

Johnson County Park & Recreation District Art and Natural Resources Residency 2023

Project Plan



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I. Introduction

Johnson County Park & Recreation District (JCPRD) launched its Public Art Program in 2020 to activate parks, trails, and facilities in a new way. The JCPRD Public Art Program commissions and cares for a collection of public artworks in JCPRD parks and facilities, and promotes the community's access to and engagement with public art. The Public Art Program is guided by the JCPRD Public Art Committee (PAC), a nine-member advisory committee to the JCPRD Board. The Public Art Committee advises and makes recommendations to the JCPRD Board regarding the Public Art Program. JCPRD adopted a policy to set aside one-half of one percent (.5%) of the annual Capital Improvement Plan budget for public art. JCPRD is also using those funds to leverage additional philanthropic dollars.

JCPRD approved a Public Art Master Plan in the Fall 2021. As part of this planning process, the following draft goals have been developed as a guiding statement for the program.

Public art in JCPRD parks, trails and facilities will inspire a deeper connection to place through interactive, immersive, and inclusive experiences.

The Art and Natural Resources Residency (ANRR) is a short-term residency program to engage a local artist and allow them to embed with the JCPRD Natural Resource Team to learn, respond artistically, and amplify this important work.

JCPRD Natural Resource Management Plan

The JCPRD Board officially adopted the Natural Resource Plan in 2019. JCPRD's vision for natural resource management is:

The forests, prairies, waters, and wildlife in JCPRD's parks and streamways will be protected, restored, and well-managed to be diverse and long lasting for the enjoyment of all people now and in the future.

JCPRD is often responding to disruptions in the processes that sustain healthy ecosystems. Millions of visitors, exotic plant invasions, and overabundant animal populations all affect the ecosystem health and diversity that JCPRD strives to protect.

A link to the JCPRD Natural Resource Plan can be found here:

<https://www.jcprd.com/DocumentCenter/View/11405/Resource-Management-Plan-2019>

Prairie Restoration Efforts

The 2023 Art and Natural Resources Residency will focus on prairie restoration efforts throughout JCPRD, focusing on Kill Creek Park and the large prairie ecosystem and efforts located at this park.

This residency program is being funded through the JCPRD General Fund as an effort to engage and educate our community through the power of art. This project also hopes to invest in the local arts community and elevate the role and capacity of this important sector in this region.

JCPRD's parklands (including streamway parks and trails) contain a little over 1,000 acres of tallgrass prairie. Less than 4% of the original tallgrass prairie remains across the Midwest. Johnson County was 84% prairie in the 1850s and less than .006% of the original high-quality prairie remains*. The majority of the remaining old growth prairies in the county are managed by JCPRD with federally threatened, globally rare species present. Prairie supports highly diverse flowering plants and grasses while being a

refuge for threatened pollinator species and declining grassland birds. Tallgrass prairie sequesters enormous amounts of carbon, while protecting watersheds with deep root systems increasing water infiltration and nutrient retention. Prairie and the ingenious people of Kansas are deeply connected from the use of fire on the landscape to medicinal plants and native food sources.

Prairie is critically threatened by a combination of habitat destruction, invasive species, and fire suppression on the landscape. With the 2019 JCPRD natural resource plan in place, much needed progress has been realized with parkland transitioning to its original prairie landscape. Investments in stabilizing old growth prairies has been strengthened by innovative landscape level new prairie restoration efforts across the county.

Artist Residency

JCPRD seeks an artist in residence to visit Kill Creek Park (where JCPRD's prairie restoration story began in the late 1990s), engage natural resource experts and non-profit partners to tell the story of the remaining old growth prairie and hundreds of acres of new prairie planted by JCPRD.

The residency includes access to an office/planning space within Kill Creek Park and the Natural Resource Office at Shawnee Mission Park but does not include overnight accommodations.

*---*A Natural Areas Inventory of Douglas, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami, and Wyandotte Counties of NE KS* by Kelly Kindscher, William H. Busby, Jennifer M. Delisle, Jennifer A. Dropkin, and Craig C. Freeman 2005.

