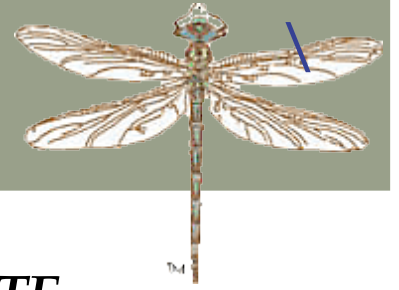




# Missouri Master Naturalist



## THE GREAT RIVERS GAZETTE

February 2013

Volume 3 Issue 1

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

### ***Introducing Our New President, Cori Westcott***



*President Cori Westcott (left) working at honeysuckle removal in Castlewood Park alongside Gina Staehle*

*And ... now a few words from Cori ...*

***“Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” – Aldo Leopold (1887-1948)***

That is why I'm so proud to be serving as our chapter's president. With each and every volunteer hour we work, we are refuting Mr. Leopold's sad observation. Allow me to

present several points in evidence. We are out “in the field” working hard to help heal our natural communities by eradicating invasive plants and replacing the void with life-sustaining, rain water filtering, soil-benefiting Missouri native plant species. Just see what we are doing in Forest Park, NW Parkway Middle School, St. Louis Southampton Neighborhood, Manchester’s Seibert Park and more recently, Castlewood State Park. We travel to southern Missouri and trek through rough terrain to help locate newly born elk calves for health checks and collaring. We teach and inspire the younger ones through park and CA events all over the area. Eagle scoping, trail guides, nature classes, bird talks and walks, overnights and a myriad of others. Maple-syrup collection at Rockwood is scheduled for the end of January. Some Great River MMNs regularly drive to Shaw Nature Reserve. We collect, process and sow seeds. We join the crew and walk the fire line in a prescribed burn. Or, we battle the ever-present invasive plants. Several of us serve as Habitat Advisors for St. Louis Audubon Society’s young program “Bring Conservation Home” . We suggest to the homeowner better storm water management through installation of rain gardens and rain barrels. We identify aggressive exotic species and offer suggestions on the best method of eradicating them. We explain the need to eliminate the use of pesticides and fertilizers and offer lists of native Missouri plants that would sustain our insect, bird and small mammal populations. Some of us have become trained Water Quality Monitors who regularly check the health of our streams and rivers by

collecting, identifying and releasing macroinvertebrates and/or conducting chemical tests. Those of us involved in Missouri Stream Team often clean up trash and work to ecologically restore the riparian corridors within our watersheds.

Our yearly totals of volunteer and training hours are consistently climbing.

Year	Service	Training
2010	2412	745
2011	3844	967
2012	4698	924

Each of these activities I have included came from a simple, individual idea. Even as I write this with great pride in our work of the past year, I can’t help but look forward to what will evolve from your ideas. Please share them. Know a natural community near and dear to your heart that needs restoration? Do you know of an event that lends an opportunity for teaching? It’s only from those brave enough to share an idea that accomplishments are born. What are yours? *(Submitted by Cori Westcott)*

### *Xmas Party 2012*



Kathleen Evans won the door prize at the Great Rivers Christmas party Nov. 30, but we all had a great time. Thanks to our hospitality team for planning a wonderful party.

### ***Honeysuckle Chopping at Castlewood State Park***

On December 8th, we gathered with volunteers from Missouri Stream Team, St. Louis Audubon Society, Parkway High Schools and Confluence to remove Honeysuckle in Castlewood State Park. We had a nice showing of eight members from Great Rivers MMN.

We got to work and attacked the area like a hoard of locusts! It had rained just enough the night before to loosen the sandy soil hold on these plants.

We were able to pull many from the roots. In three hours' time we registered and cleared 1.5 acres. Randy Becknell, Castlewood's director was delighted with our morning's efforts.

The area covered was from the outdoor restroom facilities close to the boat ramp straight south to the park's road.

Great Rivers participants included Glen Horton, Shawn Thomason, Michael Meredith, Bill Hoss, Pam Fournier, Gina Staehle, Cori Westcott and Susan Orr.



