



# Missouri Master Naturalist



Summer-Fall Issue 2016

Volume 6 Number 2

*For if one link in nature's chain might be lost, another might be lost, until the whole of things will vanish piecemeal.*

*---Thomas Jefferson*



Monarch Butterfly observed in Queeny Park during the Missouri Butterfly Monitoring Network walks. See page 5.

— Photo by Sherri Schmidt

# Great Rivers Gazette

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## The President's Corner



Can you believe four years have already passed? In some ways it seems a blink of an eye and in other ways, four years seems about right.

We have doubled our size in my two terms. We have expanded the nature of our services to include more opportunities to folks who can't work as hard as they used to. There's always something for everyone. MMN is a smorgasbord of adventure.

The function of our chapter's operation rides

solely upon the success of our committees. Please find a time in your tenure as a member to serve. It will be a rewarding experience for you and a benefit to the chapter you hold dear.

And me? I'm just going to do more of what I love doing. I'll visit more homeowners and encourage habitat building in the urban environment through Bring Conservation Home. I'll win back habitat from the invading non-natives. I'll continue to work at Shaw Nature Reserve each Thursday. I'll continue coordinating biological and chemical monitoring of the Grand Glaize Creek. And, of course, I'll continue to steward the ecological restoration of the city of Manchester's Seibert Park. I hope to see you out in the field! So much earth and so little time!

*Cori Westcott*

– *President, Great Rivers Chapter*

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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**U** Extension  
Live. And Learn.

"The Master Naturalist name and dragonfly logo are trademarks of Texas Cooperative Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, used with permission for the Missouri Master Naturalist program."

**Front Cover** Monarch Butterfly in Queeny Park – Sherri Schmidt  
**Back Cover** Pinwheel Mushrooms – Bangert Island, St. Charles MO

### Great Rivers Chapter Officers

*President* ----- *Coralynne Westcott*  
*Vice President*----- *Shawn Thomason*  
*Secretary* ----- *Diana Miller*  
*Treasurer* ----- *Barbra Stephenson*

*Board Member-at-Large* ----- *Cindy Lueder*  
*Board Member-at-Large* ----- *William Hoss*  
*Board Member-at-Large* ----- *Sherri Schmidt*



## Webster Groves Tree City USA



**MDC, Arbor Day Foundation, and communities celebrate 40 years of Tree City USA in Missouri**

*Event celebrated 88 Missouri communities in the program*



**ST. LOUIS, Mo.** -- For the last four decades, people who live in Tree City USA communities have enjoyed the benefits of having greener, healthier places to live. In Missouri, that includes 88 communities representing almost 43 percent of the state’s population.



Representatives Tessa Wasserman and Annie Russell from the City of Webster Groves, a Tree City USA community for 33 years, enjoyed the anniversary celebration

Tree City USA is a national recognition program sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation and administered in this state by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). MDC recently recognized the 40th anniversary of the national program by celebrating the 88 Missouri communities in the program at a special event on September 12 in St. Louis at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

“After 40 years, it’s clear that Tree City USA is a proven framework to help communities establish a healthy, sustainable urban forestry program,” said Russell Hinnah, MDC forestry field program supervisor. “This program helps communities invest in their trees, which makes those

communities better places to live.”

Only 16 cities nationwide have been in the program for the full 40 years. Although none are in Missouri, there are several with 30-plus years, including Des Peres (33 years), Ellisville (35 years), Fenton (32 years), Mexico (37 years), Rock Hill (30 years), Springfield (31 years), St. Louis (34 years), University City (34 years), and Webster Groves (33 years).

At the recent anniversary celebration, MDC Interim Director Tom Draper announced that the Conservation Department is committed to making sure the Tree City USA program continues well into the future.

“The Department has set a new goal to add 40 new communities to the program over the next five years,” said Draper. “Our foresters are ready to assist any municipality interested in joining the program.”

Tree City USA requires communities to meet four fundamental standards. Each community must maintain a tree board or department, establish a tree-care ordinance, develop a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita, and celebrate Arbor Day each year.

That flexibility allows communities of any size to participate. Kansas City is the biggest Missouri community in the Tree City USA program, with a population of 467,000 people. Augusta is the smallest, with 249 people.

In 2015, Missouri Tree City USA communities invested \$20 million in tree and forest management, including tree inventories, pruning, planting, hazard assessments, education, and planning.

**Get more information about the Tree City USA program, including all participating Missouri communities, at [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov) and search “Tree City USA,” or at [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZh](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZh)**



## Webster Groves Green Space Advisory Commission

Congratulations to Glen Horton, Bill Hoss, Tess Wasserman, and Annie Russell on their selection to the Webster Groves Green Space Advisory Commission.

