



Missouri Master Naturalist



May 2011

Volume 1 Issue 2

Our mission is to engage Missourians in the stewardship of our state's natural resources through science-based education and volunteer community service.

Message from Chapter President Michael Meredith

Spring is sprung... the grass is riz... I wonder where the flowers is.

Well if you're still reading this after that feeble attempt at rhyme, please accept my thanks for allowing me to serve as President of the Great Rivers Chapter. Our chapter is growing in numbers and commitment; and the numbers speak for themselves! Consider the number of hours reported by our members for the past four years:

Year	Service	Training
2007	505.00	139.50
2008	1,159.10	441.25
2009	1,706.75	589.05
2010	2,411.75	744.50

Now take a look at the results for the first quarter of 2011: 836 service hours and 284 hours of advanced training. And that's during a period with less than fabulous weather.

With things thawing out, our service opportunities start to multiply. Hidden Creek Savannah, our Forest Park Capstone site, is going to offer a multitude of activities from inventories and surveys, to plantings and digging. Parkway Southwest Middle School still has an abundance of honeysuckle to eradicate and ground to plant with natives. Not satisfied with those projects? Just keep an eye on the chapter calendar and take advantage of some of the work with the River Des Peres Watershed Coalition and St. Louis Audubon in Creve Coeur Park.

Last but not least, have fun! February saw a select group of Great Riverians band together to compete in the Ozark Trails Association Trivia Night. There will be other trivia contests and we're just crazy enough to try and improve our results, so join us and maybe we can have two tables at the next one.

(See picture of Trivia Masters on page2)



Deeply involved in Trivial Contemplations are left to right: Sue and Michael Meredith, Julie Nikolai, Dennis Honkomp, Kathleen Evans, Renee Benage and Pam Wilcox.

NOT TO BE OUTDONE

Master Naturalists from all three area chapters met on Saturday, 3/19 at the service project of seedling potting for Forest ReLeaf at the Communitree Nursery in Creve Coeur Park. Through team effort and coordination a new record was achieved potting 2,100 tree and shrub seedlings in less than four hours. One team pruned and potted the seedlings and the other team arranged, fertilized and watered the new plants. All will grow with all of good energies and will be offered to public planting sites. Mike Walsh, project manager, said we could set the bar at 2,200 seedlings next year. It was a great unified event!
Submitted by MaryPat Elhmann

HEY! THERE THEY ARE AGAIN



Renee Benage, Michael Meredith and Kathleen Evans helped to dewinterize trees at CommuniTree at Creve Coeur Park .

UPCOMING EVENTS

Greetings Master Naturalists! The **chapter** will be setting up a table at the **Wings of Spring** event at **Riverlands in East Alton, Mo. on May 7th**. So far there are three of us working the event. We could use additional volunteers, so if any of you would like to participate we'd love to have you join us. There will be additional organizations at the event. The shifts are 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and 12:30 to 4 pm. The chapter has a tent and chairs rented so we will be protected from the elements.

Thanks in advance
 Pam Wilcox

If you'd like to help, contact Pam at pamster049@yahoo.com

ONGOING EVENTS

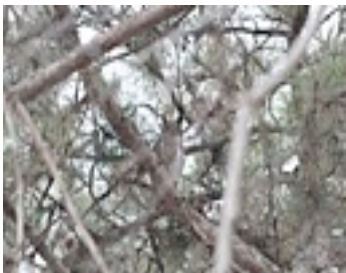


The **Southwest Middle School honeysuckle removal project**. Pictured here are project veterans Cori Keys, Glen Horton, Bill Hoss

See page 8 for Glen's article on this project

IT WAS AN OWL PROWL!

February 20th, ten master naturalists met with Mark Glenshaw at Forest Park for an “owl prowl”. We had a wonderfully warm day to learn about the pair of great horned owls that live in the park. Mark is an individual who has lived near the park for several years and has become entranced by these owls. He often spends part of four to six days a week observing the owls and subsequently has learned much about their habits and habitat. He graciously shares his knowledge with anyone willing to come along on a “prowl”. He began the afternoon with a general discussion of the owls and their behaviors. Then we set out to see the tree that “Sarah” is currently nesting in, as well as some of the pair’s favorite perching spots. Next, we set out to see if “Charles” was in one of his usual perches. Lucky for us, he was! We took turns getting near the tree he was perched in and viewing with binoculars. Further walking took us past some old nesting sites as well as some other areas they are known to frequent. It was nearing dusk, so we came back near the nesting tree to see if we might spot Sarah. We could see her nearing the entrance to her nesting cavity. We waited to see if we could hear Charles. It took some waiting, but finally Charles came near and started calling. After quite a series of calls, Sarah flew to the same tree. We did not hear her calls that evening but got to see her fly back and forth. Quite magnificent! For more on Mark and these owls, visit his blog at <http://forestparkowls.blogspot.com/>. Can you spot the owl? *Photo by Mark*



Submitted by Renee Benage

GR CHAPTER WELCOMES AS GUEST SPEAKER, MDC'S DAVID BRUNS...

