

2021 Annual Report

CONTENTS

3	Board, Staff, Sponsors, and Partners	27	Volunteers
4	Letter from the Director	28	AmeriCorps
5	Preface	30	WCO Board
6	Programs	32	Funding
7	Watershed Center Education and Outreach	33	Summer Gala
12	Watershed Natives	34	Donors and Sustainers
15	Fellows Lake	37	Revenue and Expenses
18	Watershed Conservation Corps	38	Grant Activity
21	Monthly Meetings	41	Sponsor Support and Value Proposition
22	Projects and Management		
23	Upper Little Sac 319		
23	Sac/James USDA Project		
24	James River Headwaters RCPP		
26	Hydrilla		
27	People		

OUR MISSION

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



Jeff teaching at the Watershed Center

Cover design by Aaron J. Scott

2021 STAFF

Mike Kromrey, *Executive Director*

Stacey Armstrong Smith, *Projects Manager*

Kelly Guenther, *Director of Business Operations*

Jeff Birchler, *Watershed Center Director*

Rowan Hoffman, *Watershed Fellow/Volunteer Coordinator*

Christy Wilder, *Watershed Natives Program Manager*

Caleb Sanders, *Watershed Conservation Corps (WCC) Program Director*

Adam Barton, *WCC Program Manager*

Dillan Simmons, *WCC National Parks Service Restoration Specialist*

Trey Thompson, *WCC National Parks Service Restoration Specialist*

Hannah Stinnett, *WCC National Parks Service Restoration Specialist*

Grant Denbow, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Jeremiah Cline, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Evan Petrich, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Brendan Brothers, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Mara Holt, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Lexis Mader, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Desha Middleton, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Henry Wilbers, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Allan Wilkinson, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Matt Taylor, *Fellows Lake Manager*

Kelce Arrington, *Fellows Lake Asst. Manager*

Elizabeth Barnes, *Fellows Lake Accountant/Asst. Manager*

Rachel Wilkins, *AmeriCorps Member, WCO Development Coordinator*

Sammi Gisselbeck, *AmeriCorps Member, WCO Development Coordinator*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Angela Blevins, *Chair*

Michael Stelzer, *Vice Chair*

Bobbilynne Koepke, *Secretary*

Michael Finch

Aaron Robison

Jason Hainline

OUR SPONSORS

City Utilities of Springfield

Greene County

City of Springfield

OUR PARTNERS

Drury University

Greene County Soil and Water
Conservation District

James River Basin Partnership

Missouri Master Naturalists, Springfield
Plateau

Missouri Department of Conservation

Missouri State University

National Park Service

Ozark Greenways

Project WET (Water Education for
Teachers)

Springfield-Greene County Fairgrounds

Springfield-Greene County Park Board

Springfield Public Schools

DEAR FRIENDS,

Have you ever heard of “a big year” in the world of birding? Bird enthusiasts often keep a life list of birds seen, and sometimes shoot for “a big year” by trying to break a record for the most species seen in a year in a certain geography like a state, country, or even within the bounds of a park or backyard. The trick to a big year is covering the basics like robins and bluebirds, using skill and perseverance to capitalize on ephemeral opportunities like migrating warblers, and being connected with a broader community to discover rare outliers like an Iceland Gull in the Midwest carried inland by unexpected winds. We didn't set out in 2021 with big year intentions, but things quickly shifted that way. Our combination of covering the basics, a skillful team to identify and capitalize on opportunities, and the ability to tally a rare Gull or two all came together.

Watershed has been around since 1984, and for most of that time, the organization has employed two to four people. In 2021, we employed over 30 with the inclusion of Watershed Conservation Corps staff and the Fellows Lake team. The bluebird/robin basics took on a whole new level with the added payroll, insurance, human resources management, and the ever changing dynamics of operating during a pandemic. I am filled with gratitude for the team for their continual problem solving to keep our foundation sound as we grew so much in pursuit of our mission. People, after all, are our best investment and to have so many talented people working together is thrilling.

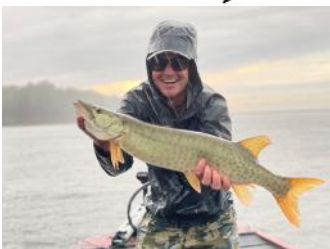
We got to tally some big opportunities we had been working towards. On March 1, 2021, we began operations at Miller Park at Fellows Lake as a community partner with City Utilities. Our presence at Fellows will provide a myriad of education and outreach opportunities centered around our primary drinking water source for years to come. We also procured the largest project-related water quality grant to date as the lead partner for the USDA James River Headwaters Regional Conservation Partnership Projects, as well as a Little Sac 319 grant. We worked urgently to explore promising frontiers for watershed health in the buy/protect/sell strategy and the possibility of nutrient trading in local watersheds, and were able to utilize Pandemic Payroll Protection funds. Not all of our explorations have yielded fruit yet, but hopefully some will with time.

What really drove home our big year were several incredible welcome outliers—our Iceland Gull. Watershed, along with Ozark Greenways, TrailSpring, and the James River Basin Partnership received an anonymous, game-changing gift. By investing the gift with the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, our nonprofits will have an additional, continual source of income which will improve our ability to pursue our respective missions in a myriad of ways. Several of our long-time business sustainers came though in big, new ways. Bass Pro Shops and Tracker Marine provided boats for Fellows Lake in a partnership which will showcase their product, provide boats for public use, and improve local water access for people with limited mobility or without their own watercraft. Long-time business sustainers Coca-Cola and Vital farms found additional ways to invest and become involved.

Our big year would absolutely never have happened without our board, staff, sponsors, and advocates like you. Thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing the opportunities 2022 will bring.

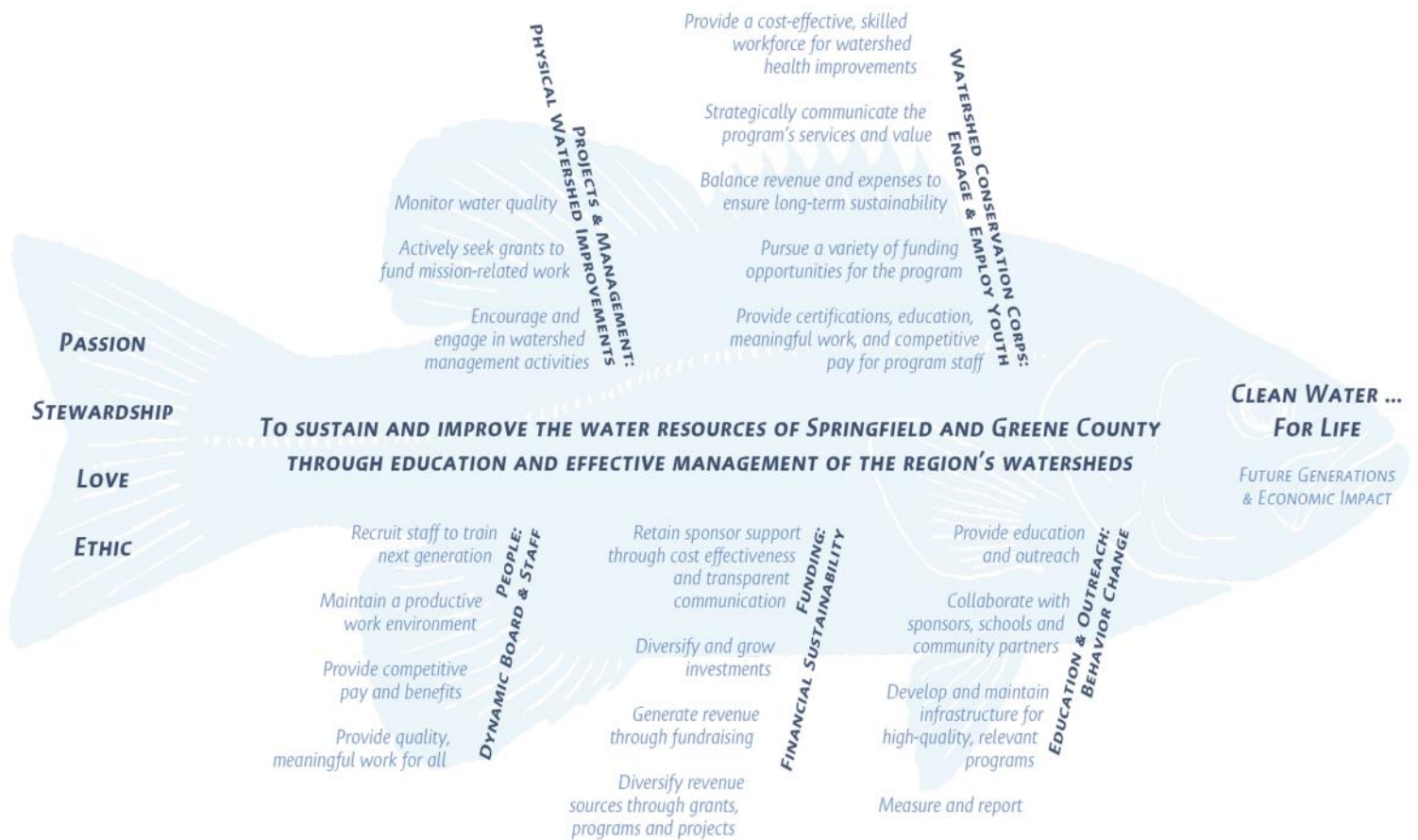
Kind Regards,

Mike Krummy



PREFACE

The work of watershed protection is complex and multi-faceted but is simplified nicely with a Fishbone Diagram (see below). Our mission is the backbone. It is central to everything we do and directs all of our moves. The tail propels us. We are driven by our ethic, our passion, our desire to be stewards, and ultimately by love—love for creation/the earth and love for our work and community. The body of the fish is a dynamic mix of parts which work both independently and in synchrony. Each component is part of something bigger, much like our projects, programs, people, funders, volunteers, and educational endeavors. All of these components add up to something bigger than the sum of their parts. This plan is represented by the sections summarized in the bones of the diagram below. The head, the direction we are always swimming, is what we actualize as we work toward accomplishing our mission. Clean water...for life!





