

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



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Area school children learning about water quality by discovering macroinvertebrates at the Watershed Center.

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Seth Wheeler, *Watershed Conservation Corps Program Manager*

OUR MISSION

To sustain and improve the water resources of Springfield and Greene County through education and effective management of the region's watersheds.

OUR SPONSORS

City Utilities of Springfield

Greene County

City of Springfield

OUR PARTNERS

Drury University

Greene County Soil and Water Conservation Dist.

Missouri Master Naturalists, Springfield Plateau

Missouri Department of Conservation

Missouri State University

Project WET (Water Education for Teachers)

Springfield-Greene County Park Board

Springfield Public Schools

This report covers our fiscal year: January 1-December 31, 2019

DEAR FRIENDS,

When you think about the term “return on investment or ROI,” what do you think of? An energy efficient appliance, retirement portfolios, or even a hybrid car may come to mind. We have been thinking about ROIs a lot here at WCO lately. But how do you compare very different solutions to improving water quality for cost effectiveness, much less calculate an ROI?

Fortunately, local leaders and brainy consultants have developed the Sustainable Return on Investment (SROI) model. This powerful tool quantifies the social, economic, and environmental impacts over the lifetime of the solutions analyzed. The SROI tool was developed out of the City, County, and City Utilities’ deep ethic of spending limited municipal resources for water quality as effectively as possible. This herculean effort has afforded our community some regulatory flexibility to focus on what’s most effective.

The outcomes of the solutions evaluated by the SROI model have been at times reinforcing, surprising, and even inspiring. Thankfully, the water quality education programs we have worked so hard to develop show a positive return. Livestock grazing was also evaluated. The results converting “traditional” grazing (think one big pasture in which livestock have full access to streams) to managed, rotational grazing like what we demonstrate at the Little Sac Grazing Demonstration recently came in. The SROI model produced a whopping \$2.90 return for every dollar invested. This reinforces the idea that working with producers in our local watersheds provides a huge opportunity to sustain and improve water resources. Our local Natural Resources Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation Districts have a track record of success in this particular endeavor, but they face funding and staffing limitations. Through partnership and innovation, we hope to capitalize on this tried and true investment.

We are thankful for the investments we’ve been able to make in our mission this year. The growing Watershed Conservation Corps, staff, education programs, solar energy generation, and investment time and effort directly on the land at the Watershed Center to name a few. The work of those before us is paying dividends, we aim to continue to invest, and we are really excited for the opportunities on the horizon!

Kind Regards,



Eli Kromrey and his Pipkin Middle School classmates participating in Greener Greenspaces.

PREFACE

At the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, our mission focuses the organization and directs the work that we do. The work of watershed protection is complex, but a compass, with four cardinal directions, helps categorize what it takes to achieve our mission. Points north and south represent Education and Outreach and Projects and Management. These directions are the real work of water protection. East and west represent Funding and People. These are the resources necessary to accomplish the work.

In the center of the compass, the place from which everything radiates, is our mission. The accomplishments of 2019 contained in this report are organized in this manner, so our compass can be your guide, too. Please share our joy in these accomplishments, because none of this could happen, or is even possible, without supporters like you.





Education & Outreach

Field trip at the Watershed Center.

Education and outreach are at the core of our mission. To protect our resources, citizens must understand where our water comes from. They must see what can positively and negatively affect our resources, along with what actions can be taken to protect them. We strive to connect a range of learners, from “kindergarteners through engineers,” with the information they need to help keep our water clean and plentiful.

WATERSHED CENTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Over the last few years we have made tremendous advancements and improvements in our educational and outreach programs. After rapidly rising a few years ago, our field trips numbers have stabilized around 10,000 participants per year. We realize that it is not just about the numbers, and we strive to continue to increase the quality of our programs. To help meet the growing demand we have added key staff and continued to refine and improve our programs. Continued collaborations also increase the potential to more effectively reach wider audiences. As we reflect on 2019 we would like to celebrate the successes and look at the opportunities ahead that will allow us to continue to grow our programs in both quantity and quality.

Watershed Center Education and Outreach (cont.)

Field trips to the Watershed Center are still our educational “bread and butter.” We continue to be a resource for private and public schools, universities and colleges, home school groups, and numerous clubs and organizations. Almost 10,000 individuals participated in 181 field trips to the Watershed Center this year. Individuals from pre-kindergarten students through adults took part in our programs. While Springfield Public School (SPS) students made up the bulk of our participants, groups as far away as Everton and McDonald County made field trips to the Center. We need to provide these experiences if we want students to appreciate the abundance and special relationship the Ozarks has to water.

As we near capacity for Watershed Center field trips, we have continued to expand our educational outreach programs. Almost 2,500 students participated in off-site field experiences and classroom visits. Our most popular outreach activity is an underground tour of Jordan Creek. Exploration of this urban stream provides historical, cultural, and environmental lessons (along with a very dynamic art scene).



Students journaling at Springside Learning Station.



Using kick nets to collect macroinvertebrates.

Collaboration – More Effective When Working Together

Not captured in the numbers is the improvement in our programs through the increased collaboration and partnership with community businesses and organizations. This year we continued to work with previous partners and added additional programs with the Greene County Library and the Park Board.

SPS – Splash!

Working with SPS, we are developing a curriculum that reaches elementary, middle school, and high school students. This spiral approach to education provides a deeper understanding of water-related issues. The **Splash!** Program was first piloted as part of the summer Explore Program in 2016. Second and third graders participating in the **Splash!** Program explore our watershed and develop a deeper understanding about where our water comes from and what can be done to protect it. These students make four visits to the Watershed Center over the month-long course, participating in a variety hands-on activities.



Using kick nets to collect macroinvertebrates.

SPS, City of Springfield Environmental Services, and Fantastic Caverns – Greener Greenspaces

For the first time, all 7th grade students in Springfield Public Schools participated in the **Greener Greenspaces** program. In this project-based learning unit, teams of students were given \$1,000 budgets to make improvements to green spaces around their campuses. Over the course of the program, students made two visits to the Watershed Center, where they investigated best management practices, local threats to our water supply, and the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems. Staff from our partners, **Fantastic Caverns** and the **City of Springfield's Environmental Services Division**, led students in off-site field trips to the Sanitary Landfill and Ritter Springs Park as they explored the role solid waste disposal and karst topography play in protecting our groundwater quality. Students applied this knowledge in their designs for campus improvements. Students presented their designs to a review committee where winning designs were selected. The school district then provided funding and support to assist the students in installing the winning designs on each campus.



Collecting native plant seeds to grow back in the classroom.

Springfield Art Museum Collaboration

The continued collaboration with the Springfield Art Museum to offer Science Technology Art & Math (STEAM) programs has allowed us to reach rural schools in new and creative ways. The **Placeworks STEAM Residency** provides two classroom visits by Museum and Watershed staff, as well as field trips to both the Art Museum and Watershed Center for participating schools. Students use journaling to connect science and art. A journal provides a reliable record of observations and encourages students to focus much deeper than a typical casual observation. Journaling also forces us to slow down and make deeper connections. This is a tremendously rewarding experience for teachers, students, and both Watershed and Museum staff.



Students proud of their journals!

Eco Float Trip

We partnered with the **Springfield-Greene County Park Board Outdoor Initiative** to pilot an Eco Float Trip. This non-typical float trip was designed to educate participants about stream ecology as well providing instruction on improving basic paddling skills. Participants signed up through the Springfield-Greene County Park Board website. During the float we took time to pause at gravel bars and riffle areas to explore the aquatic life and learn about water pollution and prevention. After this successful pilot venture you can expect more programs to be available in the summer of 2020.



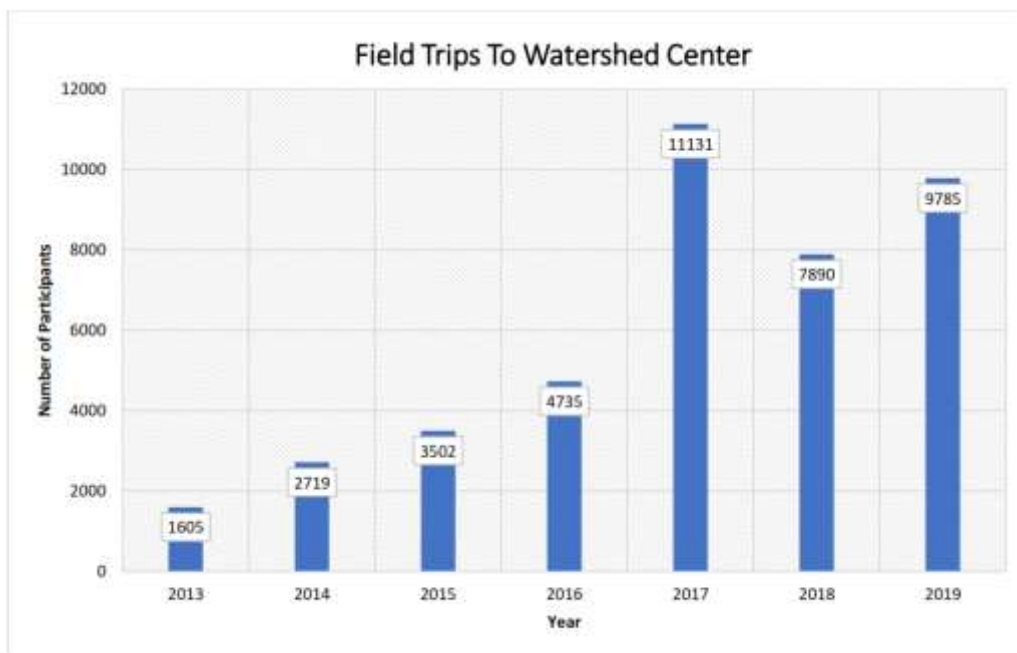
Justin with Outdoor Initiatives giving tips about traveling by river.