..... who proceeded to enchant meeting participants with his presentation on lichens, particularly Missouri lichens.

Highlighting the attributes of beauty and diversity, David provided a virtual tour of the many varieties of lichens readily visible to attentive trail walkers and back yard aficionados.

On rocks, on trees and decaying wood, the physical characteristics and colors of the varieties were beautiful to behold. We were advised to turn our binocs backward and look close-up at the lichen to behold the tiny structural characteristics of each variety.

(Pictured here is the British Soldier Lichen, not too common to Missouri but very beautiful. In order to give a sense of size, it is pictured with a lady's ring.)



David holds an MA in Environmental Studies from Montclair State University in New Jersey. David's love of the outdoors and commitment to education are reflected in 25+ years of teaching ecology and natural science for organizations, which have included the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Catalina Island Marine Institute, the Desert Sun Science

(Cont.on page 4)

(Cont. from p. 3)

Center and the Missouri Botanical Garden. He started with the Missouri Department of Conservation in 1997 as the Naturalist at Rockwood Reservation before entering into his current position as Conservation Education Consultant. Thanks David for a *wonderful* presentation!

WATER QUALITY **MEASURING AT HIDDEN** **CREEK SAVANNAH**

Twice a year, as part of Missouri's Stream Team, we measure the quality of the water of the stream in Hidden Creek Savannah at our Forest Park Capstone site. We do the monitoring in March and October, when overwintering insect larvae (macroinvertebrates) are present in the stream, and at the same time, we also do chemical analysis of the stream.

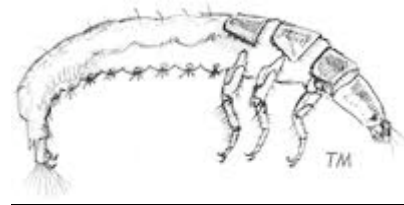
On March 16 we found caddisfly larvae during our macroinvertebrate inspection. Caddisflies are in a group of insects (with mayflies and hellgramites, which were present in Hidden Creek last fall) that are sensitive to water pollution, so when they were found, good water quality was indicated and we were quite pleased. If only pollution-tolerant insect larvae are found, the water may lack oxygen, or be high in nitrates or acids. The insect larvae in a healthy stream are food for frogs, fish, and crayfish (all found in our creek!). We also check the creek for excessive algae, turbidity, and flow rate. Our chapter's planting of strong -rooted native plants in the creek area will protect against erosion, and help maintain the naturally-evolved relationship between plants, water, and animals.

The results of our surveys are sent to the Dept. of Natural Resources where a database of stream conditions from all over the state is

maintained. When unusual results are received by DNR, investigations may be started. Landowners, homeowners, and businesses are often not aware that their farming or disposal actions have detrimental effects on local streams, and this is an opportunity to educate the public.

Check out our Master Naturalist calendar to participate in water quality monitoring, planting natives on stream banks, and trash cleanups of local streams. They're fun, they raise awareness in the community and they help keep our streams clean.

Submitted by Sue Schoening



Caddisfly larvae



Some Caddisflies create a casing of sand or vegetation around their bodies in the larval stage, and that's what you see in this picture.

WINTER BIRD SURVEYS AT THE CAPSTONE PROJECT SITE AT FOREST PARK

The Great Rivers chapter performed several winter bird surveys at the Capstone Project site in Forest Park Friday, 02/18/2011 and Saturday, 02/19/2011 in conjunction with the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). The results were reported to the GBBC website, in addition to being recorded for our chapter.

The highlight of Friday's survey was our observation of an Eastern Bluebird near the prairie restoration area. We saw the bird in a tree, and on top of two of the Bluebird houses. We also heard the bird calling and singing.

On Saturday Glen Horton identified raccoon tracks in the creek bank near the bridge and the results were added to the mammal survey.

Summary of Winter Bird Surveys

Observations were made at the three sites chosen for the initial bird survey and the same method used for the initial survey was followed. On both days the team participating in the surveys included current and new Chapter members.

On Friday, it was a mostly sunny morning, approximately 58 degrees, with high clouds and a slight breeze. Saturday was mostly cloudy, in the low 40s.

