



# Missouri Master Naturalist



## ***THE GREAT RIVERS GAZETTE***

November 2013

Volume 3 Issue 4

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

### **A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Greetings, Great Riverians!

We're heading into the season of holidays and World Series. I hope each one of you have safe and happy times.

I look forward to welcoming new friends to our chapter from the 2013 class. I hope that you will greet any new face you see at the November meeting. Please send me an email if you're willing to mentor a new member this new season of internships. It would be nice to have a list ready when the new folks register.

We have accomplished great things large and small this year. Seibert Park in the city of Manchester is virtually honeysuckle free. It's pretty much remained free this year. We've busied ourselves in removing and controlling lots of other aggressive exotics such as Garlic Mustard, White and Yellow Clover, Johnson Grass and Crown



Vetch. It's amazing to witness the explosion of Pokeweed and Jewelweed. It's definitely showing a succession community's population vying for new space. There are healthy colonies of Wild Ginger, Trillium (two species), Spring Beauties and a host of other natives whose seeds have been long dormant in a dark world. Now, under a filtered sunlight, they've awakened. We have seen mink in the creek, a fox in the woodland, frogs, and more birds. Mike Walsh of Forest ReLeaf will mark some Silver Maples (and a couple Tree-of-Heavens) for cutting down. The city of Manchester will do that. He'll supply us with understory trees and shrubs for a wooded slope and to start a woodland edge. Keep your fingers crossed for our MDC community Stewardship Grant for the park. We'll learn its fate in November. It would fund a butterfly garden and install a shrub, forb and grass habitat on what is now a turfed slope to the creek.

We're beginning to see the return of fauna diversity in our restored Hidden Creek Savanna in Forest Park. I believe this is one of our more favored volunteer activities. And why not? It's a wonderful opportunity to witness our rich variety of birds, insects and mammals.

Castlewood has come close to fulfilling its obligations in an MDC Community Stewardship Grant. We've participated in a number of Saturday morning "honeysuckle hacks" (as Mitch Leachman calls them) and a morning of planting.

Vaughn Meister has seen the woodland of Webster Groves Y.M.C.A. open up from our work removing the honeysuckle there. It will be fun to see what sprouts next year. We hope to see some woodland plants long dormant in that habitat. Our Michael Wohlstadter has seen to the installation of several habitats in Southampton.

Columbia Bottom, The Green Center and Eagle Days (to name a few) have benefited by our talented educators. Our work at Parkway Middle School has paused as a new biology teacher took the place of Barbara Cerutti. We're giving him time to settle in to his new position. We hope he'll want to continue the restoration of their prairie and woodland habitat there.

We have had so many projects this year! Remember these volunteer projects didn't just manifest themselves on the calendar. Each one of them started with a single idea from one of you. Let's keep that in mind and instill the creative juices in our fellow members and new members alike.

Speaking of new members, let's try to settle upon a capstone idea before the beginning of the year. Please forward suggestions of a 1-3 day project to Shawn Thomason, our Projects and Partners chairman at [smt68@yahoo.com](mailto:smt68@yahoo.com). He would also like suggestions on volunteer opportunities and/or projects from you.

Be sure to record your hours. Remember that the program requires a minimum of 40 service hours and 8 advanced training hours per year from each of its members. 2012 interns have an extra 12 months to complete their certification. Please review these guidelines on page 7 of the manual. It can be found under "Documents" after you have signed in on our website [www.greatrivers.org](http://www.greatrivers.org). If something is preventing you from your certification requirements, please inform a board member. Life does interfere sometimes, doesn't it?

November's meeting will be our last meeting in 2013. It's a handy time to bring \$ or check for annual \$10.00 dues to Barbra Stephenson, our treasurer. Make checks payable to: University Extension Council.

In closing, let me share my dreams of the future with you.

- 1) All my friends in Great Rivers create new wonderful memories over the holiday season.
- 2) Next year brings members offering to serve on committees (even though they might feel they know nothing about it because none of us really do before we join a committee).
- 3) We break our record and have all members reach their certification or re-certification requirements by the end of next year. And, that they find their service rewarding, safe and fun!

I am so proud of our accomplishments this year. Aren't you?