Environmental & Natural Resources Management Academy

One of the most exciting programs to develop this year has been the **Environmental & Natural Resources Management Academy** at Hillcrest High School. This program is part of the Springfield Public Schools College and Career Pathways. After a freshman introductory course, students select from one of nine career pathways. They then take courses during their sophomore, junior, and senior year to better prepare them for careers or college in their selected pathway. The courses are built around interactive units that prepare students for both college and careers by providing opportunities to earn college credit and/or industry-valued certifications.

The Watershed Committee has been working with SPS to develop the Environmental & Natural Resources curriculum, embedding interactive units and developing strategies for certifications applicable to careers related to this career path. This Academy also includes careers related to Agriculture. We are hopeful about future program developments related to both the Agriculture and Resource Management arms of this Academy as we work to train the next generation of professionals and workers.

Year at a Glance for Education & Outreach Activities



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Field Trip Participants to Watershed Center	3,502	4,735	11,131	7,890	9,785
Watershed Center Field Trips	86	116	201	173	180
Booths at Community Events	13	15	14	12	10
Jordan Creek Tours	20	19	20	28	20
Outreach Activities Participants		1,914	3,349	4,964	3,450

Jordan Creek Tours

We continue to offer a unique educational experience with our Jordan Creek tours, in which we hike members of our community through the big box culvert that forms the artificial cave running beneath downtown Springfield. In an educational experience like nothing else, we can clearly see the many complex relationships between homelessness, folklore, urban design, local history, and water quality. While many participants come along for the thrill of exploring these concrete catacombs, most leave with a stronger sense of the big picture. As we walk, we point out the wide-open storm drains, familiar from the street but new and surprising from our vantage point in the creek, clearly demonstrating the fact that stormwater is directly connected to our streams and rivers.

Daylighting Jordan Creek has long been a topic during our tours and it is exciting to think about how our tours will evolve as the City of Springfield begins to implement Phase One of the Jordan Creek Daylighting Plan. Please call (417) 866-1127 or email jeff@watershedcommittee.org for more information or to book a tour.

Colleges

Local universities and colleges provide many benefits to our community, infusing this Midwestern town with energy and vigor in a way that only young, excited, and expanding minds can. Our local students often improve the trails that we enjoy at the Watershed Center, teach the kids that come through on field trips, reduce the presence of invasive species, and spread the message of water conservation and sustainability farther than we ever could on our own. It is always a pleasure to work with these students in the classroom and in the field, and we are happy to continue hosting them as they use the Watershed Center as a classroom to learn about streams, forests, and sustainable design.

Drury University continues to use the Watershed Center as a classroom for ecology classes. For the past few years, we have had the chance to work with the incoming freshman students on a service project, usually involving Jordan Creek, which runs near the Drury campus. This project serves as a unique way to engage these new students in the local world of community service and environmental stewardship. Some of these students go on to join the Think Green Team at Drury. This group is already self-sufficient with service projects and cleanups, needing only bags and trash pick-up support from the WCO.



Tour offered in collaboration with Greene County Public Library as part of their Earth Week programs.



Colleges (Cont.)

Missouri State University has the Citizenship and Service-Learning (CASL) Program in which students can earn extra course credit for participating in a local organization's work for 40 hours over the course of a semester. In 2019 we were happy to host eight of these students. These students helped us in a variety of ways from providing Spanish translations of our educational documents, creating educational posters on plankton, to a variety of on-site habitat projects. In addition to providing many volunteers, students in the Science and Education departments stay busy out here learning about native plants, macroinvertebrates, and how to teach the Discover Nature Schools Curriculum.



MSU students learning about water quality and sustainability.

Ozark Technical College has become increasingly involved with the Watershed Center. Individual student volunteers and campus organizations have assisted with a variety of clean-ups and projects. Many classes have conducted field trips to the Watershed Center and participated in Jordan Creek underground tours. This last year we worked closely with the Urban Forestry class, providing field experiences here at the Watershed Center and Lake Springfield. We continue to increase our collaboration with the Environmental Science classes.



Caleb working with an OTC Environmental Science class.

Watershed Center Fellowship Position

In June **Allison Terry** was awarded our third **Watershed Center Fellowship Position**. Ally graduated from Stetson University in Florida where she majored in Environmental Studies and minored in both Management and Communication and Media Studies. Ally was also an Environmental Sustainability Fellow at Stetson. As a WCO Fellow, Ally was tremendously valuable in coordinating volunteer efforts, leading educational programs, and working on numerous land management projects. In addition to being an excellent teacher, she shared her knack for organization which was very valuable. The Fellowship program continues to provide a mutually beneficial opportunity for young professionals and much needed help for WCO. This program would not be possible without the Summer Gala and help from those who have invested in our mission.



Ally leading a native plant educational program.

Watershed Center Assistant Coordinator

With both educational and volunteer programs expanding, it was time for additional staffing. After a challenging process reviewing many excellent applications, Kelly Owens was hired as the Watershed Center Assistant Coordinator. Kelly started her career with WCO as a volunteer in 2017. She was rapidly promoted to paid intern where she assisted with educational programs and was integral to the Greener Greenspaces pilot program. Kelly left WCO to become the Wonders of Wildlife Assistant Volunteer Coordinator where she established their extensive volunteer program. In just a few short months, Kelly has made tremendous improvement to the WCO volunteer program. She has also proven to be a tremendous asset to our educational programs and has become a valuable addition to the Watershed staff.



Kelly leading a water quality program.

Staff Development and Professional Involvement

Jeff attended a variety of staff development conferences and workshops in 2019.

The Conservation In Planning Tools for Communities Workshop held in March provided a wealth of information that will be useful in curriculum development for the Environmental & Natural Resources Management Academy. March also brought on Stream Team Level 1 training for many Watershed staff and volunteers. While we have been doing many of these activities for years, it was nice to receive some of the official training from the state program.

The WCO team had the opportunity to expand horizons from leaders across the country. The National Science Teachers Association held their national conference in April in St. Louis. This four-day conference is attended by thousands of formal and informal educators and scientists from all parts of the globe. A wealth of ideas and strategies were exchanged. Another insightful moment came from a visit to Stroud Water Research Center in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Since 1967, Stroud has been one of the leaders in producing innovative solutions for preserving and restoring freshwater. They have strong research, restoration, and educational programs. Mike and Jeff visited their facilities at the end of May. Productive meetings with key Stroud staff members resulted in David Wise visiting the Watershed Committee in August and sharing his insight at our monthly meeting.



Mike and David Wise discussing benefits of riparian corridors.

As you probably know, running a nonprofit is very similar to running a business—there is a lot to it! Kelly Guenther, WCO's business manager, works continually to keep the computers up and running, bills paid, and is the team-lead for the WCO Summer Gala. In addition to her normal duties, this year Kelly took some big steps to improve the organization by implementing a comprehensive Safety Manual and associated trainings for all staff and working with various outside consultants and professionals to update human resources policies and procedures.

Other items include the Congressman Billy Long 7th District MO Agricultural Tour on August 23, 2019. Mike and Stacey had the opportunity to attend the educational tour of local agricultural operations including Pinegar Farms Land & Cattle, Randy Mooney Dairy Farm and College of the Ozarks dairy, beef farm, and vegetable garden. The City of Springfield is engaging in a planning process for a new Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for the future. It is a community vision that is intended to guide the City for the next 20 years. On October 8, WCO staff and board members participated in a Forward SGF planning session held at the Watershed Center. Stacey spoke on a Missouri State University Geography, Geology and Planning Alumni Panel on October 25. The panel topics included "how to get from student to professional" and "what are the necessary traits for professional success."

Staff Development and Professional Involvement (cont.)

The Watershed Conservation Corps (WCC) is on a mission to engage and employ young people in hands-on watershed improvement. At the heart of this mission is a commitment to providing a rich and complex educational experience for program members. To accomplish this end, the leaders of the WCC are tasked to both obtain and maintain their own conservation related certifications. This not only ensures that our program members receive the training needed to confidently carry out the diverse projects that they are tasked to complete, but also, and perhaps more importantly, that they are equipped to work on these projects in a safe manner. WCC program staff participated in the following development activities in 2019:



Caleb Sanders, WCC Director:

- Recertified Missouri Department of Agriculture's category 3 and 6 certified commercial applicator's license
- Recertified Missouri Forest Products' Professional Timber Harvester Chainsaw Certification—September, 2019
- Recertified American and Safety and Health Institute's Wilderness First Aid Certification—September, 2019
- Gained United States Forest Service's National Crosscut Sawyer Certification (class B)—November, 2019

Seth Wheeler, WCC Manager:

- Gained Missouri Department of Agriculture's category 2 certified commercial applicator's license—May, 2019
- Gained Missouri Forest Products' Professional Timber Harvester Chainsaw Certification—September, 2019
- Gained American and Safety and Health Institute's Wilderness First Aid Certification—September, 2019

Adam Barton, WCC Conservation Specialist:

- Gained Missouri Department of Agriculture's category 3 certified commercial applicator's license—May, 2019

Dillan Simmons, WCC Conservation Specialist:

- Gained NWCG S - 212 Chainsaw Certification—February 2019
- Gained Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Certified Applicator License—February, 2019
- Gained American Red Cross CPR/AED Certification—February, 2019



WCC Manager Seth Wheeler Participating in the 2-day Wilderness First Aid certification course



WCC staff participating in Safety and Woods Worker (SAWW) week-long wilderness skills training with the USFS in Russellville, AR.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Every first Friday of the month, the WCO continues the long tradition of gathering community members and stakeholders together to learn about water-related topics. In spite of the 7:30 a.m. meeting time, total attendance exceeded 470 in 2019. The meetings also serve as a networking opportunity and a time for participants to share announcements and upcoming events. These meetings are a great tradition of the Watershed Committee and we are thankful to all our participants and presenters. Our topics for 2019 were:

- **January:** “Greener Green Spaces Collaboration: how Watershed Committee of the Ozarks (WCO), Springfield Public Schools (SPS) , City of Springfield, and Fantastic Caverns work together to create unique educational experiences,” Ann Walleyne Meyer (SPS), Sarah Foster (SPS), Jeff Birchler (WCO), and Hubert Heck, Fantastic Caverns
- **February:** “Greene County Environmental Services Update”, Tim Davis, Matt Forir and Tyler Goodwin, Greene County
- **March:** “Always Ready in the Heartland,” Todd Wilkinson, James River Basin Partnership
- **April:** “Noble Hill Partnership: Growing Food in the Ozarks,” John Chiles
- **May:** “Volunteers, Conservation and the Guest Experience,” Kelly Owens, Wonders of Wildlife
- **June:** “86 Days on the Big Muddy,” Gary and Linda DeKock
- **July:** Cancelled due to 4th of July Holiday
- **August:** “Wetlands And Our Relationship With Them,” Frank Nelson, Missouri Department of Conservation
- **September:** “What’s Worked For Us: Sharing Ideas on Watershed Restoration,” David Wise, Stroud Water Research Center
- **October:** “Watershed Conservation Corps,” Caleb Sanders, WCC Director and Seth Wheeler, WCC Projects Manager
- **November:** “Watershed Committee Update,” Mike Kromrey, Executive Director, Watershed Committee of the Ozarks
- **December:** “James River Water Quality Snapshot,” Brent Stock and Loring Bullard, James River Basin Partnership



Todd Wilkinson presenting at a WCO monthly meeting



Projects & Management

David Wise and Zeke Kuehn at the Little Sac streambank stabilization project site.