Programs

Above: A field trip at the Watershed Center

WATERSHED CENTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

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. In addition, connecting the next generation with nature, in a fun, hands-on, and safe environment is paramount in building a foundation for the next generation of water stewards in our community.

Field Trips to the Watershed Center

While we have not made a full recovery to pre-pandemic numbers, things are looking up. Many more schools were ready to return to a normal practice for outdoor experiences. However, this year was still a blend of field trips to the Watershed Center, Jordan Creek underground tours, classroom visits, and collaboration with virtual conferences, distance learning, and Zooming along.



Our most requested activity—stream sampling!

Watershed Center Education and Outreach (cont.)

The Springfield Public Schools (SPS) Splash! field trips were canceled for this year, but we were able to modify other programs to meet the changing circumstances. For example, the Greener Greenspaces was modified to give individual schools the flexibility to best fit their needs as to whether they wanted to participate in field experiences or have our staff visit their school for outreach activities.

Our preferred method of connecting with the public is through visits to the Watershed Center. At Valley Water Mill Park, guests can easily explore the connection between healthy land and healthy water. Interpretive signage allows for self-guided tours that entertain and educate. Early experiences with nature are critical in creating future advocates. For many students, field trips are their first chance to wade in an Ozarks stream or catch a crayfish. For some, it is even their first experience hiking a trail through the woods. These first impressions have a lasting impact on students that will stay with them for a lifetime.

One of our most impactful programs made its return this year. Greener Greenspaces reaches every 7th grade school student enrolled in Springfield public schools. This unit combines place, problem, and project-based learning strategies, providing real-world experiences to students. Teams of students are given \$1,000 budgets to make improvements to green spaces around their campuses. Over the course of the program, students make two visits to the Watershed Center, where they investigate best management practices, local threats to our water supply, and the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems.

Our partners, Fantastic Caverns and the City of Springfield-Environmental Services, led students on off-site field trips to the Sanitary Landfill and Fantastic Caverns 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.



Never too young to learn



Studying aquatic life at Streamside Learning Station



Rachel & Clarissa leading a water chemistry activity

Looking Forward

We are excited about the year ahead. In addition to continuing our established collaborations, there are many new opportunities to explore. The new SPS Agriculture magnet school offers some unique opportunities to engage with students about the value of native plants, soil health, and working toward clean water. Managing Miller Park at Fellows Lake gives us a fantastic opportunity to reach a brand-new audience with important messages about water quality issues and stewardship actions for the lake. Our Watershed Natives Program will continue to grow along with the SPS College and Careers Pathway Program. Good things are ahead, and we look forward to sharing them with you.

Outreach

Not everyone finds their way on their own to the Watershed Center (yet!). Fortunately, field trips are not the only thing that made their return this year. Community events also began to reappear on the calendar. These events allow us to connect with a wider audience. Not only is it a fun way to engage with the public, but participants leave better informed about our organization and the important role each individual plays in protecting our water quality. In March, the Seuss Science Day brought hundreds of kids and their parents to the YMCA where they were able to participate in a variety of science-themed programs. In keeping with the Seuss theme, WCO sponsored a Red Fish Blue Fish activity that the kids really enjoyed. In October, WCO participated in the Homeschool Outdoor Fair held at the Botanical Center. While numbers were down from previous fairs, many families still took the opportunity to bring their kids out for the educational activities. Some schools were not yet ready to return to field trips, so our staff made the trip to their classroom. Our focus was to make use of displays and hands-on activities as much as we possibly could with restrictions that were in place at the time. Educators were thrilled to have this option available to them and greatly appreciated our efforts. Students especially enjoyed any hands-on activities we could bring their way.

Not all outreach programs happen in a classroom or in a community center. Sometimes we meet at other more convenient locations. It helps tell the story when the source of the water you are referring to is in their backyard. It also introduces students to opportunities to which they might not normally be exposed. One of our favorite outreach activities is meeting the WOLF students at Bob and Barb Kipfers' place on Bull Creek to taste Bull Creek tea.



Combining art and science in a fish printing activity

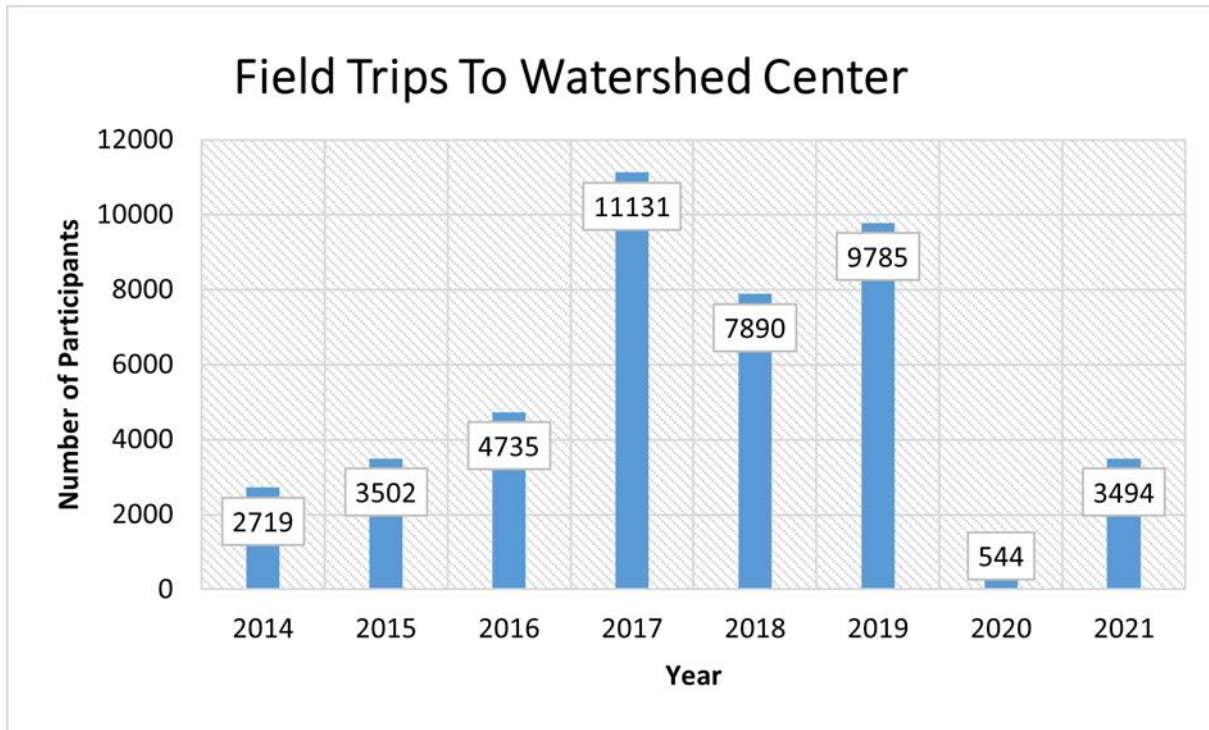


Engaged students in a lesson on stormwater



Enjoying Mike's secret Bull Creek Tea recipe

Education and Outreach: A Look at the Numbers



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Field Trip Participants to Watershed Center	11,131	7,890	9,785	544	3,494
Watershed Center Field Trips	201	173	180	21	64
Booths at Community Events	14	12	10	1	4
Jordan Creek Tours	20	28	20	9	22
Outreach Activities Participants	3,349	4,964	3,450	525	2,728

Watershed Center Fellow/Volunteer Coordinator Rowan Hoffman

Our Watershed Center Fellowship Program, made possible by the generosity of our sustainers, has been a huge success since its inception in 2017. This program provides college students and/or recent college graduates a unique educational and work experience to assist us in meeting our critical need for volunteer coordination and ecological restoration. We were thrilled when Rowan, one of last year's AmeriCorp members, was able to move over into this roll. Rowan has risen to the challenge of recruiting and managing volunteers during these unpredictable times. His contribution to the Watershed team is much appreciated.



Rowan demonstrating to volunteers how to remove invasive species in the park

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 (SPS) 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 years to better prepare them for careers or college in their selected



Christy providing guidance on potting seedlings

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 continues to work with SPS developing the Environmental & Natural Resources curriculum, embedding interactive units and developing strategies for certifications applicable to careers related to their career paths. This Academy also includes careers

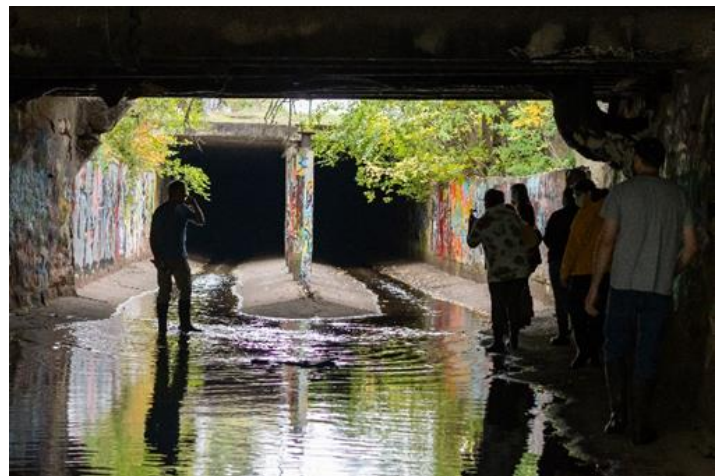


Students preparing plants for sale

related to agriculture. Prior to the lockdown, we were able to kick off our Watershed Natives Program with the assistance of Springfield's Hillcrest High School students. Their Future Farmers of America (FFA) club was a huge help in potting our native trees and shrubs. The environmental science class germinated and cared for our young seedlings in their early growth stages. These plants, started by students, made up the bulk of our fall and spring plant sales. Next year's program will utilize the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds facilities, a high tunnel, and a Nursery Manager. This location and three-way collaboration between the Fairgrounds, SPS, and the Watershed will be a huge benefit to all.

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 how stormwater is directly connected to our streams and rivers.



Starting the tour at Main Street Bridge

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.

Missouri State University has the Citizenship and Service Learning 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. 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.