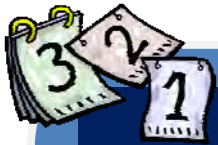
Glen reported that members are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council for a three year term, with a possibility of a second three year term. Meetings are held once a month and attendance is mandatory unless excused in advance. Of the nine appointed members five are Certified Missouri Master Naturalists, with four members of the Great Rivers chapter. Over the past years members of the Commission have taken part in the annual Make A

Difference Day, usually removing honeysuckle in one of Webster's parks, received a Trim grant from MDC for the publication of a booklet highlighting Webster's trees of distinction, and manned the information table once a month at the farmers' market from April thru October. The park manager wants to start a volunteer program for the city parks and the chapter has just recently signed a Partnership Agreement with the Webster Groves parks department.



This agreement should lead to future volunteer opportunities for the chapter.

Thank you Glen for spearheading the partnership agreement.



### Advanced Training Committee Speaker Calendar for the first half of 2017

December 13, 2016	Holiday Party – No Speaker
January 17, 2017	Soils – Ross Braun, MMN and CPESC
February 21, 2017	Black Bears in Missouri – Tom Meister MDC
March 21, 2017	Earthquake Geology – Boot Pierce, Missouri Geologic Survey
April 18, 2017	Frog Watch – Michael Dawson, St. Louis Zoo FrogWatch Program
May 16, 2017	Water Treatment – Tim Ganz and Tom Simmons, Missouri American



## Missouri Master Naturalists Participate in Missouri Butterfly Monitoring Network (MBMN)

This summer the Butterfly House began the Missouri Butterfly Monitoring Network (MBMN) and recruited volunteers to collect data on butterflies in our area. Several Great Rivers Chapter members participated. Before monitoring began, the Butterfly House staff trained the volunteers on butterfly identification and the monitoring process. Part of the training included a 'mock' monitoring walk to hone our skills in Faust Park, where the Butterfly House is located.

After the training, volunteers were asked to monitor a selected route in a public site, like a park or conservation area and note the butterflies observed. Volunteers selected their own site, with a route of at least a mile. Ideally most sites contained a variety of key plant communities, like wetlands, prairies, woodlands, etc.

Volunteers were asked to monitor on their assigned route at least 6 to 8 times between June 1st and August 31st.

The PollardBase protocols were used for monitoring and required:

- The route takes between 45 to 120 minutes to walk.
- A monitoring session should begin after 10 am and be completed before 3:30 pm.
- Weather should be at least 50% sunny, with a minimum temperature of 70 degrees F.
- Wind should be moderate or less

The last three protocols helped to insure volunteers would see more butterflies, since butterflies are usually more active during midday, when it is sunny, warmer and less windy. Volunteers entered data collected into a database so it could be shared with people doing research on butterfly conservation.

Initially I was hoping to do monitoring at the Claire Gempp Davidson Memorial Conservation Area in Sunset Hills, but the site was too small and didn't have a route at least a mile long. We settled on a route at Queeny Park, and it included native wildflower areas, woodland edges, woodlands and grasslands. Initially it was a challenge to identify butterflies on the wing, but with practice it got easier. During my initial walks I was surprised to observe more butterflies at the woodland edges and in the woodlands than in the native wildflower areas. During one walk I was thrilled to see a Giant Swallowtail Butterfly flying through the woods. I also observed butterflies I have never seen before, like

Northern Pearly-eyes. As the summer went on, I began to see more butterflies in the native wildflower and grassland areas. On my final walk of the season I observed almost 50 butterflies, including Monarchs, Black Swallowtails, a Red-spotted Purple, a Snout, a Great Spangled Fritillary, a Painted Lady, a Question Mark and numerous Buckeyes (among others). I really enjoyed the experience and hope to continue participating in the MBMN. It's a great way to go for a walk in nature and contribute to a citizen science project. If you would like to know more about my experiences, please feel free to contact me. If you are interested in participating in the project, contact Tad Yankoski at the Butterfly House on 636-530-0076 ext 16 or email him at [tad.yankoski@mobot.org](mailto:tad.yankoski@mobot.org). Tad can put you on a mailing list so you receive updates about spring training classes as information becomes available.



The photo above was taken during one of my MBMN walks at Queeny Park. I wasn't sure what kind of butterfly it was initially, but determined it was a black Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilla glaucous*). Tad Yankoski at the Butterfly House further identified it as a female black morph of the Tiger Swallowtail. The photo shows the tiger striping even though it is black against black. I had never identified one before.

--- Sherri Schmidt



## Swallowtail Caterpillars

Sean Tracy was fortunate to capture these images of Swallowtail caterpillars growing on his potted parsley plants. Maybe parsley should be on everyone's list of plants to purchase in the spring. Thanks for sharing Sean.



---Sean Tracy photos



# Planting Milkweeds at the Claire Gempp Davidson Memorial Conservation Area

October 15, 2016



Last year Missouri Master Naturalists collected milkweed seeds from several project areas for the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC's) Milkweeds for Monarchs program. One of the areas was the Claire Gempp Davidson (CGD) Memorial Conservation Area in Sunset Hills. The seeds were used to grow milkweeds at MDC's George O. White Nursery.

