

## Building healthier communities for generations to come

Sankofa Community Development Corporation (CDC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to revitalizing the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans by addressing both environmental and economic challenges. Through key initiatives like the Wetland Park & Nature Trail, Sankofa Vegetable Farms, and Fresh Start Market, Sankofa is improving access to healthy food, driving economic growth, green infrastructure, and restoring blighted land. By fostering community engagement and supporting local businesses, Sankofa CDC is building a more resilient, self-sufficient neighborhood with a lasting impact for generations.



## Sankofa Wetland Park and Nature Trail

Sankofa CDC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to empowering communities through innovative green infrastructure solutions. Collaborating with neighborhood residents, local and national governments, university experts, and stakeholders such as the National Park Service Rivers Trails and Conservation Program, we are creating transformative spaces that promote resilience, sustainability, and growth.

The Sankofa Wetland Park & Nature Trail serves as both an environmental restoration effort and a cornerstone for economic recovery and growth in the lower ninth ward area of New Orleans.



The Sankofa Wetland Park is a model for resilience, transformation, economic development, and community empowerment designed to:

- **Enhance Resilience:** Provide long-term hurricane protection and reduce the impacts of coastal flooding through advanced stormwater management systems, including bioswales and weirs.
- **Foster Community Engagement:** Offer spaces for outdoor recreation, STEM education, and green infrastructure training, enriching the lives of residents and visitors alike.



- **Support Biodiversity:** Establish habitats that attract native and migratory bird species, creating unique opportunities for birdwatching and ecotourism.

### Key Features of the Wetland Park & Nature Trail

#### 1. Recreation & Community Engagement:

- Hiking and biking trails.
- Fishing and canoeing opportunities.
- Birdwatching sites that showcase native and migratory birds such as ibis, herons, ducks, hawks, egrets, and songbirds.

#### 2. Outdoor STEM Education:

- Programs for elementary and high school students focused on wetland conservation and green infrastructure.



Upon completion, the 40-acre Sankofa Wetland Park will:

- **Manage Stormwater:** Store approximately 16 million gallons of stormwater runoff, mitigating flood risks and enhancing local resilience.
- **Deliver Economic Benefits:** Generate an estimated annual environmental economic impact of \$412,000 through flood damage reduction, water quality improvement, habitat restoration, and more.
- **Promote Public Health:** Encourage physical activity and connect residents to nature, fostering well-being and environmental stewardship.



## Sankofa Vegetable Farm

The Sankofa Vegetable Farm is an initiative to transform vacant and blighted land into spaces that grows fresh produce and fosters economic recovery in the lower ninth ward area of New Orleans. The land will be transformed into a vegetable farm to grow okra, a historically and culturally significant food in New Orleans. Okra is most commonly used in *gumbo*, linked to the West African name for Okra “*kimgombo*”, a dish that truly defines the New Orleans cuisine.



The Sankofa Vegetable Farm is a restorative project aimed towards self-sufficiency, sustainability, and resilience. It is designed to:

- *Promote Food Security*: Provide locally grown, nutritious produce to the community.
- *Foster Economic Growth*: Support a local green economy in the Lower Ninth Ward.
- *Restore the Land*: Convert vacant, blighted lots into produce farms.

We are creating a future where the community thrives in all aspects, environmentally, economically, and socially.



## Sankofa Fresh Start Market

The Sankofa Fresh Start Market is the lower ninth ward's only green grocery store and it provides a wide variety of healthy, whole foods, meeting the community's needs for nutritious options.



Sankofa CDC began its food access work in 2008 as a marketplace and farmers market, which evolved into an open-air produce stand in 2017. The Fresh Start Market opened its doors in 2024 as a permanent, 1,600 sq ft green grocery. This expansion marks a significant milestone in Sankofa CDC's long-term commitment to improving food access and addressing the unique challenges faced by the Lower Ninth Ward. The development of the Fresh Start Market has been driven by a collaborative, community-driven process. This initiative is focused on building health-centered infrastructure that nurtures wellness and ensures consistent access to fresh, nutritious food. The Fresh Start Market's design and offerings reflects Sankofa's commitment to the health and prosperity of the community.





The Fresh Start Market serves as an anchor hub for the Lower Ninth Ward, offering a wide selection of produce and seafood sourced from local farmers and fishers. In addition to fresh fruits and vegetables, the market provides essential food staples such as dairy, dry beans, grains, and dry goods. With seasonal displays featuring high-quality, in-season products, the Fresh Start Market ensures year-round access to fresh groceries for residents. But it's not just a place to shop—it's a space for community connections, where neighbors gather, engage, and support one another. The Sankofa Fresh Start Market is more than a grocery store; it's a cornerstone of a broader movement to build a healthier, more sustainable future for the Lower Ninth Ward. It represents a vital step toward ensuring food justice and empowering the community to thrive.



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