



The Forest and the Trees

A Five-Year Grant From the Mysun Charitable Foundation Has Super-Charged Restoration of Kennedy Forest for the Benefit of Generations of St. Louisans

Last fall, the Mysun Charitable Foundation—a family foundation with deep roots in the St. Louis community—granted \$1.5 million over five years to seed the ongoing restoration of Forest Park’s Kennedy Forest. The Kennedy Forest Project aligns with the Foundation’s most important priorities.

“We’re so thankful to the Mysun Charitable Foundation for supporting our efforts, in partnership with the City of St. Louis, to move forward with our Kennedy Forest Natural Resources Master Plan,” says Shawnell Faber, Forest Park Forever Director of Land Management.

The Mysun Charitable Foundation is named for Myron and Sunny Glassberg, long-time community philanthropists. “The project that this grant funds preserves our family legacy and commitment to St. Louis while providing opportunities at the intersection of environment and education,” says Sally Sands, the Glassbergs’ daughter, Mysun Foundation board member and a retired educator. “And because Forest Park and Kennedy Forest are open to all,

regardless of socioeconomic status or race, it supports our strong belief in environmental and racial justice.”

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Kennedy Forest has benefitted from the Mysun Foundation’s vision and generosity since 2015. Thanks to that support, Forest Park Forever began the restoration process in the forest and eventually grew to have 20.7 acres under a stage of restoration.

With the additional funds from the Mysun Foundation’s multi-year grant, 1.4 unrestored acres have been added into the process while deepening the conservation efforts already underway. Over the next five years, the grant will fund the restoration of slightly larger acreages of untouched forest annually. By the end of the project,

active restoration will then be underway in about half of Kennedy Forest.

Even before the Kennedy Forest restoration began, the Glassbergs had supported multiple Park projects. Sunny Glassberg cared deeply about the environment and working conditions of the staff in Forest Park, supporting not just iconic destinations but also less



glamorous projects that provided essential behind-the-scenes support.

For example, she funded the restoration of the World’s Fair Pavilion, several picnic areas and the creation of Turtle Park. Among other Park programs she funded were the otter exhibit and the Myron Glassberg Family Maintenance Center at the Saint Louis Zoo as well as the *Through the Eyes of a Child: Growing Up Black in St. Louis* exhibit at the Missouri History Museum.

Reflecting the Glassbergs’ commitment to people, the Kennedy Forest grant also enables Forest Park Forever to double its Nature Reserve staff caring for Kennedy Forest.

“Adding new staff is one of the best parts of the fund,” says Amy Witt, Forest Park Forever Park Ecologist. “It allows our team to develop their site knowledge, which is very valuable. People underestimate how much in-depth knowledge of a site can allow an individual and management to grow as they care for that site in a more meaningful way.”

“The foundation deeply appreciates that the Park serves the city, welcomes and celebrates diversity and invites all to enjoy the beauty of nature and its spaces,” Sands adds. “We are proud to have the opportunity to help nourish Kennedy Forest, just as Forest Park nourishes families and builds communities.”



MYSUN YEAR 1 STATS

Sep. 1, 2020–Aug. 31, 2021

 **4,554**
NATIVE PLUGS PLANTED

 **19.3 LBS**
NATIVE SEED LAID

 **1,027**
VOLUNTEER HOURS

 **1.4**
ADDITIONAL ACRES
UNDER RESTORATION

 **22.1**
TOTAL ACRES
CURRENTLY MANAGED

Kennedy Forest had become overgrown with aggressive and invasive plants. The restoration project has removed much of and continues to manage the non-native vegetation.

By removing much of the overgrown, invasive plants, the Forest Park Forever crews have allowed the sun to penetrate the forest floor and the newly planted native plants to thrive.