one another.

As we continue to face challenges from climate change and a changing landscape, Heartland Conservation Alliance has a strong foundation for facing our future together. Thank you to our many partners and members who continue to lead, inspire and support this crucial work.

Yours truly,



Jill Erickson



(LEFT) Renew the Blue partners host a table at the 2018 Ethnic Festival, educating 450 participants about the Blue River. (CENTER) HCA Youth Council members experienced the outdoors while camping along the Missouri River. (RIGHT) Shumaker Family Foundation partnered with HCA to provide funding for Green Guard stewardship training at East High School.

Conserving Natural Resources

104 acres under active restoration



20 acres at Alex George Park in partnership with Jackson County Parks and Recreation



40 acres at Blue Valley Park in partnership with KC Parks



14 acres at East High School in partnership with Kansas City Public Schools



30 acres at Municipal Farm in partnership with Boys Grow, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and City of Kansas City, Missouri



(LEFT) Volunteers of all ages plant trees at Alex George Park, the first of four workdays held with funding provided by Missouri Dept. of Conservation.
(CENTER) Serving as a site leader and managing volunteer teams, HCA participates for the fifth year as a partner for Project Blue River Rescue.
(RIGHT) HCA continues to build Restoring Vacant Lots program through partnership with Urban Neighborhood Initiative and providing technical assistance for four mini-grant recipients, pictured here in Manheim Gardens celebrating success.

OUR TEAM IS GROWING

Adison Banks, Land Trust Coordinator



Adison joined the HCA team as Land Trust Coordinator in October of 2018. Adison Banks was born and raised in the Kansas City metro. He earned a Bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Kansas and a Juris Doctor from Washburn University School of Law. Adison is licensed to practice law in Missouri and Texas, and he has worked at the county and federal levels of government, in addition to working in private practice.

Adison has cultivated, and continues to cultivate, a passion for the environment, guided primarily by moral principles. He believes everyone has a responsibility to actively care for others and the environment, and by saving our environment we save ourselves. He has volunteered with the Sierra Club, Bridging the Gap, Mid-America Regional Council, KC Rescue Mission, and Impact KC, and has given presentations to the EPA, city councils, parks departments, and the public to help inform decisions to preserve the environment and protect human health and quality of life.

Convening our Community



Our Alliance is 56 partners strong



Co-Leaders of the Kansas City Conservation Equity Network to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the conservation community



Ambassador for EPA's Urban Waters Federal Partnership and convened monthly meetings with federal partners



56% of funds spent in 2018 went to watershed partners



140 partners attended the Fifth Annual Partnership Summit



Convened Blue River stakeholders for 4-day workshop to kick off first-ever Blue River Report Card



Partner with Green Drinks to host four community events in 2018



(LEFT) University of Maryland leads local stakeholders in creating shared measurements for the Blue River Report Card. (CENTER) HCA had record-breaking attendance at Fifth Annual Partnership Summit featuring theme "Hope for Future Urban Conservation". (RIGHT) HCA co-hosted a Green Drinks presentation with Boys Grow featuring local leaders working to restore vacant lots.

OUR TEAM IS GROWING



Natasha Karsk, Partnership Coordinator

Natasha joined HCA as Partnership Coordinator in October of 2018. This position is a result of capacity building through the AmeriCorps VISTA program for the past four years. A child of the prairie, Natasha grew up in Nebraska. After receiving her degree in Art Management with a minor in Business from the University of Tulsa, she moved to Kansas City and has considered it home for the past 15 years. Natasha has a strong background in nonprofit art organizations, working with national and international artists.

While working in the arts, Natasha's passion for outdoor environments, nature, and our interaction with it grew. She owned and operated an urban farm in the KC metro for 3 years and is a recent Missouri Master Naturalist. Natasha completed her Masters in Public Administration from the University of Missouri Kansas City in 2016. Natasha seeks to unite people behind one like-minded goal: conserving our endangered wild environments. She believes in strength in numbers, that through collaboration we can truly accomplish something bigger than any one person or organization.

Connecting People to Nature

Green Guard Stewardship Training Program: Building a community of land stewards



20 new stewards



93 individual participants

"We have three generations in our home. Completing the Green Guard program positively reinforced how we as a family can live within the environment. Now, as we share house responsibilities and chores, we all have the same earth-friendly focus."

There is a shared opportunity and shared responsibility to take care of ourselves and the earth.

Since Green Guard, we have helped organize clean-up days with our church and other neighborhood organizations. It's contagious!"

-Belinda Caldwell-Shelby - 2018 Green Guard Steward

Photo: Belinda Caldwell-Shelby (center) with HCA staff and board president at Green Guard graduation ceremony



Partners working together to make the Blue River Healthier

Participating partners: Bridging the Gap, Deep Roots, Giving Grove, Healthy Rivers Partnership, Heartland Tree Alliance, KC Water, KC WildLands, MARC, Monarchs on the Move



41 community events hosted in the watershed

3,762 attendees to events

56,791 people reached through the promotional campaign

104,319 pounds of trash diverted from the river **897** tires collected

674 native plants planted **2,646** trees planted

3.7 acres of invasive plants removed



(LEFT) The Urban Waters Steering Committee focused on community engagement by attending events and surveying residents about connecting to nature. (CENTER) Since 2015, HCA has been training and engaging youth and adults in stewardship of natural resources in their community through the Green Guard program. (RIGHT) HCA Youth Council provides opportunities for 14-24 year-olds to lead peers in conservation projects.