II. Park Context

Kill Creek Park is an 897-acre park nestled within a beautiful natural setting on the west side of Johnson County in Olathe. The park includes a swimming beach and marina, four picnic shelters, a playground, over 12 miles of hiking, mountain bike, and equestrian trails, and 1.5 miles of paved, shared use trails for walking, running, and bicycling. The Russell and Helen Means Observation Tower offers magnificent views of the park and beyond!

Included in the total acreage for Kill Creek Park is TimberRidge Adventure Center. Only available by reservation or as part of programming, this facility encompasses over 200-acres of diverse landscape divided by a series of ponds. Offerings include rentals, challenge course team building, birthday parties, camps, special events, and camping.

The ANRR will focus their work and efforts on the prairie remnant and ongoing efforts to restore this area and other prairie ecosystems in parks across JCPRD.

III. Public Art Goals

The goals for the Art and Natural Resources Residency are to:

- Create interactive, artistic experiences that allow park visitors to learn about the land restoration and the ecology and natural systems that make up the JCPRD parks. Specifically, this ANRR will focus on the health of prairie restoration efforts within JCPRD and specifically at Kill Creek Park.

- Provide a platform for artists to create new, engaging art projects that grow out of an exploration of the work of the JCPRD Natural Resources team, the process of land restoration, and the ecology and natural systems of JCPRD parks.
- Increase community engagement, awareness, and appreciation related to the JCPRD Natural Resource Plan and the efforts and impact that staff have on the health of the natural ecosystem.
- Support the growth and development of Kansas City regional artists.

IV. Site and Scope

The JCPRD Public Art Program is interested in commissioning an artist in residence to create a site-specific, temporary work of art made partially of materials from Kill Creek Park. Support and fastening materials may be obtained off-site and used within the artwork as needed, providing they have a minimal visual impact on the final work of art. A Special Use Permit will be issued for the artist to collect materials within the park, providing the sourcing of materials has a minimal impact to the park's environment. JCPRD staff will be available for materials guidance and consultation as needed.

To complement the temporary artwork, the artist will also be asked to organize an artist-led workshop/community engagement activity about prairie restoration efforts and the diversity within this ecosystem. Additionally, the artist will be asked to assist in providing content for an educational exhibit at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center telling the story of their residency experience and study of prairie restoration.

Site

Various sites at Kill Creek Park have been identified as potential locations for the temporary artwork installation. The final location be determined in collaboration with the JCPRD Natural Resource team and park staff.



Artist in Residency Scope of Work

The residency spans over an approximate 4-month period with various time commitments throughout, beginning in late February and ending in late June (see “Tentative Timeline” below). The selected artist will be invited to spend the first 4 weeks of the residency with the JCPRD Natural Resource team and Kill Creek Park staff to learn about the restoration efforts of JCPRD, especially for prairies. JCPRD anticipates a minimum of 8-10 hours per week with staff during this period. This will include some structured field work and experiences, meetings with staff and community partners, and much unstructured time for the artist to explore and learn. The months of March and April will be time for the artist to reflect, plan, design, and fabricate. By early May, the artist will be expected to install the ephemeral temporary artwork, have assisted with providing content for the educational exhibit at the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center, and designed/planned a community engagement activity. This scope includes the following deliverables:

1) Ephemeral Temporary Art Piece

- Based on engagement with JCPRD staff and the inspiration gained during their residency, the artist will develop and create an ephemeral, temporary art installation. Midway through the research period, the artist will meet with the Artist Selection Committee to present a concept proposal. It will be constructed partially from natural materials collected within the park.
- The final proposal will need to detail every physical feature of the construction, materials, and its integration with the site. Upon approval by staff, it will be installed by the artist the first week of May 2023.
- The piece should have a minimum “lasting” date of 2 months from installation.
- Removal of temporary art will be determined in collaboration with the artist and JCPRD staff. Removal could occur sooner if artistic integrity is compromised.
- The artist will manage all aspects of the installation of the artwork.