Projects and Management is where the rubber meets the road. Source water protection, watershed management plans, stormwater best management practices (BMPs), and policy recommendations are the water protection techniques important to all members of our community. Support from our sponsors allows us to operate and apply for additional resources to fund projects that improve our community's water resources.

LITTLE SAC RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (LSRIP)

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks (WCO) was awarded a subgrant agreement from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources on April 1, 2014 for the Little Sac Restoration and Improvement Project. A grant amendment was awarded bringing the total grant funding to \$380,442 with a required \$225,222 in local match and extending the grant until November 30, 2019. The goal of this project is to improve watersheds which supply the drinking water of Springfield and Greene County with implementation of best management practices (BMPs) that will reduce nonpoint source pollution.

The WCO has been working to update the Upper Little Sac Watershed Management Plan. This plan is an EPA nine-element plan that identifies sources of pollution, estimates load reductions, and describes the management measures to be implemented in critical areas to help reduce those pollutants over a 20-year timeframe. The plan is currently in the process of being reviewed by EPA. The grant has implemented several projects throughout the five years timespan, including installation of five prescribed agricultural grazing systems, installation of three bank vegetative buffers strips, improvements to riparian

LITTLE SAC RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (CONT.)

corridors, completion the Longitudinal Peaked Stone Toe Protection streambank stabilization project, and collection of water quality data at five locations in the watershed. We are very thankful to our community partners that have made these projects possible, including the landowners, the grant steering committee, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Greene County, Missouri Department of Conservation, City Utilities of Springfield, and the Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District. Stacey Armstrong Smith, Projects Manager

SAC AND JAMES RIVER WATERSHED CONSERVATION OUTREACH PROJECT

The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks was awarded the USDA Conservation Technical Assistance Grant for \$49,0000 on September 15, 2018. The objective of the project is to promote public awareness and implementation of Farm Bill activities, especially in historically underserved communities and in watersheds critical to drinking water supply. As part of the grant WCO has created a survey to understand the knowledge farmers, producers, and growers have of the Farm Bill practices and cost share programs currently available. On September 9 the survey was first conducted at the Cedar/Dade county grazing school in Greenfield, MO and on October 15 the survey was conducted at the Greene County Grazing School at the Darr Agricultural Center.

A Soil Health Workshop was held at the Sac River event center on September 24 featuring speakers Keith Burns, Co-owner/Operator of Green Cover Seeds in Bladen, Nebraska and Jimmy Emmons a row-crop/livestock producer from Dewey County Oklahoma. Topics discussed included carbonomics-what can carbon do for you, how to select cover crop species, applying soil health principles on your operation, and integrating livestock into your covers. The workshop was sponsored by the Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

GROUNDWATER MONITORING

The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks did a revamp of the former Adopt-A-Spring Program and this year launched a new groundwater monitoring program in partnership with City Utilities of Springfield. This program will provide a proactive groundwater monitoring collection of quarterly water samples from area springs to measure water quality parameters and identify any existing or emerging groundwater contaminants in our region. This year samples were collected on April 30, July 18, and October 22.

MEDICINE TAKE BACK EVENTS

As part of a nationwide campaign by the DEA, Ozark Area Pharmacy Association hosted two medicine take-back events on Saturday April 27 and October 26, 2019 in collaboration with the Greene County Sheriff's Department, City of Springfield, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, SafeKids Springfield, and local pharmacies. The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks assisted by providing volunteers and local water quality information to participants of the event. The combined collection from both events reached a total of 2,806 pounds of unused medicine. Proper disposal of these medications helps to prevent possible misuse while also keeping them from harming our drinking water supply.

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP)

WCO submitted a RCPP proposal to the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service late in 2019. The project would leverage Federal Resources through the 2018 Farm Bill to work with partners and local producers to improve water quality and drinking water resources in the Upper James River Watershed. We hope to receive word on this exciting possibility in the first quarter of 2020.

SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT SAMPLING

WCO assisted Springfield-Greene County Health Department with collecting voluntary weekly bacteria samples in streams that are public swimming locations during the summer months. After the samples are analyzed, the E.Coli and Total Coliform results are posted on the Health Department's webpage the following day for the public to access. Samples were collected from May 22 until August 26, 2019 and results are found at <http://health.springfieldmo.gov/2934/Stream-Testing>. The Health Department does not regulate these sites in any way, and these samples are not required to be collected under any state or federal rules. The information is provided as a community service.



Water sample collected from Wilson's Creek.

LITTLE SAC GRAZING DEMONSTRATION

WCO and partners made great progress on "our farm" this year. In February the major infrastructure upgrades were completed with the reinforced stream crossing installed by Zeke Keuhn and Wildscape Environmental, making it possible for vehicles to access the south half of the property. After several years of planning and work, it was tremendously satisfying to see cattle trot onto the property and immediately begin enjoying the forage awaiting them. The cattle willingly (albeit unknowingly) participated the first full year of a prescribed grazing plan, based on the fundamentals of rotational grazing to stimulate forage and soil health which in turn protect and improve water quality. This is all made possible by sub-lessee and neighbor Jerry Krasser. About 8 cows and 4 calves from Jerry's herd "volunteered" for the job and were moved through the grazing system at the appropriate times by Jerry. In addition, Jerry has been a great partner by allowing access through his property and generally helping improve and keep an eye on the place.

Other very exciting developments occurred this year. State NRCS director J.R. Flores and his team toured the facility on a visit to Springfield, and a high school forage competition and NRCS fence building class taught by the locally famous Mark Greene were held on site. In August the WCO Board took a field trip to see the progress, and were delighted to meet Mr. Krasser. Researchers at MSU have begun the baseline soil data collection for what is planned to be a long-term soil health experiment. A special thank you to Dr. Will McClain, Dr. Melissa Remley, and graduate student Shelby Mundy for embarking on this important work. A new sign highlighting the purpose and partnerships was posted along Farm Rd. 171. (see below) Recently, the Sustainable Return on Investment model used to evaluate water quality solutions as part of the integrated planning process calculated that converting traditional pasture to rotational systems with alternative watering systems provide the best return on investment of any solution evaluated to date; \$2.90 for every dollar invested. Working with local cattle producers is one of our most promising opportunities.



THE HYDRILLA PROJECT

Hydrilla is a highly invasive aquatic plant. In areas of the U.S. where hydrilla is established, it causes great expense to local economies and businesses. It damages ecosystems and water supplies, and it hampers recreational opportunities. Hydrilla was first found in southwest Missouri in 2012. A landowner in the Pomme de Terre River Watershed contacted the Missouri Department of Conservation for assistance, because a plant, which was later identified as hydrilla, had “taken over” his pond. Since then, hydrilla has been found in multiple impoundments, including locations in the Little Sac and James River watersheds.

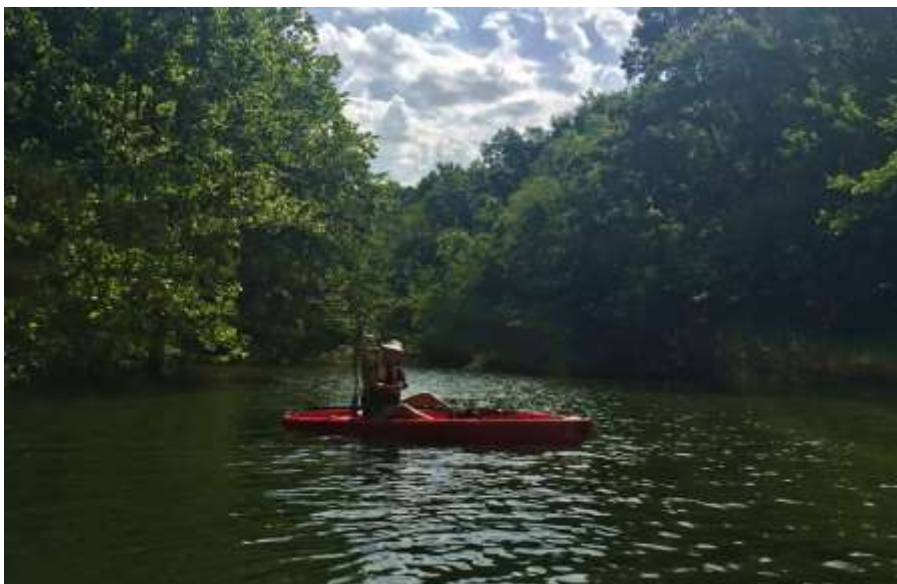
Eradicating hydrilla from our drinking-water watersheds is our goal. A Missouri Department of Conservation-led team that includes City Utilities, Greene County, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Natural Resources, and WCO, cooperates on the eradication effort. Our multifaceted approach includes multi-year chemical treatment of infested water bodies, public education and outreach, inspections, and planning.



