

WATERFRONT & BEARGRASS CREEK

WALKING AND PADDLING ROUTES



Walking Path
Paddling Route

START

WATERFRONT & BEARGRASS CREEK

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Pocket Guide



MSD improves the quality of our waterways in collaboration with the community by designing, building, and maintaining critical systems to keep pollution out of our streams.



MSD Main Office
700 W. Liberty Street
Louisville, KY 40203

1. Waterfront Park

Waterfront Park opened in 1999 and now welcomes over 2.2 million visitors each year.

2. Big Four Bridge

Built in 1895 to carry trains, the Big Four Bridge opened to pedestrian and bicycle traffic in 2013.

3. Louisville Community Boathouse

The Louisville Community Boathouse offers canoeing, kayaking, and rowing opportunities to the public. The facility also includes a site to launch and store boats.

4. Waterway Protection Tunnel

Eighteen stories underground, the Waterway Protection Tunnel will hold up to 55 million gallons of combined storm and wastewater until it can be treated and returned clean to the Ohio River. The giant machine cutting its way through the bedrock is named "Bumblebee" in honor of hometown hero Muhammad Ali. The tunnel is expected to come online in 2021, and you can read more at LouisvilleMSD.org/tunnel.

5. The Paget House

The Paget House, built in 1838, stands on what used to be Fulton Street in "The Point," a thriving neighborhood for more than a century until it was destroyed by the 1937 flood.

6. RiverPark Place

RiverPark Place consists of apartment buildings and a marina, which took the place of the Municipal Boat Harbor.

7. Heigold House Facade

Besides the Paget House, the decorated facade of the Heigold House is the only other remnant of "The Point."

8. Towhead Island

Towhead Island was initially called Willow Bar and used to stretch farther downstream.

9. Ohio River

The Ohio River flows 981 miles from Pittsburgh, PA to join the Mississippi River at Cairo, IL.

10. Beargrass Creek

Beargrass Creek drains more than 60 square miles of Jefferson County and joins the Ohio River about two miles from downtown.

11. The Three Bridges

Bridges for old River Road and new River Road, and one for rail traffic, frame the Beargrass Cut-Off.

12. Water Quality Monitoring Station

MSD and the U.S. Geological Survey operate an in-stream water quality monitoring station that transmits near real-time data about the creek.

13. The Beargrass Cut-Off

The Beargrass Cut-Off was dug in the 1850s to divert the creek away from downtown Louisville.

14. Waterfront Botanical Gardens

Open since 2019, Waterfront Botanical Gardens is being developed into an ecological haven atop the old Ohio Street landfill, which was capped in 1973.

15. MSD Letterle Pump Station

Built in 1936 to pump sewage during Ohio River floods, The Point sewage pumping station, now called the Letterle Pump Station, was taken off-line in 1999.

16. The Belvedere Slabs

Concrete slabs taken from the old Belvedere during a 1990s renovation are visible on the western creek bank.

17. MSD CSOs

Several outlets for combined sewer overflows, which can occur during rainstorms, are visible along the creek.

18. Muddy Fork

Muddy Fork is one of three streams that make up the Beargrass Creek watershed, along with the South Fork and Middle Fork.

19. MSD Beargrass Creek Flood Pumping Station

MSD Beargrass Creek Flood Pumping Station's gates close during floods to keep river water from flowing upstream. Six pumps housed inside the station push floodwaters out of the city and into the Ohio River.

20. Brownsboro Road Bridge

The Brownsboro Road Bridge was built in 1956, but the first bridge to span the creek in that spot actually dates back to 1888.

Louisville MSD protects our community's health by providing clean waterways through wastewater treatment, stormwater management, and flood protection.

What is a CSO?

Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) can occur when it rains, and sewer pipes that carry both **stormwater** and **wastewater** fill up and overflow into streams and the river. Several outlets for these overflows are visible along Beargrass Creek. MSD's underground storage basins and tunnel significantly reduce these overflows.

Be safe and wash your hands after encountering water near a CSO.

Water Quality Testing

Every 15 minutes MSD collects data on stream flow, temperature, conductivity, oxygen levels, and other water quality measures from 27 locations throughout our community, including the 67 square-mile Beargrass Creek watershed. MSD tracks stream health by monitoring fish, bugs, algae, and other parameters, with more than 3 million data points collected and analyzed each year. Findings are published in the State of the Streams Report:

LouisvilleMSD.org/WaterQuality

How does stormwater affect the streams?

