



Great
Rivers

Missouri Master
Naturalist

Great Rivers Gazette



TM

Spring Issue

Volume 6 Number 1

Hidden Creek Savanna

Great Rivers Gazette

Spring 2016

Vol.6 No. 1

The President's Corner

Published by the Great Rivers Chapter of
Missouri Master Naturalist

A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.

By Henrik Ibsen

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Noah didn't build the ark in the rain. Neither will I wait until the end of my term as president to train a successor. I have been privileged to preside for two two-year terms ending this November. It's time to pass the baton to another leader. There's always wisdom in bringing in fresh thought and energy.

Most of you have heard me liken an organization to a car. Very few of us purchase a vehicle solely for the intent of working over the engine. We simply want to transport ourselves from Point A to Point B. But to do so efficiently and effectively, we must pay attention to the engine's performance and maintain it as best as we can.

To that end, we have revisited our by-laws and made adjustments that better reflect our procedures. We have composed an Operational Rhythms document that contains activities that happen annually so new board members and officers can refer to this rather than learn of an event too late to prepare. Our committees have reviewed their methods of procedures and revised them on our website. Many restoration tools have been acquired during my tenure. We keep another document entitled Chapter Supplies and Locations to facilitate the care, storage and use of our tools. These documents are posted for all to read on our webpage. They're in the same location as our Training Request and Project Opportunity forms. Under MAIN MENU, click on Chapter, then click Documents.

Besides presiding over the business meetings, I receive communiques from the state coordinator and disseminate them to you. Often, I'll represent us in the mentoring teleconference calls. I write a yearly report. I oversee the projects. Currently, the board is meeting quarterly. I write agendas for the business and board meetings. Posting events on the calendar and monitoring the hours and ordering pins are not duties of the president. I just do them. Don't think that those efforts are part of the duties. They're not. Power points for business meetings are not either. And, most recently, with the dependable and often brave ;-) assistance of Bob Virag, I am not orchestrating the audio-visual needs either. It never was a duty of the president, although I took that on as well.

I hope by listing executive duties above, you understand that the president doesn't have as many duties as you may have believed. We need you to be the fresh source of energy and thought for the executive office. Please don't leave it to the next guy. I knew nothing about the office four years ago. Pam Wilcox suggested I do it so I stepped up. Now, I'm asking you.

Cori Westcott

Front Cover An employee of DJM Ecological Services, Inc. watches grasses burn at Hidden Creek Savanna in Forest Park on March 21, 2016.

The Missouri Master Naturalist™ program is a community-based natural resource education and volunteer service program for adults, sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the University of Missouri Extension.



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Hidden Creek Burn

DJM Ecological Services, Inc. out of
Wentzville, MO



Honeysuckle Sweeps Week

Missouri Botanical Garden's BiodiverseCity Initiative began a region-wide effort for communities to invite their citizens to honeysuckle eradication events throughout the region and be trained in techniques they could take home and use on their own bush honeysuckle. The Great Rivers Chapter conducted two events.

Bill Hoss led the efforts in Deer Creek Park, Webster Groves. Joining city residents and members of the St. Louis chapter of Wild Ones, Natural Landscapers members helped clear approximately 100s of square feet of park ground. Also assisting was the Webster Groves Parks and Recreation Department who furnished a wood chipper and two employees who ground up the cut honeysuckle as volunteers hauled it to them.



Among our members who attended were Sean Tracy, Bob Virag, Linda Lesh, Michael Meredith, Vaughn Meister and Bill Hoss. (Please forgive the editor for not recognizing others in this photo.)



Another Honeysuckle Sweeps Week event conducted by our chapter was at the Paul A. Schroeder Park in Manchester, Missouri. Cori Westcott led this event. Twenty-four folks attended. There was a Boy Scout troop and several citizens of Manchester in attendance. All learned how to identify both honeysuckle bush and vine that morning. It was a great example of a Missouri woodland being choked out of sunlight to support any native plants that should have lived there. We were able to see Gooseberry, Dutchman's Breeches and smell a twig of a Spicebush. Roughly 325 shrubs were piled up for shredding. Peggy Parr and Bill Hoss also attended. The following are some photos from the Manchester event.