*(Submitted by Cori Westcott)*

## **BOOK REVIEWS by Cori**

### ***Ozark Journal 1818-1819 Rude Pursuits and Rugged Peaks: Schoolcraft's***

*With an Introduction, Maps, and Appendix by Milton D. Rafferty*

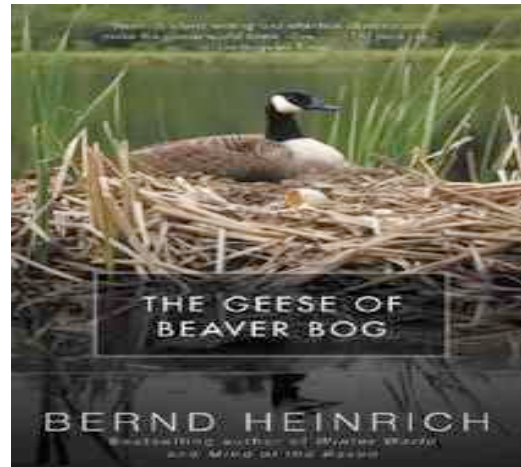
In 1818, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, a mineralogist, with a companion, Levi Pettibone, set off on foot to journey a 900-mile route in 90 days through what is now southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. This book is his journal. It's full of reports of riparian corridors, what trees populated each region, mentions of forbs and shrubs, minerals and the Native Americans and white hunters who had settled there.



I was intrigued about the frequent mention of "canebrakes" they had to struggle through. That's Missouri's native bamboo, *Arundinaria gigantea*. Canebrake jungles could stretch for four miles and 1/4 mile wide. They provided shelter to cougars and black bears. Many warbler species nested in them. The book is full of interesting tidbits such as that. From Potosi, they traveled southwest to the border, then turned north and traveled almost to what is Springfield today. They doubled back,

headed south to Batesville, Ark., then worked their way northeast, missing Poplar Bluff, MO and ended their journey near Farmington. Actually, Schoolcraft ended alone. Pettibone had to leave the journey early. It's sometimes dry and dull. But, it's worth it to stumble upon revelations that might change your perceptions of the early southern settlers. (Submitted by Cori Westcott)

### ***The Geese of Beaver Bog* by Bernd Heinrich**



Following Heinrich's almost daily journal of observations on the life of the nesting geese near his home, I couldn't help but try to guess why the geese took certain actions. It put me in the dilemma scientists have when trying to block their own cultural and moral influences and objectively conjure the reason behind an animal behavior.

Why do some geese parents abandon their young or leave a perfectly good nest site so soon after their chicks hatch? Why do others adopt another's chicks? It's my first Bernd Heinrich book and it won't be my last.

(Submitted by Cori Westcott)

**A NOTE OF THANKS FROM  
COLLEEN SCOTT**



*Memorial Tree*



*Headstone*

Colleen Scott has provided the Gazette with two pictures of her step-son's memorial tree and stone that was gifted by the Great Rivers Chapter, MMN. She states "Despite a little lacebug feeding, high waters on the area, high temperatures, and close to tornado winds which took down a 198 year-old

cottonwood, our memorial tree is standing beautifully at Columbia Bottom. (All we had to do was give a little support from leaning slightly.) I wish I could put into words how much it means to my husband and me. It does our hearts good.

*Colleen Scott CIT, CIP  
Interpretive Center Manager*

**HELP KICKSTART OUR NEW  
MISSOURI STATE PARK  
BOOK PROJECT**

**Missouri Parks Association** is partnering with **Missouri State Parks** and **Missouri Life Media** to produce a fully revised new edition of our acclaimed book on state parks and historic sites. Please let everyone you know who cares about Missouri state parks that we need their help in the next two months to reach our goal of funding the printing of the book, with all its new full-color photos, in time for release in October 2014.

Please contribute and pass this notice along to friends. You will be rewarded with the satisfaction that you helped create a fantastic new book about Missouri state parks. And, depending on the level you select, you will also receive a copy of the new book and other great incentives.