At the Wetlands site, the group observed flyovers of Canada Geese, ducks and starlings and one grackle. Red-Winged blackbirds and a robin were identified by sound.

Canada Goose flyovers were seen on both days at the Bridge site, in groups of 10 and 15, along with a starling. Red-Winged Blackbirds were identified by sound, and song

sparrows and a Cooper's hawk were seen. The Bridge site is also where the Eastern Bluebird was sighted on Friday.

At the Woodland site, the group saw a mourning dove on Friday and heard a robin on Saturday. A group of three Canada Geese flew over as well.

Thanks to Sherri Schmidt for collecting this information. Details of the surveys are available on the Great Rivers website.

SCHEDULE OF REMAINING 2011 SURVEYS AT CAPSTONE SITE – Mark Your Calendars!

To participate in a survey, please meet at the listed date and time under the large Burr Oak tree at the center of the site, near the intersection of Union & Summit drives.

If you intend to participate in one or more of the surveys, please notify me via email at sgschmidt@prodigy.net, so I can contact you if there are any changes.

Thanks, *Sherri Schmidt*

Wildlife Monitoring

Bird Surveys

Summer - Friday, 7/08/2011 (9:30 am)

Saturday, 7/09/2011 (8:00 am)

Fall - Friday, 10/14/2011 (9:30 am)

Saturday, 10/15/2011 (10:00 am)

Pollinator Surveys

Spring - Friday, 5/20/2011 (11:00 am)

Fall - Friday, 9/16/2011 (11:00 am)

Saturday, 9/17/2011 (11:00 am)

Reptile and Amphibian Surveys

Members should check for reptiles and amphibians whenever surveying the site.

Mammal Surveys

Members should check for mammals whenever surveying the site.

Vegetation Monitoring

Prairie Plant Surveys

Spring - Friday,

5/20/2011(10:00 am)

Thursday 6/02/2011 (6:00 pm)

Summer - Friday,

7/29/2011 (9:30 am)

Thursday, 8/04/2011 (6:00 pm)

Fall - Friday, 9/16/2011 (10:00 am)

Saturday, 9/17/2011 (10:00 am)

Wetland Plant Surveys

Spring - Friday,

5/20/2011(10:00 am)

Thursday 6/02/2011 (6:00 pm)

Summer - Friday,

7/29/2011 (9:30 am)

Thursday, 8/04/2011 (6:00 pm)

Fall - Friday, 9/16/2011 (10:00 am)

Saturday, 9/17/2011 (10:00 am)

Tree Surveys

Spring - Friday,

5/20/2011(noon)

If needed, additional surveys will be scheduled for Friday, 9/16/2011 (noon) and/or Saturday, 9/17/2011 (noon).

Bird Survey Team from 02/18/2011



In the heart of the Capstone site, from left to right: Lorraine Schraut, Sue Schoening, Jennifer Grable, Bill Hoss, John Vandover
Not pictured - Sherri Schmidt

Bird Survey Team from 02/19/2011



"Tree Huggers" at the Burr Oak on the Capstone Site, from left to right: Lorraine Schraut, Mary Stevens, Pamela Fournier, Marypat Elhmann, Emily Horton, Glen Horton, Bill Hoss, John Powers. *Not pictured - Sherri Schmidt*

CAPSTONE SPRING SURVEY **RESULTS**

The Spring Survey, held on April 8, was far more rewarding, with the return of spring and temperatures in the 60s. Bill Hoss, Jen Grable and Sherri Schmidt saw a wide variety of birds, and in greater numbers. Most widespread were bluejays, robins, grackles and a variety of sparrows, seen at all three sites, but mourning doves, flickers, cardinals and a number of red-winged blackbirds were also sighted. At the woodland observation site, the group saw single sapsucker, mockingbird, red-breasted nuthatch, and thrasher individuals and a pair of goldfinches. Barn and tree swallows flew over at the bridge site. Bluebells, spring beauties, violets and squirrels were also noted.

Submitted by Faith Williams, info from S.Schmidt

EARTH DAY EVENT AT FOREST PARK

Great Rivers Master Naturalists partnered with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to host a booth at the Earth Day event in Forest Park on Sunday, April 17th, 2011. The weather was wonderful this year, with lots of sunshine!

The following Great Rivers Chapter members assisted MDC's Barbra Stephenson the day of the event.

Jim and Brenda Christ, Kathleen Evans, Sherri Schmidt, Sue Schoening, and Toni Vafi.

