



# Missouri Master Naturalist



Oct 2014

Volume 4 Chapter 4

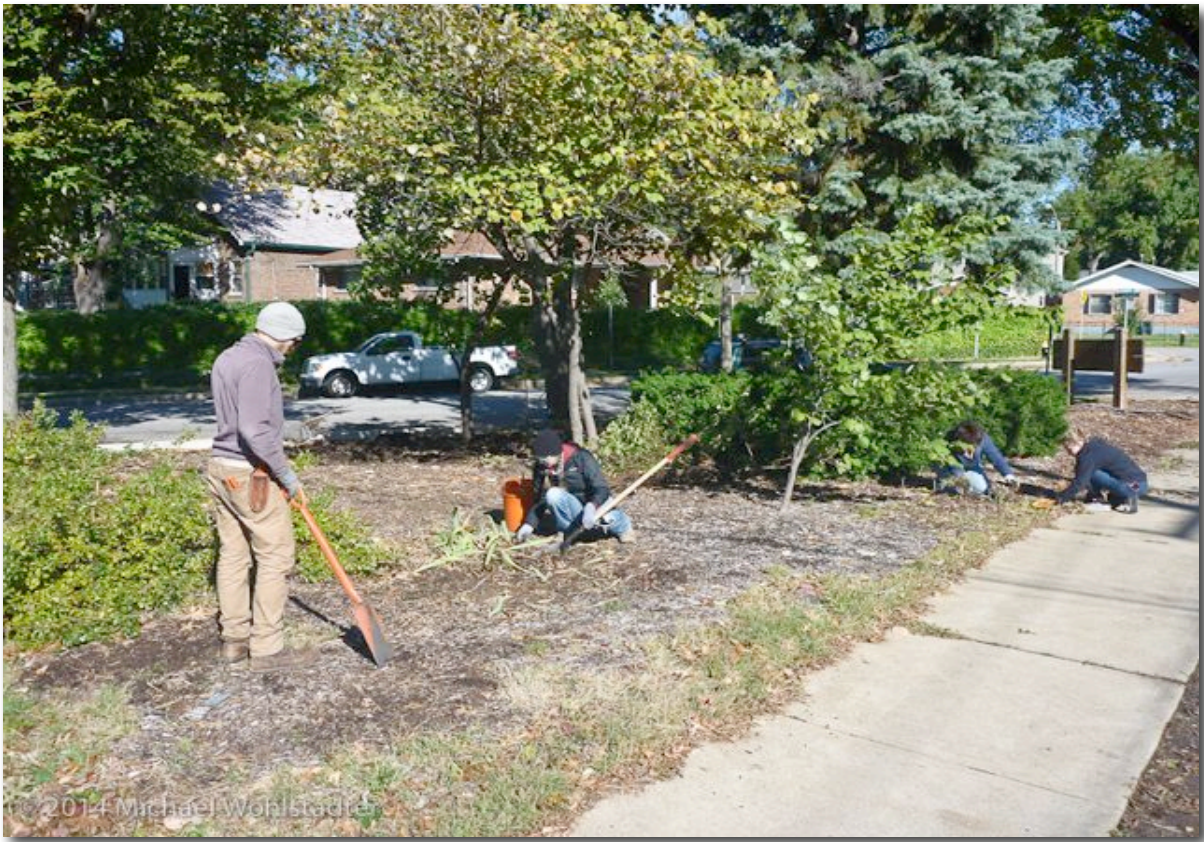
*Our mission is to engage Missourians in the stewardship of our state's natural resources through science-based education and volunteer community service*

## ***URBAN GARDENING IN THE SOUTHAMPTON NEIGHBORHOOD***



*Marie's Wedge*

***The Gazette thanks Michael Wohlstadter for this excellent presentation of the Naturescaping projects that he spearheads in South St Louis City. Congratulations Michael for a job so beautifully done.***



***MMN and Community volunteers working together at Buder Wedge Garden***  
***Cassidy Dellorto-Blackwell*** – Missouri Master Naturalist, ***Cody Hayo*** - Southampton resident and landscaping partner who is maintaining the Hampton Wedge, ***Renee Robinson*** and daughter-  
Southampton residents, Renee has helped on a couple of occasions and became interested when she saw Michael Wohlstater working in Marie's ***Wedge and the Southampton Community Garden.***

## **NATURESCAPING IN SOUTHAMPTON**

Southampton is a neighborhood in the southwestern corner of the City of St. Louis. Consistent with much of the city, most of the streets run in a north/south or east/west orientation. However one street, Wherry Avenue, cuts diagonally across the neighborhood. As is often the case for exceptions, there is a story behind the design of Wherry Avenue.

