



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

CONTENTS

3 Board, Staff, Sponsors, and Partners

4 Letter from the Director

5 Preface

Programs

6 Watershed Center Education and Outreach

7 Environmental and Natural Resources Mgmt. Academy, Field Trips, and Year at a Glance

9 Jordan Creek Tours and Colleges

10 Watershed Center Fellowship Position

11 Watershed Natives

12 Fellows Lake, LLC

13 Monthly Meetings

Watershed Conservation Corps

14 Projects and Partners

16 Success and Growth

Projects and Management

17 Little Sac Restoration and Improvement Project

19 Groundwater Monitoring, Grazing Demonstration

20 The Hydrilla Project

People

21 Volunteers

23 AmeriCorps

26 WCO Board

Funding

28 Summary of Funds and Funding

29 Watershed Summer Gala

30 Our Generous 2020 Donors

32 2020 Revenue and Expenses

33 Grant Activity

36 Sponsor Support and Value Proposition



Hillcrest High School FFA students involved with the Watershed Natives Program .

Cover Design by Aaron J. Scott

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020 STAFF

Angela Blevins, *Chair*

Michael Stelzer, *Vice Chair*

Laura Greene, *Secretary*

AdriAnn Rode

Eric Dove

Jason Hainline

Mike Kromrey, *Executive Director*

Stacey Armstrong Smith, *Projects Manager*

Kelly Guenther, *Business Manager*

Jeff Birchler, *Watershed Center Coordinator*

Kelly Owens, *Watershed Center Assistant Coordinator*

Caleb Sanders, *Watershed Conservation Corps Program Director*

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, 2020

DEAR FRIENDS,

At this time last year, most of us would not have imagined the events which transpired in 2020. Hindsight is 20/20, and I'm glad *2020 is a hindsight*. We will focus mostly on the productive, the positive, and the inspiring here, but our year has not been without its share of lumps. We mourn the loss of fellow water warriors Zeke Kuehn and Tommy Bieker. Zeke was our go-to river healer with his company Wildscape Environmental. He helped us with multiple projects over the last few years and was a joy to work with. Tommy worked tirelessly with Environmental Works to grow the company and was actively involved in the community. As volunteers and young leaders years ago, Tommy and I tackled the issue of coal tar sealants which turned into a memorable can of worms and forged our friendship in fire, almost literally. Their loss is a reminder that our time here is precious, and we must work toward our goals and the work before us with urgency.

The words pivot and adapt have been used and suggested so much this year that they are nearly cliché, yet still are a good way to frame WCO's year. We realized that our annual Summer Gala could not take place in person, so we held it virtually, and took the opportunity to transition away from event sponsorships and toward business and individual sustaining sponsors. With your help, we were able to raise a similar amount of funds to use toward our Fellowship and Education and Outreach programs! Thank you for becoming a sustainer, and if you haven't yet, please join us! In addition, we were able to utilize some pandemic assistance opportunities with the Payroll Protection Program and CARES funding opportunities provided at the Federal, State, and local levels. These programs combined made a big impact for our year-end finances.

This past year, we planted a lot of seeds for the future. We anxiously await the outcome of applications for a major 319 grant to carry out our Watershed Management plan in the Little Sac Watershed, and Regional Conservation Partnership Program application for a transformative project in the Upper James River Watershed. Combined, these efforts would provide millions of dollars for water quality improvements. We began Watershed Natives (WN), a student-led native plant nursery, just before the students (and the WN workforce) went home for the semester due to the pandemic. We inherited the seedlings and equipment, and all got a crash course in growing native plants! With the help of staff, volunteers, and our Americorps Vistas, we learned about growing plants, selling plants, and the local demand for native plants. In 2021, we hope this program will continue to grow and grow. And as I write this, we are in full preparation mode for the operation of Fellows Lake LLC. This exciting partnership with City Utilities will allow us to pursue our mission on Fellows Lake—the very resource which precipitated our existence in 1984. We are thrilled to be a part of actualizing the master plan for Miller Park and Fellows Lake, and more immediately, operating the Fellows Lake Marina. Now every dollar spent by citizens at Fellows will essentially go back to the resource.

