



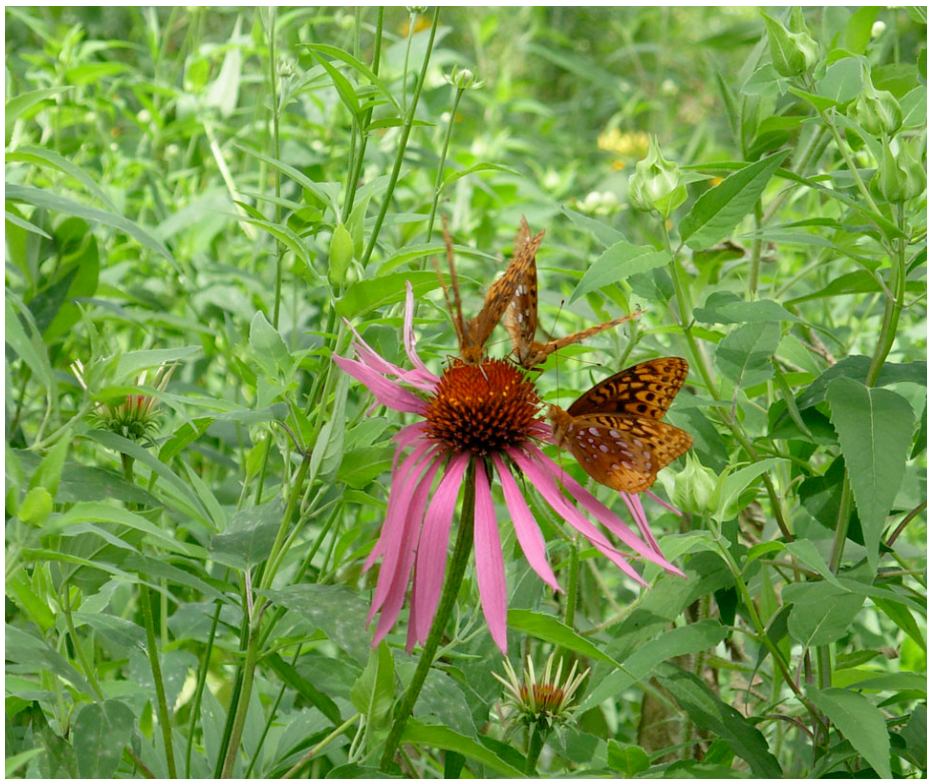
Missouri Master Naturalist



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Volume 1 Issue 3

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



3 Great Spangled Fritillary butterflies on a purple coneflower in the FP Capstone site

GREAT RIVERS VOLUNTEERS MONITOR CAPSTONE PROJECT

A small but dedicated group of Great Rivers Master Naturalists has been very busy monitoring the Hidden Creek Savanna, our chapter capstone project in Forest Park. Seven surveys have been taken between May 20 and July 9, including surveys of spring and summer birds, plants, trees, pollinators, and a butterfly survey taken with members of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA).

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FOCUS ON OUR PARTNERS

LITZINGER ROAD ECOLOGY CENTER

How many of you have either heard or seen or heard the name Litzinger Road Ecology Center? They are one of our partners but how many of us really know what they are all about? In an effort to familiarize the membership with our partners, following is a short overview of the LREC. After reading and learning about them you may decide you want to find out more about volunteering there.

The LREC is a 34 acre educational site dedicated to promoting science teaching and learning, environmental literacy, and stewardship of the Earth. Its unusual location in the heart of Ladue is unique and full of a variety of habitats and landscapes, including woodlands, restored prairies and an urban creek.

The site is available only to teachers and students in the St Louis area, or by appointment

In addition to educational endeavors, the LREC also has a staff dedicated to ecosystem restoration, which includes but is not limited to: tall grass prairie, woodlands and riparian areas. They are also involved in invasive species management, collection of native seeds, plant propagation, and restoration of native landscaping all on site.

Litzinger provides opportunities to lead school groups of all ages on a daily basis. This requires a series of classes provided by LREC to educate prospective volunteers and familiarize them with the site.

The restoration volunteers work only on specific days of the week.

NOTE: LREC is NOT open to the public.

For information on volunteering at LREC, please contact Martha Schermann @ 314 540 4068.