In late July, MDC asked if Missouri Master Naturalists would like milkweeds from the Nursery for projects. I submitted a proposal requesting 40 milkweeds for CGD. Although the conservation area has a number of milkweeds, especially Common Milkweeds, we wanted to provide additional Monarch Butterfly host plants in three

Great Rivers project areas at CGD - the Monarch Waystation, the Butterfly Garden and a grouping of native plants at the front gate of the property. Our request was approved, and in early October we received 75 bare root milkweed plants, since the plants were only available in bundles of 25.

The plants were planted over several workdays in October. Bill Hoss, Pam Klump, Rachel Becknell, Lori Purk, Rita Buckley and her niece Patty (who is not a Missouri Master Naturalist, just a wonderfully helpful person) all volunteered to help plant milkweeds. Thanks to their efforts, we should have more Butterfly Weed, Swamp Milkweed and Common Milkweed blooming, offering more food for Monarch caterpillars and nectar for the butterflies at Claire Gempp Davidson next year!

If you know of a project that could use some milkweed plants in the future, keep the MDC Milkweeds for Monarchs program in mind. This year the request deadline was August 1st, and the request should include the following information:

- Master Naturalist Chapter name
- Project Coordinator name, email, daytime phone, shipping address for plant delivery
- Number of plants requested
- A one page project narrative giving an overview of the full project, including:
  - Property location (it must be public property)
  - Property owner
  - Size description (size, soil, sunlight, existing vegetation, etc.)
  - Type of public access
  - Project partners
  - Identify if this is a new or on-going planting
  - List what other resources have been donated or acquired for the project (plants, signage, etc.)
  - Identify who is responsible for on-going maintenance

-- Sherri Schmidt





## Greenway Network - Race for the Rivers Festival



Our Great Rivers Master Naturalist booth was a great success at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Greenway Network Race for the Rivers Festival August 27, 2016...thanks to all the hard work from the eight volunteers that helped set up and staff the booth:



Dave Richardson,  
Mary Mierkowski,  
Pam Wilcox,  
Tessa Wasserman,  
Evelyn Tullos,  
Linda Lesh,  
Sharon Baldesarre,  
Peggy Paar, and  
Bob Virag

Greenway Network is a long standing Stream Team Association in the Missouri Stream Team Watershed Coalition. Based in St. Charles, MO,

Greenway Network aims to conserve natural resources, encourage sound management of the watersheds, and protect the



quality of life for the residents of the St. Louis Region. They do that by creating a network of communication and consensus among citizens, government leaders and other organizations which share our goals, and to encourage everyone to 'act locally' to make it happen.

Race for the Rivers Festival is one of Greenway Networks most popular events. Founded in 2007, the festival is focused on clean water education, restoration and recreation. Every year, thousands of festival visitors cheer on hundreds of competitors in the 65, 41, and 25 mile Missouri River canoe and kayak paddling races.



Several hundred visitors stopped by our Missouri Master Naturalist booth to view our exhibits.

Mary Mierkowski answered many questions about her display of dozens of Missouri native clams and mollusks. Scores of young visitors clamored over the miniature stream table and open trays of live aquatic invertebrates. Most (but not all) were excited to 'catch' their first Crawfish. There were plenty of smiles and even a few light bulbs illuminated over the visitors heads! It was a great day, thanks to all the volunteers.



Charlene Waggoner, the president of the host organization, Greenway Network, was especially delighted at the turnout at the MMN booth. You know that we succeeded when the visitors post photos of our booth on their own Facebook page!

Sadly, the Bangert Island nature hike and experience event we planned for students from Carr-Lane Middle School was abruptly cancelled by their new principal the night before. The students were sorely disappointed. The principal said he could not find any adults to supervise the students on the bus ride out to the event. But news reports show that the previous principal (who was abruptly reassigned in early summer) was arrested the day before, August 25, for theft of the school dance program field trip funds. I guess I understand the newly appointed principal's caution, but it's the students who suffered the most. We should all think about what we can do to make up for this disappointment. If Carr-Lane won't bring the students to nature, we should find a way to bring nature to the students. If anyone has any ideas, please let me know.

Thanks again to all the volunteers who participated for a very successful and enjoyable day!