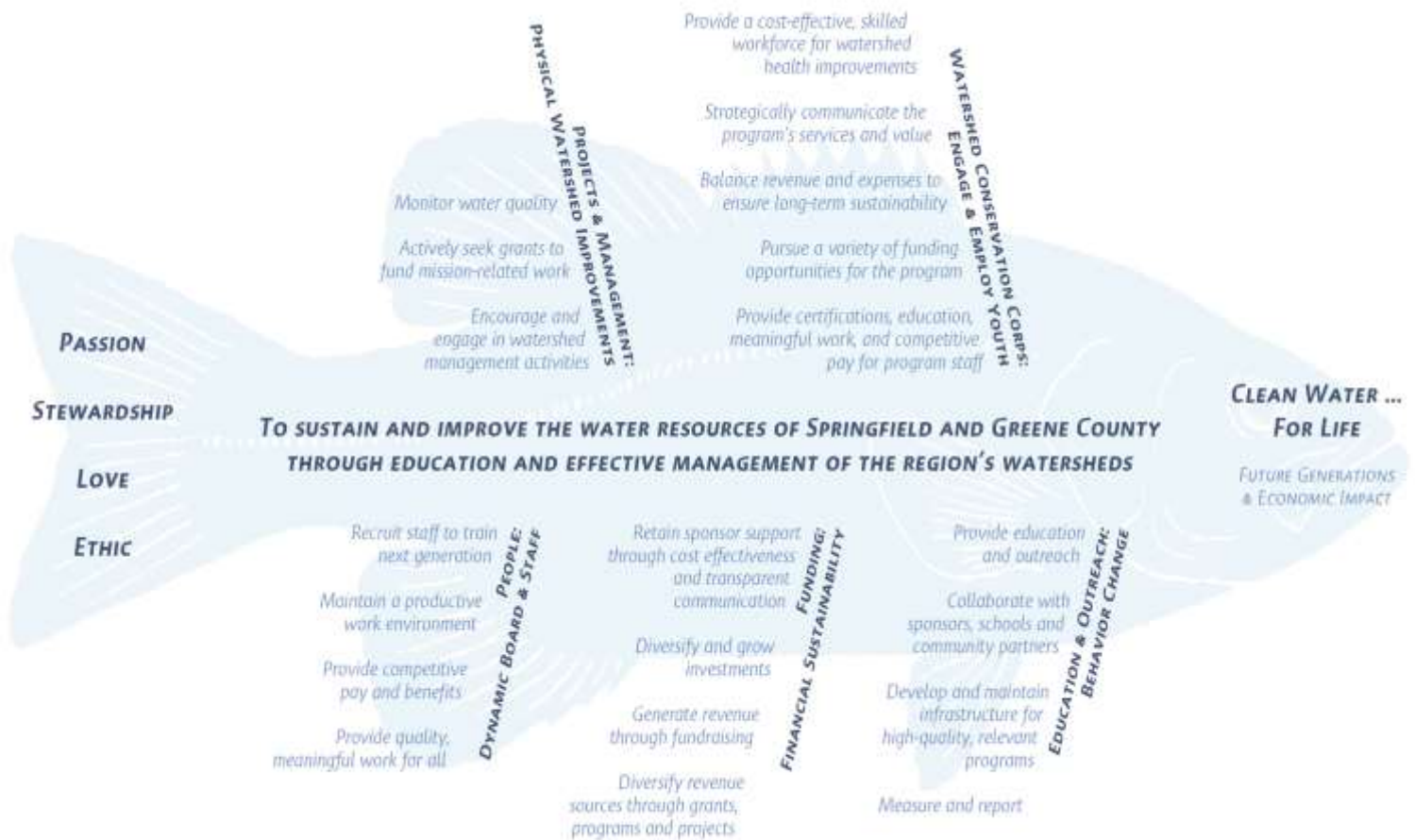
At the heart of all this is building relationships and community. The native plants we sell connect with people emotionally, and offer people a chance to take action and make a physical and beautiful difference. This is empowering, and opens the door to other conversations and education. The Watershed Conservation Corps has built bridges with new partners, and new, young natural resource professionals, and the Watershed Center continues to grow in its importance to the community. Each year, I ask myself if this year was better than the last. In spite of the slings and arrows of 2020, it is the richness of the personal and professional relationships which I value so deeply that make the answer to this question a yes.

Kind Regards,



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 do. 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 above in the chapters in our annual report. 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.

What a difference a virus can make. The 2020 calendar full of scheduled field trips to the Watershed Center, Jordan Creek underground tours, classroom visits, and collaborative programs morphed into a year of frequently working from home, virtual conferences, distance learning, and Zooming along. This was destined to be a record setting year for field trips to the park with thousands of students participating in Splash, Greener Greenspaces, and other collaborative programs. A shutdown that began in March and the resulting safety guidelines essentially put a stop to all structured field trips to the Watershed Center which continued



Our most requested activity—stream sampling!

Watershed Center Education and Outreach (cont.)

through December. We were able to safely host a few isolated field trips prior to the pandemic and during the summer months, but large programs like the Springfield Public Schools Splash! were canceled in 2020. The Greener



Let the exploring begin!

Greenspaces program which is typically scheduled for fall field trips was moved to spring of 2021 in hopes that we may still be able to provide field experiences for this year's 7th grade students. Fortunately, educators are some of the most flexible people out there so we adapted and adjusted to new formats while looking forward to a return of a park full of students on field trips.

Record Number of Park Visitors

One positive outcome of was a record setting year for number of guests to have visited the park. The combination of shelter in place, an extended cool spring, and warmer fall weather brought out regular visitors and many first timers to Valley Water Mill Park. It has been rewarding to watch young and old get out and enjoy nature. And what a year for experiencing nature! The many hours put in by staff and volunteers in habitat improvement have really paid off. In the spring we were blessed with extended viewing of Baltimore orioles, rose breasted grosbeaks, indigo buntings, and so many other birds. Much to the delight of pollinators, throughout the year the

native plants have put on their own show.

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 years 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



Hillcrest students setting up germination trays.

industry-valued certifications. The Watershed Committee has been working with Springfield Public Schools (SPS) to develop the **Environmental & Natural Resources curriculum**, embedding interactive units and developing strategies for



FFA students potting up tree seedlings.

certifications applicable to careers related to this career path. This Academy also includes careers related to agriculture. Prior to the lockdown, we were able to kick off our Watershed Natives plant program with the assistance of Springfield's Hillcrest High School students. Their Future Farmers of America club was a huge help in potting up 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.