(submitted by Pam Wilcox)

WILD TIMES IN THE WETLAND

The Wednesday 4/27 afternoon service project, Free the Forest, sponsored by The Green Center was met with several turnarounds. Rather than being a planting/weeding/litter collecting project for kids it became a slip-sliding adventure for adults. Rather than being done in the sun it was done in a steady rain with a few thunderclaps thrown in for good measure. Rather than being a project for many it was a successful planting event for the brave rain-drenched, mud thickened few. Wetland plants were planted, some honeysuckle pulled up easily, and litter on the path was collected making the project a success. There was one other change, rather than being called Free the Forest it was renamed Wild Times in the Wetland.

(submitted by Mary Pat Ehlmann)

REGARDING LA BARQUE CREEK

Dear Friends,

La Barque Creek has been nominated for designation as an Outstanding State Resource Water. If it receives this designation, the DNR will work to maintain the stream at its current high level. Help me to support this program *by contacting, in writing before August 12, 2011:*

John Hoke
Department of Natural Resources
Water Protection Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
Thanks for your help.

Tim Wood
College School

RECOMMENDED READING

To introduce a new Gazette feature, we're including a recommendation of *Missouri's Wild Mushrooms-- A Guide to Hunting, Identifying, and Cooking the State's Most Common Mushrooms*, by our own **Maxine Stone**. Though published several months ago, it was not featured in the Gazette at the time, and is definitely recommended as an indispensable guide for those who want to collect and eat mushrooms straight from our Missouri woods.

Try Maxine's granddaughter's recipe for preparing chanterelles.



That is quite some mushroom Maxine!

<i>Morgan's Chanterelles</i>
by Morgan Johnson (Maxine's granddaughter)
1-2 tablespoons butter
1 clove garlic, sliced
1 cup fresh chanterelles (Cantharellus cibarius, p. 100, or C. lateritius, p. 102), torn into pieces
Splash balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper
Bread, pasta or rice
Melt butter with garlic and sauté until garlic is soft. Add chanterelles. Let them sauté for 4-5 minutes. Add a splash of balsamic vinegar, and salt and pepper. Continue to cook until done. Serve over rice (good), pasta (better), or bread (best). Enjoy.

ON A DIFFERENT TOPIC...

Renee Benage recommends the following books for anyone who likes to garden with native plants.

"*Noah's Garden*" by **Sara Stein** and "*Planting Noah's Garden*" by **Sara Stein**

Comment by the NY Times..."Sara Stein's wonderful book tells of her conversion from a high-style conventional gardener into an excellent field ecologist and a visionary with plans for ending the barrenness of America's subdivisions".

IN CASE YOU WEREN'T AT THE MEETING

Faith introduced the concept of this book review/recommendation column as a continuing feature of the Gazette. If you have read and wish to recommend a book, OR if you want to write a review, Faith will be happy to receive your copy. Book lovers of our GR Chapter will rejoice.

(comment by Toni Vafi)



*O, queen of cooks, your comely looks
And dishes, how they stir me!*

OZARK NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAYS

The Ozark National Scenic Riverways has been named by American Rivers as one of the ten most endangered rivers in the United States. Two of America's clearest and most beautiful spring-fed rivers - the Current and Jacks Fork - make up the Ozark National Scenic Riverways National Park, the first national park area to protect a wild river system.

American Rivers is a national conservation organization which annually lists the ten most endangered rivers; this is the first time ONSR has been on the list. Threats include overdevelopment, proliferation of roads and motorized vehicles, scenic easement violations and overcrowding.

A new management plan is currently being crafted for the area. Please go to www.currentriverfriends.org for more information and to sign their petition endorsing a strong management plan. Please share this information with anyone who cares about this Ozark treasure.

Thanks
Dennis Honkomp
Missouri Master Naturalist

GREAT RIVERS MEMBERS EARN PINS FOR HOURS GIVEN

Many Great Rivers Members were recognized at the July 19th meeting for their many hours of effort benefiting the chapter, MMN and MDR. Members receiving various pins are listed below.