--- Bob Virag





## St. Louis Audubon Society Mallard Lake Pollinator Garden Planting

Partners, we had a GREAT DAY this past Saturday installing ~450 plants to complete the North and South Native Plant Pollinator Gardens as key parts of the Mallard Lake Prairie Project! About 25 volunteers and partner staff made it happen, in spite of a few sprinkles. --- Pam Wilcox



Mitch Leachman attached a few photos showing the group with each completed garden. For additional photos, taken by STL Audubon staff and Mark Spreitler, see the St. Louis Audubon FaceBook page:  
[https://www.facebook.com/St-Louis-Audubon-Society-116967501667135/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=1274764809220726](https://www.facebook.com/St-Louis-Audubon-Society-116967501667135/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1274764809220726)



## St. Louis Audubon Society Mallard Lake Community Stewardship Program

October 22, 2016



On October 22nd, 20 volunteers and staff with Forest ReLeaf, Missouri Master Naturalists, St. Louis Audubon, St. Louis County Parks, and Wild Ones – St. Louis Chapter installed over 300 native Missouri shrubs and trees at Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park. This is just the latest effort in the multi-year collaboration that is restoring habitat around the Mallard Lake section of the park. Forest ReLeaf provided the plants and significant in-kind support. The Missouri Department of Conservation and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service have provided nearly all the funding required for the effort. Many thanks to everyone who helped out!

-- from *St. Louis Audubon Society Tale Feathers*, Volume 83, Issue 8

*Great Rivers Chapter members Renee Benage, Diana Miller, Bob Virag, and Evelyn Tullos helped plant over 350 trees in Creve Coeur Park*

### Partners and Projects Committee New Partners

The following organizations have committed to a partnership with the Great Rivers Chapter. Please remember to support the opportunities provided by these wonderful groups. Many area parks departments have limited full time staff and depend on volunteers to assist in their various outdoor tasks.

— *Pam Wilcox, Chair*

- Kirkwood Parks Department
- Ellisville Parks Department
- Webster Groves Parks Department
- Mississippi River Water Trails Association



# Native Prairie Strip Demonstration Exhibit at the Science Center

October 18, 2016

Many thanks to your members who planted the Prairie Strip at the St. Louis Science Center on Tuesday. While it was a small job, the Prairie Strip will be used to educate many members of the public often that we do not reach.

---Bob Lee, Missouri Master Naturalist - Confluence Chapter



The native prairie strip demonstration exhibit was planted today at the St. Louis Science Center GROW Exhibit. Special thanks to members of the Grow Native!/Missouri Prairie Foundation team who assisted with the native plant selection advisement, design and coordination, Ted Spaid, Principal/SWT Design, who assisted with today's plant layout, and a wonderful group of Missouri Master Naturalists/Great Rivers & Confluence chapters, who planted the native plant landscape plugs. Here is a plant list and photos of our planting experience.

----Bill Ruppert, Grow Native!, a Committee of the Missouri Prairie Foundation



### Native Plant List

#### The Forbs (flowering perennials)

- Asclepias tuberosa* butterfly milkweed
- Coreopsis palmata* prairie coreopsis
- Dalea purpurea* purple prairie clover
- Echinacea pallida* pale coneflower
- Fragaria virginiana* wild strawberry
- Liatris aspera* rough blazing star
- Monarda fistulosa* wild bergamot
- Penstemon digitalis* foxglove beardtongue
- Ratibida pinnata* grey headed coneflower
- Rudbeckia fulgida var. sullivantii* showy coneflower
- Salvia azurea* blue sage
- Silphium integrifolium* rosinweed
- Silphium terebinthinaceum* prairie dock
- Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* New England aster

#### The Grasses

- Bouteloua curtipendula* side oats grama
- Eragrostis trichoides* sand lovegrass





## Missouri Master Naturalist Advanced Training – Sedalia, Missouri

September 17, 2016

This year the Hi-Lonesome Master Naturalists chapter invited naturalists from across the state to gather for a one-day training program in Sedalia, Missouri. The one-day program provided advanced training, networking, interactions with some of the best conservation professionals in the area, and a host of new explorations. Sessions included classes on Missouri Birds, a study of past Great Naturalists, Insect Life, Understanding Streams and Wild Edible and Medicinal plants. Obviously, there was something for everyone. Here are some thoughts on the event from Great Rivers chapter member Laura Belarbi:

"I went on a bird walk early Sat morning with people who are much more into birding than I am. It was a beautiful morning and I got a good photo and posted it to FaceBook. I found the Soils class to be informative and volunteered to monitor a site in Perry County. I enjoyed touring the Bothwell Lodge and posted a few good photos to my FaceBook page. I especially liked that John Bothwell built the tower over a cave and attempted to cool that part of the lodge with cool cave air. He also had bees living in windowsills of the tower, and reforested the area after buying the property. It was a long drive from St. Louis, but it was a beautiful drive along Highway 50 and I had some really good, cheap pizza in Tipton."

--- *Laura Belarbi*

Other Great Rivers members who attended the event include Dennis Honkomp, Lorraine Schraut, and Barbra Stephenson.



*John Bothwell built the tower over a cave to cool the lodge*



*Bothwell Lodge near Sedalia, MO*



## Missouri Conservationist

October 2016

### A Lasting Legacy – Master naturalist volunteers in Missouri give back in big ways

<https://mdc.mo.gov/conmag/2016-10/lasting-legacy>

Please take a few minutes and read this great article about the work being done across the state by Missouri Master Naturalists. Although our chapter wasn't specifically mentioned, our sister chapter Confluence across the river was. The chapter built an impressive outdoor classroom and volunteers now host scores of school children who realize just how great it is to be outdoors. The same sentiment seemed to resonate amongst the chapters featured in the article. That is that "the greatest legacy for master naturalists in Missouri is their ability to work together, their passion, for conservation, and their gift for educating others about why it matters". "It's also their open invitation for others to join them in this journey".