*This is Bill Hoss with his trusty chain saw destroying the horrible, terrible very bad Honeysuckle at Castlewood State Park.*

### ***Who Am I?***

I am a small sociable, energetic songbird with a short, conical bill. I often have black or brown caps and throat patches. I look just like my female partner, as do my offspring. I'm often found in wooded and suburban habitats. I'm well known for my habit of hiding seed in various storage sites that I return to a later date. I eat mainly caterpillars, spiders and insects, including their larvae and eggs. But when winter comes I'm happy to eat sunflowers seeds and berries. I have very strong leg muscles that allow me to reach food from a variety of angles and you may see me eating upside down. I nest in tree cavities where I build a cup shaped nest. I have one of the most recognized songs. And I'm a lot cuter than those old brown sparrows. Here's a clue: My song is my name. Who am I? **Answer** found within the newsletter.

*(Submitted by Pam Wilcox)*

### ***Certifications & Milestones***

In December, the following people were certified, re-certified or received milestone pins:

**Certifications:** Joanne Johnson, Jennifer McBride and Alan Westcott

**Re-certifications:** Claire Beaudoin, Jennifer Grable, Dennis Honkomp, Vaughn Meister, Mary Mierkowski, Kari Pratt, John Powers and Faith Williams  
Susan Orr reached her **250-hour milestone.**

Brenda Christ, Jim Christ and Glen Horton reached the **500-hour milestone.**

*Beautiful Photos From Last Autumn to Brighten Our Winter Days*



*Eastern Tailed-Blue butterfly at Hidden Creek Savanna wetland area*



*Skipper on a Chicory bloom at Hidden Creek Savanna woodland area*

Both of these beautiful photos were taken and later submitted by Sherri Schmidt at the 9/08/12 Pollinator Survey at Hidden Creek Savanna

*(Our thanks to Sherri for her continued commitment to Hidden Creek Savanna)*

## ***Hidden Creek Savanna***

Project Chair John Powers reports that Rachel Becknell and Courtney Pike distributed six types of seed in Hidden Creek on Jan. 4. The seed had been collected from Hidden Creek Savanna and the Steinberg area last November and included ox-eye, creek oats and bundleflower.

John wants us to know that there are upgrades planned to Forest Park in 2013 that are likely to impact the Savanna. Work will be done on the upper Munny lot, Central Fields and Union Road – all near our site. John has brought the problem to the attention of an engineer with Forest Park Forever who will keep us informed of progress.

He would also like to thank the committee members who have shepherded the chapter's involvement with the project from its inception. They are Marypat Ehlmann, Emily and Glen Horton, Steve Hoy, Al and Jeanne Koebbe, Paul Newett, Sherri Schmidt, John Vandover, Pam Wilcox and Michael Wohlstadter, with John serving as chair. All members are encouraged to join the efforts to restore and maintain our focus project site.

*(Submitted by Faith)*

## ***Group Outing: Hayride at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area***



*(see next column)*

The Friday of November 9<sup>th</sup> was a perfect evening for a hayride at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area! When the sun went down, there was a nice chill in the air that had us bundling up and the almost cloudless night had us looking for constellations and planets lighting up the sky.

Members of Great Rivers had the special opportunity to explore Columbia Bottom. After sunset, we took a hayride to explore along the gravel bars, through the woods, past the champion eastern cottonwood tree (which is amazing to see at night!), near the wetland areas, past the sloughs and to the Confluence overlook! We walked down to the Confluence overlook to listen to the two great rivers and look for creatures that explore that area at night. To end the evening, we warmed up inside the Visitor Center with hot chocolate and s'mores!

Special thanks to Colleen Scott and Pat Behle for making this experience happen for our chapter. They had a lot of great educational information to share along the ride and truly made it a wonderful experience!

