

# Changes in the land

**One constant in** the St. Charles Ecopark (and everywhere else) is that nature is always changing. In newly exposed soil, pioneering weeds like ragweed and chicory grow first. In damp areas near the river you'll notice cottonwood and sycamore trees springing up in thickets.

Along a big river like the Missouri flooding is the main disturbance on shore. Without a major flood—or wind-storm, disease, or insect damage—the forest has time to

mature. Other trees in the Ecopark include silver maple, box elder, green ash, and black willow. These are typical first-stage riverfront trees. If the Ecopark were underwater more often, they could not survive.



**Left to right:** The canopy of the Ecopark's south woods is quickly closing. Roots of some tree species cannot survive long underwater during floods. **Image credit:** Missouri Department of Conservation (2)