2) Artist-Led Workshop/Community Engagement Activity

- Design a program, workshop, and/or artist talk-back within the park space for community members in relation to their residency and prairie restoration. The event will be free and open to the public. JCPRD staff can assist with marketing and logistics for the program (promoting through JCPRD communication channels, collecting RSVPs, reserving a shelter/space, etc), but any supply or materials expenses related to the community engagement activity will be the responsibility of the artist.

3) Educational Exhibit at Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center (JCAHC)

- Photography and videography will be coordinated with the artist to document the journey of the residency. The JCPRD Fine Arts Coordinator will lead the exhibition design, printing, and installation at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center. The artists will be asked to provide narrative for the didactics and photographs. Costs associated with this exhibit will be funded by JCPRD.

The artist will be expected to work cooperatively and maintain effective communication with all parties involved in the project including JCPRD administrative staff, natural resource staff, park staff, community partners, and stakeholders during their residency.

V. Selection Process

The ANRR Art Selection Committee (ASC) will review artist qualifications and select an artist for the residency based on qualifications, vision, and experience. The ASC may choose to interview finalists prior to making a final decision. The ASC will recommend an artist to the Public Art Committee. The selected artist-in-residence will be approved by the Public Art Committee.

ANRR Residency Art Selection Committee

- Kaitlyn Ammerlaan, Grassland Heritage Foundation
- Ryan Bell, JCPRD Fine Arts Coordinator
- Monte Fiegel, JCPRD NW Region Park Manager
- Matt Garrett, JCPRD Natural Resource Manager
- Brett Hager, JCPRD Planning and Development Project Manager II
- Susan Mong, JCPRD Superintendent of Culture
- Jen Newell, non-voting, administrative support

Artist Eligibility

In an effort to invest in and grow the public art ecosystem in the Kansas City area, this public art opportunity is open to professional artists residing in the Kansas City region. We also invite artists who work in other professional disciplines to consider applying, such as architects, environmentalists, ecologists, etc. Residents are required to make their own arrangements for transportation to and from the residency. Overnight accommodations are not included.

Contract

Johnson County Park & Recreation District shall provide the contract shell for artists to review prior to applying. Please review the contract to ensure compliance as no modifications will be made. [View the document here.](#)

Following recommendation from the ASC, the selected artist-in-residence will be approved by the Public Art Committee and finalize a contract with JCPRD for the residency.

Virtual Open House / Informational Session

JCPRD will host an optional virtual open house / informational session for all prospective applicants to provide an overview of the park, the goals for the project, a review of the application process, and field any questions. This session will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, December 6 from 12:00 – 12:30pm. [Please RSVP here to receive the access link.](#) Although the session will not be recorded, questions and answers will be compiled and shared on the associated project page at <https://bit.ly/JCPRD-ANRR>.

Submittal of Qualifications

Interested artists should submit their qualifications and the requirements outlined below by Thursday, December 15, 2022 at 11:59 PM via the JCPRD website. [Click here to submit your qualifications.](#)

- A letter of interest that indicates your interest in the project and how you might approach the residency (no more than 2 pages)
- A CV/resume with current contact information and past/current experience (no more than 3 pages)
- Names and contact information for 3 - 5 professional references

- Up to 10 sample images of previous artwork relevant to this project
- A corresponding image list with artwork title, medium, dimensions, brief description, location, date of work, commissioning entity and budget/price

Criteria for Review of Qualifications and Finalist Interviews

Artist qualifications will be reviewed by the Art Selection Committee based on the following criteria:

- Artist resides in the Kansas City region within one of the following counties: Cass, Clay, Douglas, Jackson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami, Platte, Wyandotte.
- Artistic excellence: What is the quality of the artist’s work and their compatibility with the project?
- Goals: Does the artist’s body of work demonstrate an ability to create an artwork and community engagement activity that responds to the goals of the project?
- Approach: How well does the artist communicate their understanding of the project?
- Capabilities: Does the artist have sufficient experience to be able to design, fabricate, and install an artwork, community engagement activity, and narrative reflection of the project on time and on budget?