Stormwater washes quickly off most impermeable surfaces like parking lots and streets, carrying bacteria and chemicals into streams. **Green infrastructure** like rain barrels and rain gardens, permeable pavers, trees, and streambank plantings can help to filter this stormwater runoff.

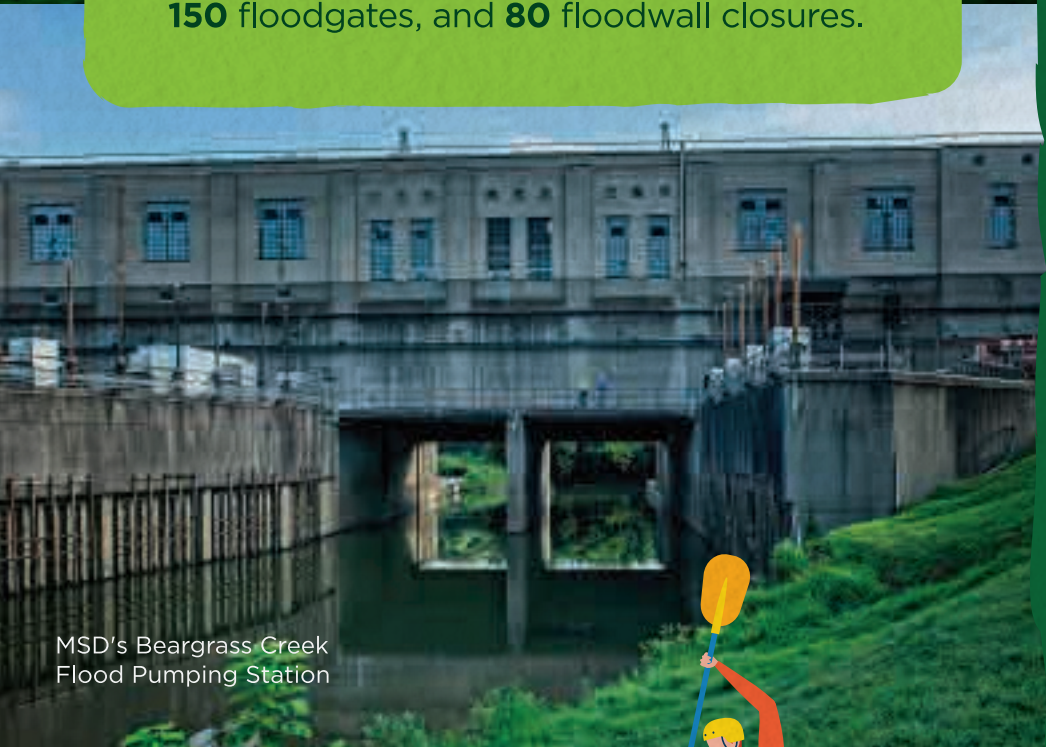


How can you promote healthy waterways?

Simple things like waiting to shower or do your laundry until **after a rainstorm** can ease the strain on sewer systems and help keep pollution out of streams. You can volunteer for **creek cleanups** hosted by MSD, the Kentucky Waterways Alliance and others, and help plant trees. Be sure to **clean up after your dog** and consider **using fewer chemicals on your lawn**. Most importantly, enjoy your time around Beargrass Creek and share what you've learned with others.

How does MSD manage Ohio River flooding?

MSD maintains Louisville Metro's Ohio River Flood Protection System, protecting more than **200,000** people, **87,000** homes, and **\$24 billion** in property throughout **110 square miles** of Louisville Metro. This includes **29 miles** of floodwall and earthen levee, **16** flood pumping stations, nearly **150** floodgates, and **80** floodwall closures.



MSD's Beargrass Creek Flood Pumping Station

Resources

Kentucky Watershed Watch
SRWW.org

Louisville Community Boathouse
louisvilleky.gov/government/parks/louisville-community-boathouse

River City Paddle Sports
RiverCityPaddleSports.wordpress.com

Waterfront Botanical Gardens
WaterfrontGardens.org

Water Quality Testing
LouisvilleMSD.org/WaterQuality



For CSO overflow alerts:
LouisvilleMSD.org/OverflowAlert

For information about MSD's consent decree:
LouisvilleMSD.org/consent-decree



LOOK FOR WILDLIFE



Great Blue Heron



Pond Slider Turtle



Common Carp



Belted Kingfisher



American Beaver

LOOK FOR PLANT LIFE



Cottonwood Tree



Sycamore Tree



Poison Ivy



Honeysuckle



Porcelain Berry