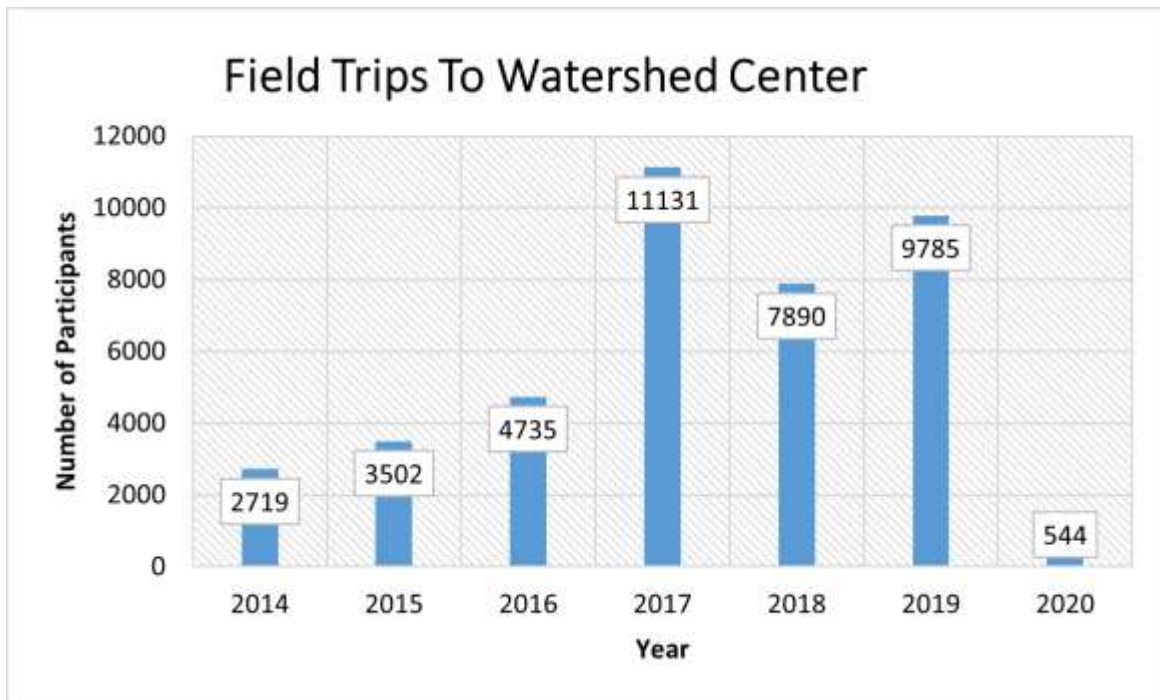
Looking Forward

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 values of native plants, soil health, and working towards clean water. Managing Fellows Lake Marina 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.



Gardening club learning the value of native plants.

Year at a Glance for Education & Outreach Activities



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Field Trip Participants to Watershed Center	4,735	11,131	7,890	9,785	544
Watershed Center Field Trips	116	201	173	180	21
Booths at Community Events	15	14	12	10	1
Jordan Creek Tours	19	20	28	20	9
Outreach Activities Participants	1,914	3,349	4,964	3,450	525

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.



Beneath Main Street, about to enter Jordan Creek box culvert.

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.



Sigma Pi students helping with stream cleanup.

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.

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 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.

Ozark Technical College 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.

Watershed Center Fellowship Position

In September Angelica Smith and Brooks Burrell were awarded our **Watershed Center Fellowship Positions**. Angelica graduated from MSU with a Bachelor's in Wildlife Biology. Brooks is also a recent graduate with a love for ecology and permaculture. Angelica obtained a Herbicide Applicators License during her time in the Fellowship. They were both a great help in our continuing restoration projects at the Park. 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.

Brooks and Angelica helped with many projects including the following:

- Created a reinforced barricade to close a social trail in the wetland
- Cleared and removed nonnatives on the hillside by lakeside picnic tables
- A new path/trail section more favorable than steep and eroded main trail using cardboard and mulch and two waterbars
- Planted a "Bob Gordon" variety elderberry seedling mulched with chips inoculated with *Stropharia* (wine cap) mushroom spawn. If successful, this inoculation will speed and supplement soil building, exchange nutrients via mycelium, and produce both berries and edible mushrooms
- Helped plant hundreds of natives in Southern Hills next to one of the lakes with the Watershed Conservation Corps
- Executed a small black-line burn to improve glade habitat
- Removed buckbrush, bush honeysuckle, winter creeper in savannah with extract-a-gator tool (ongoing)
- Assisted with large woodland prescribed fire to assist a landowner near the Little Sac River



Angelica removing invasive species



Trail re-route to prevent erosion



*Assisting with native plant installation
at Southern Hills*



*Repairing the split-rail fence above
Sanders Spring*



WATERSHED natives

The idea for the Watershed Natives program has been brewing for years. We use native plants, love native plants, explain their many virtues to anybody who will listen, and have experienced the gap between supply and demand. With a lot of help, in 2020 Watershed Committee of the Ozarks officially launched Watershed Natives to grow high quality native plants for our community and capitalize on the educational opportunities throughout the process. To start, we collaborated with Springfield Public Schools, and received support from the Darr Family Foundation, Community Foundation of the Ozarks, Missouri Wildflower Nursery, Forest Keeling, Ozark Society Foundation, and many other entities. Once established, we plan for this program to grow (literally and figuratively) and sustain itself with revenue generated through plant sales.