*(Submitted by Kathleen Evans)*

***Answer: Black Capped Chickadee – *Poecile atricapilla****



***S'more***

## *Greetings, Fellow Great Riverians.*

A Cooper's Hawk caught a meal, ate it, rested, tried a couple more times to catch another. He remained perched on the chair back for an hour.

Here's a link to a minute and a half video. ..

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTc9G3ispvo>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGIb9igR5Ws>

*(Submitted by Cori Westcott)*



*Thanks for this beautiful shot Cori*

## *Coming Events*

**Feb. 9** Beekeeping Workshop, 8-5 at Maritz in Fenton. Register by Feb. 2 at [www.EasternMoBeekeepers.com](http://www.EasternMoBeekeepers.com) or call 314-894-8737.

**Feb. 16** Bird Survey at Hidden Creek Savanna at 10 am in conjunction with the

Great Backyard Bird Count.

**Feb. 23** Native Landscaping Workshop 8-4 at Powder Valley. Register at [stlouisaudubon.org/PNL/](http://stlouisaudubon.org/PNL/). Registration fee of \$20 includes lunch and Native Landscaping Guide.

**Feb. 26** Miramiguoa chapter is sponsoring a Nature Photography Class with MDC photographer Noppadol Paothong 6:30-8:30pm at the Jay Henges Range Educational Center, 1100 Antire Rd. at I-44 in High Ridge, MO

**Mar. 2** **Bring** Conservation Home workshop 9-4pm. \$10 fee. Contact Pam Wilcox for more info.

**Mar. 15 & 16** Introductory Level Water Quality Monitoring Workshop 8:30-5 at Babler State Park. Register by Feb. 20 for Mar. 15 session, Feb. 27 for Mar. 16 session. Go to [www.mostreamteam.org](http://www.mostreamteam.org) to register or for more info.

Southwest Middle School work dates are Mar. 9, April 6 & 20, and May 4 & 18, 9am-12. Our contact with the school, teacher Barbara Cerutti, has invited us to have an information table at the school's Science Night on April 4 from 6-8pm.

Please see website calendar for workdays/times at Castlewood Park and Seibert Park.

Ongoing Volunteer Opps at the Green Center – please contact Kathleen Evans at [kevans@thegreencenter.org](mailto:kevans@thegreencenter.org) if you are interested in helping restoring habitat, plant propagation, gardening, or leading interpretive classes at the Green Center in U. City.

## *Notes*

Thanks to Unsung Hero Michael Wohlstader for maintaining our website and for sending regular calendar reminders to all of us.

Intern Shawn Thomason is still recovering from the broken leg, hip, rib and shoulder he suffered in a motorcycle accident in December. Messages to him at [smt68@yahoo.com](mailto:smt68@yahoo.com) or 7739 Gissler Ave., 63117 might help alleviate his cabin fever.

Deadline for submitting articles and photos for the May 1 issue is April 2

## *Spotlight on Colleen Scott*



We have all met Colleen and know that she enjoys her work; warm and smiling, she is always ready to answer questions or to share her love of the natural world. So it's hard to believe that, in a former life, Colleen Scott worked in accounting? And given that fact, how did she end up as Interpretive Center Manager at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, in charge of volunteers and staff there and at Forest Park? Not to mention being an esteemed MMN sponsor on behalf of MDC.

Colleen says, though, that the foray into accounting was only a detour – that she has always been a naturalist at heart. She grew up not far from Columbia Bottoms, on the city/county line, with lots of room to explore. As a child, she spent most of her time outdoors.

After high school, her decision to study accounting was a practical matter, rather than one of passion. A visit to the Wolf Sanctuary inspired her to get involved in conservation. She first volunteered at the Sanctuary and got to know the Education Director there, who suggested she explore opportunities with MDC.

In 1993, she started volunteering at Powder Valley, working with kids as a naturalist. She continued to work part-time in accounting and went back to school. As it wasn't practical to go to Columbia for Mizzou's Fish and Wildlife program, she studied Biology and Writing and went to work providing front-line training/teaching to kids and the public.