South Dry Sac makes a great outdoor classroom



MSU students stream ecology activity



OTC students exploring best stormwater best management practices

Ozark Technical College (OTC) has become increasingly involved with the Watershed Center. Individual student volunteers and campus organizations have assisted with variety clean-ups and projects. Many classes have conducted field trips to the Watershed Center and participated in Jordan Creek underground tours. We continue to increase our collaboration with the environmental science classes.



WATERSHED natives

Watershed Natives is a program of the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks that uses native plants for clean water and healthier communities. Watershed Natives provides many opportunities to share the myriad benefits of native plants with students, teachers, and community members and plant the seeds of stewardship.

The roots of Watershed Natives lie in a partnership with **Springfield Public Schools** (SPS). In 7th grade, SPS students participate in a program called Greener Greenspaces in which they take field trips to a cave, the landfill, and the Watershed Center. These fall frolics encourage a deeper dive into the place they live and is based on the fundamentals of low impact development. The culminating activity for this experience is a challenge for teams of students to improve their school grounds, and the best project proposal receives funding! Students also learn about the future opportunity they have to further explore these topics in high school.

For those interested, the next step in this upward-spiraling curriculum is the college and career pathway at Hillcrest High School. Beginning sophomore year, students can take Environmental Science and begin participating in the Watershed Natives Program. Along with the curriculum content which meets state standards, students get to learn the fundamentals of plant growing. This involves hands-on cleaning pots, weeding, transplanting, and germination. Juniors take Watershed Science and build more advanced skills like species identification, sexual and asexual plant propagation, seed stratification, and explore larger concepts like forestry and soil health. Senior year, students take Restoration Ecology and put the native plants they have grown and concepts they have learned into practice with management plans they create, with help from natural resource professionals in the community. Our Watershed Natives Program Manager acts as support staff to the school, as an educator, and as a nursery manager.



Hillcrest students with seed harvest

Program Objectives:

- 1) Provide an engaging, relevant, place-based, hands-on experience for local students
- 2) Grow high-quality native plant stock
- 3) Identify and fill gaps in local native plant supply, such as overall supply and availability, aquatic native plants, larger-sized native trees and shrubs, and plants of conservation concern
- 4) Ensure long-term program viability with a sustainable business model, including plant sales
- 5) Provide a meaningful, native-plant centric volunteer opportunity
- 6) Build a healthier community, including soils, plants, animals, and people

Watershed Natives (Cont.)

Partnerships and Collaboration: Community Foundation of the Ozarks

The nursery was awarded a Collective Impact grant in 2019 which provided funding support for a nursery manager, seeds, equipment, and irrigation. Through the 2021 season these funds were very helpful getting the nursery operating out of a new location at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds. In the spring of 2021, Watershed Natives was asked to support *Clean Green Springfield* program. The Community Foundation of the Ozarks (CFO) helped fund the purchase of plants used in this program. The theme of this massive clean-up event was “Trash for Treasure.” Participants who brought in trash as part of the clean-up efforts received treasure in the form of native plants at no cost. From this event native flowers, grasses, trees, and shrubs were planted throughout our community. We were also able to wrap our box truck with the Watershed Natives logo to help transport plants and other materials. Along with these events, Watershed Natives, with the help of CFO, was given the privilege of contributing native plants for the memorial of Jan Horton; a huge philanthropic influence of the Springfield community. In honor of Jan’s love of the outdoors, trees/shrubs were given out at her memorial service to be planted back in the community in her memory.



The newly transformed box truck we call “foxy boxy”

Missouri Department of Conservation



MDC & WCO staff planting at Valley Watermill

Valley Water Mill Lake is a unique partnership involving many different agencies. In continuation of this partnership, Watershed Natives assisted the Missouri Department of Conservation in a native planting in mid-September. Due to many factors in the watershed, Valley Water Mill Lake is rich in nutrients, resulting in high amounts of algae on the lake. The goal is to catch many of these nutrients that are brought in during high flow events. Native aquatics like pickerelweed, spatterdock, and Missouri native waterlilies were planted to help take up these nutrients and slow down sediment entering the lake from Sanders Spring and Mill Creek. Watershed Natives will continue this partnership by supplying aquatic plants for the ongoing efforts of controlling the invasive species Hydrilla.

Springfield-Greene County Library

This summer, Watershed Natives partnered to supply native seeds to support the Heirloom Seed Library. This program allows patrons to “check out” seeds for planting. In the past these seeds have been vital to establishing vegetable gardens, and now residents will have the opportunity to plant natives in their gardens. With the help of the Springfield Public Schools’ Greener Greenspaces and College and Career Academies programs, students collected native seeds, processed, and packaged them for the library. The students focused on 6 species of native plants (Evening Primrose, Virginia Wild Rye, Goldenrod, Rose Mallow, Grey-Headed Coneflower, and Indiangrass) for a total of 620 seed packets. We look forward to these native seeds being available following their grand opening February 1, 2022.

Watershed Natives (Cont.)

Ozarks Empire Fairgrounds

The location of the nursery at the fairgrounds allows for activities to continue with Hillcrest High School and serve a new audience at each fairground event. With the help of Hillcrest students, we have replanted some of the flower bed at the fairgrounds with native plantings. These beds are maintained during the summer by Hillcrest FFA students. With the support of the Springfield Public Schools, Ozark Empire Fairgrounds, Darr Family Foundation, and Community Foundation of the Ozarks, we received the delivery of the long-awaited high tunnel. The high tunnel will protect overwintering plants, provide protection from excess rainfall, insects and animal pests, and give them extra boost in the spring. With the help of OEF, SPS, and WCO, staff construction started in early December. We hope to have it completed in time to start plants in 2022!



High Tunnel Delivery Day!

Looking Ahead

2021 was the first year Watershed Natives was able to hit the ground running. This year was all about learning—our space and how to use it, navigating new programs, and plant sales. We are excited looking at the possibilities for 2022 and using something as simple as native plants to make an impact within our community. We are looking at continuing existing partnerships and developing new ones. In 2022, look for workshops/classes, events, and all kinds of plants for sale. This year we are working to schedule a day the community can come to the fairgrounds to shop the high tunnel for all their planting needs. Watershed Natives is also looking to expand its programming to other organizations, schools, and colleges. At the nursery, students, teachers, and guests can get their hands in the soil and learn about native plants and how important they are to our water quality, erosion control, nutrient filters, pollinators and animal habitat, and soil health.



Notecards available through the Natives online store

Year at a Glance	2020	2021
Number of plants sold/ distributed	1,974	1,462
Community events, programs and plant sales	2	19
WN Workshop/ classes hosted	0	1
Educational programs conducted	2	49
Number of students participating in educational programs	40	1,763



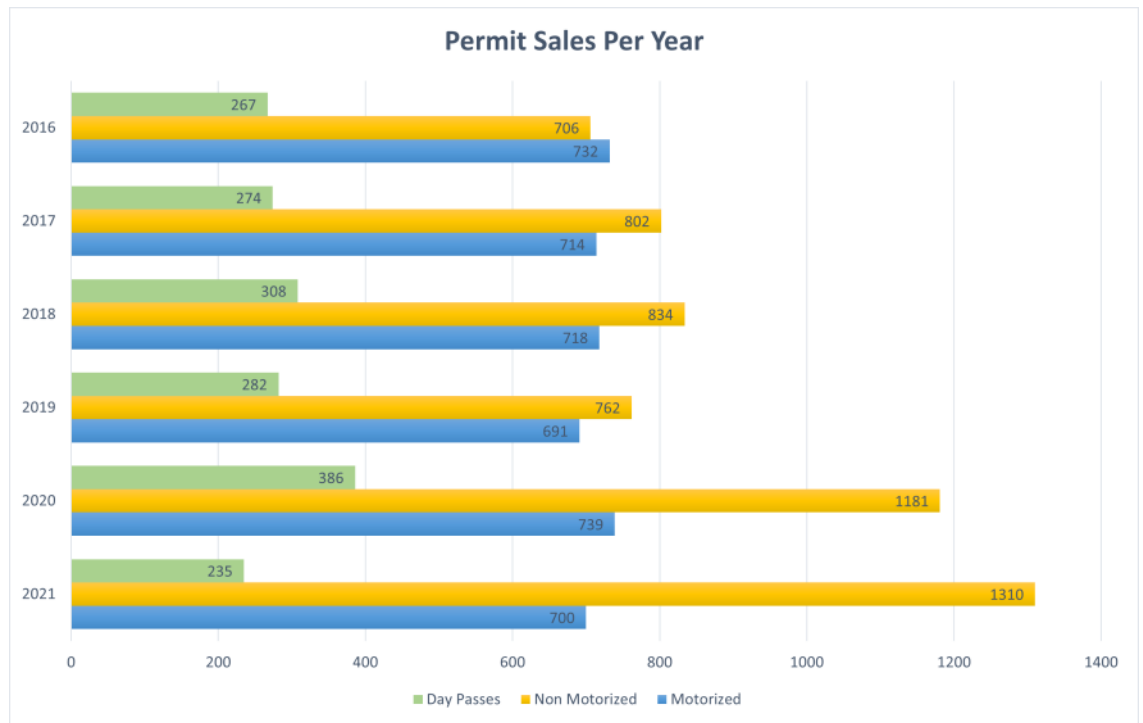
Mission and Purpose at Fellows

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks (WCO) was founded out of concern for the water quality at Fellows Lake. Keeping this source of water clean remains central to the WCO mission. Thus, when the opportunity presented itself for WCO to have an integral role in the developments at Fellows Lake, WCO jumped in. With our involvement in the Fellows Lake Program, WCO now is able to directly interact with the people who are utilizing our water. We can promote increased education and stewardship activities with every person who buys a permit, rents a watercraft, or just comes in to talk to the store staff. These interactions are vital to providing important information to the public about how to embrace the lake to its fullest potential while also maintaining its water quality.

Laying the Groundwork

When starting the Fellows Lake Program, there were many challenges we did not know we would face. This entire first year has been about laying the groundwork for our success. Fellows was a unique operation for WCO which required creating a Limited Liability Corporation, Fellows Lake LLC.