Just visit the following link to see the campaign and watch the video!  
<<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/622423996/discover-missouris-state-parks>

*(Submitted by Faith Williams)*

**BEAUTIFUL PICTURES FROM THE SAVANNA**



*ROSE MALLOW*



*BUTTERFLY MILKWEED W. RESIDENT BEE*

## **GROWING UP WITH NATURE**

*A presentation by Dr. Peter Raven at the Green Center*

What draws us into the wonder of nature? One answer, that of Dr. Peter Raven, was presented at The Green Center in University City, the evening of October 8 th . Against a background of the changes in our earth since his birth in 1937, Dr. Raven described an insect book that was given to him when he was out of school with the measles at age seven. Each of us can probably remember something early on in our lives that sparked our curiosity in the natural world, and also a time when as adults we loaned or gave a child something to entice that early questioning of the world around us.

A second event in Dr Raven's early life was also something we as Missouri Master Naturalists can identify with. He learned of a youth program with the California Academy of Science, and joined. He started collecting plant specimens in this Academy of Science program and one of these specimens later led to a UCLA graduate program in botany. We work with programs to give kids a chance to get out in the natural world and learn about plants, insects, birds, etc, and have the potential to spark that interest in a young person.

Dr Raven talked about the increase in population on this earth since his birth and the changes in our uses of the earth's natural resources. He has a masterful grasp of so much information. He led us through each decade and the gradual development of the environmental movement and eventually our current interest in sustainability. One quote really struck me---he said those of us on

this earth are currently living at 150% of sustainability, and those of us in the United States, twice as much of the earth's resources as is sustainable.

It's interesting to imagine that we might be working with some child today who will make a major scientific contribution to our future world. And surely many of those children we touch in our naturalist work will be more connected to and appreciative of our earth.

*(Submitted by Vaughn Meister)*

## **A-V EQUIPMENT FOR MEETINGS**

After difficulties with AV equipment that delayed the October meeting, we'd like to remind members of the procedures for arranging needed equipment for presenters. Program coordination should go through the Advanced Training team; the person who secures a speaker should coordinate with/inform Emily Horton and Michael Meredith before making tech arrangements with the speaker and the community center.

Cori suggests, however, that we should discuss forming an audiovisual committee to assist with equipment set-up at meetings. We may also want to consider purchasing chapter equipment to assure compatibility.



## **MEETINGS SUMMARY**

Our August meeting was especially informative with a thorough presentation on frogs and toads of Missouri by Michael Dawson from the Education Department of the St. Louis Zoo. Globally, 32% of amphibian species are threatened with extinction, suffering from the Chytrid fungus and from habitat loss. Michael is a member of Frog Watch and is looking for volunteers for this long-term frog and toad-monitoring program, managed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums since 2009.

For more information, go to <http://stlzoo.org/education/frogwatchusa>. To volunteer, contact Michael at 314-646-4551 or [dawson@stlzoo.org](mailto:dawson@stlzoo.org). Training will be provided in January, February and March.

In addition to Michael's presentation, we heard from Tom Casey, Director of HR for Boys Hope Girls Hope; Angie Weber of MDC; and Scott Woodbury from Shaw Nature Reserve with an update on the ongoing project at BHGH. Mary Mierkowski is the lead for Great Rivers chapter's participation in planting and maintaining a more sustainable landscape at the BHGH headquarters. Watch for upcoming work dates.

In September, George Yatskievych gave an overview of his work on the Flora of Missouri project at the Missouri Botanical Garden. George is the Curator of the project and has just completed Vol. 3 of Steyermarks' "The Flora of Missouri."

Cori passed a sign-up sheet for those interested in mending mist nets for the World Bird Sanctuary; contact Cori if you are interested in helping.

Our October speaker was Donna Coble, Executive Director of Forest ReLeaf, who described the ambitious program of Mapping the Canopy Cover in St. Louis and identifying possible planting areas. Forest ReLeaf is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the distribution of 130,000 trees in 2013.

Chapter elections will be held next month. Pam Wilcox has agreed to continue as secretary, but we need candidates for Vice President. Please send your nominations to Michael Meredith. Michael is also still accepting orders for apparel embroidered with the chapter logo. Contact Michael for more information.

It was noted that the chapter banner, brochures and pamphlets are now being stored at Columbia Bottoms.