As of today, we have 35 sites, with a combined infested acreage of approximately 84 acres. Thirteen of these sites are within the Little Sac watershed. All known sites are under a hydrilla eradication plan and are actively being treated and/or monitored.

The good news is that we are making progress. Several sites completed their treatment phase in 2018 and went to “monitoring only” in 2019. A few more will be added to the “monitoring only” list in 2020, giving us a total of 15 sites that are in “monitoring only” phase. The 1.8-acre stand at Fellows Lake continues to follow this same path with no plants observed in 2019. To date, 185 sediment cores have been collected within the known hydrilla area and zero tubers have been detected. This just re-emphasizes the importance of inspections and early detections in our overall battle against hydrilla.

Partnerships and volunteers have been integral to our battle against this invasive species and will continue to be the key to success. In 2019, staff and volunteers from various agencies, including WCO staff and volunteers, participated in an intensive search of Fellows Lake for hydrilla. This combined effort was invaluable. We raked many acres and conducted several visual surveys throughout the lake and did not find any hydrilla plants. No one group or agency could have done this alone.



This year a major sampling effort was conducted on Fellows Lake.

In 2020, treatments will resume in late March or early April, and we also plan to train more volunteers to help search public waters in the Ozarks and around the state. We will also continue organized inspection efforts at Fellows Lake and other larger waterbodies within impacted watersheds. As long as hydrilla is within a watershed, we cannot afford to let up. Diligence is key.

Contributed by Kara Tvedt, Fisheries Biologist, MDC

WATERSHED CENTER SITE PROJECTS

Numerous improvement projects have been completed over the course of 2019. These would not be possible without the generous help of our volunteers.

Trail maintenance and improvement efforts are continuous. Throughout the year, our staff worked to improve the safety and accessibility of our trails. With the help of various volunteer groups, we were able to apply mulch and gravel to sections of the trails to improve visitors' experience and to help mitigate erosion. Visitors of Valley Water Mill Park will see a new short section of trail leading from the Watershed Center to the trailhead. This area has been a trouble spot for us and difficult to maintain during the wet seasons. Volunteers from Summit Preparatory School and Missouri State University did the bulk of the work in this construction project.

The proximity of the Watershed Center and Valley Water Mill Park to an urban setting is a double-edged sword of sorts: while the short drive from anywhere in Springfield to the park provides educational and recreational opportunities for the public, the park receives heavy influence from **exotic and invasive flora** that its rural counterparts may not experience. To combat this influence, **Caleb Sanders** and **Seth Wheeler**, and numerous volunteers have worked diligently to remove mature invasive plants in conjunction with the chemical treatment of seedlings using the appropriate herbicide as they sprouted. As a result, the understory density of our park has been reduced and we have altered species composition in favor of native forbes and shrubs.

While invasive removal and forest stand improvement are both physical in nature, each practice provides an excellent educational opportunity for visitors and volunteers alike. Our staff strives to enrich the visitor or volunteer experience by explaining what types of work are being done and why they are important. A better understanding of the ecological processes unfolding in front of a volunteer or visitor helps to evoke a deeper passion for environmental stewardship. Our long-term goal is to create a more resilient forest which directly correlates with improved water quality. In 2019, we hope that more visitors enjoy a hike in a healthier ecosystem and an improved aesthetic around our park.



Summit Prep students building a new section of trail.



A small mountain of wintercreeper removed by students during a field trip.



A carpet of sunshine - Missouri bladderpod made a reappearance in our glade thanks to restoration efforts.

SOLAR AND EFFICIENCY PHASE II

This year a grant from the **C.W. Titus foundation** allowed us to get the Watershed Center closer to achieving net-zero energy. First, we were able to do a major **energy efficiency upgrade** to the outdoor restrooms attached to the C.W. Titus Education Facility. The restrooms used a prodigious amount of energy because of the uninsulated structure with electric resistance heating (think giant space heaters in a two story continually vented chimney). In 2019, in partnership with Springfield Greene County Parks, we added insulation, lowered the ceilings, and added a highly efficient heat source called a mini-split heat pump system. The area above the new ceilings now also provides attic storage space which will continue to be useful as we grow. The remainder of \$45,000 grant allowed us to **add roof-mounted solar panels** to the Lakeside Pavilion, which is an excellent location for solar based on the access to direct sun and a separate meter which can be utilized. The generosity of the HDR employees through the HDR Foundation, the C.W. Titus Foundation, Sunbelt, and the Springfield Greene County Park Board are steadily allowing us to spend less money on energy, and more money/energy on our mission. As the results of our efficiency and production are monitored in 2020, we will be able to assess the impact of these investments.



Zach Hancock with Sunbelt Solar beaming with the new Lakeside Pavilion solar installation

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION TRIM GRANT

On October 1st, 2019 the Missouri Department of Conservation approved our application for the Tree Resource Improvement and Maintenance (TRIM) Cost-Share Program. Designed to provide Missouri communities with financial assistance for the management, improvement, or conservation of publicly owned trees, the funding received from this program will be used to provide the Watershed Conservation Corps staff, crew leaders and members, and other natural resource managers of Springfield with educational and professional development opportunities. Thanks to the funds made available through the TRIM program, the Corps staff can now purchase study materials and cover the costs of exam fees in order to become International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborists®, a professional recognition given to those who are trained and knowledgeable in the cultivation, management, and study of individual trees, shrubs, vines and other perennial woody plants. Assistance from TRIM also created the opportunity for up to twelve Corps members and other natural resource managers of Springfield to participate in Safety and Woods Worker Training (SAWW). SAWW provides professional sawyers with effective, hands-on training delivered by certified trainers and is focused on safety, cutting techniques, and chainsaw maintenance. The generous assistance of the Missouri Department of Conservation will undoubtedly broaden the knowledge and skillsets of the Watershed Conservation Corps staff and allow for the Corps to expand its services offered, increase the available educational and developmental opportunities for its young employees, and help improve community forests across Missouri. Seth Wheeler, WCC Program Manager



WCC Program Manager Seth Wheeler operating a chainsaw

COCA-COLA DEAR FUTURE COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANT

The Coca-Cola Company and its family of 68 independently owned bottlers across the country invited young Americans to help deliver a better tomorrow through the “Dear Future Community Challenge.” Locally, Ozarks Coca Cola Dr. Pepper Bottling Company and Watershed Committee of the Ozarks teamed up to ask students and young adults at Drury, MSU, and OTC their ideas “to protect and restore Ozarks water resources.” After reviewing many submissions, an award of \$30,000 went to Ashley Cusic for her idea to protect and restore waters by preventing erosion and planting native plants. WCO served as a mentor and fiscal agent to help Ashley actualize her idea.

WCO surveyed local partners for “needs” or projects that might align with Ashley’s idea. Ashley decided the best fit was a project need of Ozark Greenways. A section of the Frisco Highline trail, located within Springfield’s water supply area, was eroding badly. With the investment from Coke and Ashley, Ozark Greenways was able to fund the work to stabilize the stream bank with stone and native plants. This unique project provided the opportunity to engage many students, build a relationship with Ozarks Coca Cola Dr. Pepper Bottling Company, and our student partner Ashley, as well as fix a problem and make the water cleaner.



Repaired section of the Frisco Highline Trail.

DARR FAMILY FOUNDATION GRANT

The Darr Family Foundation has invested \$10,000 in “seed money” to create an engaging, relevant, and personal educational experience for students and local consumers. This will be done by incorporating a native plant nursery in the College and Career Pathway Program at Hillcrest High School (HHS). The project stems from a partnership with Springfield Public Schools (SPS), Watershed Committee of the Ozarks (WCO), the newly formed Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter of HHS, and the Darr Family Foundation (DFF). The region’s growing demand for native plants and the desire to provide students with a learning experience which blends agriculture and environmental science provided impetus to the project.

Native Plants are integral to soil health, pollinator and wildlife habitat, erosion prevention, biodiversity, and reduction of nutrient runoff. The virtues of native plants are becoming increasingly understood and desired by consumers. As such, native plants are increasingly utilized in a variety of applications in agriculture, rural development, and urban development. Locally, successes with native plants include balancing cool season and native warm season grasses in prescribed grazing systems, planting native plants to improve habitat for monarch butterflies and honey bees, and using native plants in rain gardens and riparian buffers to improve water quality.

How do native plants fit in a High School program? In the quest for engaging, relevant, and personal educational experiences for students, SPS realized the opportunity for integrating both environmental science and agriculture into a curriculum. Native plants provide a myriad of opportunities for education, like growing and propagation, the use of natives for land/watershed management in urban and rural environments, cell biology, plant structures, the role of plants in ecosystems and soil health, developing a business plan and selling them. As such, SPS is committed to providing both students and teachers curriculum in which students, faculty, and volunteers will have the opportunity to learn about and participate in native plant production. And back to the seed money...the design/business plan for this endeavor should generate enough revenue to support and grow the program, along with the plants and students!



Watershed Conservation Corps

WCC crew members Amy Greene and Hannah Whaley constructing trail in Mark Twain National Forest

The idea of creating a local program that would offer entry-level jobs to young adults looking for work within the field of conservation was starting to take shape for us three years ago. I had just moved back to Springfield after a 7-year detour, consisting of graduate school and conservation work, and was struggling to find work in the field in southwest Missouri. There were simply few opportunities.

This was a surprise. With our area's wealth of public land, a rich cultural appreciation of the Ozark's natural resources, relatively strong regional economy, and highly enthusiastic and driven local conservation professionals, it was inexplicable that the "conservation corps brand", a proven-successful employment model that has achieved, across the United States, as much for conservation as for the youth these programs seek to serve, didn't already find a stronghold in the Ozarks.