During the 2021 season we worked diligently to



perform necessary tasks like procure insurance and develop new sets of procedures. Matt Taylor, Fellows Lake Manager, worked over the course of the season to create protocols for the rental of non-motorized and motorized craft, fueling, checkout, and leasing procedures. Later, motorized boat lifts were added and procedures were established and refined to create a manual for the future seasons. The setup and development of the retail store were also created during the 2021 season. From interactions with customers, suppliers and sponsors, the retail store was able to expand their offerings and grow. The retail store now boasts fishing products, snacks, drinks, branded gear, and even kites. One important improvement and service Fellows Lake LLC now provides is training staff to inspect for invasive species and teach visitors what to watch out for.

Staff

Many will say that staff are what make a business successful and this couldn't be truer at Fellows Lake. At the beginning of 2021, Matt came on board with Watershed to spearhead the Fellows Lake Program. Matt jumped in fully. Starting from an idea, Matt has created the functional retail store and rental program. While working diligently through the season, Matt has created relationships within the community that resulted in the formation of the Springfield Sailing Club, recruited more volunteers, and furthered our relationship with our partners. In the middle of 2021, we welcomed Elizabeth to the staff to help with accounting and business development. She took over as the Assistant Manager in October.

Throughout the 2021 season, Fellows Lake LLC employed 13 staff members. The 11 part-time staff worked over 3,200 hours out at the lake. Staff at the lake were required to participate in various safety trainings, invasive species training, and inclusivity training. Each staff member was trained on AED, CPR, boating safety, operation of motorized and non-motorized water craft, and cold weather safety. The staff was also trained to identify invasive species and perform watercraft inspections. Fellows Lake LLC (FLLLC) also utilized many volunteers. Working with Watershed Center Fellow Rowan Hoffman, FLLLC hosted 7 volunteer days at the lake. At the volunteer days, 73 people put in about 232 hours at the lake. These volunteers helped clean the lake of debris, plant native plants, and help with the maintaining of Fellows Lake.



Fellows Lake crew ready to start the season

New Dock, New Fleet!

It was late in the year before we were able to finally offer the services of the new dock, but what a dock it is! It was worth the wait! City Utilities and the construction crews worked diligently to allow us to provide services here at the lake while still pushing to complete the project. Once the dock was opened, all of the slips were immediately taken and a waiting list was



A long awaited sight: Our pontoon boats and fishing boats in the new dock!

formed. Thanks to a generous donation from **Springfield Rotary**, we were able to install boatlifts for a portion of our new 2021 fleet provided through **Bass Pro and Tracker Marine**. These lifts allow for wheelchair users and other patrons facing mobility issues to access the water and share in the beauty of the lake. We are excited to be able to provide our community with these rental boats. The competitive rates allow for guests to be able to get out on the water to fish, picnic, or just enjoy a peaceful ride.

Springfield Sailing Club

The steering committee formed to drive the Springfield Sailing Club (SSC) has been meeting monthly and making great strides toward being ready to "launch" the club to our community in early spring. The SSC is planning two regattas this year, one in the spring and one in the fall, as well as completing the certification of Fellows Lake as a sailing center. Our assistant manager Elizabeth is excited to be able to offer the US Sailing Stem, Reach, and Accessibility Programs to our community. The curriculum through US Sailing always has an element of stewardship and environmental education, making it a perfect fit for our community here at the lake. Our plan is to offer both adult and youth sailing courses and rental of sailing boats to experienced sailors. We are very excited to revive the sailing community here at Fellows Lake.



Dirt 66: Fellows Lake Trails

WOW is all we can say about the new trails here at the lake. The team at Trail Spring has done an incredible job of keeping the trail building on track, on time, and within budget. By 2021 year-end, they had completed over 20 miles of the single track, multi-use trails, and they have completed a new trail head and parking area on the southeast side of the lake off Farm Road 197. We were thrilled to host many events this year from high school cross country running events, the Concrete Man Triathlon, Missouri Off Road Cycling events, as well as many smaller club and bike shop events.

By May of 2022, the trails will be almost completed with over 25 miles open to hiking, biking, or running. We are looking forward to an even better 2022 with many events in the planning stages to utilize these wonderful trails. Maps and more information may be found at [Trailspring.org](https://trailspring.org).



Fellows Lake crew out enjoying the new trails

Fellows Lake First Year!

What an incredible year it has been! With the help of our friends and neighbors, the first year at Fellows has been great. Due to the support of the sponsors involved in the Fellows Lake plan, such as CU, Trail Spring, and Ozark Greenways, as well as our sponsors, such as Bass Pro, Eric Peterson, and many other individuals who have donated time and boats, we are now poised to have a stellar 2022 season. In 2021, we installed a traffic counter at Gate 3, the gate leading to the marina, to track the volume of traffic. During the peak months of May, June, July, and August, Fellows was showing an average traffic of 4,000 cars and 1,000 trailers per month. With 2,251 permits sold, which included day passes, motorized permits and kayak/canoe permits, and over 800 rentals of our non-motorized fleet, our interaction with the community grew.

These interactions allowed us to open a dialog within the community about the lake and the Sac River watershed to educate our clients about what we do and how it can drastically affect the water quality we all depend on. These interactions out at the lake lead to many new volunteers for the other activities of WCO. It was amazing to see how first-time visitors at the lake would then be drawn into the cause. We are looking forward to working with the Springfield –Greene County Park Board, James River Basin Partnership, US Coast Guard, Missouri Department Conservation, and many other like-minded groups to further our community interactions. We are hoping to offer various programs involving birding, sailing, hiking, biking, and other workshops in conjunction with these groups.



The Watershed Conservation Corp (WCC) continues to successfully blend the projects and educational components of WCO's mission as it engages and employs young people in hands-on watershed improvement. The program provides a unique and valuable blend of work experience, training, and education for WCC crew members, most of whom intend to pursue careers in natural resource management. The WCC also provides a cost-effective, value-added option for ensuring water-related projects are successful. The effectiveness and value of this program, which is largely self-funding, is illustrated by the demand for our services. In 2022, we plan to continue providing additional education and training opportunities and to help supply the region with a trained labor force for green infrastructure and water quality related projects.

Projects and Partners

During the course of the year, the WCC worked on a variety of projects with a variety of partners:

- The WCC completed a year-long agreement to work at many national parks and monuments in the region, via a cooperative agreement with the **National Park Service (NPS)**. A four-person crew traveled from southern Arkansas up through eastern Missouri managing invasive species, conducting habitat restoration, and aiding NPS crews with prescribed burns. WCC also received a \$75,000 grant from the **National Park Foundation** to fund a new crew working on invasives species along the Buffalo National River in Arkansas.
- The WCC received the 2021 David Risberg Memorial Grant from the **Conservation Federation of Missouri** to purchase warm-season grass seed from **Hamilton Native Outpost** in Elk Creek, Missouri. WCC has continued to increase its warm-season grass establishment projects around the Ozarks, and will continue seeding additional sites in 2022.
- The WCC received the 2021 Invasive Plant Action Award from the **Missouri Invasive Plant Council** in recognition of outstanding work done to mitigate the impact of invasive species on natural communities. This award celebrates exceptional effort and leadership in the field, and also serves as a way to demonstrate to the broader community.



Local WCC crew accepting the 2021 Invasive Plant Action Award from the Missouri Invasive Plant Council

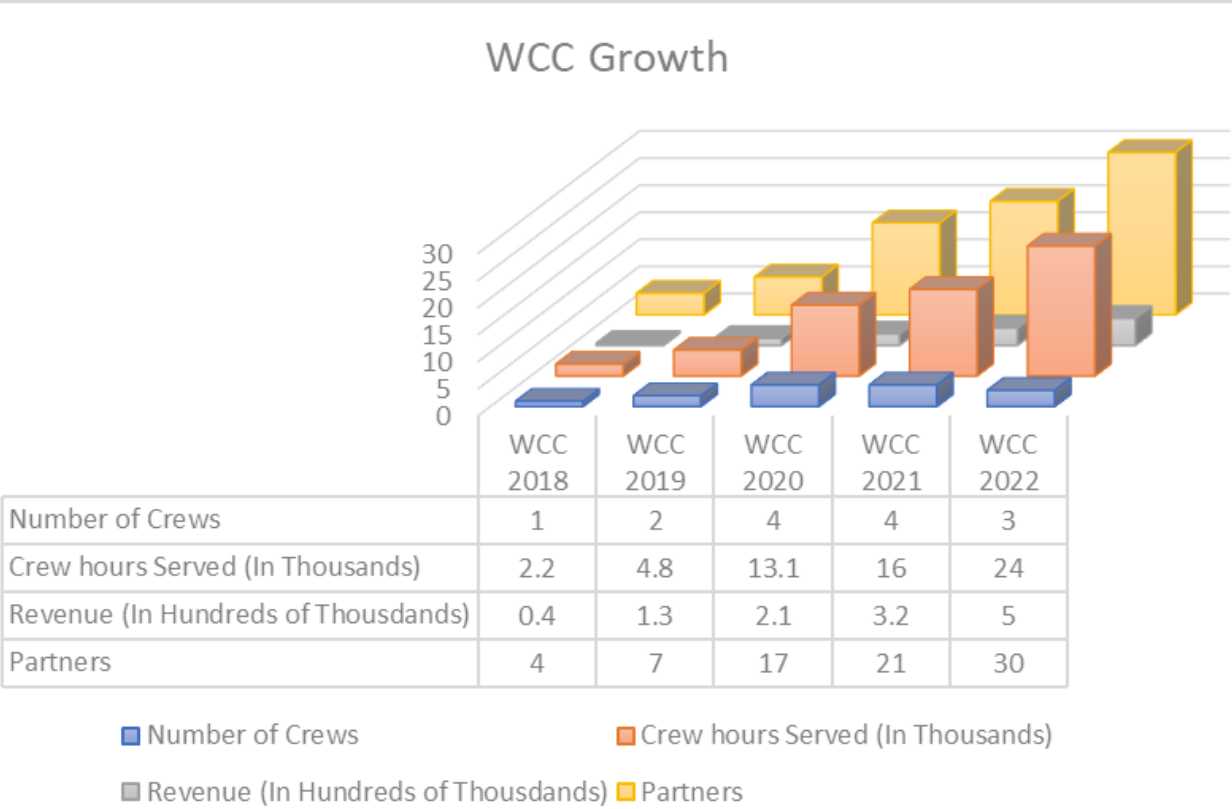
WATERSHED CONSERVATION CORPS (CONT.)

