



Spring Newsletter 2014

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Director's Update

Major Grant Award: The Little Sac Restoration and Improvement Project

The Upper Little Sac Watershed is a critical area for our drinking water supply. Recently, Watershed Committee of the Ozarks (WCO) was awarded a section 319 subgrant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the amount of \$428,461. The DNR will provide \$255,551 in Federal dollars and WCO and Partners will provide \$172,910 in local match to improve the Little Sac River watershed near Springfield and in Greene County. The project will aim to reduce pollution like bacteria, nutrients, and soil from erosion coming from diffuse, or "nonpoint" sources.

To reduce nonpoint source pollution, WCO will implement best management practices (BMPs). Examples of planned practices are cost-sharing with local farmers to encourage the use of prescribed grazing systems and restoring stream banks that are being lost to erosion (on the Upper Little Sac River). The project will also include water quality monitoring and project-specific educational activities.

The strength of this grant application, and ultimately the project, comes from the use of innovative practices and partnerships. City Utilities, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Missouri Department of Conservation will help with water quality monitoring, best management practice expertise (like writing nutrient management plans) and biological monitoring.

Mike Kromrey
Executive Director

30
YEARS



Big Urbie Update

Water Quality Improvements at local schools:

The Robberson Elementary stormwater improvements are complete! Construction began in early January on the stormwater retrofit at Robberson Elementary which included replacing a portion of the asphalt in the courtyard with an infiltration swale, native landscaping, trees, and rain barrels. The improvements reduce runoff, improve water quality, and provide a more welcoming and functional space for the school. An educational sign will explain the benefits of native plants and rain barrels. The project was designed by Olsson Associates and installed by Kenmore Construction.

This project is a partnership with Springfield Public Schools (SPS), which provided matching funds and in-kind labor. A special thank you goes out to SPS staff for their partnership on this project and we look forward to working with them again on the stormwater improvements at Boyd Elementary! See before and after photos below, and learn about more Big Urbie projects at www.bigurbie.org.



Before Big Urbie Improvements



After Big Urbie Improvements!

Medication Take Back Event

Unused or expired medications are a public safety issue and if disposed of improperly can cause problems for aquatic ecosystems. Medication Take-Back Events provide a means for safe disposal of prescription and over-the-counter medications. As part of a nationwide campaign by the DEA, the Ozark Area Pharmacy Association hosted a Medicine Take Back Day on April 26th in collaboration with the Greene County Sheriff's Department, City of Springfield, Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, SafeKids Springfield and area pharmacies. In the Springfield area alone, 1,995 pounds of medications was collected at 7 drop off locations within a four hour timeframe. The next Springfield Medicine Take Back event will be held in the fall.

Stacey Armstrong
Projects Manager



Springfield-Greene County Urban Watershed Stewardship Project
Section 319 Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant

Watershed Center

Showers, flowers, and volunteer power!

Since January first, we have been looking forward to big new things. Our 30th anniversary is well underway and as part of the celebration, we have been raising awareness about our water supply and our organization. Along the way, we have had a spring packed full with exciting events and interactions this season.

The Watershed Center has received some diverse visitors this spring. The Department of Health and Senior Services has held two onsite wastewater installation classes which draw students from all over the state. In January we hosted the National Audubon Society planning meeting in which people from across the United States met to discuss new programs and strategies for the upcoming year. Our friend David Catlin organized that event and we were happy to see so many folks from out of town enjoying our center.



Volunteers and agency staff meeting for an update on invasive aquatic plant species.

Our trails and habitats have received some well-deserved attention this year. The students from SMU Dallas, TX, on a spring break mission trip, removed some winter creeper that was covering the forest floor near the confluence of our two headwater streams for the lake. Using rakes and old weed whackers, we ripped, pulled, and slashed at the vines until we could see the ground. This effort was especially effective paired with the work of another volunteer, Greg Looney, who had been painstakingly cutting and pulling the stuff off of trees for months before the big group got to work on it. I am happy to say that the labors are paying dividends.

Dead leaves are falling from the tree-borne vines and the ground has remained open and exposed to the sun, yielding huge patches of wild ginger and goldenseal, which we have not seen in the area during the creeper invasion. Further on up the trail I worked with a group of college students from Missouri State University along with Greg McComas from Ryan Lawn and Tree to do some clearing on the northwest ridge along the trail. Our goal is to open it up and see a savannah restoration underway! Ryan Lawn and Tree provided the expertise and the tools, including a greatly helpful wood chipper.

Some fraternity brothers from MSU provided the brawn and energy to move the cut limbs and trees to the chipper. Two volunteers, in particular have been instrumental in these work days. Ed and Kelly Posey have been out here for every major work day this spring and they quickly became my right and left hands at the Watershed Center. A special thanks to them.



Fraternity brothers working on the trails at the Watershed Center.

Rob Hunt
Watershed Center Coordinator



320 N. Main Avenue
Springfield, MO 65806

WCO's 30th Anniversary Event

Support the Watershed Committee by celebrating with us at our 30th Anniversary Event!

When: Saturday, July 12, 2014

Where: Springfield Art Museum 1111 Brookside Drive Springfield, MO

Highlights: Local Beer (Mother's Brewery), Local Food Appetizers (Tea Bar & Bites), Wine (Vino Cellars), Wine Grab, Silent Auction featuring local artists, "Clean Water for Life" photography exhibit, video premier, and music from Barak Hill and Bob Ranney.

Tickets: \$40 (over 21 please) Available online: www.watershedcommittee.org

All proceeds benefit the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks and will help us with education and outreach projects such as: Creating a Water History Learning Station at the Watershed Center, purchasing new Adopt-A-Spring sampling kits and helping Elementary through High School students take field trips to the Watershed Center.

Thank You to All of Our Sponsors: Dave Coonrod, KRAFT, Arvest Bank, CU, Commercial Metals Co., Mother's Brewery, MSU, Pinnacle Sign Group, Ryan Lawn & Tree, Bill and Maret Cheek, Mike and Mary Chiles, Associated Electric Cooperative, Tea Bar & Bites, Barak Hill, Bob Ranney, Brian Todd, Jon and Karen Jones, Mike, Mary & Eli Kromrey, Tim and Sally Smith.

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor please contact Mike Kromrey : mike@watershedcommittee.org or 417-866-1127.