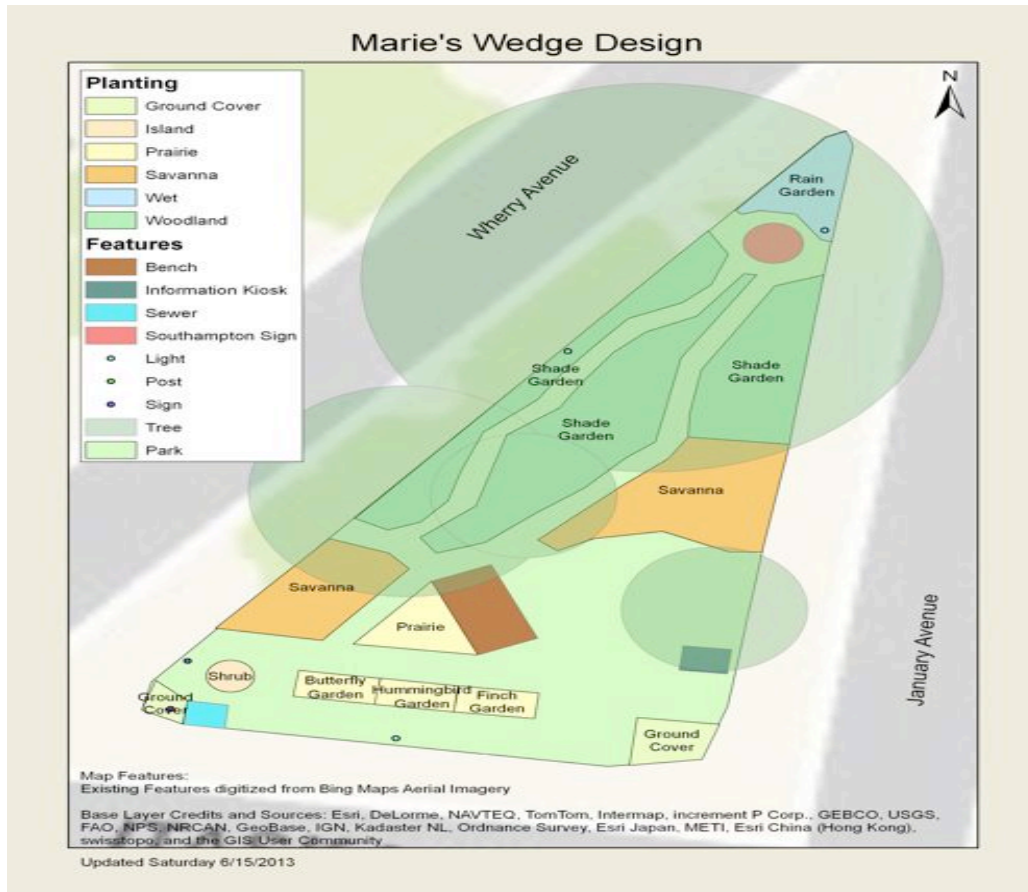
### **History**

In 1903, a creek flowed through the neighborhood. At that time most of the Southampton neighborhood homes had not yet been built and just a few of the streets existed. There were clay mines and an electric streetcar line, but most of the neighborhood was undeveloped.

According to land grant surveys conducted by the Government Land Office in the mid 1800's, most of the habitat surrounding the creek was prairie and open woods. The creek, colloquially referred to

as Wherry Creek, flowed west through the area and eventually joined River des Peres. Along the stream were pockets of forest and along the high points in the neighborhood was scrub.

As the area was settled, the prairie was converted to field and pasture and the homes were built on the high points. Residential and business development continued to fill the neighborhood, and the tiny creek was filled in and forgotten. Wherry Avenue now marks where the stream flowed.