- The WCC continued the ongoing 70-acre restoration project at **Bass Pro Shops Base Camp**. In 2021, two acres were seeded with native warm season grasses, timber stand improvement was conducted on woodland areas, and 35 acres of invasive vegetation management took place. American lotus was treated in ponds with water-safe herbicide, and overall, the WCC has accomplished a 90% reduction in invasive plants in the past three years.
- The WCC worked with the **Missouri Prairie Foundation** to implement aspects of prairie management plans at La Petite Gemme Prairie and Golden Prairie. These projects showcase the level of skill possessed by crew members to identify plant species and address problems with precision in one of the most sensitive and rare habitats in Missouri. WCC successfully treated over 700 acres of remnant prairie in 2021.
- The WCC continued its work with **Greene County** to carry out a glade habitat restoration at River Bluff Cave. The WCC worked with the **Missouri Institute of Natural Science** and the **Missouri Department of Conservation** to leverage community conservation grant funds to make this project possible. So far, over eight acres have been heavily treated, with many large patches of eastern red cedar and bush honeysuckle removed.
- The WCC worked with the **Springfield Greene County Parks Department** at Lake Springfield Park to restore another 15 acres of habitat at the park, building on successful previous years. The WCC and the Parks Department partnered to acquire grant funding from the **Missouri Department of Conservation** through the Community Conservation Grant Program to make this project possible. WCC ended 2021 by conducting a 30-acre controlled burn of the site.
- The WCC worked with the **James River Basin Partnership (JRBP)** and **Springfield Greene County Parks** on a riparian tree planting project at Rutledge Wilson Farm Park with the help of volunteers. This project was funded by a 319 grant managed by the JRBP and WCC conducted follow-up maintenance during the summer to ensure the success of the planting.
- The WCC continued its partnership with the **City of Springfield-Environmental Services** to improve the riparian habitats along the Jordan, Wilson, Fassnight, and South Creeks. These tasks included, but were not limited to, invasive species management, tree planting, prescribed fire, and native plant propagation and installation.
- The WCC worked with many **private landowners** in local watersheds on a variety of projects including native plant installations, riparian buffers, prairie management, invasive species removal, and assistance on prescribed fires.
- The WCC worked with **Mark Twain National Forest** to reroute about three miles of damaged trail in the Ava, Willow Springs, and Cassville districts. The five-person crew accomplished this work over a three-month period in the summer.



WATERSHED CONSERVATION CORPS PROGRAM GROWTH

The demand for the services provided by the WCC continues to grow. While the revenue the WCC generates supports the program, it would not be possible without additional support from our sponsors and partners. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have committed partners that have stepped up to provide additional projects and opportunities for our crews to further their skills and complete projects during the pandemic. We continue to accumulate certifications as an organization, which furthers our ability to effectively manage habitats and provide a vital service to our partners and the region. Our work generally falls into three categories, local partners (like our sponsors), regional partners (like the Parks Service and Forest Service), local individuals (usually private landowners), and local businesses. For the sake of the graph below, category totals were combined.



WCC treating autumn olive at Ozark National Scenic Riverways



WCC crew posing after rerouting nearly one mile of trail in the Mark Twain National Forest

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 and continuing the virtual format, total attendance exceeded 400 in 2021. 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 2021 were:

- **January:** Cancelled in observance of New Years Day
- **February:** Reimagining Our Water Future, Loring Bullard
- **March:** Ozarks Underground Lab, Dave Woods
- **April:** MSU Sustainability Program, Doug Neidigh, MPH, REM, CEA, Sustainability Coordinator, Missouri State University
- **May:** Engaging a Watershed for Source Water Protection, Nate A. Wetson, Geospatial Ecologist, Beaver Watershed Alliance
- **June:** NRCS Conservation Planning Perspectives, Diana Sheridan, District Conservationist
- **July:** Cancelled due to 4th of July Holiday
- **August:** Exploring Regenerative Pasture Systems in the Ozarks, Dr. William McClain, MSU William H. Darr College of Agriculture.
- **September:** Missouri Prairie Foundation Update: Carol Davit, Executive Director
- **October:** Raven Lawson, Watershed Protection Manager, Central Arkansas Water
- **November:** Watershed Committee Update, Mike Kromrey, WCO Executive Director
- **December:** Buy, Sell, Protect, Mike Kromrey, WCO Executive Director

2021 PRESS

- *January 8, 2021 — KY3 “Big Changes Coming to Fellows Lake”*
- *January 24, 2021 — Springfield News-Leader “Fellows Lake Update: Dock Delayed. Phase 1 of bike trail, marina store on schedule”*
- *February 5, 2021 — Springfield News-Leader “Fellows Lake Marina gets \$75,000 loan from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks”*
- *February 15, 2021 — KSMU “Fellows Lake-Historical Connection to Ozarks Watershed”*
- *May 11, 2021 — Springfield News-Leader “Lumber shortage due to Covid-19 pandemic delays construction at Fellows Lake Marina”*
- *August 5, 2021 — Springfield News-Leader “Renewed sailing program at Fellows Lake receives donation of \$15,000 and a sail boat”*



Projects & Management

Photo by Erin Hillery: Soil Health Truck educational field day at Hillcrest High School lead by Drexel Atkisson with NRCS as part of the USDA Sac and James River Watershed Conservation Outreach Project

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.

WCO AWARDED UPPER LITTLE SAC WATERSHED 319 GRANT

In October 2021, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources announced the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks received a \$400,000 grant for restoration and improvements to the Little Sac River. The funding is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

The project will focus on reducing bacteria in the Upper Little Sac River basin while also helping to decrease soil erosion and lower nutrient levels in the watershed. This will be accomplished by using practices proven to be effective in reducing pollution from stormwater runoff.

Community partners have provided a contribution of \$266,667 over the life of the project which helps make this project possible, bringing the total cost of the project to \$666,667. The project is expected to be completed in the summer of 2025. Water quality improvement efforts will include stream restoration, riparian corridor enhancement, bioretention, volunteer tree plantings, and septic tank maintenance. Project partners will assist with implementation and performance monitoring of the selected practices.

“A healthy environment requires a balance of clean air, land and water, and our mission is to protect those elements,” said Dru Buntin, director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. “It’s a huge job, so working closely with groups like the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks is key to achieving our mission objectives. This project is a great example of how strong partnerships work to protect Missouri’s environment and keep our state healthy and beautiful for future generations.”



The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks was awarded the USDA Conservation Technical Assistance Grant for \$49,000 on September 15, 2018. On September 9, 2020, a grant amendment was awarded, bringing the total grant funding to \$78,000 and extending the grant until 2022. 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.

23

SAC AND JAMES RIVER WATERSHED CONSERVATION OUTREACH PROJECT (CONT.)

On July 21, Missouri Forage Grassland Council sponsored a “Foraging for Soil Health Workshop” in Everton, Missouri. The workshop was made possible by partners including Missouri Cattlemen’s Association, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Missouri Department of Conservation, and MFA. The workshop reached maximum capacity with 100 participants and WCO collected 62 water quality surveys during the event. Speakers included soil health experts Ray Archuleta, Dale Strickler, and Doug Peterson.

The NRCS Soil Health Truck will visit Hillcrest High School for an educational field visit on Friday, October 29th 2022, for a capstone course called “Restoration Ecology”. Future visits are planned to be scheduled for the Agriculture 2 course. This is an important target audience due to the school’s location in our community’s drinking-water watershed. The current students participating could be future local landowners and producers.

GROUNDWATER MONITORING

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks launched a groundwater monitoring program in partnership with City Utilities of Springfield beginning in April 2019. The program provides 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. Continual sample collection will build the local groundwater dataset and yield background water quality trends.

LITTLE SAC GRAZING DEMONSTRATION

The Little Sac Grazing Demonstration continues receiving updates and refinements. The neighbors who sublease the property to run cattle have been great to work with, and have gone above and beyond to make the place better. A special thank you to them and to Dr. Will McClain, Dr. Melissa Remley, and graduate student Shelby Mundy for continuing research at the site in spite of the pandemic. 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 is 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.

