WATERFRONT & BEARGRASS CREEK
WALKING AND PADDLING ROUTES

1. Waterfront Park
   Waterfront Park opened in 1999 and now welcomes over 7.3 million visitors each year.

2. Big Four Bridge
   Built in 1876 as a railway bridge, the Big Four Bridge opened to pedestrians and bicycle traffic in 2010.

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 inches underground, the Waterway Protection Tunnel will help to stop billions of pounds of combined storm and wastewater runoff. It is the treated and returned clean to the Ohio River. The pedestrian tunnel cutting across the bridge is named "Thoroughbred" in honor of hometown hero Muhammad Ali. The tunnel is expected to come online in 2021 and you can read more at LouisvilleB rr/Tunnel.

5. The Paget House
   The Paget House, built in 1878, stands on what used to be a Fulton Street, "The Point," a thriving neighborhood for over 100 years until it was destroyed by the 1937 Flood.

6. RiverPark Place
   RiverPark Place consists of apartment buildings and a marina, which face the site of the Municipal Road Harbors.

7. Heigold House Facade
   Heigold House was the oldest home in Louisville, dating back to 1837. It was purchased in 1966 by the Waterfront Development Corporation and restored to its original 1837 condition.

8. Towhead Island
   Towhead Island is a small island located in the Ohio River just north of the Big Four Bridge. It is a popular spot for canoeing and kayaking.

9. Ohio River
   The Ohio River flows 981 miles from Pittsburgh, PA, to 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, form 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 real-time data about the creek.

13. The Beargrass Cut-Off
    The Beargrass Cut-off was used in the 1860s to divert the creek away from downtown Louisville.

14. Waterfront Botanical Gardens
    The Waterfront Botanical Gardens opened in 2013 and are located on the north bank of the Ohio River.

15. MSD Lettere Pump Station
    Built in 1938 to pump sewage during Ohio River floods, the Lettere Pump Station has been operational since 1939.

16. The Belvedere Slabs
    Concrete slabs taken from the old Belvedere during a 1930 renovation are visible on the western crease bank.

17. MSD CSOs
    Several stormwater management structures, which can occur during rainstorms, are visible along the creeks.

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

19. MSD Beargrass Creek Flood Pumping Station
    The MSD Beargrass Creek Flood Pumping Station's gates close during floods to keep water out of the city and divert it into the Ohio River.

20. Brownsboro Road Bridge
    The Brownsboro Road Bridge was built in 1905. At the time, the bridge was the first to open the creek in that spot actually back to 1898.
Louisville MSD protects our community’s health by providing clean waterways through wastewater treatment, stormwater management, and flood protection.

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 $34 billion in property throughout 110 square miles of Louisville Metro. This includes 26.1 miles of floodwall and earthen levee, 16 flood pumping stations, nearly 150 floodgates and 79 floodwall closures.

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.

Resources

- Kentucky Watershed Watch: 502-568-3175
- Louisville Community Brandhouse: lexingtoncommonwealth/brands/LouisvilleCommunityBrandHouse
- River City Paddle Sports: https://www.rivercitypaddlesports.com
- Waterfront Botanical Gardens: WaterfrontGardens.org
- Water Quality Testing: Louisville MSD/WaterQuality
- For CSO overflow alerts: Louisville MSD/KyGovDSWAlert
- For information about MSD’s current decree: Louisville MSD/KyGovDecree

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 tunnels significantly reduce these overflows.

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:

Louisville MSD/WaterQuality