



## Summer Newsletter 2016

### 2016 Board

Eric Dove, *Chair*  
Laura Greene, *Vice Chair*  
Dan Hoy, *Secretary*  
Bridget Dierks  
Karen Spence  
Jason Hainline

### 2016 Staff

Mike Kromrey, *Director*  
Stacey Armstrong  
Smith, *Projects Manager*  
Kelly Guenther, *Business Manager*  
Jeff Birchler, *Watershed Center Coordinator*

### Sponsors

City Utilities of Springfield  
Greene County  
City of Springfield

## Director's Update

### Full Bloom

The work of the Watershed Committee is blossoming this summer. The Our Missouri Waters Project is wrapping up with the creation of a Healthy Watershed Plan, the Little Sac Restoration and Improvement Project is in full swing, and the Watershed Center is virtually buzzing. Our successful Summer Gala will allow us to invest in site improvements, new interpretive signs, and part-time assistance. The honor of pursuing our mission drives us to DO, and think about how to DO MORE.

Organizations like ours do not function without a tremendous staff of volunteers and interns. This summer we have been fortunate to have some outstanding individuals working on a variety of projects. Ben Parnell, who recently received his Bachelor of Science degree from Missouri State University, works as our habitat improvement specialist—a position made possible by a grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation. Danielle Hopkins is an undergraduate Biology major at Saint Louis University with an emphasis in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation. Ben and Danielle have been a tremendous help in battling invasive species while improving native habitats.

Clarissa Hatley is a Missouri State University graduate student. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Geography with an emphasis in Environmental Sciences and Policy. Kayla Gunn is a Wildlife Biology major from Missouri State University. Both Kayla and Clarissa have been involved with education programs as well improving the various habitats and trail systems at the park. All of our summer volunteers worked hard and shared a contagious passion for learning.

Mike Kromrey, Executive Director



Danielle, Clarissa, and Ben after a serious battle with invasive “tall sock destroyer” parsley.

## Our Missouri Waters Update



### Sac River

The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks has been working with watershed landowners on the collaborative Our Missouri Waters effort for the Sac River to gather local input and allow landowners to identify water resource priorities. The voluntary local Sac River Watershed Advisory Committee is comprised of twenty-four landowners who have attended five educational and facilitated meetings during the past five months. These meetings provided the opportunity for landowners to meet other local landowners, to share the resource concerns they have, and also discuss ideas on how to address those concerns.

On May 3rd at the Greenfield High School Library the Sac River Watershed Advisory Committee met for a facilitated meeting to discuss watershed priorities. They used the concerns list they created from the February meeting as a guide to write down their top three concerns on sticky notes. Then they placed the sticky notes on the wall and grouped them into categories. The group then received stickers with numbers written on them and were asked to place the sticker with the highest number on their top priority and the following numbers on their second priority and so on until they had voted with all of their stickers. The numbers were then added up and the priorities were listed from highest total of points to the lowest. The committee discussed urban runoff, confined animal feeding operations, and municipal waste. They created a problem and solution list for each resource concern discussed. On May 17<sup>th</sup> at the Willard Community Center, the committee continued discussion of resource concerns which they did not cover in the previous meeting. The additional topics included animal waste, nutrients/stormwater runoff, septic tanks, and lack of knowledge.

The Sac River Healthy Watershed Plan will summarize the process and the recommendations from the Sac River Watershed Advisory Committee which will be completed by August 31<sup>st</sup>. This working document will help maximize resources and focus watershed priorities over the next five years. To learn more information about Our Missouri Waters, visit [www.dnr.mo.gov/omw](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/omw) or [www.watershedcommittee.org](http://www.watershedcommittee.org)

Stacey Armstrong Smith, Projects Manager



Sac River Watershed Advisory Committee member meeting.



# Watershed Summer Gala

## Watershed Summer Gala

The evening began at 5pm at the Springfield Art Museum. Mother's Brewery provided excellent brews for the evening, Remo's Wood-Fired Oven served up delicious oven fired pizzas, nuts, dates, and cookies, Vino 100 served wine by the glass, and Goat Milk Honey and Emily Higgins provided music.

We are very fortunate to have so many sponsors of the Gala; this year we had the most yet! We appreciate their commitment to our organization and their shared passion for our water resources. We would like to recognize 2016 sponsors who we were not able to recognize at the Gala: Mike and Mary Chiles, Dan and Margy Chiles, and Husch Blackwell. We are so thankful for and humbled by the continued community support!