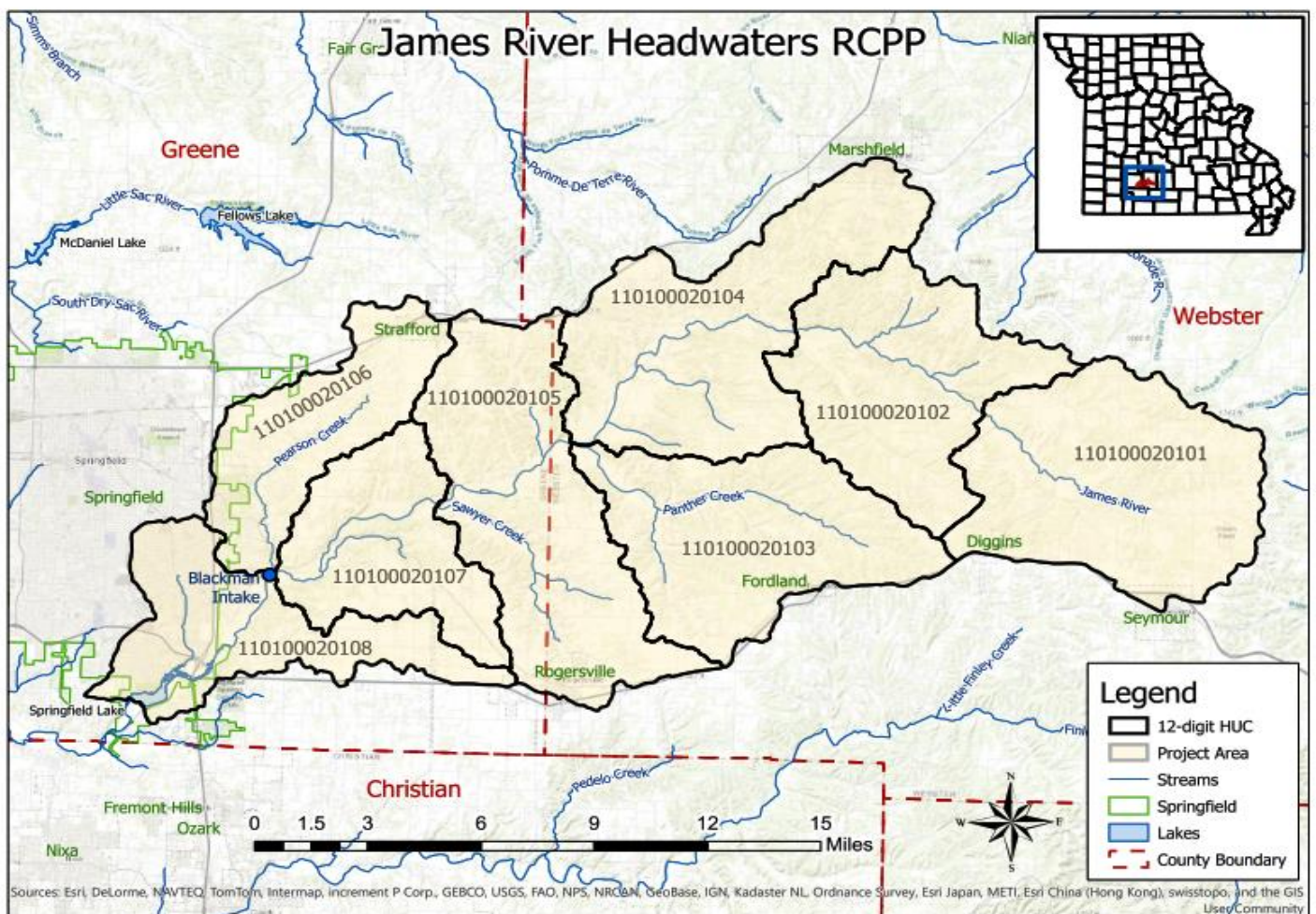


Ray Archuleta performing soil demonstration during July Soil Health Workshop in Everton, MO

JAMES RIVER HEADWATERS REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (RCPP)

On April 26, 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it is investing \$330 million in 85 locally driven, public-private partnerships to address climate change, improve the nation's water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat and protect agricultural viability. Projects are awarded through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services awarded RCPP funds to Watershed Committee of the Ozarks and Partners to leverage \$2,115,247 in Southwest Missouri to support the protection of clean drinking water for more than 150,000 Missourians, improve the local farming economy, to help Springfield and Greene County meet federal water quality requirements, and to improve aquatic ecosystems along the James River Headwaters. Through RCPP, conservation partners work in collaboration with NRCS to help farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners throughout the nation to implement systems that conserve water and soil resources, improve the health of wildlife habitats, and increase climate resilience. RCPP funds will provide significant cost-share opportunities for producers and landowners in the James River Watershed upstream of Lake Springfield for activities like planting trees along waterways, fencing infrastructure for prescribed grazing systems, improving wildlife cover and habitat, forest and soil health improvements, and cost share for voluntary conservation easements and land rentals. RCPP partners offer value-added contributions to amplify the impact of RCPP funding. These projects offer impactful and measurable outcomes. Throughout its history, RCPP has leveraged partner contributions of more than \$1 for every \$1 invested by USDA, resulting in nearly \$3 billion collectively invested in natural resource conservation on private lands. For the remainder of 2021, WCO staff entered a contract negotiation process. It is our hope and goal the funds will begin "flowing" in 2022.



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. Shortly after the initial detection, a Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)-led team that includes City Utilities of Springfield (CU), Greene County, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), James River Basin Partnership (JRBP) and WCO was formed to combat hydrilla in southwest Missouri. The team's approach is multifaceted and includes a variety of detection, control, and prevention measures. This collaborative effort is the key to success as no one group can tackle an invasive such as hydrilla alone.

As of today, 37 hydrilla sites have been detected in southwest Missouri with most being in private waters. These sites are in the James, Little Sac, Pomme de Terre, Niangua, and White River watersheds. Of the known sites, 36 of 37 are under a hydrilla eradication plan which includes an initial multi-year "treatment" phase followed by a multi-year "monitoring-only" phase. Today, 14 sites are in the "treatment" phase while 22 have already moved into the "monitoring-only" phase. In other words, hydrilla has been reduced to non-detectable in over 50 percent of the sites. This is progress. Once a "monitoring-only" site stays hydrilla free for five consecutive years, then the site will be considered eradicated. Two sites will be entering their fifth year in 2022. The one remaining site made it to the "monitoring-only" phase before the site changed ownership. Since then, we have been unable to engage with the new owner. Efforts on that front will continue in 2022.

As sites are moving into the "monitoring-only" phase, we are working with the landowners on improving the overall ecosystem of their impoundments. This has included discussions on fisheries management objectives and introducing native aquatic plants (after going through 60-day quarantine period) that enhance fish habitat and water quality along with benefiting wildlife and pollinators.

Our story at Fellows Lake, the first known public waterbody to have hydrilla in Missouri, continues to follow the path towards eradication. This past year was the first year for the site to be in the "monitoring-only" phase. MDC and Fellows Lake Marina Staff inspected the known area twice during the growing season with rakes and underwater cameras. No hydrilla was detected. MDC staff also used rakes, underwater cameras, and side imaging sonar to search the main lake for aquatic plant stands and hydrilla. Again, no hydrilla was detected. Our progress at Fellows Lake continues re-emphasizing the importance of early detections and rapid responses in our overall battle against hydrilla.

Similar search efforts were undertaken at McDaniel Lake. Staff from MDC, WCO, JRBP, Greene County, and CU searched the lake with rakes and underwater cameras. Even though the crew's time on the water was limited due to some much-needed rain, they were able to search a lot of shoreline area and saw no signs of hydrilla.

In 2022, treatments will resume early April and monitoring activities will resume in July. Both activities will be on-going throughout the growing season. Other planned activities include continued inspections/monitoring of area streams and small impoundments, public outreach, and habitat enhancement. We also plan on continuing coordinated inspection efforts at Fellows Lake and other larger waterbodies within southwest Missouri.

As long as hydrilla is on the landscape, we cannot afford to let up. Diligence is key.

Contributed by Kara Tvedt, Fisheries Biologist, MDC





People

Watershed Committee and Fellows Lake staff working at the Watershed Summer Gala

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

2021 allowed some changes for the volunteer program, including a few structural changes and new opportunities. We saw some growth since 2020 and beat last year by nearly 300 volunteer hours. Overall, our volunteers logged 1,748.61 hours through the year.

New Opportunities

This year, we introduced the docent program, which allowed volunteers to act as educators and tour guides at Valley Water Mill Park. We were also able to connect volunteers with opportunities at Fellows Lake including trash cleanups and planting a native plant bed in front of the building. Some of our volunteers have also gotten to help with the Watershed Natives Program. We saw more service-learning students this year, many of whom worked on invasive plant identification and removal.

Day of Caring and Groups

Group volunteer days looked different this year, as well, with additional opportunities at Fellows Lake, along with our usual work at Valley Water Mill Park. This year, United Way of the Ozarks held two separate Days of Caring, which brought out more groups and additional projects. Between the two Days of Caring, we had 388.5 volunteer hours from 7 separate groups. Between the two days, the Day of Caring groups finished a trail reroute, completed the native plant bed at Fellows Lake, sanded and stained the railing on the boardwalk over Valley Water Mill Lake, helped us lay gravel and mulch on our trails, and picked up trash from the lake and around the park.



Community Foundation of the Ozarks volunteers

In June, the Youth Volunteer Corps spent a week incorporating service and learning through numerous projects both at the Watershed Center and with the Watershed Natives Program. This group of young adults was able to return home every day with new knowledge and experience. Overall, groups contributed the most volunteer hours this year, with over 1,268 hours between 21 separate groups. In comparison to last year, with a little bit over 657 group hours, our groups nearly doubled their time volunteering with us in 2021.



Youth Volunteer Corps

In the future, we are looking to have a regular volunteer or set of volunteers present with the Watershed Natives Program and Ozark Empire Fairgrounds to help maintain flowerbeds and weed and water plants. We are also looking at expanding our docent program to Fellows Lake to provide education to the public.

Rowan Hoffman, Watershed Fellow/Volunteer Coordinator

AmeriCorps

Two AmeriCorps members, Sammi Gisselbeck and Rachel Wilkins, were assigned their year-long term of service with the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks. They began their service mid-January of 2021 and are scheduled to conclude their service with WCO February of 2022. Sammi has a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resources from Missouri State University. Her course work and experience as a graduate assistant made her a tremendous asset to help grow our Watershed Native, educational, and volunteer programs. Rachel has a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Master of Science in Entomology from Kansas State University. Projects she worked on included writing a stream bioassessment narrative and creating a collection of real, preserved aquatic macroinvertebrates, creating an entomology display case that will be viewable to visitors, and helping to create the Watershed Docent Program at the Watershed Center.



Sammi and Christy preparing soil for the Watershed Natives Program

AMERICORPS — A YEAR IN REVIEW

Looking back at the last year, I found I accomplished quite a bit as an AmeriCorps member at the Watershed Center. In June, I spent time compiling materials to jumpstart the Watershed Docent Program. Docents interact with the public and educate visitors on a variety of environmental subjects through trail tours or learning stations. During my downtime, I collected and pinned insects for an insect display that I hope to have completed by next spring. This display will raise awareness for local insect diversity, increase insect appreciation, and encourage visitors to search for insects while hiking the trails (because insects are awesome).

In July, I was introduced to an outreach activity idea involving benthic macroinvertebrates. Real macros were preserved in vials for students to study and identify during field trips or classroom visits. I was tasked with developing this outreach activity further—I made new macro samples and created a lesson plan/worksheet for students to complete. The goal of this activity was for students to determine the health of a stream using real macroinvertebrates without having to visit an actual stream—ultimately making stream ecology learning more accessible to students.