Initial Certification: Gina Staehle and Cori Westcott

2010 pin: Dennis Honkomp, John Vandover,

Michael Wohlstadter, Brenda Christ, Jim Christ, Bill Mulford, Paul Newett, and Maxine Stone

2011 pin: John Vandover, Michael Wohlstadter, Brenda Christ, Jim Christ, Kathleen Evans, Michael Meredith, Sue Schoening, Pam Wilcox, Renee Benage, Glen Horton, Emily Horton, Bill Mulford, Maxine Stone, Bill Hoss, Michael Smith, Gina Staehle, Cori Westcott and Toni Vafi

250 hours milestone bronze dragonfly pin: Brenda Christ, Jim Christ, Sue Schoening, Glen Horton, Gina Staehle and Cori Westcott

500 hours milestone pewter dragonfly pin: John Vandover, Michael Wohlstadter and Kathleen Evans

Asked to describe some of the activities they have devoted their time to, **Sue Schoening** and **Brenda** and **Jim Christ** responded. Their replies illustrate the wide variety of interests and volunteer opportunities available - something for everyone!

From Sue Schoening

This year I started monitoring frogs through the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program (MDC), which has been fun as well as challenging. The fun part is driving around our designated country route in the evening, listening for and IDing frog calls, while also hearing whip-poor-wills and coyotes. Bliss! The challenging part was learning all the frog calls.

I also really enjoy being at the Don Robinson (LaBarque Creek area) property, helping Bob Coffing with his awesome job of restoring the glades after 60 years of cedar growth. After the chainsaw gang cuts up the cedars, I toss the branches onto giant piles for the periodical bonfires. It's a joy to see sturdy glade plants emerging through the season, after years of languishing under cedar shade.

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I have worked at Creve Coeur Park with tree planting and invasive removal in conjunction with St. Louis Audubon, and I help out with horticulture work at Litzsinger Road Ecology Center. I've done a little work with the ever-busy River Des Peres Coalition, and I do water quality monitoring on Fishpot Creek in Ballwin and at our Capstone site.

Until this year, I did weekly spring and fall bluebird box monitoring at SNR.

And from **Brenda and Jim Christ**

Really, I don't think we do anything special; the activities are so fun!

We helped at the WOW event [National Outdoor Recreation and Conservation School] with Liz Lyons. We helped to pass out the "goody bags" to participants. We also helped at Forest Park/Columbia Bottom youth day-camp fishing and Powder Valley's "Get Your Child Outside" program.

Regularly, we volunteer at Shaw Nature Reserve as teacher naturalists and help do the MDC Discover Nature Family Events there. Basically, we help with various Shaw or MDC special events that need teacher naturalists.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can recycle your pet litter by adding it to your yard waste bin. You can either add it directly to the grass/leaf etc. clippings or paper bag it (no plastic please). This info was obtained directly from the "compost guys" at Earth Day.



ADVANCED TRAINING AT GR **CHAPTER MEETINGS**

We are fortunate (and grateful) for the excellent presentations we have at our meetings. Many thanks to our presenters and to the committee that plans and arranges for these learning opportunities!

In recent months, we learned about, and practiced, geocaching with MDC Outreach and Education District Supervisor Liz Lyons at the May meeting, who also conducted a session at Emmenegger Park the following weekend. In June, experiential archaeologist Larry Kinsella taught us about how atlatls were made and used in prehistoric times, and gave members an opportunity to try their hand at using them. In July, Jeff Ettling, curator of herpetology and aquatics at the St. Louis Zoo, updated us on the status of the endangered hellbender population and the preservation project being conducted by the Zoo and MDC. He also arranged for members to have a 'behind-the-scenes' tour of the hellbender facilities at the Zoo.

And Cori Westcott* commented on Pat Garner's presentation at a spring meeting: The insects of Missouri presentation at the last [March] meeting that Pat Garner did was fantastic. She has 45 acres including various distinct natural communities. Pat takes her camera out every day for a couple of hours. She's patient enough to observe the behavior and make notes. When she returns home, she researches what she observed and the results are sometimes not what she expected at all. Having done this for some time, she knows when what butterfly or caterpillar will show up and where. Most of her photos have the subject enjoying its host plant. The photos are breathtaking! She published a book that she didn't mention in her presentation. Also, those photos and more are on her facebook account and worth the time to get there!