In fact, despite the 120 active and accredited private conservation corps programs within the United States, there were no corps programs within a four-state area of Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, and Oklahoma in 2017. This isn't to say that work wasn't being done by conservation corps in these states. On the contrary, with ever-increasing funding opportunities for federal managed parks and forests, which sought to work directly with youth corps, our local and state land management agencies were using corps to complete their deferred maintenance projects—but they were looking to programs in states like Minnesota and Arizona to do so.

WATERSHED CONSERVATION CORPS (CONT.)

There isn't anything wrong with such a model per se. Out-of-state corps doing work in the Ozarks were providing results for our local land agencies while providing employment opportunities for youth at the same time. However, the region was missing an opportunity to invest in the next generation of its conservation leaders by not providing a way for Ozark youth to work on the projects available within the Ozarks—local youth could provide a better product with better results. These are *our* parks and forests after all, and the local knowledge and passion for place runs deep and can be inspiring, even through some challenging work.

Lastly, out-of-state conservation corps programs were failing to achieve reciprocal relationships with their partners. This, again, is no fault of these programs. But, by nature of being-out-of-state, the large grant resources open to youth-corps projects on federal and state land were not being leveraged for work to happen in the Ozarks. Building rich and dynamic partnerships with regional land management agencies, a local conservation corps program could bring opportunity and capital to the table and, at times, fund their own work.

These were some of the reasons WCO decided to invest in the first and only conservation corps program in the region in 2017. Conceptually, it was relatively low risk,—we took a proven model and simply applied it to our region. Financially, however, it was challenging. While the average start-up costs of a 2-crew conservation corps program hovers around \$250,000, our program needed to be fiscally sustainable at the outset without internal capital investment—meaning we needed to generate revenue while simultaneously building the WCC. A daunting task.

One key to the success in the beginning was the interest and investment of Bass Pro Shops. A leader for conservation on the local, state, and national level, Bass Pro offered the first year-round work for the WCC to work on native prairie reconstruction at their National Headquarters. This was a game-changer for the WCC. They allowed us to tie-in some nominal programmatic support into our crew-rate, which provided a foundation from which to build the program. From here, we were able to form a partnership with the National Park Service through the investment by our local conservation leaders Ted Hillmer, Mike DeBacker, and Craig Young. We then formed a rich partnership with Mark Twain National Forest through the concerted effort of Darla Rein and Jonathan Rhodes. Adding Missouri Department of Conservation into the mix, Ashley Schnake then helped our program to leverage work for our local partners in Springfield.



WCC crew members moving freshly cut cedar in sensitive habitat at Wilsons Creek National Battlefield



WCC crew members standing next to their new section of hand-cut trail in Mark Twain National Forest

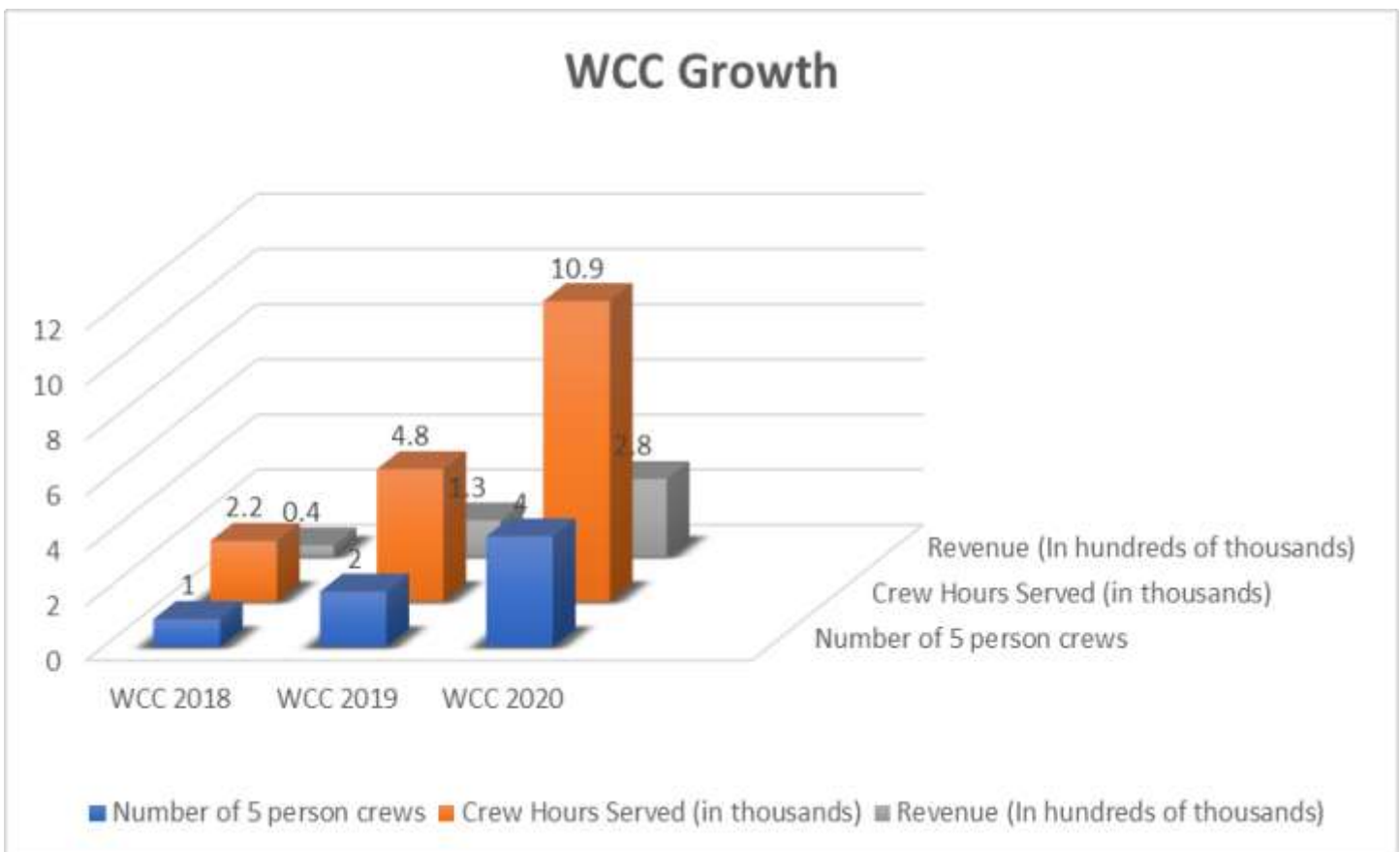
WATERSHED CONSERVATION CORPS (CONT.)

Now, two years later, the WCC has grown into a rich and vibrant program that is benefiting the youth of our region. Not only that, but our program is now leveraging its status as an accredited youth corps to help bring money and projects into our area. The start of a new decade highlights the precedent of collaborative partnership between the Corps and its invaluable project partners. With an extended program cycle spanning from March to November of 2020, crew members and leaders will be presented with the following opportunities: to restore and preserve glade, prairie, and forest habitats by removing invasive flora and to construct and maintain sustainable multi-use trails to mitigate erosion in order to better protect our region's watersheds.



Public and private project sites throughout southern Missouri and northern Arkansas include Mark Twain National Forest, George Washington Carver National Monument, Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, Pea Ridge National Military Park, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, and Bass Pro Shops Base Camp. We are also excited to announce that crew members and leaders serving with the Corps in 2020 and in subsequent years are now eligible to receive an Americorps Education Award upon completion of their service period. Depending upon how many hours individuals serve each program cycle, members and leaders will be awarded between \$350 and \$6,195 to pay for future educational expenses or to repay qualified student debt. Stay tuned for 2020 employment opportunities and to see how you could earn an education award with the Corps!

Caleb Sanders, Watershed Conservation Corps Director





People

Day of Caring volunteers with Watershed Fellow, Allison Terry.

The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks is **People**—people who are dedicated to protecting our water resources now and for the future. Our board, staff, sponsors, volunteers, partners, and supporters are a group of dedicated and dynamic individuals who make our mission possible. This chapter is about those people.

VOLUNTEERS

This was a year of change within the volunteer program. In the past the program has grown immensely, and 2019 was the year to refocus our attention to *how* the program was growing and what direction we want to grow in. What kind of investment are we expecting of our volunteers? What should they expect from us? What is the purpose of their time spent here? As we attempted to answer these questions, we decided on several guideposts that will help lead us into the future: we want this experience to be meaningful; we want our volunteers to have a real impact; and perhaps most importantly, we want our volunteers to build long-lasting relationships with both the outdoors and our community.

Among the many changes was the addition of the online volunteer portal which encompasses all the volunteer contact information, scheduling, hours tracking, communication, and even some training and educational opportunities. This “one stop shop” means that it is easier than ever to sign up for activities, set goals, and stay informed—all of which lead towards a larger investment in our organization and our mission. Although the number of individual volunteers decreased to 50, the total number of service hours only slightly decreased to 3,137.

VOLUNTEERS (CONT.)

This was primarily due to the data capture of service-learning hours, increase in service-learning opportunities for students, and an increase in the average number of hours per “individual” volunteer.

This year 2,275 area middle school students participated in on-site service-learning activities. We achieved this outstanding number by incorporating service opportunities into field trips such as the SPS seventh grade program, Greener Greenspaces, as well as several smaller programs from K-12 schools in the area. By incorporating service into these place-based experiences, students do more than learn about the importance of our water resources—they take ownership of them. We hope that by encouraging these students to take ownership of the land and water resources they’re learning about now, we can lay a solid foundation for stewardship in their future.