## Wherry Creek Gives Way

While Wherry Creek is no longer flowing, Wherry Avenue now marks its former course. Because of the topography of the land, the flow of the creek ran diagonally across the planned neighborhood streets. As a result, small triangles of land (wedges) were created where Wherry Avenue intersects the east and west running streets. The larger wedges were developed and the smaller wedges became the property of the City of St. Louis Parks Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry.

The Southampton Neighborhood Association has had a long history of maintaining the two of these parks locally referred to as Marie's Wedge and Buder Wedge.

## **Marie's Wedge**

Marie's Wedge is named for Marie Robinson, former President of the Southampton Neighborhood Association who passed away in 2009. Marie's Wedge is bounded by Wherry Avenue, January Avenue, and Itaska Street.

Southampton resident Lisa Tenhouse was the original project leader of the landscaping effort of this wedge, and regular maintenance was performed by neighbors Ron Gomez and Bob Currie. After Lisa moved and both Ron and Bob passed away, Marie's Wedge was abandoned. What had been gardens was converted to turf grass and while the grass was regularly maintained, an esthetic element of the neighborhood had been lost.

## **Buder Wedge**

Buder Wedge is so named because it is just west of Buder School. This Wedge is bounded by Wherry Avenue, Macklind Avenue, and a private lot to the south.

As part of the Brightside St. Louis sponsored spring cleanup, every April the Southampton Neighborhood Association joined neighborhood residents in cleaning and weeding the wedge. Throughout the year the wedge was maintained ad hoc and mostly by neighborhood residents. Unfortunately that maintenance meant wood mulch and little else. Buder wedge needed some attention.

## **Naturescaping with Brightside St. Louis**

Some years ago, I became aware of the *Neighbors Naturescaping* program managed by Brightside St. Louis. With the approval of the Southampton Neighborhood Association, I submitted a grant application to convert the Marie's Wedge to native landscaping.

### **2012 and 2013**

In late summer of 2012, Brightside St. Louis approved the application and subsequently native forbs, grasses, and shrubs were planted in the fall of 2012. Thanks to the neighborhood's alderman, Donna Barringer, this native landscaping project has access to the fire hydrant to meet watering needs.

Today, Marie's Wedge has a rain garden lined with native sedges and grasses. In the bowl of the rain garden grows Marsh Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) and other native forbs. Along the berm surrounding the rain garden is dwarf New England Aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae* "Purple Dome").

From the rain garden stretch two paths, one on the shaded side of the wedge and one on the side that receives much more sun. Along the shaded path grows Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*), Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), and Woodland Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ernestiana*).

Along the sunny side grows Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), Missouri Coneflower (*Rudbeckia missouriensis*) and Missouri Primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*).

Both paths eventually converge on an open area with beds of prairie natives including Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnostachya*), Leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*), Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), among others.

The plantings were expanded with a subsequent Neighbors Naturescaping grant, awarded in 2013.

## **2014**

Buder Wedge remained a patch of wood chips and weeds. In 2014 I partnered with neighborhood volunteer and landscaper, Cody Hayo, to develop a design for Buder Wedge. Paired with Cody, I reasoned that I now had the local support required to maintain *three* wedges in the neighborhood. So we added another wedge located on Hampton Avenue, and thus called Hampton Wedge. Cody accepted the role of project leader for Hampton Wedge which allowed me to focus on Buder Wedge.

We both drafted designs for our respective wedges to include butterfly gardens. Buder Wedge also boasts savanna and woodland settings. The butterfly gardens utilize various milkweeds and other full sun forbs along with native grasses. And the woodland garden includes Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*) and Wild Sweet William (*Phlox divaricata*).

Our designs were submitted to Brightside St. Louis and in September both designs were awarded grants. With help from neighborhood volunteers and Great Rivers chapter members, both new wedges have now been prepped, planted, and mulched.

It is now time to rest and let the roots take hold. Cody and I look forward to next spring when the plants begin to send up shoots and the beds begin to fill in. Even though the wedges are planted, all three will still need quite a bit of attention to help the native plants fully establish themselves.



*Buder Wedge*

## ***RABBIT MONITORING PROJECT***

I recently had the opportunity to volunteer for a new project being run by the Department of Conservation at Columbia Bottom C.A. and found the experience to be very interesting. The first part of the ongoing study involved trapping, tagging and determining the weight, sex and the hind foot measurements of rabbits captured in a controlled area. The data obtained is to help determine the size and age of small game populations in several different types of habitat within the conservation area. The study is expected to continue for 5 to 10 years.

