



## Fall Newsletter 2013

### Director's Update

#### What the Use Tax Election Means for Water Resources

For those who receive our Blog, RSS feed, and Facebook Updates, we have been providing information about the tax which will be a ballot issue on November 5<sup>th</sup>. Although certain aspects of this potential revenue source seem complex, from a water resources perspective, the outcome of this election will be quite simple.

If Greene County does not receive this new revenue source, it will be unable to keep most or all of the staff that we work with on a daily basis to protect our water resources and meet our Federally mandated requirements. These people have names, they are exceptionally hard working and dedicated, and they have become personal friends. Secondly, if the Use Tax does not pass, there is no chance that Greene County will be able to provide financial support to the Watershed Committee that has been vital to our organization and our charter for almost 30 years.

This unassuming election is one of the most impactful water decisions our community has faced in a long time. Please, review the information, go to the polls on November 5<sup>th</sup>, and motivate other people in your life to do the same.

Mike Kromrey  
Executive Director



#### 2013 Board

Keran Lemons, *Chair*  
Dan Hoy, *Vice Chair*  
Michael Bridges,  
*Secretary*  
Stuart Murr  
Bridget Dierks  
Scott Bratcher

#### 2013 Staff

Mike Kromrey,  
*Director*  
Stacey Armstrong,  
*Projects Manager*  
Kelly Guenther,  
*Business Manager*  
Rob Hunt,  
*Watershed  
Center Coordinator*

#### Sponsors

City Utilities of  
Springfield  
  
Greene County  
  
City of Springfield

## Big Urbie Update

**Campbell Streetscape Rain Garden Planting:** On October 16th, with the help of Volunteers from the Springfield Plateau Chapter of Missouri Master Naturalists, we planted the newly installed rain gardens on Campbell. The volunteers planted 444 plants, including Tussock Sedge, Showy Coneflower, Foxglove Beardtongue, Indian Pink and Blue Star. Thanks to our volunteers for making the planting day a success! These rain gardens will reduce urban runoff into Jordan Creek for years to come by allowing stormwater to slow down and soak into the ground. For more information about Big Urbie projects, visit [www.bigurbie.org](http://www.bigurbie.org).



**Greene County Bioswale Planting:** Two Bioswales have been planted on the Greene County Campus, located in the parking lot north of Webster Road. The County Highway Department constructed the bioswales by excavating approximately 199 cubic yards of material and replacing it with gravel and soil, thereby transforming a large impervious area into a pervious one. The Big Urbie grant provided native Service Berry and Shrubby St. John's Wort for these bioswales. Thank you to the Greene County Environmental Staff who helped with the planting of these basins, and the Greene County Highway Department for constructing them!

Stacey Armstrong  
Projects Manager



## Watershed Center

The Watershed Center has had its busiest fall yet this year! We have been on **thirteen off-site visits** for outreach and led **four Jordan Creek Tours**. We have hosted **several volunteer workdays** including a few trail work days, a native planting, and our Fellows Lake cleanup. The **building has been rented out to five different organizations**, including our friends at James River Basin Partnership, Missouri State University, and the Master Naturalists. All of these rentals and events are topped by our **fifteen field trips** here at the Watershed Center! Most field trips consist of about fifty to eighty students who get to explore the trails and building with WCO staff and volunteers. Each trip is unique and they are all fun. If you want to be a part of that fun in the Spring, please contact Rob Hunt at [rob@watershedcommittee.org](mailto:rob@watershedcommittee.org) or 833-8525. We would love to have you!

Along with our great field trips, we had a few very important events this fall. **The Earth Stewardship Fair for Homeschoolers** was held in early October at the Botanical Center in Close Memorial Park. Close to two hundred homeschooled students and their families visited booths from all of the area, including a booth with information about the Watershed Center and a station where they could examine the organisms in pond water! We were proud to host the **“Watershed Event”** at the Watershed Center with a prestigious speaker list. Topics for the day ranged from energy usage and extraction to stormwater challenges and urban streams recharging local economies.

The Southwest Missouri Council of Governments (SMCOG) recently held their quarterly meeting at the Watershed Center. The topic of the day was the history and future of the Solid Waste Districts. It was an opportune time to highlight all the **recycling features of the C.W. Titus Education Facility**, paid for in part by a grant from the **Solid Waste District O**.

This fall I also attended several professional development opportunities. In September, I traveled to Branson for the **Association of Missouri Interpreters conference**. I was able to hear speakers present on a variety of topics such as; Common Core standards and how to implement them into our education and outreach projects, Volunteer recruitment programs and designing volunteer positions, and the history of the Ozarks region. In October, I spent a day at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center for my **Stream Team Level 1** certification.

Near the end of the month, I traveled to Northwest Arkansas for the **Regional Project WET, WILD and Learning Tree conference**, including attendees from Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri. We saw great examples of how activities can be used inside or outside of the classroom. We also had a chance to see some teaching in action at the Crystal Bridges museum as our group toured the well cared for native plant gardens and forests. This was followed by a visit to a very special school where students serenaded us with tunes about trees, and we got to stroll through an exceptional outdoor classroom with beautiful native trees and plants. A visit to the Botanical Gardens of the Ozarks wrapped up the day for us in a setting of wonderful themed backyard sized gardens.

The fall has been a very busy time with events and field trips, and these enrichment opportunities enable me to stay fresh and excited for each group of students I meet. I have formed new network connections and have many ideas of how we can improve our own visitor interaction out here at the Watershed Center.

Rob Hunt  
Watershed Center Coordinator



**320 N. Main Avenue  
Springfield, MO 65806**

## **Asher Creek Sampling**

It's been a fun project, but the Asher Creek Watershed sampling has finally come to a close. It was a challenge at times to finish the day's sampling, but as they say, "neither wasps, nor snakes, nor cattle, nor poison ivy shall keep the water samplers from their appointed rounds!" It will be interesting to see how this project will add a piece to the puzzle of how to direct resources to improve local water quality.

A lot of folks came together to make this project possible, from my coworkers with the Watershed Committee; the hardworking lab at OEWRI on MSU campus; Will Rhodes with Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District; and plenty of others. With this kind of collaboration, we've been able to gather data and report on the watershed dynamics north of Springfield and get a comprehensive, 18-month dataset to help quantify and measure impairments in Asher Creek which is a part of Springfield's drinking watershed.

David Chiles  
Water Quality Technician