In addition to the rise in service-learning opportunities, we also saw an increase in the number of group work days. Sixteen groups representing local businesses, government agencies, university organizations, and even a local high school completed a total of twenty-seven work days in 2019, with several groups participating multiple times. These work days allow us to start important conversations with members of our community that may not otherwise have the opportunity to connect with nature. By starting these conversations, we hope to foster future connections between the people representing these groups and our community. These work days are also a great chance for us to complete larger on-site projects in a relatively short amount of time. Trail repair/maintenance, invasive species removal, and raingarden management are only a few examples of the tasks undertaken by these amazing businesses and organizations. The following is a comprehensive list of every group that participated in a work day with us in 2019:

- Bass Pro Shops
- City of Springfield
- DATEMA House
- Drury University: *Drury Service Plunge*
- Greene County HR
- John Deere Reman
- Kansas State University: *Alternate Spring Break Program*
- Missouri State University: *Aerialist Club, Bear Breaks Program, Principles of Sustainability Class, The Wildlife Society*
- Ozark Technical College: *Environmental Club, Green Council*
- Parkview High School : *Parkview Cares*
- UPS
- Youth Volunteer Corps



MSU Aerialist Club repairing trail by the Lake.

As mentioned previously, the total number of volunteers who participated with us as individuals dropped in 2019, down to 50 people. However, the average number of hours each of these volunteers invested increased throughout the year. During the first six months of 2019, volunteers dedicated 13.9 hours each on average. During the second half of the year, volunteers spent an average of 17.7 hours working with us. The annual average per volunteer eventually came to 17.5 hours. This increase highlights the larger investment our current volunteers are making.

VOLUNTEERS (CONT.)

Among the efforts we've made towards strengthening our volunteer relationships was the start of a Volunteer of the Month recognition program this July. The following volunteers were the recipients of this award and candidates for the 2019 Volunteer of the Year:

July: Jessica Todd

August: James Brown

September: Shelby Palmer

October: Angelina Vasquez

November: Alexis Parks

The 2019 Volunteer of the Year was Shelby Palmer. Shelby has been with us since August of 2018, and has helped with every possible task since that time. She is a current student at Missouri State University where she majors in biology and runs distances on the Track and Field team. Her outstanding attitude, willingness to learn, and consistent teamwork earned her the first annual Volunteer of the Year Award.



Volunteer of the Year, Shelby Palmer.

Most of the changes that came in 2019 can be categorized into two groups: efficiency and incentives. The changes related to program efficiency include the previously mentioned volunteer portal, the online application, a monthly volunteer newsletter, and hiring an additional coordinator. Incentive related changes include the Volunteer of the Month/Year recognition programs, allowing volunteers to choose how they want to volunteer, and increased training/learning opportunities that are made available to volunteers. These changes were brought about to increase our capacity for involvement, and by creating this streamlined infrastructure, we hope to see additional growth and success in the upcoming years. In coordination with our new guideposts, we'll determine future success by tracking the following:

Average Hours Volunteered per Individual Volunteer: This indicates how much of an investment our volunteers are willing to make in our organization and how connected they feel to our mission.

Longevity of Service: The length of time someone chooses to volunteer with us will represent what kind of relationship we've built with that individual.

Reasons for Discontinued Service: When a volunteer chooses to stop serving with us, are they leaving for a job in the field? Are they leaving for another service opportunity? Did they decide to (actually) retire? The answers to these questions will indicate if we've helped foster a long-lasting relationship with our community and the outdoors.

Volunteer Reported Feedback: We want to know that volunteers feel that their experience is rewarding, meaningful, and impactful. Positive volunteer feedback will be our primary indicator of success as we move into the future.

In order to ensure that we're continuing to have a large community impact, we still have to keep track of more basic information, such as the number of individual volunteers, group work days, and total hours served. This information and more can be found in the following chart and associated graph.

Volunteer Program at a Glance

Year	2017	2018	2019
Total Service Hours	2,571	3,863	3,137
<i>Individual Volunteers:</i>			
Volunteers	86	76	51
Hours	1,381	1,089	891
Avg. Hours/Volunteer	16.1	14.3	17.5
<i>Service-Learning Students:</i>			
Students	No Data	1,530	2,275
Hours	No Data	1,711	1,367
<i>Community Organizations:</i>			
Groups Represented	15	21	16
Volunteers	430	417	156
Work Days	20	24	27
Hours	1,190	1,063	879

2019 PRESS

- May 28, 2019 – KOLR10 “Summer stream testing begins in Greene County”
- June 26, 2019 – Springfield News-Leader “New watershed conservation corps restoring glades, hiking trails”
- July 2019 - Springfield News-Leader “Faces in the crowd: Watershed Summer Gala”
- September 14, 2019 – Springfield News-Leader “Education is key focus at Watershed Center”
- September 24, 2019 – KSMU “Migrating and resident birds greet visitors at Valley Water Mill Park”
- October 3, 2019 - Nixa High School “Nixa high school biology learns outside”
- October 23, 2019 – Springfield Public Schools “Greener Green Spaces experience chemistry, conservation at the Watershed Center”

AWARDS

In 2019, WCO was honored as the Forestry Partner of the Year (for 2018) by the Forestry Division of the Missouri Department of Conservation. Here’s an excerpt written by Francis Scalicky for the MDC Newsroom:

“SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Protecting the watersheds of southwest Missouri involves more than caring for water. Maintaining the environmental beauty of our waterways takes comprehensive stewardship of the land around the streams as well as the water flowing through them. It takes an ongoing educational effort that connects the people to the watershed and helps them understand their value.

In other words, it’s work the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks does throughout the year.”



Celebrating our Tree Farm Certification and Forestry Partner of the Year Award.

OUR BOARD

We owe a special thanks to our Board Members, who volunteer about 300 hours each year, helping us with major decisions, monthly meetings, and guiding us as we move forward into our 35th year!

Jason Hainline, Chair: Greene County Appointee, 1st Term Expires December 2020

Jason Hainline is a design associate with Dake Wells Architecture, a design-centered practice with an emphasis on progressive and sustainable design solutions. While attending Drury University, Jason began his career in the Design Development Department of Bass Pro Shops. Following, Jason moved to Boulder, Colorado and joined a nationally recognized environmentally sustainable architecture consulting firm, ENSAR Group, led by the late Greg Franta, FAIA, co-founder of the American Institute of Architects Committee on the Environment. With a move back home to the Ozarks, Jason joined EMSI, an international green building consulting practice that established green building consulting in China. Jason's experience in sustainable design includes site and landscape planning, energy efficient architectural design and analysis, daylighting, material selection, and LEED™ coordination. He has been active in a wide range of projects in the US and abroad that include facilities for each branch of the military, the National Park Service, private retail developments, low and high-rise offices, laboratories, educational buildings, restaurants, and private residences. Jason has worked in numerous countries, including Brazil, Egypt, Dubai, Poland, Czech Republic, India, Vietnam, as well as throughout China. Currently he is serving as a board member of the Springfield Component of the American Institute of Architects. In the fall of 2013, Jason was selected into the 2013 Class of LEED Fellows for his contributions to the green building movement.



Angela Blevins, Vice Chair: at-large board member, 1st Term Expires December 2021

Angela Blevins grew up alongside the James River in rural Southwest Missouri. Throughout her childhood and young adulthood she floated the James River and many other local rivers with her family. She and her husband, Tom, have traveled all over the world. Through their travels she has fallen in love with the ocean and has grown to appreciate protecting all waterways big and small, salt and freshwater. Growing up, Angela shared her parents' passion for building and joined her family's construction company. After her parents' retirement, Angela and her brother formed their own construction company and today she is co-owner of BP Builders. Throughout her 20 years in the construction industry she has held the belief that it's possible for building and growth to go hand in hand with sustaining our natural resources. Expansion doesn't have to mean destroying the natural environment. Angela is a past president of the Junior League of Springfield. She has served on the Isabel's House Board, has been chair of the Better U Committee for the American Heart Association and is currently a board member of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ozarks. In her spare time, Angela and Tom enjoy kayaking, hiking and learning all they can about other cultures. Angela is a self-proclaimed geo-nerd and loves learning everything she can about geology.



Eric Dove, Secretary: at-large board member, 2nd Term Expires December 2020

Eric Dove is a professional engineer and has an extensive technical background solving problems related to surface water supply and water quality in streams and lakes. Over 20 years ago, Eric fell in love with the Ozarks while on a vacation with his wife. Since moving to the Ozarks, Eric enjoys taking his wife and three sons to the local lakes, streams, and mountain biking trails. Eric has dedicated his career to the protection and enhancement of our precious water resources. He has published and presented at national conferences on a wide variety of water resources topics such as the value of using natural approaches to stabilize Ozark streams. Eric's educational background includes a bachelor's and master's degree in civil engineering with an emphasis in water resources.



Laura Greene: City Utilities Appointee, 2nd Term Expires December 2020

Laura Greene is an attorney in the Springfield office of Husch Blackwell, LLP. She grew up in the Midwest, spent several years in the Northeast, and then moved to Springfield over nine years ago. Since making the Ozarks her home, Laura has enjoyed exploring the waterways, hiking trails, and lakes of this beautiful area. She also loves indulging in her newly-discovered passion for fly fishing. Laura is a past board member of Breast Cancer Foundation of the Ozarks, serves as the Chair for the American Heart Association's Springfield Circle of Red, is the founder of Springfield Women of Influence, and is in Class 30 of Leadership Springfield. Laura spends as much time as possible outdoors with her husband Chuck and their three children, Andy, Abby, and Sarah. She believes in the mission of conserving the pristine natural resources of the Ozarks for the enjoyment of generations to come.



Dan Hoy: City Appointee, 2nd Term Expires December 2019

Dan Hoy's passion for the Ozarks water resources dates back to the early 70's, when he began floating and fishing the area's lakes and streams. This passion inspired Dan's personal values of caring for creation and resource conservation. He's put these values to work in his career of more than 30 years as Bass Pro Shops Director of Facilities. Dan's inspiration in conservation causes is sustained by his work maintaining Bass Pro Shops facilities throughout the country, overseeing energy and waste management, and providing for environmental compliance. In addition to his WCO Board membership, Dan is active with the James River Basin Partnership, involved with his church, St. Elizabeth Anne Seton, and other boards and community outreach opportunities. Dan conspires every spare moment to pursue the passions of his youth in the great outdoors with his childhood sweetheart and wife, Diane.