One of the biggest hits of the evening was our new "Whiskey Pull." Staff and board donated 21 bottles of whiskey and Missouri Spirits donated 2 very special bottles. At \$30 a pull, all bottles were gone in half an hour! The Brown Derby Wine Grab is always popular, and all but a few bottles were claimed by happy participants. Our Silent Auction was a success thanks to Bass Pro Shops, our friends and colleagues who donated their time and talents, and local businesses who created pieces or offered services specifically for our event, and enthusiastic and generous bidders. Our volunteers and interns did a fantastic job throughout the evening, and we appreciate their help. All in all it was a fantastic evening spent with friends celebrating the Watershed Committee and "clean water for life!"





# Watershed Center Update

## Summer Starts with a Splash!

The Watershed Center was thrilled to partner with Springfield Public Schools to offer Splash! as part of the summer school Explore program. Third grade students in the Splash! course explored the role of watersheds in the water cycle and our drinking water supply. Over 700 students from 22 different elementary schools participated in the course. Students were able to make four weekly field trips to the Watershed Center to participate in a variety of hands-on experiences. The course culminated in a fishing trip to Valley Water Mill Lake. It was exciting to see the level of excitement and engagement in the students. As one student exclaimed, “Best field trip ever!”



Measuring water temperatures near Sanders Spring.



Students using the Stream Table to explore erosion.

## Scouts Clean-up Little Sac River

Led by Cody Oursbourn, Scout Troop Springfield 409 spent a Saturday in July removing a large amount of trash from the upper Little Sac River. Cody, a life scout, elected to coordinate and lead the river clean-up for his Eagle project. The hard working scouts and their parents removed 20 tires, including two tractor tires, from the river. The trailer full of collected debris was sorted and taken to recycling centers.



Springfield 409 Scout Troop Little Sac Clean-up begins.



Out of the river and off to be recycled.



# Watershed Center Update

## Habitat Improvements

Repeat visitors to the Watershed Center are seeing notable differences throughout the park. Thanks to Ben Parnell, our new Habitat Improvement Specialist, native plant species are becoming much more abundant and invasive species are becoming more difficult to find. Ben, with the help of interns, volunteers, Missouri Master Naturalists, and the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, continues to make significant habitat improvements in the varied park ecosystems. The Habitat Improvement Specialist position is made possible by a grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation Community Conservation.



A variety of flowering native plants fill the rain garden, including the native hibiscus called Rose Mallow.



The Prairie area is flourishing with the removal of invasive species like Johnson Grass and Crown Vetch.

## Land Ethic Leader Programs Coming in November

The Watershed Committee is partnering with the Aldo Leopold Foundation and the MSU Bull Shoals Field Station to bring two Land Ethic Leaders Programs to the Ozarks. The Leopold Foundation states, “Land Ethic Leaders equips participants with tools to both introduce Leopold’s land ethic to a wider audience and also to deepen understanding and engagement through dialog about the meaning and value of conservation.”

The Field Station session will be held November 9-12 and will target leaders and participants of area non-profit groups. The Watershed Center session will be held November 14-16 and will target businesses, city and county agencies, as well as local community leaders. This program has not previously been offered in Missouri and is made possible through a Grant from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. For registration information please contact Jeff Birchler at 417-866-1127 or [jeff@watershedcommittee.org](mailto:jeff@watershedcommittee.org).



The famous “shack” was the Leopold Family’s retreat and a Mecca for conservationists.



**2400 E. Valley Water Mill Rd.  
Springfield, MO 65803**

### **Ozark Greenways Celebrates 25th Anniversary!**

Ozark Greenways, Inc. is a long-term partner of the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, and it provides some great services to our community besides being a great place to run or bike. Greenways trails offer important buffers for local waterways which alleviate flooding and reduce erosion and water pollution. What's more, Ozark Greenways functions as a land trust which can ensure the perpetual protection of the sensitive areas close to streams where our beloved trails are often located. Greenways also provide "gene-ways"—or natural corridors for populations of plants and animals isolated by development to connect and share genetic information.

You can help our friends at Ozark Greenways celebrate 25 years of connecting people and places. This event is always super fun and laid back! It will be held on September 22, 2016 at 6 pm. All proceeds from this evening will fund Ozark Greenways' mission and will specifically benefit the Trails for Generations Funding Initiative.

Cost is \$75 per guest and includes food, beer, wine, and entertainment. Reservations are required as space is limited. Tickets will not be available at the door. For more information check out [www.ozarkgreenways.org](http://www.ozarkgreenways.org) or follow along the 19th Annual Fall Dinner and Party Facebook Event Page.