Rowan passing plants to happy customers at our first drive-through plant sale on May 11

Native plants emanate wonderful aesthetics in our urban parks and residential areas. More so, native plants create well founded habitats for local wildlife, including our native pollinators we so deeply depend on. Native plants are also fundamental to local water and soil conservation efforts; the establishment of native plants decreases erosion, reduces nutrient run-off, manages stormwater, increases soil aggregation, and sequesters carbon. Watershed Natives is a program striving to bridge the gap between natural resource conservation and agriculture. The program is an engaging learning experience that builds upon students' native plant nursery skills, ability to identify native plants, and conservation management techniques utilizing native plants. Students at Hillcrest High School have taken part in potting native trees and shrubs at the Watershed Center. Within their classes on campus, they have also been led in germination techniques, proceeding to germinate native seeds in the classroom and care for the native plants in their earliest growth stages.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, during the spring of 2020 the city of Springfield shutdown to limit the spread of the virus. Local schools closed and in-person educational programs were not permitted. Regardless, the potted trees and shrubs alongside the native wildflowers Hillcrest students had germinated were cared for and managed by volunteers and staff at the Watershed Center. The development of the native plants made it possible to take part in the spring native plant sale hosted by the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks. The native plant sale was a successful event for all vendors who participated! Watershed Natives also conducted a smaller sale in September to coincide with fall planting projects.

For the first year, Watershed Natives served over 450 local customers, and sold 2,000+ native plants. Native plants grown and maintained through the program also contributed to restoration projects at Valley Water Mill Park and within the Springfield area. All the funds generated through the native plant sales of 2020 will funnel directly into the continuance of the Watershed Natives program in 2021. Students at Hillcrest High School are already preparing seeds to begin at the start of the new year and will have more opportunities to be actively engaged in each step of the native plant growing process as we continue to move forward. –Kaitlin Marshall, AmeriCorps



Fellows Lake is the crown jewel of our community's water supply, and the main reason the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks was formed—human impacts severely effected the water quality leading to our mission and formation in 1984. Now, a new chapter for Fellows Lake is beginning. We look forward to having a presence at the lake, and helping balance increased use and recreation with increased community building and stewardship through Fellows Lake LLC. This is the first time this endeavor has appeared in our annual report, so I'll spend the next few paragraphs explaining how we have arrived here.

Several years ago, City Utilities (CU) hired a consultant to evaluate the safety of the Marina Structure at Fellows Lake, owned by CU. The result of the study was the finding that the structure was nearing the end of its safe and useful timespan structurally. Concurrently, the marina operations lease was up for renewal. In 2018, City Utilities submitted a Request For Proposals (RFP) for the operation of the Fellows Lake Marina. Watershed responded with a proposal to operate the Marina because of the potential to serve our mission, literally on the very water that we strive to safeguard. The plan and hope was that revenue from the various income streams related to the operation of the marina would balance the expenses and allow us the opportunity to connect with people using the lake.

CU did not accept any RFP in 2018, including Watershed's RFP. In 2019, the main 10-acre area at Fellows Lake became Miller Park, in honor of recently retire CU General Manager Scott Miller. CU leadership took the important step of pausing to create a master plan to incorporate the newly dedicated park and emerging opportunities, including a major soft-surface trail system called Dirt 66, interest in improved playground facilities from the local Kiwanis Club, and the possibility of improving the facilities to provide more use and enjoyment for the community. A firm called GLMV Architecture, specializing in this sort of planning was hired and created the "Miller Park Recreation Master Plan" with input from CU and stakeholders. This excerpt from the executive summary is explanatory:

"Miller Park at Fellows Lake is an amenity that all communities would love to have adjacent to their community. It provides a close to home outdoor experience that many users travel long distances to enjoy. Although the number one priority is to provide a dependable water supply for the community, its location in a natural environment has given City Utilities an opportunity to serve as citizens in two ways that virtually no one else can: a) the unequaled priority to provide drinking water; and b) an outdoor close-to-home opportunity that is the type of amenity near the top of reasons that citizens live where they go.

This Master Plan emphasizes the condition of existing amenities surrounding the lake, possibilities for new/ additional recreation uses for the lake itself, and recreation trends that would increase the appropriate future use of the park/lake when they are implemented."

In 2020, City Utilities began looking for a Community Partner to operate the Marina, with an eye towards the master plan and balancing stewardship with increased use. Watershed was ready and willing to embark on this unique and important opportunity to serve our mission. To actualize this opportunity, Watershed formed Fellows Lake LLC. Fellows Lake LLC is a single-member limited liability corporation which falls under the "umbrella" of WCO. Fellows Lake LLC now holds the lease to operate the Fellows Lake Marina, and we look forward to providing similar services at Fellows Lake like slip and boat rentals, watercraft permits, bait, and refreshments starting in the spring of 2021. We very much look forward to helping actualize the Master Plan, protect the resource, and build community as we go. As with the initial RFP, it is our goal to use the revenue from the operation to balance our expenses and reinvest in our mission.