Michael Stelzer: at-large board member, 1st Term Expires December 2021

Michael's background in business and branding began with ownership of a Design firm focusing on identity development and package design for companies like 7-Up, Monsanto, Holiday Inn and Bass Pro Shops. After the sale of the firm, he became Creative Director for an ad agency where he worked with clients such as Tyson, Sara Lee, Simplot and other national brands. From here, he co-founded Marlin, an ad agency focused on food and beverage. This employee-owned company grew into 5 offices, 180 people and a client roster that included global brands such as Starbucks, Unilever, Heinz, Nestle and Frito-Lay. A love of nature and the outdoors drew him to, and keeps him in, the Ozarks. Currently, Michael is in post-retirement as a full-time blacksmith/sculptor working out of his dirt floor forge on his farm close to the Upper James River.



Funding

Funding is necessary to accomplish the work of protecting our water. **Our sponsors—City Utilities, Greene County, and the City of Springfield provide our core operational funding.** This three-way agreement is a powerful fund-leveraging mechanism for each sponsor. Grants, donations, and in-kind contributions are also vital to advancing our mission. As an example, the Watershed Center project was made possible by \$659,222 in private funds.

Long-Term Fund

Recently, the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks developed a Long-Term Fund, with the assistance of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. The Fund is treated as an endowment, with the added benefit of being unrestricted, so it can be accessed (with Board approval). As this fund grows it will provide interest that can be reinvested or applied to projects or personnel to further our mission. With the help of our gracious donors, this fund balance was over \$132,000 at the end of the year.

Watershed Summer Gala & Fundraising

The Watershed Committee raised just over \$60,000 in 2019 through the Watershed Summer Gala event and gifts from organizations and individual donors.

Endowment Fund

The Watershed Committee established a restricted Endowment Fund in 2008, held at the Community Foundation of the Ozarks (CFO). Thanks to some donations, a CFO matching grant and interest accrued, this year, the endowment fund has surpassed the \$28,000 mark.

Watershed Center Rentals

With the growth of our staff, volunteers, and education programs, we are pressed for space at the C. W. Titus Education Facility (Watershed Center). Therefore, we will no longer rent the Watershed Center for meetings, workshops, etc.

Sustaining Donors

The Sustaining Donors program is a new avenue for people to invest in the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks. One-time donors are fantastic, but building relationships with people and businesses that lead to yearly commitment is even better.

Individual Sustainers

Aaron J. Scott
Bill & Maret Cheek
Brian Edmond
Dave & Elisa Coonrod
Laura and Chuck Greene
Mike & Mary Kromrey
Todd Polk
Tom & Angela Blevins

Business Sustainers

Commercial Metals Company
Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr. Pepper Bottling Company
Roto Rooter Plumbing & Drain Service

Watershed Summer Gala

We are excited to announce that our Watershed Summer Gala raised over \$40,000, exceeding our fundraising goal of \$30,000. These funds have helped us pay for our Watershed Center Fellowship Program and will enable us to keep pace with the growing demand for our education programs. At the event, the local food catered by Chartwell's was exceptional, and it paired well with Mother's Brewery beer and 7'C 's Winery wines. Several attendees expressed similar comments: that this event is quickly becoming a favorite because of the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and meet new people with similar interests—and it is laid back and fun. Thank you to our silent auction donors, the sponsors, the bidders, the partners, and all who attended. Put Saturday, July 18th on your calendars for 2020!



OUR GENEROUS 2019 DONORS

We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who donated their financial resources, time, talent, and good-heartedness to the Watershed Committee this past year.

Watershed Summer Gala Sponsors

Presenting \$10,000

Bass Pro Shops

Gold \$5,000

Vital Farms

Silver \$2,500

Bailey Pyle Builders

The Kraft-Heinz Company

Bronze \$1,000

Arkifex Studios

Bud and Mary Hogan

Commerce Bank

Commercial Metals Company

Elite Promotions

John Wyrsh

MSU College of Natural and Applied Sciences

Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr. Pepper Bottling Company

Supporting \$500

Central Bank & Central Trust

Chartwells (In-Kind)

Crawford, Murphy & Tilly

Environmental Works

Glass Tint USA

Macadoodles (In-Kind)

Missouri Master Naturalists Springfield Plateau Chapter

Mother's Brewing Company (In-Kind)

Poor Boy Tree Service

In-Kind Donations

Aaron Scott

Alex Mauer

Ames Chiles

Angela Blevins

Bass Pro Shops

Bob Kipfer

Bryan Vance

Central Bank of the Ozarks

Glass Tint USA

Harwood Ferguson

Jason Frantz

KUAT

Larry Randolph

Lisa Berger

Mary Sturdevant

Mike Kromrey

Sandy Kromrey

Sunbelt Environmental

Tie & Timber Beer Co.

Tree City USA

Mark Bower

Monetary Donations

\$0-\$99

Aaron Scott

Mike & Mary Kromrey

Todd Polk

Tom & Angela Blevins

Upper White River Basin Foundation

\$100-\$499

Bob & Barb Kipfer

Brian Edmond

Dave & Elisa Coonrod

Jane Earnhart

Jeff Bromberger

Missouri Master Naturalists Springfield Plateau Chapter

Mud Lounge

Roto Rooter Plumbing & Drain Service

\$500-\$999

Bill & Maret Cheek

David Reynolds

Laura and Chuck Greene

\$1,000-\$2,499

Harwood Ferguson & Carrie Coleman

Sunbelt Environmental

Tal & Rosalie O'Reilly Wooten Family Foundation

\$3,000

Anonymous

\$5,000

Thomas and Kimberly Prater Family Fund

Need to send an update or report an error? Contact Kelly Guenther, Business Manager 417.866.1127 or kelly@watershedcommittee.org

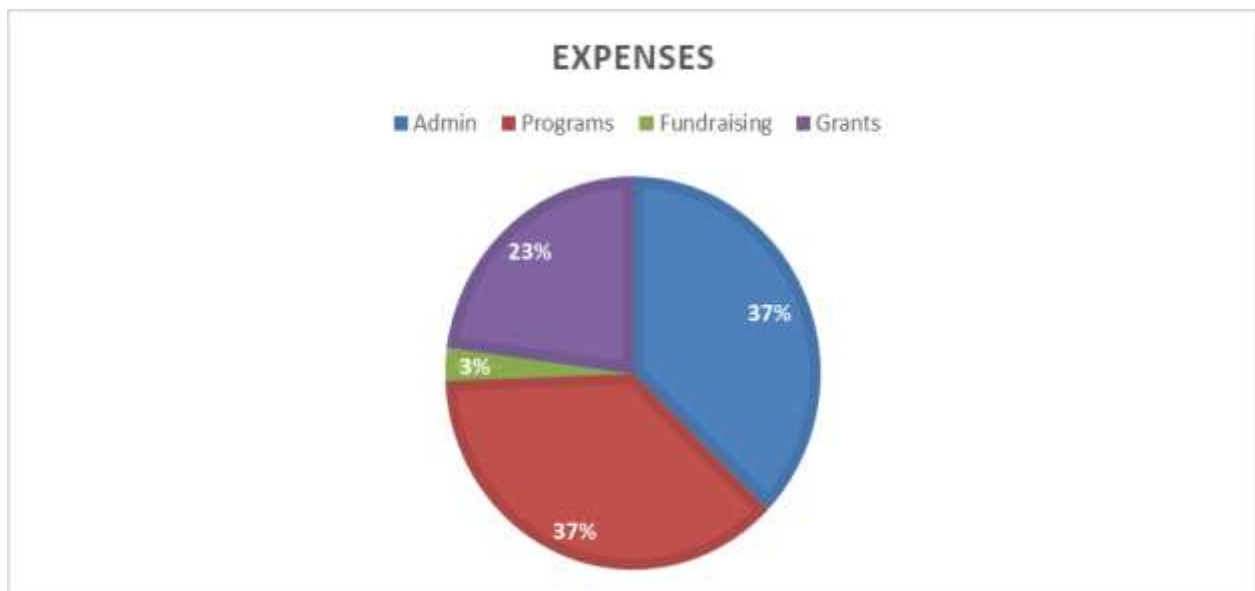
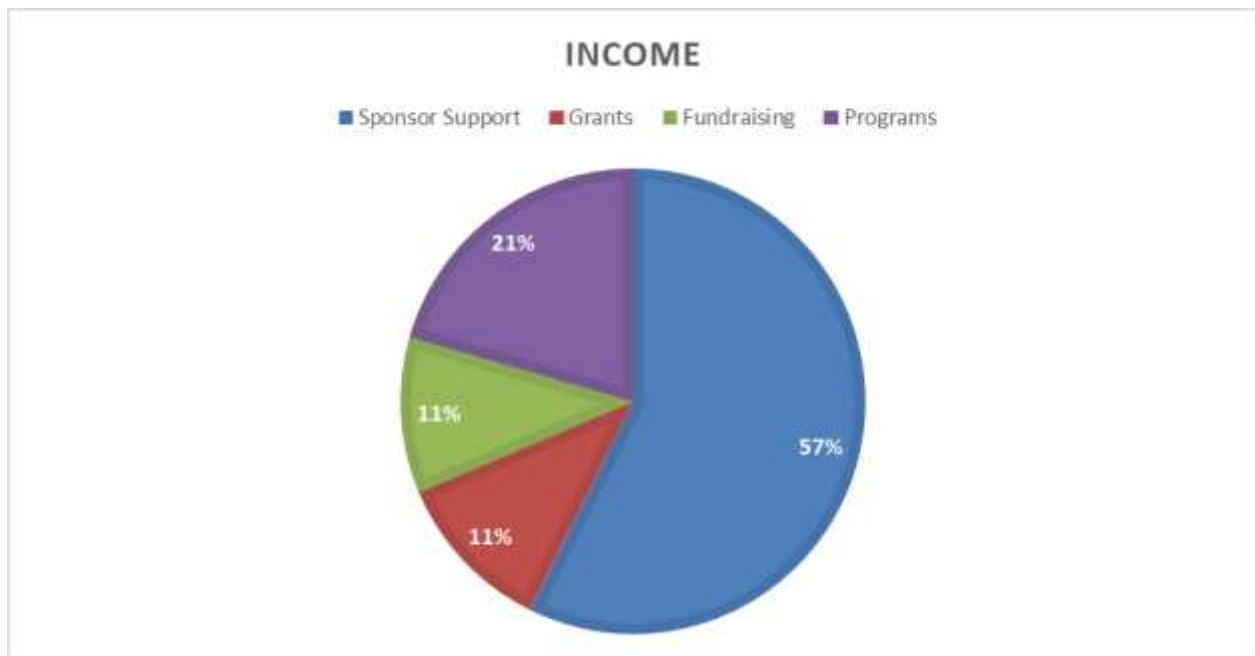
C. W. TITUS EDUCATION FACILITY DONORS