VI. Tentative Timeline

November 16, 2022	Issue Call for Artists
December 6, 2022	Virtual Open House / Informational Session
December 15, 2022	Artist Qualifications Due
December 20, 2022	ASC Selects Finalists
December 27 – January 6, 2023	Finalist Interviews with ASC / Select Artist for Residency
February 27 – March 24, 2023	On-Site Residency with JCPRD Staff * Mid-March: Proposal Presentation
Late March / Early April 2023	Fabrication of Temporary Art Piece Content Gathering for Educational Exhibit
Week of May 1, 2023	Installation of Temporary Art Piece
Week of May 8, 2023	Printing/Installation of Educational Exhibit (by JCPRD)
May / June 2023	Community Engagement Activity
TBD - Late 2023	Deinstallation

VII. Budget

JCPRD GENERAL FUND	\$5,000
Artist stipend (payable to artist) to include travel costs, research, design, fabrication, installation and community engagement activity	\$5,000
JCPRD OPERATING FUND	\$500
Signage at site location	\$100

Print materials for educational exhibit at JCAHC	\$400
PROJECT TOTAL	\$5,500

VIII. Community Engagement, Marketing and Communications

Community engagement, marketing and communications should be geared toward engaging with existing stakeholders as well as bringing new audiences to experience the artwork.

JCPRD will make efforts to make stakeholders aware of the commissioning process and, when appropriate, information about the concept proposals and other project milestones.

Stakeholders

Community engagement, marketing and communications should build upon the existing stakeholder base for art, parks, and Kill Creek Park, specifically. These will include, but may not be limited to, representatives from:

- Kill Creek Park users
- Art Selection Committee members
- JCPRD Natural Resources Team
- JCPRD Staff and Board
- JCPRD Public Art Committee members
- Community partner organizations

Engagement Strategies

JCPRD staff will develop a marketing and communications strategy for throughout the entire ANRR process that will include:

- A unique project page will be created on the JCPRD website with information about the commissioning process, artist, and project.
- Social media announcements about project milestones, as appropriate.
- Print materials about the project to be shared in the JCAHC Art Exhibition Space
- Media releases to local and national publications and blogs.
- Hosting and promoting an educational program with the selected artist about the artwork development process or the artwork itself.
- Signage will be created and installed near the piece with basic information including the project title, artist, and materials used. A QR code will also be included to direct visitors to the project webpage to learn more.

IX. Evaluation

There are several types of evaluation that can help provide valuable feedback regarding both the process and the success of the project.

- A questionnaire will solicit feedback from the selected artist on the overall project development process.
- JCPRD staff involved with the project will be invited to share feedback to improve future public art projects and processes.

- Community members that engage with the artwork and/or attend the educational activity will be asked to provide feedback regarding their interactions with the artwork and artist. Questions considered in the evaluation will include:
 - How did they learn about the residency or artwork?
 - Did they come specifically to see the artwork at the park?
 - What is their impression of the artwork?
 - How does public art impact their experience of the park?
 - Did the visitor have previous awareness of JCPRD's public art program?
 - Increased awareness and understanding of the Natural Resource Plan, forestry health, and how invasive species impact the health of our ecosystem.
 - Impact on local arts community to increase capacity and provide education with local partners.
- Media, social media, and website hits will be used to monitor engagement with the artwork.

X. Additional Resources

Links to JCPRD information and local prairie restoration efforts:

- <https://www.jcprd.com/Facilities/Facility/Details/Kill-Creek-Park-28>
- <https://www.jcprd.com/DocumentCenter/View/11405/Resource-Management-Plan-2019>
- <https://www.jcprd.com/1308/Public-Art-Program>
- <https://www.grasslandheritage.org/>
- <https://bridgingthegap.org/kansas-city-wildlands/>
- <https://deeproots.org/>