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 moving the meeting to a virtual format in June, total attendance exceeded 425 in 2020. 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 2020 were:

- **January:** Cancelled in observance of New Years Day
- **February:** “Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture Update,” Adam Saunders, Development Director of Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture
- **March:** “Always Ready in the Heartland,” Todd Wilkinson, James River Basin Partnership
- **April:** Cancelled due to Covid-19
- **May:** Cancelled due to Covid-19
- **June:** Errin Kemper, PE, D.WRE, Director, Dept. of Environmental Services, City of Springfield and Tim Davis, Environmental Compliance Manager, Greene County, “Update on the Sustainable Return on Investment (SROI) Model,” (via Zoom)
- **July:** Cancelled due to 4th of July Holiday
- **August:** Karen Piper, “The Price of Thirst,” Rebroadcast from the Missouri Humanities Council rebroadcast from water symposium , via Zoom
- **September:** Chris Dunnaway, P.E., CFM, Principal Stormwater Engineer, City of Springfield: “Update on Jordan Creek Daylighting Project,” via Zoom
- **October:** “Watershed Committee Update,” Mike Kromrey, Executive Director, via Zoom
- **November:** Rebroadcast of MDC Roundtable Plenary Speaker Colin O'Mara, President and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, via Zoom
- **December:** “Water Quality Driving Economic Renewal,” Eric Dove, HDR, Inc., via Zoom

2020 PRESS

- *May 11, 2020 – Springfield News-Leader “Watershed Committee offering its first native Missouri plant sale”*
- *October 12, 2020 – Springfield News-Leader “Watershed Committee gets lease for Fellows Lake Marina”*
- *November 9, 2020 – KSMU “Federally Endangered Species Makes a Comeback at Valley Water Mill Park”*
- *December 12, 2020 - KOLR10 “They Planted 400 New Trees in Springfield. Here’s Why”*



Photo of the Federally Endangered Species Bladderpod at Valley Water Mill Park, featured on KSMU

Watershed Conservation Corps



2020 WCC crew members at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, getting ready to restore the ecological and cultural landscape..

The Watershed Conservation Corp (WCC) continues to successfully blend the projects and educational components of Watershed's mission as the program focuses on engaging and employing 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, and we are still learning about how to meet that demand while maintaining excellence and a positive experience for those involved in the program.

Projects and Partners

The list of 2020 illustrates the value and impact of the WCC to our partners, members, and ultimately water quality:

- The WCC completed a 3-month project at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield for the **National Park Service**, including 9 Crew Members working for 4500 hours and restoring 45 acres of endangered Missouri Bladderpod Habitat, while returning the aesthetics of the landscape to one more similar to what the settlers and civil war soldiers experienced.
- The WCC completed a 2-month project on Jordan Creek for the **City of Springfield Environmental Services** to remove invasive vegetation for water quality in 24 acres of riparian area along the creek. The project resulted in dramatic improvements in aesthetics along the **Jordan Creek Greenway Trail** and removal of some of the largest invasive winter creeper we've ever experienced.
- The WCC embarked on on-going green infrastructure management for the **City of Springfield-Environmental Services** to improve riparian habitat along the Jordan, Wilson, Fassnight, and South Creeks. These tasks include, but are not limited to, invasive species management, tree planting, prescribed fire, and native plant propagation and installation.