--- Heather Feeler, MDC Community Manager

## Stardust

Mary Mierkowski submitted the following quote:



The atoms of our bodies are traceable to stars that manufactured them in their cores and exploded these enriched ingredients across our galaxy, billions of years ago. For this reason, we are biologically connected to every other living thing in the world. We are chemically connected to all molecules on Earth. And we are atomically connected to all atoms in the universe. We are not figuratively, but literally stardust."

---Neil deGrasse Tyson

Pam Wilcox thought the quote above reminded her of the refrain in the song "Woodstock":



*Got to get back to the land, and set my soul free.*



*We are stardust, we are golden, we are billion year old carbon,  
And we got to get ourselves back to the garden.*

---Woodstock –Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young (1969)



## Tri-Chapter Missouri Master Naturalist Field Day



The second annual Tri-Chapter Field Day event was held on Saturday October 15th at Shaw Nature Reserve. This event took extraordinary effort from members of the tri-chapter committee. Members and interns were invited from local chapters, including Confluence, Great Rivers, Miramiguoa and Meramec Hills. Activities included several outdoor volunteer and advanced training opportunities. The attendance was great, weather was great, and everyone enjoyed the day.

Thanks to the Great Rivers members of the Tri-Chapter Committee for a job well done; Barb Cerutti, Michael Meredith, Cindy Steinbruegg, and Cindy Turner.



## *St. Louis Audubon Society Honeysuckle Removal Projects*

### Chesterfield Montessori School Honeysuckle Hack

On November 2, 2016 volunteers from Great Rivers, Tess Wasserman, Bob Virag and Pam Wilcox, joined Mitch Leachman, Hugh Huebner, and Adolescent Program Coordinators Mike and Jenna Hill and their students from the Chesterfield Montessori School to help clear invasive honeysuckle from their newly purchased property near Babler Park. The students were extremely hard working and even seemed to be enjoying the whole experience. Anyone who's participated in a honeysuckle hack knows it's not an easy job. The students never complained, and were eager to help in any way. It was quite a successful event and we felt we contributed to the schools efforts to rid the site of this ugly, invasive. The school plans on improving the site and using it for outdoor experiences that are not available in the classroom.



*Chesterfield Montessori School clearing honeysuckle*



*Herb Heubner and Tessa Wasserman pulling the cut honeysuckle into piles.*



*Pam Wilcox cutting honeysuckle on the stream bank and teaching the students about the perils of poison ivy*



## Honeysuckle Sweeps Week event at Manchester's Paul A. Schroeder Park



BEFORE

This November 5, 2016 event was part of Missouri Botanical Garden's BiodiverseCity's Honeysuckle Sweeps Week. It was the second event in this region-wide effort to educate the public through volunteer removal days hosted by various organizations including our own.

The crisp, almost cold, morning air didn't deter

seven Missouri Master Naturalist, Great Rivers Chapter members, five Manchester residents from joining two park staff members in the control of Bush Honeysuckle. Paul and Paula (Manchester's park staff) wielded chain saws, while crews applied herbicide and drug the brush to awaiting piles along Old Meramec Station Road.



AFTER



Eileen Collins, Manchester Parks and Recreation's director, wanted to clear the honeysuckle line along the sidewalk leading to the park. It's a heavily used sidewalk. The honeysuckle provided hiding places for individuals planning to harm others. The tree line is much farther away from the sidewalk without the honeysuckle beneath it. Ms. Collins is planning to introduce dogwoods in the understory now.



This job was particularly challenging because all the brush produced that morning had to be loaded into a trailer or the bed of a dump truck and hauled away before the morning's task was completed. The industrious group filled at least eight loads, maybe more.

*Volunteers included Peggy Paar (above left), Manchester residents Mel Krebs and Madeline Krupp with Great Rivers Chapter members Eileen Hall, Sean Tracy, Cori and Al Westcott, Diana Miller, and photographer Bob Virag.*







# Mississippi River Water Trail Association

**The Mississippi River Water Trail Association (MRWTA) is a new partner now seeking volunteers.**



The Association showcases the Mississippi River as a paddling destination rich with cultural heritage, wildlife, natural areas, and history. They provide activities, events, and educational opportunities while facilitating collaboration with communities, organizations, and agencies to foster sound safety and conservation practices along the river.

As a bonus, the current president of MRWTA is a Master Naturalist. Some of you have volunteered at past events and now you can get advanced training and service hours for your time.