Steger Middle School Honeysuckle Removal Day



On April 5th, ten Missouri Master Naturalists and 320 students descended upon the hundreds of honeysuckle bushes growing on the campus of Steger 6th grade Center in Webster Groves. Volunteers included 7 from the Great Rivers Chapter and 3 from Miramiguoa. For two shifts, 9-11am and 12-2 pm, volunteers cut and pulled bushes, creating many piles in marked areas around a creek and wooded area adjacent to the grassy football field. The first wave of 160 students and their teachers came out during the first shift and were led by Science teacher, Ms. Lisa Picker. They hauled the bushes to a designated blacktop area for almost two hours as the volunteers tried to keep up with demand. After lunch, the second shift came out and did the

same creating a huge pile on the blacktop. Ms. Picker had taught lessons on invasives and the affect bush honeysuckle has on the environment previous to the planned hack. Students were engaged and motivated to rid their school grounds of it. Their excitement and interactions with the volunteers made it a rewarding day for all.



This event was very taxing upon the naturalists. Cutting and treating stumps quick enough to occupy the energies of 160 hauling sixth graders was a daunting effort!

Our thanks to Great Rivers members Bill Hoss, Cindy Lueder, Vaughn Meister, Peggy Morrison, Evelyn Tullos, Bob Virag and Tessa Wasserman and Miramiguans Max Arens, Jay Doty and Janice Schweitzer.

Congratulations to Tessa Wasserman for her efforts at coordinating the event!



Congratulations to Vaughn Meister!!

Vaughn was awarded Webster Groves Tree Steward Award for 2016. We're proud to know you!



Our own Bob Virag has made Missouri Stream Team Monitors' lives easier!



Have you ever had a conversation where someone says "that's a bad design"? You can be sure the comment came from an engineer. If you are a Stream Team member who does macroinvertebrate monitoring, you most likely have had issues with the racks used to sort the critters. Well, our very own member Robert Virag has designed and built a better system. The new version folds out in one motion, which makes it quick and easy to set up and also fits into your car. Bob was recognized in the May/June 2016 edition of the Stream Team Channels newsletter. As Karen Westin, DNR VMQM Coordinator says "we love our new net stands, and appreciate Bob's ingenuity and tenacity in making the "dream net stand" a reality". You can make one yourself by using the following link, which includes complete instructions.

<http://mostreamteam.org/Documents/VMQM/FoldableKickNetTable.pdf>

Speaking of Bob...

He wrote the following thank you note from our chapter to the Greenway Network's Larry Ruff for the continued use of an ecological restoration tool kit.

As Cori Westcott mentioned to you yesterday at the MSTWC board meeting, the Missouri Master Naturalist-Great Rivers Chapter is extremely grateful for Greenway Network's generosity in allowing our exclusive use of one of your four honeysuckle toolkits for the past six months.

The Master Naturalists put the toolkit to very good use by successfully completing 13 major honeysuckle hack events since October 2015. The volunteers left acres of mature honeysuckles quaking in their roots!

In addition to their value as weapons of mass destruction, the honeysuckle tools were useful educational instruments as well. Hundreds of middle school students are now fully aware of the importance of habitat restoration thanks to your generosity.

On behalf of all Missouri Master Naturalists in the Great Rivers Chapter and the partners we serve, a heart felt thank you!