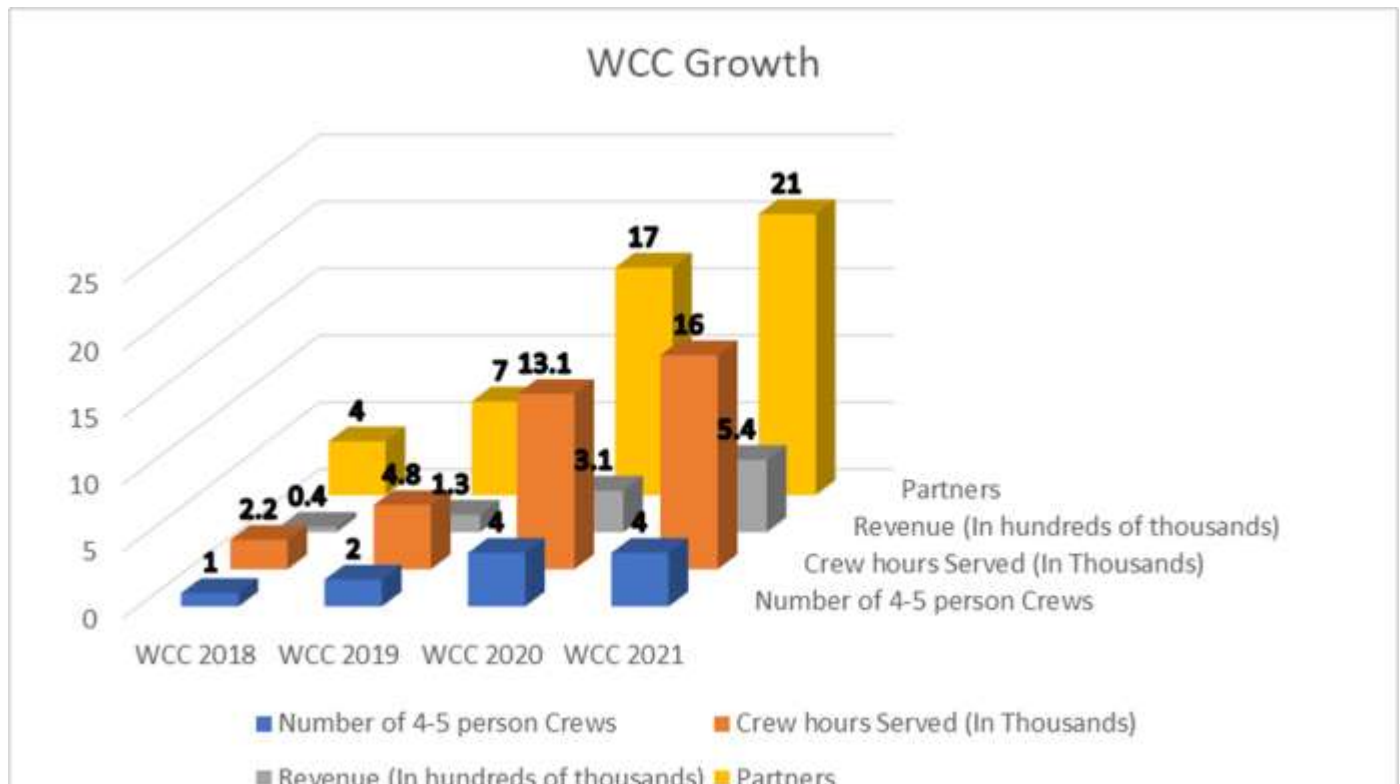
WATERSHED CONSERVATION CORPS PROJECTS AND PARTNERS (CONT.)

- With a brief pause due to the pandemic, the WCC continued the ongoing 70-acre restoration project at **Bass Pro Cabelas Basecamp**. In 2020, over 680 native rootstock plants were planted, 2.5 acres were seeded with native warm season grasses, timber stand improvement was conducted on woodland areas, 25 acres of invasive vegetation managed, cover crops established, American Lotus treated in ponds with water safe herbicide, and overall, the WCC has accomplished a 90% reduction in invasive plants from 2018 to present.
- The WCC worked with the **Missouri Prairie Foundation** to implement aspects of prairie management plans at La Petite Gemme and Schwartz Prairies. These projects showcase the level of skill possessed by the team to identify plant species and address problems with precision in one of the most sensitive and rare habitats in Missouri.
- The WCC worked with **Greene County** to begin 11 acres of 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.
- The WCC worked with the **Springfield Greene County Parks Department** at Lake Springfield Park to restore another 10 acres of habitat at the Park, building on success the previous year. The WCC and Parks partnered to acquire grant funding from the **Missouri Department of Conservation** through the Community Conservation Grant Program to make this project possible.
- 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 will include follow-up maintenance to ensure the success of the planting.
- The WCC worked with the **Southern Hills Community Improvement District** to improve the water quality of the impoundments/ponds in the neighborhood. The project was made possible by a Community Conservation Grant from the **Missouri Department of Conservation**. In collaboration with the **Watershed Natives** Program, WCC grew (from seed) 800 native plant plugs and installed the plants as a buffer to prevent erosion, improve aesthetics, and demonstrate the value of green infrastructure to residents of the neighborhood.
- The WCC worked with 6 **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 restore 1.4 miles of damaged trail and prevent erosion in the Ava Cassville District.



WATERSHED CONSERVATION CORPS PROGRAM GROWTH

The demand for the services provided by the WCC continues to grow. While the revenue the WCC generates basically supports the program, it wouldn't be possible without additional support from our sponsors and partners. This year, we were able to leverage several Community Conservation Grants from the Missouri Department of Conservation for projects with partners. Bass Pro shops helped us overcome a capacity issue related to the pandemic by donating some surplus vehicles to the program. This allowed us improve our horsepower, and keep the number of team members in a vehicle at a minimum to meet pandemic safety protocol. 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, all of these are simply referred to as "partners."



Watershed Conservation Corps Crew working in South Creek



WCC working at La Petite Gem, one of Missouri's few, unplowed prairie remnants near Bolivar



Projects & Management

Photo: Fencing educational workshop at Little Sac Grazing demonstration lead by Mark Green with NRCS

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 COMPLETED

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks (WCO) completed the subgrant agreement from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for the Little Sac Restoration and Improvement Project. The total grant funding of \$380,442 with \$243,770 in local match was implemented in the Little Sac Watershed. The goal of this project was to improve the drinking water sources of Springfield and Greene County with implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) reducing nonpoint source pollution.

As part of the grant, WCO updated the Upper Little Sac Watershed Management Plan, an EPA 9-element plan. The plan 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 was approved by EPA on May 15, 2020 which will allow future federal funds to be awarded in the Upper Little Sac River watershed.

The grant implemented several projects, including installation of seven prescribed agricultural grazing systems, installation of three bank vegetative buffers strips, two educational workshops, one field day, an educational sign, two stream cleanups, improvements to riparian corridors, completion the Longitudinal Peaked Stone Toe Protection (cont.)

