



551
VOLUNTEERS

1,519
VOLUNTEER HOURS

6
ACRES OF BUSH
HONEYSUCKLE REMOVED

2023 Volunteer Project - Phase One Gillham Park Bush Honeysuckle Removal

In early 2023, our team set a goal to remove invasive bush honeysuckle from Gillham Park. With the help of 551 volunteers and 1,519 hours of service, that goal was accomplished in December of 2023. This project included many volunteers from the Kansas City metro as well as students visiting the area on mission trips. Working together to complete this project fostered a sense of community for participants and has received positive feedback from neighbors and park goers.

BUSH HONEYSUCKLE (LONICERA MAACKII)

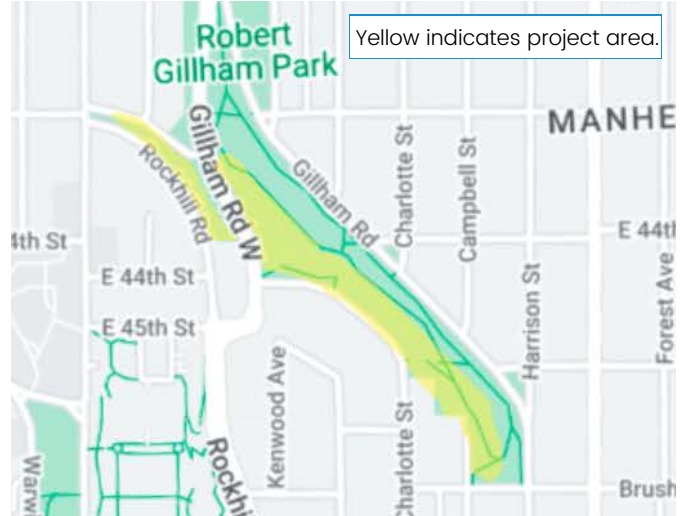
Is an invasive plant in Missouri. It was brought to Kansas City from Eurasia as an ornamental bush in the late 1800s. It establishes quickly and outcompetes native vegetation for resources. The aggressive growth leads to the displacement of native plants and disruption of local ecosystems. Honeysuckle is highly shade-tolerant, which allows the bush to thrive in a wide range of habitats. Although honeysuckle was initially thought to be beneficial for erosion control, it has a shallow root system that contributes to soil erosion. Efforts to control honeysuckle start with properly removing mature honeysuckle bushes from an infested area and treating the stumps with herbicide.



EFFECTIVE TREATMENT IS KEY

KC Parks volunteers spent 2023 carefully removing mature honeysuckle by cutting back the branches with a handsaw or loppers. Tordon, an herbicide, was then applied to the stumps of the bushes. Young honeysuckle plants were pulled by hand. Parks staff then transported the removed brush to Missouri Organic for composting.

Although machinery, like a deforester, can quickly remove brush, long-term effectiveness varies depending on treatment. When honeysuckle is removed without being properly treated with herbicide, the stumps will quickly resprout with many stems of new growth. Honeysuckle that has been cut before is more challenging to remove.



Bush honeysuckle along Rockhill Rd was over six feet tall by the time volunteers reached the area in September 2023.

Each new sprout of growth needs to be cut and treated to prevent the bush from coming back. Given the potential for ineffective honeysuckle removal and the collateral destruction of beneficial habitat, manual removal is the preferred method among environmental professionals.

Over the last few decades, many attempts to remove honeysuckle from the park were unsuccessful because stumps were not treated with herbicide. This has enabled the honeysuckle to grow back denser than it was before. We are confident that our project will be successful due to proper treatment and our long-term management plan.



2021 Google Street View (Rockhill Rd Facing East) - This area was previously cleared without herbicide treatment.



2023 Google Street View



2024 After Treatment

LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN

KC Parks volunteers will return to Gillham Park in 2024 to continue the multi-year management of the honeysuckle removal area.

- **Phase Two** - Remove honeysuckle that was accidentally missed or new growth that has germinated from seed.
- **Phase Three** - Spread native annual seed that will germinate during the 2025 growing season.
- **Phase Four** - Supplement native growth by planting native perennials in 2026.

Volunteers will continue to remove any honeysuckle that is found in the area.



2023

2024

2025

2026

Clear All Honeysuckle

Grow Native Annuals from Seed

Remove Honeysuckle that was Missed/Germinated from Seed

Plant Perennial Native Plants

BEFORE

AFTER



Gillham Park Facing South



17

AMBASSADOR WORKDAYS

15

COMMUNITY GROUPS

6

ACRES REMOVED

32

TOTAL WORKDAYS

551

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

1,519

VOLUNTEER HOURS

SERVICE VALUE \$48,304

BEFORE

AFTER



Gillham Rd W Facing Southwest