Some members helped distribute Black Gum tree seedlings and Gray Dogwood shrub seedlings. Others helped with a very popular children's activity, where kids decorated round pieces of wood to make tree cookie necklaces. We had six varieties of wood this year - cedar, elm, maple, oak, sycamore and willow.

The following Chapter members made the tree cookies used in the event:

Michael Meredith, Sue Schoening, John Vandover, Sherri Schmidt (with a lot of help from her husband Mike).

Just short of 1200 seedlings were distributed and over 700 tree cookies were made for the event. Colleen Scott worked tirelessly (as usual) bringing this event together and throughout the day as well.

Info for this article submitted by Sherri Schmidt and Colleen Scott

PHOTOGRAPHY ANYONE? IS HE AVAILABLE FOR AN ENCORE?



Noppadol Paothong, Missouri Department of Conservation photographer, gave a presentation entitled "An Evening with Noppadol Paothong" in February at Powder Valley Nature Center. He showed some of his amazing photographs and talked about the techniques he used to take them along with the stories behind them.

Submitted by Kathleen Evans

SOUTHWEST MIDDLE SCHOOL **HONEYSUCKLE REMOVAL** **PROJECT**

Members of the Missouri Master Naturalists answered the call from Colleen Scott to assist Science Teacher Barbara Cerutti at the Parkway School District's Southwest Middle School. Bush Honeysuckle has begun to invade a small school Prairie and was making the wooded area beyond the Prairie impossible to use as an outdoor natural area classroom.

Progress on Southwest Middle School Project

The first workday was Saturday March 5. It had rained the night before and was cold and threatening more rain; still three hardy Master Naturalists - Bill Hoss, Cori Westcott and Glen Horton - showed up and with Barbara Cerutti beside them began the laborious task of cutting and pulling up the bushes.

Subsequent work parties drew larger groups of volunteers as weather improved. On March 12, more honeysuckle was removed and a walking trail was re-established with the removal of a large log that blocked the way for some students. Many thanks to Bill Hoss for bringing and operating his chainsaw. Since there was no threat of rain, herbicide was used on the cut stumps. Stumps that had gone untreated the weekend before were re-cut and sprayed and in some cases, grubbed out with a pick ax.

On March 18 another group of volunteers gathered to cut, pull and spray honeysuckle. John Vandover pointed out signs of deer, including a small tree that a buck had used to rub down the velvet on his antlers.

The largest group of volunteers (11) joined the effort April 9, including two non-member

spouses who also lent a hand. Many thanks to Sue Schoening's husband, Bill, and Barbara Cerutti's husband, Tim. A walk deeper into the wooded area revealed many different kinds of spring wildflowers and lots of honeysuckle awaiting the sharp loppers of a Missouri Master Naturalist.

Now that the prairie has been cleared and the woods opened up, Barbara and her students will begin to identify trees and shrubs that are accessible to the students for the first time in a long time.

Article and pictures submitted by Glen Horton



FUTURE NATURALISTS, WE PRESUME!

Rain Garden Project

We held the digging day on March 1 and the planting day on April 1, which were the last two dates scheduled with the kids. In all, there were 6 students that stayed through the project. After careful consideration of the site and input from the students, we selected and installed three species in each of the two rain gardens: Lanceleaf Coreopsis, Blueflag Iris and Prairie Dropseed in one and Monarda Fitulosa (bee balm), Amsonia Illustris and Soft Rush in the other. The fire department has been very appreciative, and Chief Miner asked me to extend his thanks to all involved.

Overall, we had a great experience and we'll be looking to duplicate the program with another group of students. Thank you again (as always) for the support of the MMNs.

Be sure to come to our May 15 Rain Garden Block Party and check out our work!

Submitted by Eric Karch



Assisting MMN's on this project were Pam Wilcox and Sue Schoening

EDITOR'S CORNER

Corrections and omissions: Apologies to **Gina Staehle**, who was inadvertently omitted from our list of new members in the last issue. Also to **Jennifer Grable** whose name was incorrectly given as Jennifer Formation (the hazards of cutting and pasting) in the caption of the Eagle Days photo.

*** May 15, 12-3pm, Rain Garden Block Party at Oakbrook Park in University City (at Oakbrook Lane and Cornell Ave., off Delmar 2 blocks east of I-170). Attractions include tours of the new gardens, on-hand master gardeners, native plant giveaways, informational booths, music, bar-b-que, and activities for the whole family. . Contact Eric Karch with questions: 314-603-8834, Act.) Rain or shine.

Thanks to all for contributing articles and pictures for this issue. The next issue will come out the first week in August. **Deadline for contributions is July 27.**