Cori informed us that the next statewide conference will be held May 31-June 1, 2014, in Kansas City, MO, hosted by the Osage Trails Chapter. She also reminded members that, until the website migration is complete, all events, meetings, projects, etc. are posted on the Google calendar at the link she previously provided to members by email.

**Community Service Award** It was announced that our own John Powers was honored with the 2013 Community Service Award by Commerce Bank's William T. Kemper Foundation. John was honored for his work in education, health care and environmental service.

**MDC** Jamila Reid is seeking volunteers to help at Eagle Days, Jan. 15-19. For more information or to volunteer, contact Jamila at [jamila.reid@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:jamila.reid@mdc.mo.gov).

Colleen Scott invited chapter members to present educational programs at Columbia Bottoms or Forest Park. If you are interested, contact Colleen at [colleen.scott@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:colleen.scott@mdc.mo.gov). She also noted that she has transportation dollars in her budget to pay for buses to bring groups to Columbia Bottoms. In return, participants would be asked to assist in the March 2014 Trash Bash at Columbia Bottoms. If you know of a group that might be interested, please contact Colleen.

**Holiday Party** It was announced that the holiday party will be at 6pm on Dec. 5 at Houlihan's at Olive St. and Mason Rd. in West County. Dinner is \$23 per person, with subsidies available. Please RSVP to [luedercbr@hotmail.com](mailto:luedercbr@hotmail.com) by Nov. 21 and send payment to Barbra Stephenson at 7 Baron Court, Florissant, MO 63034. *(Submitted by Faith)*

## **A WORD FROM THE GAZETTE'S NEW CO-EDITOR**

In May 2011, I made an important decision to become more involved with nature. For some time I had been suffering the stress of a life overburdened with deadlines and distraction. I distinctly remember the feeling I had one day while looking at a photograph in a magazine of prairie wildflowers. I so longed to be in that field: to be able to touch, smell, and see the flowers up close. I craved it like someone might crave a food that provides the nutrition of which their body is depleted. It was a visceral and intuitive emotion I recognize now as a symptom of what the journalist Richard Louv terms Nature Deficiency Disorder. I understood then that a reconnection to the natural world was essential for my spirit and well being.

Previous to this insight it was not that I had withdrawn from nature; I gardened, went for walks in the park; I rode my bike along the river. But what I lacked was a *relationship* with nature: a concrete awareness of and insight into my connection with my natural habitat.

I began hiking more and volunteering for organized events such as trash pickups, native plantings, etc. But in 2012 I learned of the Missouri Master Naturalist program and I registered immediately. I was eager for the active engagement that the program introduces. In the past year I have learned about Missouri, pollinators, native plants, pollinators, trees, wetlands, and prairies. I have been more interactive and more observant of my natural surroundings than I have in years. I know I have only barely begun to understand my natural

habitat and I have much more to learn and look forward to.

So that I might learn more, I have volunteered to edit the Gazette starting in 2014. Up until now when it arrived in my email I so often file it away after only reading parts here and there. As editor I will be reading every story and therefore enjoying reports from Chapter members, keeping up with past and future events and appreciating a broader view of the Missouri Master Naturalist program.

*(Submitted by Marcia Wilderman)*

## **AND FROM FAITH....**

Toni Vafi and I produced the first issue of the quarterly Great Rivers Gazette in January 2011 (past issues can be found in our website archives). As newsletter pioneers, we learned as we went along and, after three years and 12 issues, I think it's time to give someone else an opportunity to bring fresh ideas to the newsletter. I am passing the baton for my part of the process to Marcia Wilderman. She will work with Toni, who continues as co-editor and layout artist.

*Faith Williams*

## ***And a last word from Toni***

*It has been a genuine pleasure to work with Faith for the past three years. Always prompt with edited materials, creative to the max, she is always congenial, and altogether a great working partner.*

*You will be missed Faith. Thanks for all your hard work.*



## **FALL SURVEYS AT HIDDEN CREEK SAVANNA**

The last surveys of the year were completed in late September and mid-October and were especially enjoyable and informative. Plant and pollinator surveys were done September 28 on a beautiful day. Starting with the plant survey, a group including John Powers, Nancy Burgess, Marypat Ehlman, Jen Grable, Beth Skelton, Faith Williams and Sherri Schmidt waded through thick vegetation to identify a variety of plants, both intentionally planted and otherwise.