LITTLE SAC RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (CONT.)

streambank stabilization project, bacteria source tracking, and collection of water quality data at six locations in the watershed. The grant final report and technical reports can be found here: <https://watershedcommittee.org/portfolio-item/little-sac-restoration-and-improvement-project-2/>

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.

SAC AND JAMES RIVER WATERSHED CONSERVATION OUTREACH PROJECT

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. 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 this grant, WCO created a twelve-question survey to gather information about familiarity with current farm bill programs and primary water quality concerns. A total of 92 surveys were collected from three workshops which included a soil health workshop and two regional grazing schools. Erosion, sedimentation, excess nutrients, and runoff are water quality problems listed by respondents. Also, no till, cover crops and better water quality practices are improvements that respondents would like to occur in their watersheds. Information collected from the survey will help guide topics of interest for future workshops. Currently, WCO is planning virtual educational workshops as part of the grant. To learn about available farm bill programs, visit: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mo/programs/farmbill/> -Stacey Armstrong Smith, Projects Manager

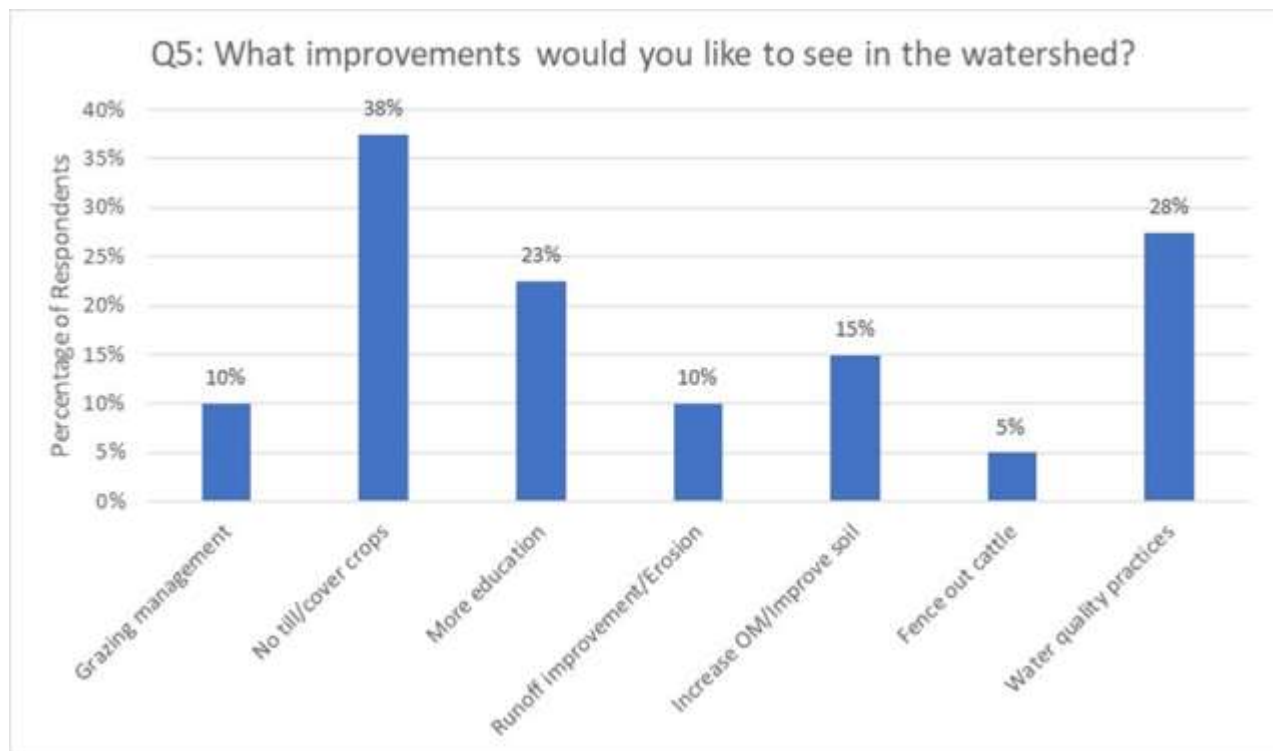


Figure showing results from a question gathered from USDA grant survey

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.

SEEDLING PLANTING ALONG SOUTH DRY SAC

WCO planted 400 native seedlings at Lost Hill Park in April 2020. The native seedlings were planted adjacent to the South Dry Sac River at the park to help improve the riparian corridor. Expanding the riparian corridor helps improve the water quality in the watershed. Thank you to Missouri Department of Conservation and the Springfield-Greene County Park Board for helping with this project!



Native seedling planting at Lost Hill Park

MEDICINE TAKE BACK EVENT

As part of a nationwide campaign by the DEA, Ozark Area Pharmacy Association hosted a drive-thru medicine take-back event on Saturday and October 24, 2020 in collaboration with the Greene County Sheriff's Department, City of Springfield, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, SafeKids Springfield, and local pharmacies. Proper disposal of these medications helps to prevent possible misuse while also keeping them from harming our drinking water supply.

SPRING FORAGE CONFERENCE

WCO attended the Annual Southwest Missouri Spring Forage Conference on February 25, 2020. It was a day filled with rich learning and networking. It was an honor to hear the keynote speaker Dr. Temple Grandin speak about "Improving Cattle Stockmanship." WCO would like to thank the planning committee of the conference for their hard work and hosting a such a wonderful event in our community.