## **Planned events for next year include:**

- A river-related Speaker Evening in January.
- The Riverlands Paddle Fest in May near West Alton. For a \$5 fee anyone can try paddling on the Mississippi River in a safe, family-friendly, and fun way. Last year 341 people attended.
- The Firecracker Race in August where racers in all forms of kayak, canoe, or SUP race in a unique circular route.
- Nature education (about native and invasive plants and animals, for instance) and river clean-ups experiences have been requested by the Boy Scouts to complete their badge requirements.
- The Association participates in other partner events throughout the year (Earth Day at Forest Park, Creve Coeur Park Life Outside Festival and Great Rivers Festival for example).

Kayaking experience is not required of volunteers. All kinds of help is needed from registration, event set up, life vest and boat fitting, flora and fauna education, race timing, maintaining trail rest areas/primitive campsites/facilities- you get the picture- they need you! There's no better feeling than helping a child or adult safely experience a large river from a kayak or Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) for the first time. You can help them to better understand the importance of our great waterways. If you like to be outside near the water, then check the MN calendar or [greatriverwatertrail.org](http://greatriverwatertrail.org) for 2017 events.

*-- Mary Mierkowski*



## The Green Center



*Green Center volunteer Pam Wilcox presenting the history, value and diversity of a prairie habitat to Jackson Park Elementary students.*

This year the Green Center added an outdoor program for second grade students in the University City school district. The students rotate through three diverse habitats, including Prairie, Wetland and Forest. The new program was extremely successful, receiving positive feedback from the students, teachers, and volunteers. Second grade is the perfect time to bring students outdoors to experience nature in places they normally would not seek out.

The Green Center is always looking for volunteer educators. If you are interested in sharing your love of nature with students of all ages, please contact Kathleen Kapayou at the Green Center at [kkapayou@thegreencenter.org](mailto:kkapayou@thegreencenter.org) or call 314-725-8314, ext. 105.

--- Pam Wilcox





## Missouri Stream Team Trash Bash

Castlewood State Park, November 12, 2016

Rachel Becknell attended the trash bash event at Castlewood State Park last Saturday November 12, 2016 and forwarded photos taken by Brian Waldrop at the cleanup. Missouri Department of Natural Resources employee Sarah Wright-Aholt organized the event and 151 volunteers came out to remove 204 tires, 35 cubic yards of litter and trash, and +/- 5000 pounds of metal. There were hot tubs, fuel oil tanks, refrigerators, washing machines, cars, and a whole bunch more removed.





## Awards and Recognition

### ***Susan Orr reached 1,000 hours of service!***

I wish each of you could visit Susan's home landscape. You could learn all about Missouri's woodland natural communities by studying her many gardens and habitats. That kind of landscape isn't done overnight. She's worked steadily on it for years, just as she has worked on reaching 1,000 hours of Missouri Master Naturalist. Susan began her hours when she joined in 2011. She's one of St. Louis Audubon Society's Bring Conservation Home's most active habitat advisors. Not only is Susan bringing her hands-on experience from her garden to the visit and following report, but she's bringing her skills learned while volunteering weekly in Shaw Nature Reserve's horticulture department.

The Grand Glaize Creek Assessment Project would truly suffer without Susan's attention. She chemically monitors three sites quarterly and biologically monitors those same sites twice a year. That's a significant portion of data collecting in that watershed.

Perhaps you've planted wildflowers with her at Audubon's Riverlands, surveyed with her at Hidden Creek Savanna. You may have planted seedlings with her at Forest ReLeaf. Maybe you've run into her on Eagle Days. Whenever you see her again, I do hope you'll congratulate her for earning her 1,000-hour milestone pin!



*Gold Dragonfly  
1,000 Hour Milestone Pin*

### ***Dennis Honkomp earns his 500-hour milestone pin!***

You won't find Dennis inside much. He's reached his 500 hour milestone by working outside. He's cleared honeysuckle, cleaned up riparian corridors dozens and dozens of times and sites. About the only indoors activity he does is for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He regularly replaces brochures and talks to visitors at Cora Island.

Congratulations to you, Dennis, and thanks for sticking with us since 2005. We hope to celebrate more years of membership and service with you!



*Pewter Dragonfly  
500 Hour Milestone Pin*

### ***Re-certification Earners***

Rachel Becknell,  
Laura Belarbi,  
Nancy Burgess,  
Barbara Cerutti,  
Don Evans,  
Dennis Honkomp,  
Emily Horton,

Sel Jenkins,  
Linda Kocher,  
Mary Mierkowski,  
Peggy Morrison,  
Kathy O'Neill,  
Kari Pratt,  
Annie Russell,

Cindy Steinbruegge,  
Barbra, Stephenson,  
Maxine Stone,  
Anene Tressler-Haushultz,  
Sherri Turner,  
Yvonne Van Der Ahe and  
Nancy Willis.