We were first presented with an overview of the study. We then learned how to operate traps, how to tag, handle and determine the sex of rabbits. The traps were assembled and placed in 6 grids, each consisting of 25 traps set in 5 rows, each trap about 60 meters apart. It was determined which 2 types of bait worked best in the two different types of traps which were located in several types of habitat. One evening I helped put the traps together and set traps in 2 of the grids. On another morning I checked traps in 2 of the grids. We were sent out in teams of two (one volunteer, one staff), taught how to orient ourselves to find the traps using a compass and how to record the data. Some traps were visible and others were located in very tall plants or crops. It was difficult walking through the various areas and was quite tiring.

The study was conducted for a few weeks on consecutive days during the end of September and the beginning of October. Trapping was dependent upon weather conditions to avoid stressing or harming the animals. My partner and I discovered a young female rabbit in one of our traps and I was able to hold it while the data was collected and she was tagged. Five rabbits along with a few other types of small game were captured and released during this first phase. The results from the data collected was shared with all who participated.

The second phase of the study began in mid-October. Volunteers are now listening for non-mating quail calls for 45 minutes before sunrise in several pre-determined locations throughout the area. I hope to have the opportunity to help with this part of the study as well. Rabbit monitoring will begin again in March and 3 additional grids will be set up at that time. There will be lots more opportunities to help with this study if you are interested.



*(Photo and article submitted by Lori Purk)*

## ***BIRDING FOR EVERYONE.***

**All MMN members are invited to attend these excellent bird classes and field trips for AT hours.**

1. October 12, Sunday - Bird Hike at Blue Grosbeak Trail and Busch CA lakes to look for migration activity and other birds. Meet Sarah Pitzer 9 AM to start and the hikes should complete around noon. Blue Grosbeak Trail is at Highway 94 just south of Interstate 64 on the left before you turn towards Busch. New parking lot has been constructed. Bring your field guides and water. Your guests are invited.

2. October 20, Monday - Bird Class with Sarah Pitzer on Ground Birds including Pheasant, Quail, Wild Turkey, Prairie Chicken and others. Location is Busch CA in the headquarters building classroom. Class time 7-8:30 PM.

3. November 3, Monday - Bird Class with Sarah Pitzer on Missouri Blackbirds. Location is Busch CA in the headquarters building classroom. Class time is 7-8:30 PM.

4. November 22, Saturday - Bird hike at Cuivre River State Park in Troy, MO. We will hike trails to discover birds in the prairies and woodland edges that Confluence Chapter has worked on to create improved habitat for wildlife and good land management. Plan on 9-noon with details to follow later. Meet at the Visitor Center.

5. December 8, Monday - Final Confluence Bird Education Class subject is Avian Reproduction. We will gather earlier than normal at 6:30 PM for a Potluck celebration to honor Sarah Pitzer who has displayed her incredible knowledge of birds and her willingness and ability to educate our Master Naturalist members and guests with her

expertise. Class will go to around 8:30 PM.

Missouri Master Naturalist Confluence, Great Rivers and Miramiguoia chapter members and guests are all invited.

***Larry Berglund***

***Confluence Chapter Advanced Training***

*(Submitted by Pam Wilcox)*

## ***HOLIDAY PARTY COMING RIGHT UP!***

Join us for our Annual Great Rivers Chapter Holiday Party, December 2, 2014.

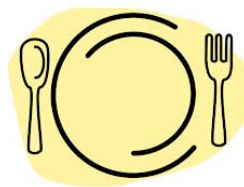
This year our party will be at Patrick's Restaurant located at 342 West Port Plaza Dr, St Louis, MO 63146 (near highway 270 and Page Avenue...in the same plaza as the Bread Company and Kobe Steakhouse).

Cost: \$26 per person. This includes an appetizer buffet (vegetarian and non veg. selections) and open bar with unlimited wine, beer, tea, soda, coffee and water. Eat and drink as much as you want!

Spouses and significant others are welcome to attend!