She became involved with the MMN

program in 2007. (Confluence chapter was started in 2005.) She worked with Nick Page and Scott Killpack from UMSL Extension to design a program based on the Texas Master Naturalist model. She is happy to see how the program continues to be refined and to expand.

As for the future, she would like to see us grow in number – to form new partnerships and promote naturalist networking, both membership and project-wise. And I'm sure we can all agree that we're glad she didn't stay in accounting!

*(Faith)*

## *Meeting Summary*

In November, we elected Cori Westcott as our new president and retained Barbra Stephenson as treasurer while sharing a sociable and tasty potluck meal. We were happy to welcome six new interns, plus special guests Jamila Reid from MDC and Randy Bucknell from Castlewood Park.

We returned to Powder Valley for a business meeting in January. We discussed the need to “refresh” our committees, urging chapter members to read committee descriptions on the website and get involved. Cori encouraged us to come up with new ecological restoration project ideas beyond honeysuckle removal. Project opportunity application forms are on the website.

Cori also proposed that we look into purchasing a brush saw to make it easier to clear various sites of invasives. It's possible that we could get a grant to obtain one. Cori is researching models and prices. Vaughn Meister will research guidelines for training, use, maintenance, storage, etc.

Michael Meredith provided a refresher in navigating our website.

Next meeting will be Feb. 19, location TBD.

*(Faith)*

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## ***Another Beautiful Picture From Hidden Creek Savanna sent in by John Powers***



***The remaining two pages of this publication is record of all Surveys performed to date at the Hidden Creek Savanna beginning in July of 2010 and ending in fall of 2012.***

*Thanks again to Sherri Schmidt for her hard work and careful documentation of these events at Hidden Creek Savanna.*



**Missouri Master Naturalist Great Rivers Chapter  
Hidden Creek Savanna Project in Forest Park  
Surveys Performed To Date**

**Updated: 1/25/2013**

**Surveys**

Listed below are the surveys the Missouri Master Naturalist Great Rivers Chapter has performed at the Forest Park Hidden Creek Savanna site.

**Wildlife Monitoring**

**Birds**

- Initial survey: 7/10/2010
- Plan to survey 4 times a year, at least once a season.
- Subsequent surveys: 11/20/2010 (fall)  
02/18 & 02/19/2011 (winter, GBBC)  
04/08/2011 (spring)  
07/08 & 07/09/2011 (summer)  
10/07/2011 (fall)  
02/17 & 02/18/2012 (winter, GBBC)  
04/13/2012 (spring)  
07/14/2012 (summer)  
10/12/2012 (fall)

**Pollinators**

- Initial survey: 9/18/2010
- Plan to survey twice a year
- Joint butterfly survey done with North American Butterfly Association (NABA) members 6/18/2011
- Subsequent surveys: 5/20/2011 (spring)  
06/18/2011 (spring – joint survey with NABA)  
06/08 & 06/09/2012 (summer)  
09/08/12 (fall)

## **Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians**

- Instead of scheduling regular surveys, members note any mammals, reptiles or amphibians observed when performing other surveys.

## **Vegetation Monitoring**

### **Prairie Plants & Wetland Plants**

- Initial survey: 07/24/2010
- Plan to survey 3 times a year (spring, summer, fall)
- Have performed the surveys at three one meter square sites in the wetland area, sunny prairie area and the shady area.
- This year we did a wider survey using a grid of the site on 6/09/12
- Subsequent surveys: 05/20/2011 (spring)  
06/02/2011 (spring)  
07/29/2011 (summer)  
05/18/2012 (spring)  
06/09/2012 (spring – grid mapping)  
07/27/2012 (summer)  
09/22/2012 (fall)

## **Trees**

- Initial survey: 10/09/2010
- Plan to survey annually
- Subsequent surveys: 5/20/2011 (spring)

## **Water Quality Monitoring**

- Initial survey: 5/28/2010
- Plan to survey twice a year, spring and fall
- Subsequent surveys: 10/13/2010 (fall)  
03/16/2011 (spring)