*Collared Lizard  
2016 certification pin*

### ***Certification Earners***

Debbie Croghan,  
Pam Klump,  
Peggy Parr and  
Sean Tracy



Dragonfly - initial certification pin



## Member Spotlight

### *Rachel Becknell (Class of 2012)*

Rachel first learned of the MMN program when she was a biology undergraduate student at UMSL in 2012. She had just started taking courses on ecology and conservation, and joining MMN allowed her to better learn about Missouri's incredible natural communities and do real work in conservation and public education.

Rachel spent most of her time working on projects that involve ecological restoration. Recently she has started working at Bellefontaine Cemetery weeding their green burial area that they are turning into a prairie complete with native plants! Rachel is planning on continuing a close relationship with the horticulturalists at the cemetery by working on all aspects of the restoration over the next few years.

Rachel is most passionate about working on restoring ecosystems that have been degraded by human activity. In her graduate school research Rachel focuses on integrating ecological theory into restoration projects to make them more successful. She enjoys getting out from behind her desk and out working with other MMN volunteers on turning these restorations into reality!



*Rachel Becknell doing field work out in the prairies at Shaw Nature Reserve*

### *Cindy Steinbruegge (Class of 2014)*

Cindy took the MMN class with one of her best friends, Sherri Turner. They go back to 2nd grade together. Cindy had just retired and this was a perfect opportunity to learn about nature and find ways to participate in our beautiful state and be helpful in a small way.

Cindy has volunteered the majority of her service hours at Bellefontaine Cemetery, working with the horticulturalists there. Kyle, Nathan, and Jason are very knowledgeable and are increasing the native plantings in the cemetery every year. It is a beautiful, historic cemetery and Class II Arboretum. The gardening volunteer numbers are growing and I always enjoy working with the volunteers. In summer, the butterfly gardens are wonderfully busy supplying nectar. The trees are spectacular and include three state champions.

The honeybees are doing well and she can vouch that the honey is delicious! And all this on the same grounds that incorporate the lives of notables like William Clark, Sublette and Campbell, James Eads, David Francis, Susan Blow, Virginia Minor, Irma Rombauer, the Busch and Lemp families and other Beer Barons. BC is a true gem of St Louis that everyone should visit!

Cindy is always amazed by the dedicated work people do within MMN and MO Conservation. She finds nature fascinating and is so glad that this program is available!



## Member Spotlight (continued)

### *Sean Tracy (Class of 2015) is certified!*



Sean eradicates Bush Honeysuckle at various locations in the metro area. He also controls sugar maple and red cedar with Bob Coffing at the as yet unopened Don Robinson State Park in Jefferson County. This is an ongoing Confluence project.



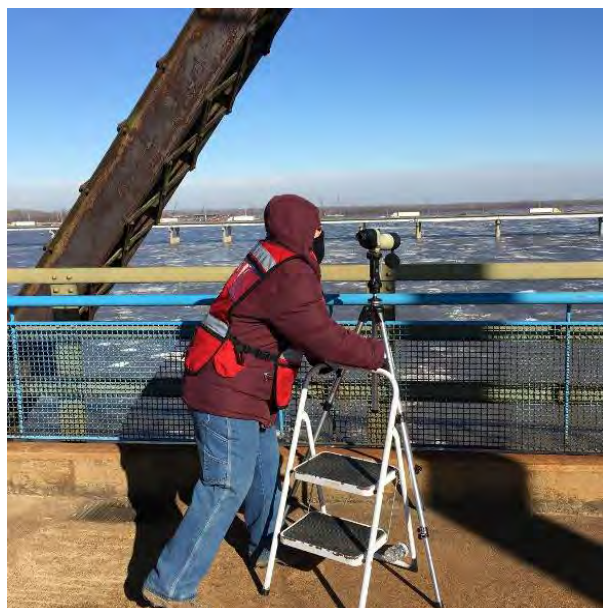
He enjoys the physical labor of trying to restore some of the ecosystems to their pre-invasive states. "I realize it is a Sisyphean or nearly hopeless task, but it gives me a sense of personal satisfaction and a physical workout at the same time."

Being retired and always having a love of nature due to hiking and backpacking, Sean wanted to become more knowledgeable about the ecosystems and the fauna and flora contained therein. He also wanted to meet other like-minded people who share these same feelings. The Missouri Master Naturalist program is just the right fit. "I am looking forward to earning a 1,000 hour pin (or more) at some point in the remaining portion of my life." Sean plans on hiking all of the 800+ miles in the Ramsey Cascades Trail in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

He's already hiked over half of the miles so far.

*Sean and Large Tulip Tree on the Ramsey Cascades Trail*

### *Barbara Cerutti (Class of 2014)*



Barbara loves sharing nature with others, especially when their curious minds are turning. MMN also offers opportunities to give back to the chapter for past kind acts of help when she was a classroom teacher. (Many chapter members spent their Saturday mornings clearing away honeysuckle and restoring a prairie behind her school.) She joined MMN the first chance she had after retiring.