3M Foundation	Greater Ozarks Audubon Society	Mr. & Mrs. Reynaldo J. Gumucio
ARIA Foundation	Greene County	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Bachus
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BKD Foundation	Jan Horton	O & S Trucking
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Gayle Harper	Mona Menezes	William & Maret E. Cheek
Great Southern Bank	Mr. & Mrs. Ross Ausburn	Wright Water Engineers

These reflect Watershed Center Capital Campaign donations received from the years 2005-2012

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization that depends on sponsor support and grant and donor dollars. Income from these sources allows us to fund our education and outreach programs, implement grant work, maintain the Watershed Center, and provide other important services. Last year, 11% of our income came from grants, and this money is restricted to specific projects and programs, such as the solar array, habitat improvements at the Watershed Center, and our trail restoration project. Unrestricted funds support general operations as well as our education and outreach programs, including our collaborative efforts with Springfield Public Schools. Unrestricted funds also help support the Watershed Fellowship and maintain and improve the Watershed Center and Valley Water Mill Park.



GRANT ACTIVITY

Grant Project	Date initiated	Total Grant	Non-Local Funds
Greene County GIS Project	1988	\$325,000	\$235,500
Fulbright Spring Monitoring System	1989	\$40,000	\$20,000
Fellows-McDaniel Lakes 319 Project	1992	\$119,000	\$63,000
McDaniel Lake Remediation Project	1993	\$66,621	\$40,500
Fulbright Spring 319 Project	1996	\$190,000	\$100,000
Splash Exhibit for Discovery Center	1997	\$6,800	\$3,500
Little Sac River Pollution Study	1999	\$145,000	\$140,000
Discovery Center Project	1999	\$205,000	\$125,000
Adopt-A-Spring Volunteer Initiative	2000	\$12,000	\$4,900
Little Sac Restoration 319 Project	2000	\$625,000	\$343,500
Show-Me Yards & Neighborhoods	2000	\$8,475	\$4,975
Valley Water Mill 319 Project	2001	\$920,838	\$480,000
Cause Marketing for Clean Water	2001	\$8,334	\$5,000
Radio Promotion White River Basin	2001	\$8,334	\$5,000
Show-Me Yards & Neighborhoods II	2002	\$8,350	\$5,000
Time to Come Clean Awareness	2002	\$8,334	\$5,000
Show-Me Yards & Neighborhoods Tips	2002	\$8,334	\$5,000
Recreational Trails Program	2003	\$84,500	\$42,500
Jordan Creek Education Event	2003	\$2,315	\$0
Science Based Field Trip Grant	2003	\$4,000	\$0
Watershed Center	2003	\$447,000	\$447,000
Watershed Center	2004	\$994,600	\$994,600
Community On-Site	2006	\$309,650	\$185,750
Water Quality Improvement Grant	2006	\$400,000	\$400,000
LAD	2006	\$5,000	\$0
CFO Streamside Learning Station	2006	\$20,000	\$0
CFO Wetland/Curricula Grant	2006	\$22,288	\$0
LAD Interpretive Signage	2007	\$3,500	\$0
Rotary Service Grant	2007	\$500	\$0
Rotary Service Grant-Southeast	2007	\$1,000	\$0
Corporate Agency Partnership Program-			
Fishing Piers	2007	\$49,500	\$0
LAD Forestry Learning Station	2007	\$5,000	\$0
CFO Fishing Piers Grant	2007	\$30,000	\$0
Watershed Mgmt Planning Grant	2007	\$15,000	\$0
MO Recreational Trails Grant	2007	\$142,000	\$100,000

Grant Activity (CONT.)

Grant Project	Date initiated	Total Grant	Non-Local Funds
Rotary Service Grant-Southeast	2008	\$ 4,500	\$0
USDA-NRCS CIG Grant	2010	\$100,000	\$50,000
Missouri Solid Waste Mgmt. District O Grant	2010	\$46,350	\$46,350
LAD Foundation	2010	\$4,000	\$4,000
DNR 319 Nonpoint Source Grant	2011	\$1,869,672	\$ 1,100,000
DNR Recreational Trails Grant	2011	\$ 143,090	\$85,000
CFO Endowment Matching Grant	2012	\$ 1,000	\$0
CFO Community Response Challenge Grant	2012	\$ 6,000	\$0
LAD Foundation	2013	\$ 2,000	\$0
Source Water Protection Plan Grant	2013	\$ 15,000	\$ 10,000
DNR 319 Nonpoint Source Grant Amendment	2013	\$166,667	\$100,000
DNR 319 Little Sac Restoration and Imp Project	2014	\$428,461	\$172,910
Missouri Department of Conservation	2014	\$ 6,500	
Our Missouri Waters Project	2015	\$ 64,000	
MDC Community Conservation Grant	2015	\$ 10,000	
CFO Community Innovation Grant	2015	\$ 11,000	
DNR Little Sac Restoration and Improvement Project Extension	2016	\$104,512	
Community Conservation Grant (MDC)	2016	\$ 10,000	
Community Conservation Grant (MDC)	2017	\$ 10,000	
Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Grant	2017	\$ 25,000	
HDR Solar Demonstration Grant	2017	\$ 80,000	
Lucky's Market Agricultural Demonstration Grant	2017	\$ 6,000	
DNR 319 Little Sac Restoration and Improvement	2018	\$ 29,155	\$19,437
Community Conservation Grant (MDC)	2018	\$ 10,000	
CW Titus Foundation	2018	\$ 45,000	
USDA	2018	\$ 49,000	\$25,334
OHRD	2018	\$ 21,000	
3M Grant	2018	\$ 5,000	
Community Conservation Grant (MDC)	2019	\$ 10,500	
Coca-Cola Grant	2019	\$ 30,000	
MO Praire Foundation Grant	2019	\$ 800	
Jeep Grant	2019	\$ 250	
3M Grant	2019	\$ 2,500	
Darr Family Foundation Grant	2019	\$ 10,000	
MDC TRIM Grant	2019	\$ 3,500	
Total		\$8,626,230	5,378,756

SPONSOR SUPPORT

Organization	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
City of Springfield	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$45,000	\$ 52,000	\$ 52,000
City Utilities of Springfield	\$188,000	\$188,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Greene County	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$15,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000
Springfield-Greene County Parks	\$ 14,300	\$ 16,000	\$16,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000

A VALUE PROPOSITION

Since 1984, the support of the City, County, and City Utilities has been an integral part of the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, our shared mission, and an investment in the present and future of our community. We know that the value of water is often taken for granted. Most people barely give water a second thought—it comes out of their faucets and showers clean and nearly free. Most of our local streams no longer have pollution issues which are easily recognizable to the average person (except for litter perhaps). This is a testament to our combined effort and success. Ironically, however, our success creates another challenge. Things are good—it is easy for most to be apathetic about water. Why should we plan, and work, and invest when there are so many other things which seem more urgent? I think that's one of the reasons WCO remains so valuable and relevant in our community.

As reflected in this report, the quantity and quality of our education programs continues to grow. We are on our way to reaching every local student, in elementary, middle, and high school. These are important steps to creating not just individuals, but a generation which understands and values water. Our education efforts also have the technical but important value of helping the City and County meet our federally mandated stormwater requirements (MS4 permit).

You've noticed our grant history (pages 36-37) and how the investment of our sponsors is leveraged by acquiring outside resources to address water quality issues. These projects are easily measured using metrics such as tasks completed, dollars spent. Most projects have other benefits too. These projects are a basis for building and expanding partnerships, sharing data, communicating, and moving the needle of water quality over the long-term. And often, these projects are opportunities to try out new techniques and demonstrate techniques of merit, ultimately speeding up our learning process as a community.

One of the quietly successful long-term efforts of the WCO has been the "monthly meeting," outlined earlier in this report. I'm not aware of any other community in the country that has a longstanding tradition of filling a room full of people at 7:30 in the morning talk about water. This meeting has certainly increased the knowledge and awareness of local water resources, but I would argue that the relationships formed between those in the room is the most impactful outcome of the gathering. Perhaps this is one of the roots of our proudly held partnership ethic in the local water world.

And finally, one of the most humbling and awesome aspects of value related to our mission, is the willingness of fellow community members to invest in our mission. They/you see the value too (page 33-34)! Through the annual Summer Gala, our business and individual sustainer programs, online giving, and planned gifts, individuals have joined us in our effort. These investments help us reach new levels of effectiveness. Often, we use these resources to increase our people power, because at the end of the day, people is what it takes—we are what it takes.

Thank you for taking the time for reading these paragraphs and this report. It is an honor to pursue this mission, and work all the many individuals who care so deeply in our shared mission. Everyone working at WCO is invested, passionate, and talented, and there are some very exciting opportunities on the horizon. We value your support, and we look forward to WCO's best years yet!



OUR MISSION:

To sustain and improve the water resources of
Springfield and Greene County through education
and effective management of the region's
watersheds.



The WCO—a wise investment with a track record
of achieving successful outcomes.