

THE CONSERVATION FUND



Gibson Mariposa Park,
Los Angeles, CA



Lindsay Street Park
Atlanta, GA

Why it's important

Eighty-two percent of Americans now live in urban areas, making the need for access to open space in cities vital.

What are the benefits?

- Safer places to play
- Cleaner air
- Cleaner water
- Habitat protection for wildlife
- Historic and cultural preservation
- Better resilience to climate change
- Jobs
- Improved public health

“Green space impacts the health of our children, the quality of our lives and our economy. We must protect it.”

—Larry Selzer, President and CEO

PARKS WITH PURPOSE

The Conservation Fund helped pioneer a new definition of good conservation beginning in 1985 when we included economic development in our mission. Today, we're deploying our conservation mission in some of the places it is needed most: America's cities.

Although the Fund has worked in some of America's largest urban areas for decades, we created our Parks With Purpose program to address the specific challenges facing urban conservation efforts. Parks With Purpose is about much more than protecting urban green space and parks: With state, county and city parks and resource departments bankrupt or underfunded it is not enough to simply protect the land and walk away. In many cities where we work, there isn't any agency able to own the land, restore it, manage it or keep it thriving.

A New Approach to Urban Conservation

America's cities represent a unique opportunity for the Fund to provide our full suite of conservation services: land loans, real estate expertise, green infrastructure planning, community development, green business lending and job creation. It is this integration of services that makes The Conservation Fund an ideal partner for helping solve the complex problems facing urban landscapes. For each project, we work with the local community to identify, protect and restore the very best land that creates safer places for children to play and families to gather. We also demonstrate how these natural areas can filter, slow and clean floodwaters, grow healthy food and create green jobs.

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The Conservation Fund, working with public, private and nonprofit partners, protects America's legacy of land and water resources through land acquisition, sustainable community and economic development, and leadership training, emphasizing the integration of economic and environmental goals.

An Emerald Necklace For Los Angeles, California

The Challenge

More than 9.9 million people live in Los Angeles County making green space a precious commodity for both current and future residents, but where do you begin? We've got a plan.

Our Role

We completed a blueprint for green infrastructure, building on our work with nonprofit Amigos de los Rios to protect and restore open spaces that will create an "Emerald Necklace" for Los Angeles County. The Expanded Vision Plan integrates common elements from existing planning efforts and outlines specific implementation strategies to help realize a vision of connected parks and trails more than 80 years in the making. The Emerald Necklace has the potential to completely transform the vast Los Angeles landscape from forest to ocean and create an iconic urban green space that rivals New York City's Central Park, Boston Common and Chicago's Lincoln Park.

A Park With Purpose In Atlanta, Georgia

The Challenge

Atlanta has been losing park space rapidly—almost 500 acres a week. To help resolve this trend we've helped complete 26 park projects across the city, but no neighborhood has ever needed a park more than English Avenue. Plagued with high crime and pollution, we knew this place needed more than green space. It needed hope.

Our Role

In 2013, we helped lay the groundwork for the very first park in the English Avenue neighborhood, piecing together vacant and abandoned lots in one of the most underserved parts of the city. We took community leaders to Milwaukee to see how neighborhoods there are using green space to address pollution and flooding issues. And, our Resourceful Communities Program brought residents together to create a shared vision of hope for the future. Lindsay Street Park will be completed in 2014 and will offer a safer place to play, impact the economy through job and workforce training opportunities for local residents and provide cleaner air and water through rain gardens and other absorbent green spaces that help stem a polluted creek from spilling into nearby streets.



Planting Seeds of Hope In Rouge Park, Detroit, Michigan

The Challenge

Detroit is in a rebuilding period. As a result of its economic collapse, city services have suffered, and rivers and parks stand neglected. With our experience working in some of America's largest metropolitan areas, we are helping Detroit improve its unique urban landscapes and ensuring its recovery will be green.

Our Role

The Conservation Fund, U-Haul, The Greening of Detroit and an army of community volunteers took part in a major effort to restore Rouge Park and strengthen Detroit's green economy. Donations to our Go Zero® program from U-Haul and its customers helped add 1,600 trees to the park and established the Growing Detroit's Green Economy Fund, which provides grants to organizations whose business models are tied directly to the sustainable use of natural resources. More than a million U-Haul customers have donated to Go Zero since 2007 to protect and restore America's forests from coast to coast.

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