Working with others on the Tri-Chapter Committee has been a focus this year preparing for the Tri-Chapter Field Day last October

*Barbara prepares a scope for visitors on the Chain of Rocks Bridge during an Eagle Days event.*



## Member Spotlight *(continued)*

### **Bob Virag (Class of 2015)**

#### Missouri Stream Team Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Ambassador Award

In July the Missouri Stream Team awarded Bob Virag the **Missouri Stream Team VWQM Ambassador Award** for outstanding service to Missouri's rivers and streams. Bob was a Stream Team monitor for only 17 months when he received the award but according to Karen Westin, Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator, he really earned the equivalent of several Ambassador Awards.

The following are but a few examples Karen Westin highlighted how Bob benefitted the state program:

- In his short tenure as a Stream Team volunteer he turned in far more data than anyone, including chloride and E. coli readings that use a new lower cost screening technique he introduced to DNR.
- He sends in absolutely flawless data sheets. Perfect data records save the data processors time and money not having to track the volunteer down to confirm the resolution of each error. This is so rare that volunteers submitting perfect data sheets are awarded Data Star pins. He's earned Data Stars for each and every kind of data sheet. That accomplishment has set a record.
- Always open to help, even when asked at the last minute, he provided visiting DNR instructors very healthy living macroinvertebrates for display at educational events
- He redesigned the classic macroinvertebrate net stand kit into a preassembled foldable table that fits in a carrying case and pops open when set up on the stream bank. This design is far easier to transport and use than the original design. He also made available step-by-step plans to help monitors across the state make their own foldable tables. For Water Quality Monitor volunteers, any improvement to ease the task may lead to a sustained effort in the program.
- Bob also helped to create a brochure available to all Stream Team monitors to persuade landowners to give permission to access the stream sites on their property.
- Bob is also helpful to other monitors and the community. Bob is great about going out with other volunteers, whether they are newbies or old pros, to lend a hand. He also takes school kids and their teachers out to the stream to teach them a bit about stream ecology.
- If all that activity sounds like it generated a lot of data, well it has! Since he started in 2015, Bob participated in 76 sampling events and helped generate 136 data sheet collections. It's all a bit unprecedented.



*Bob Virag accepting the Missouri Stream Team Ambassador Award from Karen Westin, DNR Water Quality Coordinator*

Karen Westin said, "I guess it goes without saying that he went straight through from Intro to Level 2 (which he passed with flying colors) in his first 11 months with the program...because, why wouldn't he? Bob is just a terrific addition to the incredible cadre of wonderful VWQM monitors in the St. Louis area. I'm pretty sure we should keep him." Congratulations Bob.



## Cori Westcott, Missouri Master Naturalist-Great Rivers Chapter President 2012-2016

It seems like yesterday.....

Four years ago the chapter was searching for a new president to replace my friend and out-going President, Michael Meredith. As is normally the case, we weren't bombarded with candidates. At the time, I barely knew Cori. What I did know was she was smart, outgoing and funny and I took a chance and asked if she would consider running for President of the chapter. At first she looked at me as if I had lost my mind. Then she said she would consider it. She met with Michael and must have decided "How hard can it be?"



*Pam Wilcox (left) and Eileen Collins (right) congratulate Cori Westcott on her many accomplishments at the November 15, 2016 chapter meeting.*

Soon she was elected and the rest of the story, as they say, is history. Cori didn't just get her feet wet; she jumped in head first in the deep end. Beneficial changes started happening right and left. At times it seemed she was destined to be a leader. Cori provided improvements to our processes we didn't even know we needed. Our website was updated and expanded; the Google calendar of events was created to list all of our volunteer and advanced training events. This was a huge improvement over our previous process. She ran board meetings like a pro, delving into areas that were in dire need of updating, including Operating Rhythms, By-Laws, Committee Definitions, etc.

Her insatiable drive and energy showed itself when she undertook the restoration of Seibert Park in Manchester. She turned this area into the pride of the Manchester Parks Dept. while also providing numerous volunteer service hours for a group of dedicated volunteers. She has been recognized and awarded for her dedication and hard work with the St Louis Audubon Bring Conservation Home project. The same is true for her tireless work with the Missouri Stream Team and Shaw Nature Reserve. There didn't seem to be a project that didn't benefit from Cori's knowledge, energy and dedication.

I know I speak for the entire chapter when I say we are proud of your service and your generous spirit. Our chapter is much better today than when you took office four years ago.

On behalf of all of the Great Rivers Chapter members, thank you for all you've done, Cori.



*Cori Westcott accepting the dedication of a Redbud tree planted in her honor in Seibert Park from Eileen Collins, Director, City of Manchester Parks and Recreation.*

--- Pam Wilcox





*Look deep into nature  
and then you will  
understand everything  
better.  
--- Albert Einstein*

*Pink Pinwheel Mushrooms (Marasmius)  
– in the wetland forest of Bangert Island, St. Charles, MO  
---photo by Bob Virag*