**Cori graciously allowed editor to hold this write-up when we ran out of time and space for our last issue.*

GREAT RIVERS VOLUNTEERS
MONITOR CAPSTONE PROJECT
(cont. from page 1)

On May 20, Jen Grable, John Vandover and Sherri Schmidt surveyed spring plants and pollinators and did a detailed survey of three large trees on the site using methodology from the Forest Keepers. Pollinators included several varieties of bees and butterflies, primarily in the Prairie part of the site. Sites for the spring plant survey were designated as wetland, prairie in full sun and prairie in shade; each was marked with a wooden stake topped with a flag and were identified by GPS locations. Instead of counting individual plants, the team identified the density of each type of plant -- low (less than 5 plants), moderate (between 5 and 20 plants), and high (more than 20). In the wetland area, asters and nutsedge predominated; in the sunny portion of the prairie nutsedge, goldenrod and monarda occurred most frequently; and in the shady prairie area, goldenrod, silver maple seedlings and wild strawberry were most common.

Trees were classified as small, medium and large based on trunk diameter, and were classified according to health of foliage, branches and limbs, and crown. A large oak, large white ash and large shingle ash were all determined to be healthy using guidelines from Forest Keepers, with the exception of some trunk and limb damage to the white ash.

On June 2, another spring plant survey was done by Marypat Ehlmann, Michael Wohlstadter and Sherri Schmidt. A variety of unidentified forbs, grasses and sedges were observed and described, with fleabane the dominant identified plant in the wetland; smartweed, goldenrod and ragweed in the sunny prairie; and ragweed and winter wheat in the shady prairie.

NABA members Scott Barnes, Sue Gustafson

and Sherry McCowan joined GR MMNers Mary Mierkowski and Sherri Schmidt on June 18 to perform a butterfly survey. Five different kinds of butterfly were observed along with dragonflies and bumblebees. The group also observed 18 kinds of birds (including Great Egret and Night Heron flyovers), and identified a wide variety of 22 types of plants, many in bloom.

The summer bird survey was conducted July 8 and 9; Bill Hoss and Sherri Schmidt participated on July 8, and Jen Grable joined them on the 9th. Many familiar birds were seen, with grackles, swallows, finches, and red-winged blackbirds most numerous. The group also noted plants that were blooming and various butterflies and other pollinators they observed on the site.



Picture of flower blooming at Capstone
Coreopsis tinctoria also called **Plains Coreopsis** or **Golden Tickseed**. We did not find it listed as one of the plants intentionally planted.

More detailed survey results are posted on the website.
(Information provided by Sherri Schmidt)

BULLETIN BOARD

MMN Conference

Register soon for the Sixth Annual State Conference and Advanced Training to be held Sept. 23-25 in Joplin. Although registration is open until Sept. 2, classes fill up quickly. If you haven't received your information packet and registration form, go to www.monaturalist.org for more information.

To travel to the conference, Great Rivers Chapter has tentatively reserved a bus that seats 14 plus the driver. Bus riders will take turns driving. We have received permission to leave cars at Busch Wildlife or Shaw Nature Reserve. Cost will be between \$50 and \$75 per person assuming 10 to 15 in the group. Contact Michael Meredith if you would like to be part of the group.

Green Fire, The Aldo Leopold Story

A pre-screening for MMNs has been scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 23 at 5pm at Powder Valley. No reservations are required. Viewing the movie counts as advance training! The movie will be shown on Friday, September 16 for the general public (time TBD). MMNs will be asked to volunteer at this screening (which will count toward service hours).

Volunteer to Attend a Training Class

We are looking for one or two GR members to attend each of the training classes that began July 19 and run through October 4. The purpose of attending these classes is to offer positive PR with the hopes that the trainees will join GR. Please contact Maxine Stone at verymaxine@aol.com or 314-963-0280 if you can attend a training class (field trips are not included). Attending does count as service hours.

Capstone Planting

The Capstone Committee is planning a fall planting in the wetlands area and along the

stream corridor. We are targeting a September or October planting depending on when the plants are ready. Once the schedule is known it will be posted to the calendar.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Please contact Colleen or Pat at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area (314-877-6014) if you are interested in helping prep beds at Columbia Bottom and/or Bellefontaine Conservation Area.