*RSVP by giving Barbra Stephenson your payment by November 18 (our last regular meeting of the year).*

*(Submitted by Kathleen Evans)*



## ***BOYS HOPE GIRLS HOPE NATIVE PLANT PROJECT***

Our colleagues with the Confluence Chapter originally started the Boys Hope Girls Hope project. They became overcommitted so we snapped up the opportunity to convert this urban office park property in Bridgeton to native plantings.

Under the guidance of Angie Weber of MCD and Scott Woodbury of Shaw Nature Reserve, several waves of planting have been done to reduce the turf and high-maintenance landscape to natives such as palm sedge, sumac, beautyberry and assorted perennials. The results are beautiful, ecologically useful and will be maintained at a lower cost to benefit the bottom line for this non-profit organization.

The most recent planting of palm sedge and a bioswale was done in early summer by some of our own members. These small plants grew at an astonishing rate and have helped slow the water run-off from several nearby parking lots. A number of native shrubs and several fringe trees were planted on the same day to help conceal unsightly electrical equipment.

The next installment will be a prairie at the rear of the building to include the future site of a monarch way station. The infestation of nutsedge and other weeds was sprayed in anticipation of a winter seeding of native forbs and grasses. Stay tuned for a workday announcement! We'd love to have the input from those of you who have been installing way stations in other areas. Included are pictures of the Prairie Prep area and the Bioswale.

*(Article and photos submitted by Mary Mierkowski)*



***Prairie Prep***



***Bioswale***



## ***UPDATES ON THE MCDONNELL PARK PRAIRIE PROJECT***

As announced in the last newsletter, we are embarking on an exciting new project helping St. Louis County Parks manage a newly installed prairie at McDonnell Park in St. Ann, Missouri. Doreen Cyr, the park supervisor, has installed an equipment locker stocked with two 1-gallon sprayers, a backpack sprayer, gloves, loppers, hand saws, glyphosate and blue herbicide dye. She is also going to get some hand sprayers and dab sticks for treating stumps...and anything else we feel we might need. Volunteers can access the locker and work as their schedules allow. There will be a log in the locker for entering each member's volunteer time.

Great Rivers chapter member Shawn Thomason has been central to this process. He is happy to report that while there are plenty of invasives to fight (Bull Thistle, Crown Vetch, Lespedeza, Autumn Olive and Honeysuckle), they are in isolated patches and thus fairly easy to address. The biggest challenge right now is the amount of Desmodium (Beggars Lice) from which the seeds stick to your pants and follow you home. Shawn has been to the site on several occasions to spray the crown vetch and lespedeza before it went to seed. The list of prairie species he has identified so far are: Coriopsis, Purple Coneflower, Mexican Hat, Canadian Wild Rye, Dogbain, Indian grass (possibly), Partridge Pea, and Aster.

Shawn is talking to James Traeger (entomologist and naturalist at Shaw Nature Reserve) about scheduling a walkthrough to get his assessment and to help with developing a management plan. Doreen Cyr is extremely supportive of our involvement and very interested in learning more about prairie management herself. She may even take the Missouri Master Naturalist class next year.

Volunteers will need to fill out a St. Louis County volunteer application and volunteer contract if they want to work in the prairie. New volunteers can leave the application and contract in the locker when accessing the tools. For Great Rivers members interested in volunteering, contact Shawn for the applications, contracts, and lock combination as well as an update on progress and tasks to do.

(Submitted by Shawn Thomason)  
[smt68@yahoo.com](mailto:smt68@yahoo.com)

## ***MONARCH BUTTERFLY NEWS***

### **Update on the Monarch Waystation at Claire Gempp Davidson (CGD) Memorial Conservation Area in Sunset Hills**

Earlier this year, our Chapter installed a Monarch Waystation in a corner of the existing Butterfly Garden at the Claire Gempp Davidson (CGD) Memorial Conservation Area.

Although we have not seen any Monarch Butterflies in the Waystation, on September 19, 2014 we observed a Monarch caterpillar near a Swamp Milkweed in the Waystation.

Many of the leaves on the Swamp Milkweed appeared to have been eaten, and we believe the Monarch caterpillar was the insect feasting on the plant.

The next day we didn't find any Monarch Caterpillars in the Waystation, but Bill Hoss and I observed a Monarch Caterpillar in the Butterfly Garden right next to the Waystation. Monarch caterpillars have 5 growth stages or instars, and the caterpillar appeared to be a 5th instar.

