



## History of the Living Lab

The Living Lab is 1500 feet of riverfront located on the outside bend of the Red River. It is suffering from slumping, erosion, tree loss, invasive plant species and a lack of wildlife habitat. Now owned by the City of Fargo and Cass County the site was previously used for a private residence, sheep grazing, and hobby gardens. Many agencies, local units of government, volunteers and organizations are working with River Keepers to develop the Living Lab.

## Goals of the Living Lab

The goals of the Living Lab are to demonstrate and explore a variety of riparian restoration techniques; serve as an outdoor lab for students of all ages; and exhibit wildlife habitat improvements.

**Demonstrate Riparian Restoration Techniques:** Residents, especially in urban settings, are often unaware of the importance of riparian buffers and their role in protecting river ecosystems. The Living Lab is an opportunity for visitors to observe and learn about the importance of these buffers. Numerous test sites and demonstration plots with interpretive signage are being developed. Visitors will walk on trails to view and learn about the various riparian zones, restoration techniques, and the Red River ecosystem.

**Explore Restoration Techniques:** The Living Lab is an opportunity for academic research and professionals to test methods of implementation; first through small scale plots, then with larger restoration strips. Each of the plot areas is isolated for ease of installation, maintenance, and identification.

**Serve as an Outdoor Laboratory:** Local and regional K-12 classes can utilize the site as an outdoor laboratory with the focus of better understanding of the biology, ecology, and geology of the Red River.

**Exhibit Wildlife Habitat Improvements:** Restoration of buffer zones with diverse riparian plant communities provide improved habitat for a number of native species, especially birds, insects, and fish. The site currently hosts a kaleidoscope of wildlife, ranging from macroinvertebrates in the river to large mammals such as white tail deer. Wood duck nesting boxes and other wildlife enhancements are being added.



The riverfront at the Living Lab is on an outside bend of the Red River and will be restored.