Thanks to all for contributing articles and pictures for this issue. The next issue will come out the first week in November.
Deadline for contributions is October 26

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MICHAEL MEREDITH

With a new class of Master Naturalists underway, I was asked to offer a few thoughts on what it means to be a Missouri Master Naturalist. Two things that quickly came to mind are that I have a fresh appreciation for Missouri's beauty; and I'll never look at a freshly manicured lawn in the same way again. In retrospect those are two things that could probably have been anticipated. But what I didn't expect is the way that my Master Naturalist experience might influence my appreciation of nature half a world away from Missouri.

Sue and I went on a Kenyan safari in June (careful, I'll talk your ear off about it) and there were a few times when my lovely wife had to roll her eyes and quickly walk away, because of MMN-related observations or questions. For example, we took a nature walk, under the guidance of a Kenyan naturalist and his gun-toting assistant (constantly on alert for cape buffalo, elephant and the like). This was the kind of path where you found yourself watching the trees *and* the ground, leading me to ask a question or two about the scat we were trying to avoid. The elephant droppings were obvious by their sheer volume. But the large black pancakes had me curious, so I asked... cape buffalo! At another location, Sue went looking for me, only to discover that I was photographing a dung beetle.

The point I'm trying to make is that the Missouri Master Naturalist experience has opened my mind to a lot of aspects of nature that I would have once ignored. You may have joined our chapter with years of experience in conservation and outdoor activity; or you may have been a neophyte with a great deal of curiosity. In either case, I hope that this experience has helped you to grow and expand your field of knowledge.

Though at times it might try the patience of my loved ones, I'm glad that my field of curiosity has been widened. I hope you feel likewise.

ST LOUIS ZOO HELLBENDER TOUR REPORT...with pictures!

You've heard about creatures with "the face only a mother could love"; but check out the Ozark Hellbender close up and you might extend that statement to its entire physical presence. If pandas define the *cute and cuddly* end of the scale of animal appeal, then the hellbender might be found at the opposite end, the *slimy and ugly* end. So why do we even care about them? Are they another canary in the environmental coal mine? Or is it just their time?

Hellbender populations are declining at an alarming rate, and there is no simple explanation of the cause... it might be natural predators... loss of habitat... disease... or factors that we've yet to identify. But the **Ron Goellner Center for Hellbender Conservation** at the **St. Louis Zoo** is at the forefront of the effort to gain answers to those questions. At our July meeting, **Jeff Ettling (Curator of Herpetology & Aquatics)** shared with us a presentation about the hellbender and the zoo's efforts to learn more about them and possibly become the first facility in the world to breed hellbenders in captivity. On the following Saturday, a number of Great Rivers members (and one aspiring member from the new MMN class) braved the heat and humidity to get a behind the scenes tour of the center, located in the basement of the Zoo's Herpetarium. **Chawna Schuette** (the Hellbender project's full time keeper) was our guide, taking us first to the two new outdoor "streams" that will be populated shortly, and then into the relative comfort of the indoor lab.

The lengths that the program goes toward studying and propagating these salamanders

are impressive, from the water conditioning and temperature controls, to 24/7 video monitoring. Then there is the *Noah's Ark* work of the center. That involves collecting young hellbenders from Ozark streams and raising them for release after they reach adulthood.

The effort to successfully produce newborn hellbenders is more than just finding a few pairs of male and females that *care deeply for one another*; it's serious research that can lead to other breakthroughs in herpetological research. And **Chawna** believes that the center has made considerable progress, and it's only a matter of time before the Zoo's PR machine starts cranking out the new accomplishment press releases. It might be this fall, or perhaps 2012, but almost certainly by fall of 2013.

As a bonus, we were also taken to the "viper room", no... not the nightclub, but the room housing another bit of high profile zoological research. So Armenian Vipers aren't exactly native to Missouri, but you have to admit, it's kind of cool standing in the middle of a room surrounded by aquariums with 60 venomous snakes. Not everyone would find that exciting, but Missouri Master Naturalists do.

So... back to the question of "why hellbenders?" We still don't have an easy answer, but perhaps the best retort to that comes from Aldo Leopold; *"*The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant, "What good is it?"**"*

(article and pictures submitted by Michael Meredith)



The group checking out the outdoor streams



The indoor stream



A baby hellbender destined to be returned to the wild someday