Bellefontaine Cemetery

Reneé Benage

On March 22nd, several Great Riverians took a self-guided walking tour at Bellefontaine Cemetery. Our goal was to see the three Missouri State Champion trees and see what else was blooming. We walked for a few hours, enjoying the beautiful array of blooming magnolias and redbuds. The daffodils and tulips were magnificent as well – not native of course, but lovely none the less! We did see the state champion Shingle Oak as well as the champion American Elm. Saving the Red Mulberry

for another trip. In our wandering, we ran into the cemetery horticulturist, Kyle Cheesborough, planting trees at the south end of the grounds. He was very cordial and let us interrupt his planting with a question and answer session. If you get a chance to visit the cemetery you won't be disappointed. Watch the GR calendar – maybe the autumn would be another good time to visit!



Maxine found a huge mushroom.



Kyle Cheesborough discussing plans for new plantings.





Up close and personal with the Missouri State Champion American Elm



From left to right: Vaughn Meister, Renee Benage, Maxine Stone, Nancy Burgess and Pam Wilcox

Summary of Winter Bird Survey done at the Forest Park Hidden Creek Savanna site on 3/19/2016

Summary of Winter Bird Survey done at the Forest Park Hidden Creek Savanna site on 3/19/2016

Observations were made at the three sites chosen for the initial bird survey:

Site 1: Wetland area - triangle shaped piece of ground near the intersection of Union & Theater streets.

Site 2: Bridge area by the stream in the middle of the prairie restoration area. Observations taken between the large Oak and the bridge.

Site 3: Edge of the site opposite the intersection of Summit & Union streets. Observations taken at the edge of site near the street.

Method of Observation:

The same method used for the initial survey was followed:

At each site, observations were made for at least 15 minutes. Observations were also made as the group walked through the site.

Only birds seen and/or heard within the Project site were recorded. As with the initial survey, birds flying over the site were included.

Multiple team members made observations. At the end of the observing period, the results were consolidated.

If one team member observed a bird, it was recorded along with the number.

If more than one team member observed a bird, the highest count was recorded.

Marypat Ehlmann, Emily Horton, Bill Hoss, Lori Purk and Sherri Schmidt participated in the survey.

Winter Bird Survey 03/19/2016

Weather conditions:

On Saturday, 03/19/2016, it was mostly sunny with some clouds and a light wind, with temperatures in the low 40s.

Birds observed within Site 1 - Wetland (10:07 - 10:22 am)

Cardinals 2 Both female Grackles 2 Fly over
Red-tailed Hawk 1 Fly over
Robin 2
Song Sparrow 2

Birds observed within Site 2 - Prairie (9:00 - 9:40 am, 10:24 - 10:30 am)

Blue Jay 1
Cardinals 2 Male & female
Flicker 1 Heard calling & drumming Grackles 2 Fly over
Red-bellied Woodpecker 1 Heard
Red-winged Blackbird 2 Heard & seen
Robin 5
Sparrow 1 Possibly White-throated?
Song Sparrow 2 Heard & seen
Starlings 2 plus large flock in grassy area

Large unidentified bird 1 Possibly a hawk? Sitting in a Sycamore Tree

Birds observed within Site 3 - Woodland (9:41 - 10:00 am):

Blue Jay 2
Cowbird 1
Hawk 1 Heard, unidentified
Red-winged Blackbird 1
Robin 2
Song Sparrow 1 Heard & seen in a small tree

In addition, the team made the following observations:

Plants blooming -
Sunny Prairie - Spring Beauties

Plants about to bloom - Woodland - Blue Bells

Invasive plants -
Wetland - Bush Honeysuckle
Prairie - Wintercreeper climbing several trees
Woodland - Bush Honeysuckle, Japanese Honeysuckle Vine (near eroded area)

Mammals -
Woodland - 3 squirrels in a tree

General observations - Water was flowing in the creek
Large branches had fallen from several trees at the edge of the prairie
A large hornet's nest was observed in a tree at the edge of the wetland
Three small bird's nests were seen in a small tree at the edge of the woodland, near the street.

Survey submitted by Sherri Schmidt



From left to right: Marypat Ehlmann, Bill Hoss, Emily Horton and Lori Purk.

The photo was taken in the woodlands near the creek where we found some Bluebells getting ready to bloom.