August brought a month of volunteer recruitment (August = Volunteer Palooza Month!). I created some posters to advertise our newly available Docent Program, and I distributed those posters around the Missouri State University campus. Later in the month, I went with the volunteer coordinator to the MSU and Drury University student resource fairs to promote volunteer opportunities at the park. On my slower days, I typed up an official manual for the Watershed Docent Program.

September was a busy month as school started back up for Springfield students. Through the Greener Greenspaces Program, I connected with hundreds of local middle school students and taught them how to conduct water chemistry tests and benthic macroinvertebrate sampling to interpret water quality.

Additionally, our first official docent volunteered at the park. I helped her set up a learning station at the lake-side pavilion.

There, she showcased a tub full of benthic macroinvertebrates

and got to talk to park visitors about the importance of seeing these critters in our streams. Other highlights from the month included prairie seed collection with the Developmental Center of the Ozarks and assisting the Missouri Department of Conservation with the establishment of aquatic native plants at Valley Water Mill Lake. Multiple plant species were added along the edges of the lake with the goal of slowing the flow of nutrients from Sanders Spring, ultimately reducing the amount of algae growth in the lake. It was really cool seeing habitat management in action.

By fall, Greener Greenspaces was coming to a close, and there were fewer field trips at the Watershed Center. During this time, I helped Watershed Natives with their fall plant sale, finished the macroinvertebrate outreach activity, and wrote a protocol so future VISTA members can sustain that activity. Before I could finish saying, “Man, I can’t believe it’s already December 1st!”, December was more than halfway over. One of the highlights of the final month of the year was helping build the foundation for the Watershed Natives high tunnel. I’m excited to see where the nursery goes from here! Although my AmeriCorps experience is almost over, it’s been great to look back and see what I accomplished and how I built capacity during my service. The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks is a great organization and I have enjoyed learning and serving with them!

Rachel Wilkins, AmeriCorps Member, WCO Development Coordinator



Rachel on the trail with volunteers

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 38th year!

Angela Blevins, 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.



Michael Stelzer, Vice Chair: 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.



Bobbilynne Koepke, Secretary: City appointed board member, 1st term Expires December 2022

Bobbilynne is a Principal Geologist with Environmental Works, where she has proudly worked for the past 10 years. A Lake of the Ozarks native, Bobbilynne grew up camping, hiking and fishing with her family. She graduated from Missouri State University (then SMSU) in 2003 with a focus on environmental journalism, working for KOLR-10 after graduation. Eventually she migrated south, getting her master's degree in New Orleans while researching human impacts on erosion and deposition in the Mississippi River Delta. While in school, Bobbilynne began working for an environmental consulting firm, primarily in wetland permitting and restoration. Her favorite project was utilizing satellite infrared imagery to complete a land loss assessment for St. Bernard Parish after hurricanes Katrina & Rita. Eventually Bobbilynne moved back to the Springfield area where she joined Environmental Works. Her projects focus on investigation, risk assessment, and cleanup of commercial properties, ranging from current gas stations to former landfills, with a goal of protecting groundwater for drinking and recreational uses. She also recently served as an Adjunct Instructor for a summer field geology camp at MSU. When not working, Bobbilynne spends as much time in the outdoors as possible, hiking and floating with her husband and son.



Jason Hainline: Greene County Appointee, 1st Term Expired 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.



Mike Finch: City Utilities Appointee, 1st Term Expires December 2023

Michael Finch is retired from City Utilities of Springfield, MO after 34 years, the last ten years as their Chief Financial Officer. Over his career, Mike served in several roles including Financial Analyst, Director of IT Application Support, and Director of Financial Reporting and Forecasting. Over roughly two-thirds of his career, Mike was directly involved in the development of City Utilities' Annual Operating Budget and five-year Operating Plan. City Utilities is a municipal utility, with annual revenues of roughly \$500 million, that provides electric, natural gas, water, broadband/fiber, and transit services to Springfield and surrounding area. Mike holds a Masters of Business Administration degree from Drury College (now Drury University) in Springfield, MO. Undergraduate degrees include a BA in Accounting and Business Administration, with an emphasis in Economics, from Drury. In 2007, Mike was a member of Leadership Missouri and in 2011 he was a member of Leadership Springfield.



Aaron Robison: at-large board member, 1st Term Expires December 2023

Aaron was born and raised in Springfield and spent much of his time in the summers canoeing, fishing and relaxing in the rivers that we are blessed with in Missouri. When time came to choose a path in college, the idea of playing with water for a living seemed amazing, and what better place to learn a trade than Rolla MO just minutes from some of the best floating rivers in the state. Aaron received a bachelor of science degree in Civil Engineering with a focus on environmental engineering and hydraulics. A job in Kansas City allowed him to develop a unique skill set of designing water and wastewater treatment facilities around the country. While working in Kansas City he earned a Master of Business Administration degree from University of Missouri Kansas City. Being in Kansas City also chanced a meeting with a beautiful young lady with ties to Springfield, she would later become his wife and mother of their 3 children. The Robison family came back to Southwest Missouri in 2016 and ended up settling down in a house on the James River. Mr. Robison has devoted his career to helping to provide safe drinking water to communities across the US, through design and delivery of water treatment facilities. His profession also allows him to help protect our environment and drinking water sources through work on wastewater collection and treatment systems. He can't wait to use career learned skills and homemade passion to help our environment and serve his hometown community.



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, fee-for-service programs, and in-kind contributions are also vital to advancing our mission.

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 \$163,000 at the end of the year.

Watershed Summer Gala & Fundraising

The Watershed Committee raised just over \$100,000 in 2021 through the Watershed Summer Gala event, Give Ozarks Day, sustaining donors 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. This year, thanks to a generous, anonymous gift of \$1.1 million dollars, the endowment is starting to generate significant income which can be used, in addition to half of the major gift which will remain unrestricted/liquid. At the end of 2021 the endowment was at \$1,251,147.

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.

Grant Funding

Grant funding is imperative to furthering our mission. Grants help us pay for on-the-ground projects for water quality, including habitat and stream restoration, our native plant program. Grant funding helps employ budding young professionals with internships through the Watershed Fellowship Program, Watershed Natives Program, and Watershed Conservation Corps Program. Pages 38-40 showcase the variety of grantors we receive funding from, and the variety of projects grant funding allows us to invest in.

Watershed Summer Gala at Fellows Lake

"The most fun gala ever!" Statements like this were pretty consistent for attendees of the 2021 Watershed Summer Gala at Fellows Lake. The evening was shared with our partners City Utilities, Ozark Greenways, TrailSpring, and Fellows Lake, LLC, and kicked off the dedication of Miller Park in honor of Scott Miller and his outstanding contributions to the community. It was hot out, but attendees beat the heat and enjoyed the beautiful outdoors at Fellows Lake, with boat rides, live music, cold beverages, great food, and silent auction. Some even stayed for the Moonlight Paddle after the sunset. We look forward to making a few minor tweaks and doing it again next year. Thanks to all of our partners, business and individual sustainers, and guests for a great event!



OUR GENEROUS 2021 BUSINESS AND INDIVIDUAL SUSTAINERS

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.

Business Sustainers

Presenting \$10,000

Bass Pro Shops

Platinum \$7,500

Vital Farms

Gold \$5,000

Fantastic Caverns

Silver \$2,500

Bailey Pyle Builders

Bronze \$1,000

Commerce Bank

Commercial Metals Company

Hogan Land Title Company

Elite Promotions

Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr. Pepper Bottling Company

Supporting \$500

Arkifex

At Home Real Estate Company

Arvest Bank

Ball Architecture

Central Bank of the Ozarks

Crawford, Murphy & Tilly

Environmental Works

GeoEngineers

Greater Ozarks Audubon Society

Missouri Master Naturalist-Springfield Plateau
Chapter

Olsson

Steak n Shake

Wildscape Environmental Services

Individual Donors

up to \$99

Jacob Anderson

Jerusha Azjita

Tinka Betz

Kristin Binder

Linda Chorce

Polly Dross

Brian Edmond

Greg Swick

Michael and Kelly Guenther

Colton Harris

Kira Howerton

Cynthia Jones

George and Sandy Kromrey

Monica McFarland

John and Nicole Montgomery

Kyla Mullen

Danny Perches

Blayne Radford

Amy Shelburn-Zarins

Brent Stock

Jim Stouffer

Lyndsey Strahan

Scott and Kelli Stricklin

Ruth Trehal

Todd Wagner

Alex Wolken

Pink Dogwood Garden Club

\$100—\$299

Christina and William Angle

Charlie Burwick and Lisa Berger

Jeff Bromberger

Leslie and Ron Carrier

Ben and Jodi Caruthers

Jane Earnhart

Phil Graves

John Havel

Rob and Abbey Hunt

Stephanie and Jacob Hurt

Bobbilyne Koepke

Kara Tvedt

OUR GENEROUS 2021 DONORS CONT.

\$100—\$299 cont.

Mike and Mary Kromrey
Calvin and Barbara Armstrong
Lori and David Miller
Gabe Montgomery
Shane Nelson
Richard Ollis
Calvin Petrus
Elizabeth Robertson
Barry Rowell and Debbi Bellotti
Robert Ruzicka
Matthew Simpson
Scott and Connie Petrich
Tim and Sally Smith
Tammy and Wes Trantham
Veteran's United
DeDe Vest
Nancy Williams
Craig and Ann Young
Mike and Mary Chiles
Scott and Kathy Miller

\$300—\$499

Tom and Angela Blevins
Dave and Elisa Coonrod
Todd Polk
Bob and Barbara Kipfer

\$500—\$999

J. Chris Ball
Loring Bullard
Bill Cheek
Shiloh Beeman
Tamera Jahnke
Brian Kuehn
Louie Layton
Dennis Barnicle
Scott Bratcher
Tal and Rosalie O'Reilly Wooten Family Fund
CFO President's Fund in honor of Scott Miller

\$1000—\$2,500

Jessica Humphrey/Vital Farms
Jacob Berger
The Danastasio Family Fund
Walter's and Mason Retail, Inc.