In the wetlands area, fog fruit was abundant, with aster, sedge, rush and bindweed present. The intentionally planted lizard tail has survived as well. Nearby were more asters (two varieties), chicory, goldenrod, plantain and Illinois bundleflowers. Water was flowing in the creek.

The variety of plants observed was greater in the prairie, with wheat, smartweed and goldenrod thriving in the sunny area, while river oats and what predominated in the shade. Asters, Black-eyed Susan, Blazing Star, and Monarda were also present, as well as several grasses. Many intentionally planted natives are doing well.

After the plant survey was completed, the group was joined by Ed Spevak, Curator of Invertebrates at the St. Louis Zoo, who helped identify pollinators and gave the group additional in-depth information. In the wetland, pollinators included five varieties of bee, five kinds of butterfly and three types of fly, plus a yellow jacket (which is a wasp). Other insects sighted were four varieties of dragonfly and a stinkbug.

The variety of pollinators in the prairie was even greater, with several moths, six bee varieties and seven different kinds of butterfly, including several monarchs. Several types of caterpillar were also observed.

Our expert, Ed, gave the group information on how to distinguish dragonflies from damselflies, flies from bees, and moth caterpillars from butterfly

caterpillars (moth caterpillars are hairy). He also gave instructions for building a bee box and suggested adding bee boxes at the site.

Three weeks later, bird surveys were conducted on Friday, October 18 and Saturday, October 19. Marypat Ehlman and Lorraine Schraut joined Sherri on Friday when they saw a large flock of American White Pelicans – around 100 birds – fly over. They also saw blue jays, robins, sparrows and a large flock of starlings. A red-shouldered hawk was sighted, and four goldfinches seen in the woodland. A crow and a woodpecker were heard.

On Saturday, John Powers, Jen Grable, Bill Hoss and Sherri were able to see and hear a number of birds despite a running event taking place in the area. Besides robins, blue jays, starlings and sparrows, they were able to identify an Eastern phoebe, a common yellowthroat, a flicker and a goldfinch.



*A Monarch Butterfly feeding on New England Aster at the Savanna. (Thanks to Sherri Schmidt)*

## TALE OF THE GREEN LACEWING

This tale doesn't begin with the Green Lacewing at all. It begins with the Oleander Aphid (*Aphis nerii*). (photo Mid-Georgia Pest Control). I discovered these sap-sucking little creatures congregating on the stems of my Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*). They were fun to observe. I got to see the tiny wasps that laid eggs in some hapless subjects.



Then, these tiny, strange “balloons” appeared on their own individual strings.



A pregnant Green Lacewing (*Chrysopidae spp.*) had discovered the aphids and knew this was the food source for her babies. She first attaches the string and then secures the egg on the tip. “Why doesn't she save time and simply deposit her eggs in a pile on the leaf,” you might ask. Because her larvae (also known as aphid lions) are such voracious eaters, they'll eat each other and this gives them a chance to survive. They look like this...naked...but I'll get to that in a minute



©Donna Brunet (from MDC).

The Lacewing larva punctures the little aphid and feeds on its bodily fluids. Do you think those tiny aphids scream? I doubt it. As voracious predators as these little ones can be, they're also a favorite food item for several other creatures (don't ask me what). How does it protect itself?

Meet the "trash bug"! Look closely on the left side of this conglomeration of teeny, tiny plant particles. The larva attaches shredded debris from his surroundings and camouflages itself. Do you see the familiar set of mandibles hoisting the helpless aphid in the air? If your answer is yes, you're right! It's the same larva pictured elevating that so the aphids fluids can run into its mouth



Now, here's where I have a problem with the whole standard issue scientists have been using for years. Intelligence in animals has been recognized by their tool using skills. Is this not an example of tool using?

Just in case you're curious, it takes a minute for the Green Lacewing to "drink" all the fluids from one aphid. One larva can consume 600 aphids. A very beneficial garden insect indeed!



**The adult Green Lacewing**

*(Above presentation submitted by Cori Westcott)*