Sound Foundation for a Solid Future

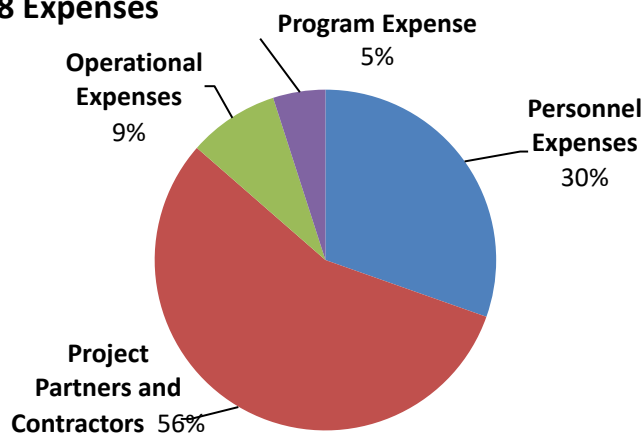
Heartland Conservation Alliance benefits from the support of private foundations like the Shumaker Family Foundation and Health Forward Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and The Conservation Fund. We are bolstered by strong support from Government Grant programs as well including grants from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Department of conservation and the Environmental Protection Agency. The HCA Finance Committee developed a strong comprehensive annual development plan for 2018 with a focus on diversifying income sources and increasing giving from individuals and corporations.

The largest expense for the organization has been staffing and in 2018 two new full-time staff were added to the team. New grants meant new work resulting in more effective and efficient programming with communities and partners. Most of the program work is completed by staff time, with an estimated 10% of staff time dedicated to administrative duties. A guiding principle for the organization has been to work collaborative and this has included sharing funding and work for projects. This is clearly reflected in the total expenses for 2018, with more than 50% of grant funds passed along to peer nonprofit organizations and local contractors.

Due to steady growth since its founding in 2012, the Board of Directors hired an auditor for the first time to review the organization's financial health and bookkeeping policies. The audit was completed in July 2019 and reflected sound fiscal management with only minor recommendations for recording grants and expense. The organization is well-funded and poised for long-term stability.

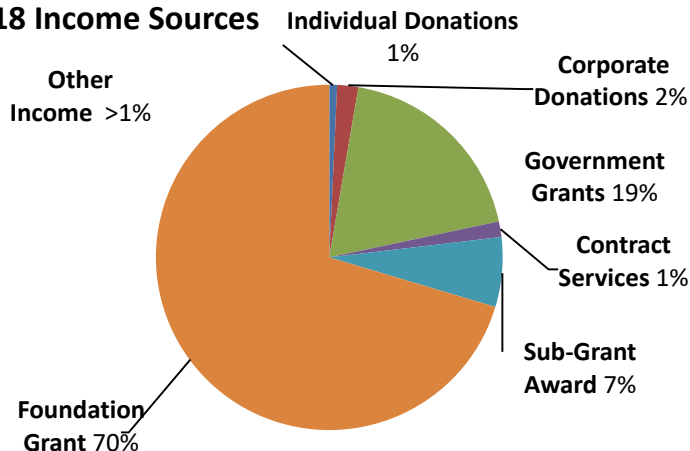
Heartland Conservation Alliance

2018 Expenses



Heartland Conservation Alliance

2018 Income Sources



Heartland Conservation Alliance Expenses

January - December 2018

Personnel Expenses	\$ 96,301
Project Partners and Contractors	\$ 177,418
Operational Expenses	\$ 27,276
Program Expenses	\$ 15,696
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 316,690

Heartland Conservation Alliance Income

January - December 2018

Individual Donations	\$ 3,923
Corporate Donations	\$ 10,525
Government Grants	\$ 101,822
Contract Services	\$ 7,800
Sub-Grant Award	\$ 35,000
Foundation Grant	\$ 377,655
Other Income	\$ 37
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 536,762

THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 FUNDERS

Black and Veatch
Bridging the Gap
Environmental Protection Agency
Farmhouse Restaurant
Health Forward Foundation
Healthy Rivers Partnership
J Crew
Jackson County Parks + Rec
KC Water

Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
National Recreation and Parks Assoc.
Shumaker Family Foundation
Urban Neighborhood Initiative
US Forest Service
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy-Kansas Chapter



(LEFT) After five years of service, board member Amanda Wilson retires from HCA Board of Directors. (CENTER) For the fourth year in a row, Director of Blue River Watershed Association, Lynn Youngblood (far right) leads a reflective nature walk in honor of MLK Day. (RIGHT) 2018 board members, steering council, and staff gather to celebrate a successful year, acknowledging the 480 hours of service contributed to support our mission throughout the year.

2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sam Bennett
Matt Davis
Lauren Garrott, Secretary
Teresa Kelly, President
Robin Martinez

Scott Schulte
Matthew Scott
Dan Tilson, Treasurer
Amanda Wilson, Vice President

2018 STEERING COUNCIL

Laura Adams
Joshua Anderson
Andrea Clark
Carla Dods
Michael Frisch
Amanda Graor

Christina Hoxie
Lara Isch
Brian Nowotny
Stephen Van Rhein
Matthew Vander Molen
Devin Wetzel