Sailing Program Gift

Eric Peterson put wind in our sails by generously donating \$15,000 for sailing program start-up costs. We have since obtained national recognition as a sailing lake, and enrolled in sailing instructor certification programs.



*Capturing the moment-check presentation from
Eric Peterson (pictured left)*

Coca-Cola Company Gift

We would like to thank the Coca-Cola Company for their generous \$50,000 donation to the Watershed Conservation Corps Program.

The Coca-Cola Company

Endowment Gift

In April, Community Foundation of the Ozarks (CFO) announced a \$4 million anonymous gift that funds endowments for four local environmental organizations: James River Basin Partnership, Ozark Greenways, TrailSpring, and Watershed Committee of the Ozarks. This gift will be transformational for our organizations and allow us to further our work towards our missions.



*Brent Stock, Jessica Pearson, Mike Kromrey, Mary Kromrey
(Pictured left to right)*

Give Ozarks Day

This year Watershed Committee participated in Community Foundation of the Ozarks Give Ozarks Day: Rally for Recovery, a one-day online giving event. Thanks to the following donors we were able to raise \$2,742 for the Watershed Conservation Corps program.

Aaron J. Scott
Adam Bauer
Amanda Stadler
Barbara Lucks
Barbara Wallace
Bob Wilson
Bridget Dierks
Caleb Sanders
Catherine Gilpin
Cathy Webb
Charlie Rosenbury
Christina Moore
Dan Hoy
Darlene Haun
Don Harkey
Eric Dove
Gerry Arb
Hugh Bollinger
Jean Marie Lewis
Jeff Birchler
Jenny Fillmer Edwards
Joel and Melody Sanders
John Chiles
Kate Baird
Katherine Kemme
Kevin Waterland
Laura Greene
Leslie Carrier
Linda Regan
Lisa Berger
Lyndsey Strahan
Mary Kromrey
Michael and Kelly Guenther
Michael H. Smith
Mike Finch
Mike Kromrey
Mike Stevens
Paragon Architecture
Rick and Debbie Smith
Russell Pavlin
Ryan Hines
Sally Baird

Give Ozarks Day Donors cont.

Shauna Smith Yates
Shirley J. Carpenter
Summer Trottier
Tim Smith
Trent Jackson
Victoria Marszalik
Vonetta Ivy -Medlock
William Cheek

Finley Farms Grand Opening Fundraising Event

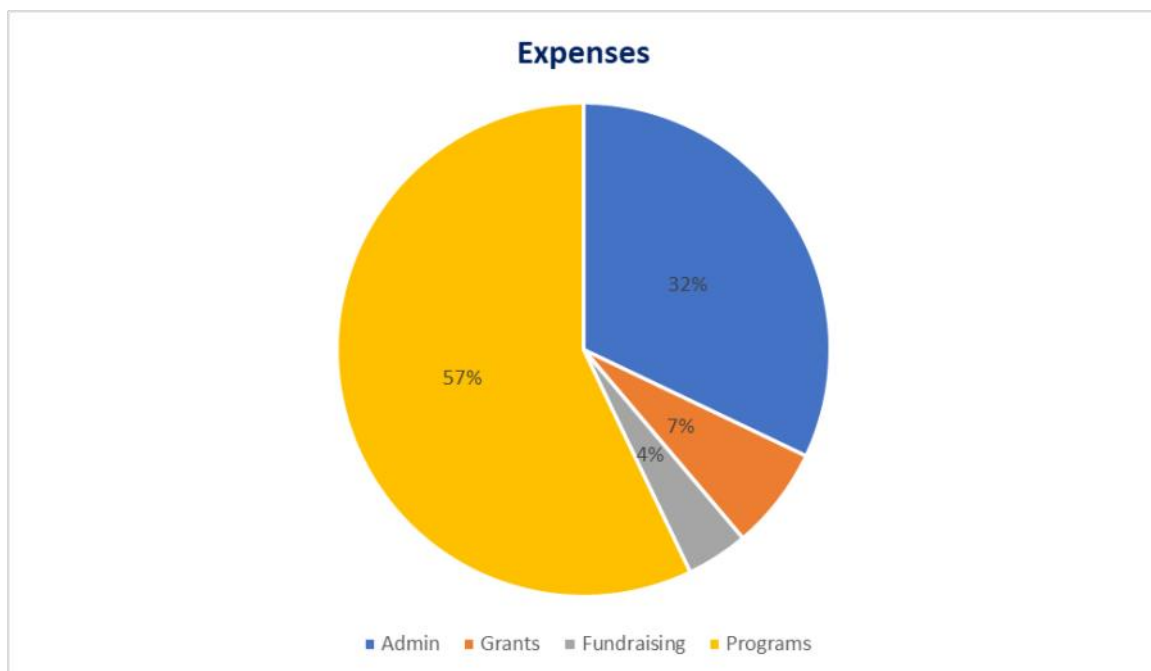
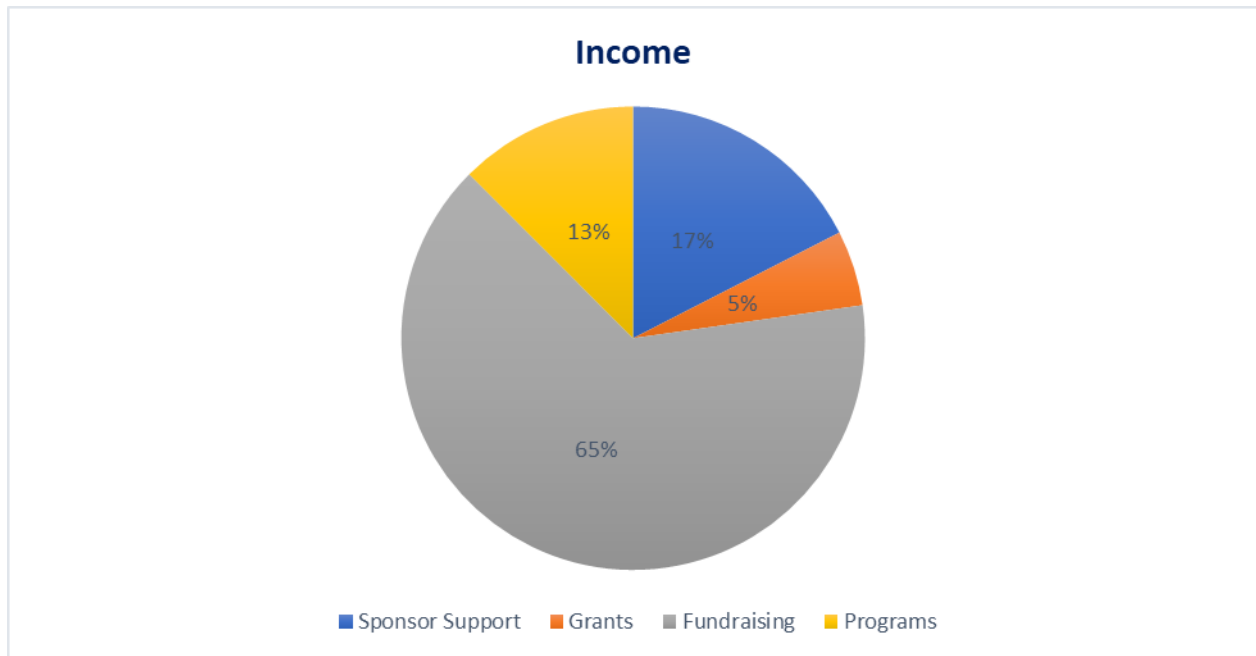
The Watershed Committee and James River Basin Partnership were invited by Ozark Greenways to participate in the Finley Farms Grand Opening Event. The proceeds raised from beer sales totaled **\$1,946** for each organization. Thank you Finley Farms and Ozark Greenways including us in this unique opportunity.

In-Kind Donors

Greater Ozarks Audubon Society
Bass Pro Shops
Bird Dog Woodworking
Dennis Barnicle
Eric Peterson
4X4 Brewing Company
Gentleman of the Woods
Gibson Woodworks
Greater Ozarks Audubon Society
Hook Creative
John Chiles
KB Designs
Marc Bower
Michael Stelzer
Mike Kromrey
Mother's Brewing Company
Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr. Pepper Bottling Company
Paden Wilcox
PFI Western Store
Rick and Sandy Osbourne
Rick and Debbie Smith
Tea Bar and Bites
Vital Farms
Watershed Conservation Corps
Watershed Natives Program
Wire Road Brewing Company

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, 5% of our income came from grants, and this money is restricted to specific projects and programs, such as the Watershed Natives Program, habitat improvements, 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	

Grant Activity (CONT.)

Grant Project	Date initiated	Total Grant	Non-Local Funds
MDC Community Conservation Grant	2020	\$ 20,080	
Missouri Humanities CARES Grant	2020	\$ 2,500	
Ozark Society Foundation Grant	2020	\$ 2,000	
CFO Collective Impact Grant	2020	\$ 25,000	
CFO Watershed Pandemic Impact Assistance	2020	\$ 10,000	
Greene County CARES Funding	2020	\$ 4,400	
MDC Community Conservation Grant	2021	\$ 6,000	
Conservation Federation of Missouri	2021	\$ 1,000	
National Parks Service Foundation	2021	\$74,605	
CFO Clean Green Grant	2021	\$10,988	
Upper Little Sac Watershed 319 grant	2021	\$666,667	\$400,000
Total		\$9,449,469	\$5,778,756

SPONSOR SUPPORT

Organization	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
City of Springfield	\$ 45,000	\$ 52,000	\$ 52,000	\$ 65,000	\$65,000
City Utilities of Springfield	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Greene County	\$ 15,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$65,000
Springfield-Greene County Parks	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	\$16,000

A VALUE PROPOSITION

Since 1984, the support of the City of Springfield, Greene County, and City Utilities of Springfield has been an integral part of the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks. We share a common vision in investing in the present and future of our community. 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 38-40) 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 and 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 to 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 are the most impactful outcomes 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 34-36)! 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 to read this annual report. It is an honor to pursue this mission and work with the many passionate individuals who care so deeply about clean water and our community. 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.