Next spring we plan to plant more native milkweeds in the Waystation, in the nearby Butterfly Garden and in a new planting area near the Front Gate, so hopefully we will see more Monarchs at CGD next year.

*(Cont)*

**Monarch News from the latest Pollinator Survey at Hidden Creek Savanna (HCS) in Forest Park**

For the first time since we have been doing surveys at Hidden Creek Savanna, we found not just one, but two Monarch Caterpillars at HCS during the September 27, 2014 pollinator survey (thanks to Jen Grable's keen observation skills). One of the caterpillars appeared to be a 4th instar on a Swamp Milkweed plant near the creek at the edge of the savanna. Another caterpillar located near Common Milkweed plants in the woodland area appeared to be a 5th instar. The caterpillar was seen on a Goldenrod plant, and was probably getting ready to pupate. (photos)

**Monarch Sightings at the Operation Brightside Native Plant Demonstration Garden located near Kingshighway and Vandeventer**

Several of our Chapter members (Joyce Borgmeyer and Pam Fournier) have been involved with the Operation Brightside Native Plant Demonstration Garden.

During a brief visit to the Garden on September 20, 2014, I saw a number of Monarch Butterflies and counted up to seven at one time. I had been told by someone involved with Monarch Watch that September 20 was usually the peak date for Monarch migration in our area, and this year that appeared to be true! It's also amazing to see the amount of wildlife in such a modest sized garden in the City.

Along those lines I encourage everyone to plant native milkweeds for the Monarchs, no matter how small the area.

Currently, I only have two small Butterfly Milkweed plants in my yard.

Yet, I found a Monarch caterpillar on one of the milkweeds this summer.

Next year, I'm planning to add more milkweeds for the Monarchs!



**4<sup>th</sup> Instar**

*Monarch Caterpillar from the pollinator survey at Hidden Creek Savanna*



**5<sup>th</sup> Instar**

*Monarch Caterpillar from the Pollinator Survey at Hidden Creek Savanna*

*(Photos and article submitted by Sherri Schmidt)*

Plant & Pollinator Survey: September 27, 2014 and Fall Bird Survey: October 18, 2014 at Hidden Creek Savanna are available from Sherri Schmidt. Survey results will be available in the next issue of the Gazette.

## ***2014 MMN STATE CONFERENCE***

The Osage Trails Missouri Master Naturalists really know how to put on a party! Their selection of the Unity Village hotel and conference center made for a beautiful setting and very comfortable learning atmosphere for many of the workshops. The classes were very rewarding for me. I repeatedly thought, "My husband has to come next year. He'd really love this!" My companion, Pam W. attended different classes so we had loads to share and discuss.

One class, A Study of Habitats, was held at EarthWorks, a learning facility that is housed within SubTropolis. SubTropolis is a 55,000,000 square foot manmade cave in the bluffs above the Missouri River that has trademarked the phrase *World's Largest Underground Business Complex*. It's an immense underground industrial/commercial community large enough to have streets and intersections. Heck, even a nice sized post office!

There was plenty of time for fun as well. I was lucky to tour Rocky Point Glades and enjoy the results of the restoration efforts that have been going on such as prescribed burns for honeysuckle and clearing of the woody invasive plants. I enjoyed comparing that natural community to Shaw Nature Reserve. It had 15-30% tree cover and the trees were primarily Post Oak. Wild Petunia and Onion, Spiderwort, Purple Milkweed, Foxglove Beardtongue were in flower (to name but a few).

In addition to the classes, there was a Friday Evening Social and Saturday Evening Dinner and Dancing. A silent auction is held each year and proceeds help support scholarships for future conferences. There was very clever stuff at the auction this year such as slice of tree trunk carved with the Missouri Master Naturalist logo.

*(Submitted by Cori Westcott)*

*Editor's note:*

*The 2014 Missouri State Conference was hosted by the Osage Trails chapter in Kansas City May 30-June 1. Attendees of the Great Rivers Chapter were Michael Smith, Michael Meredith, Dennis Honkomp, James and Brenda Christ, Lorraine Schraut, Carolyn DeVaney, Diana Miller, Pam Wilcox and Cori Westcott.*

*The 2015 Master Naturalist State Conference will be held May 1-3 in Springfield, Missouri at the Oasis Inn and Convention Center.*