Stacey meeting Dr. Temple Grandin at the Forage Conference

LITTLE SAC GRAZING DEMONSTRATION

The Little Sac Grazing Demonstration continues receive 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.



"Our farm"...now THAT is good looking riparian area! (Little Sac Grazing Demonstration)

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 9-acre lake.



This year Hydrilla Working Group was presented with the Statewide Invasive Plant Action Award for their outstanding collaborative work.

Shortly after the initial detection, a Missouri Department of Conservation-led team that includes City Utilities, Greene County, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Natural Resources, James River Basin Partnership, 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. The group’s efforts were also recognized this year as they were awarded the Invasive Plant Action Award from the Missouri Invasive Plant Task Force.

As of today, 35 hydrilla sites have been detected in southwest Missouri, with a combined infested acreage of approximately 84 acres. These sites are in the James, Little Sac, Pomme de Terre, Niangua, and White River watersheds. All known sites are under a hydrilla eradication plan which includes an initial multi-year “treatment” phase followed by a multi-year “monitoring-only” phase. Today, 17 sites are in the “treatment” phase while 18 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.

Our story at Fellows Lake continues to follow this same path. Staff and volunteers from various agencies, including WCO staff and volunteers, participated in two intensive hydrilla search events at Fellows Lake in 2020. Between these two events, 682 combined points and transects were evaluated for hydrilla and no signs of the plant were found. This continued combined effort has been invaluable in combating the 2017 invasion, and our progress at Fellows Lake emphasizes the importance of early detections and rapid responses in our overall battle against hydrilla.

In 2021, treatments will resume in late March or early April and monitoring activities will resume in late May. Both activities will be on-going throughout the growing season. Other planned activities include continued inspections of area streams and small impoundments and additional public outreach. 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

Volunteers participating in the Coca-Cola Company clean up event

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 year caused unprecedented challenges with the volunteer program, and to face those challenges, we started several new opportunities to keep volunteers engaged and assist with Watershed projects. Along with beginning to conduct volunteer orientations via Zoom, we also found new ways to involve volunteers while staying safe. Volunteers wore masks when working together or with staff, practiced social distancing, and were given new virtual volunteer opportunities.

Watershed Natives Plant Nursery

At the beginning of the year, the Native Plants Nursery began in partnership with Hillcrest High School. Hillcrest students began by germinating the seeds and planting the trees for individual sale. However, since in-person schools shut down, plans changed, and the native plant nursery was housed entirely at the Watershed Center. Several individuals and groups have since contributed over 248 hours toward planting, transplanting, and maintaining the nursery (see also page 11).

Grow in Place and Harvest and Chill

Two new virtual volunteer opportunities were started to allow volunteers to help with the native plants nursery while staying home. The Grow in Place Program was designed to allow volunteers to grow native plants from seed and transplant them into individual pots and return to the native plant nursery. Volunteers who took part in the Grow in Place program were given a kit that contained native plant seeds, soil, pots, a germination tray, and instructions created specifically for each species. The Harvest and Chill Program volunteers were given bags of plants harvested at Valley Watermill Park. The Harvest and Chill kits also contained instructions for each species and envelopes to hold the seeds after sorting. Volunteers were asked to sort the seeds from the harvested plants so they can be grown in the nursery in 2021.

Day of Caring

The summer kicked off early with United Way's Day of Caring in mid-June. Although this annual event looked much different than years past, it wasn't enough to slow down volunteers from Bass Pro Shops, Communication Workers of America, and Miller Engineering, Inc. as they spent the day at Valley Water Mill Park recovering and clearing trails, cleaning trash from our park and lake, and helping to restore a portion of riparian area.



Miller Engineering volunteers

Volunteer-Palooza

The month of August is National Water Quality Month, and the first annual Volunteer-Palooza was started for the entire month of August. Groups and individuals who worked during the month of August were entered into a competition for prizes. Tri-Beta Biological Honors Society of Missouri State University won the group category by volunteering the most hours—40 hours during the month of August. Chase Rose won the individual category by volunteering over 21 hours during the month. Altogether, nearly 257 volunteer hours were logged just during the month of August.

This year, volunteers worked on several large projects in the park, including rerouting the trail and installing water bars on the hill to the Savana, re-graveling the trail in the bottomland forest, installing a culvert in a frequently washed out area on the trail, restoring an area in the wetland by planting native plants, and habitat restoration efforts. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, 51 individual volunteers and 14 groups volunteered their time through the year. Altogether, over 1,459 hours were logged in 2020.

Coca-Cola Foundation Clean-ups

We are grateful for the generous donation provided by the Coca-Cola foundation. Although the past year has been full of unique challenges, our team of volunteers has been committed to utilizing Coke's support by dedicating an incredible amount of time cleaning our local waterways. All in all, the support of Coca-Cola helped more than 100 volunteers of all ages (kindergarten through retirement) participate in community initiatives that removed more than 200 bags of trash, four large rugs/carpets, nearly two entire bikes, several pieces of sheet rock, 3 tires, and a 12' piece of metal fencing from our local streams!



Volunteers helping with stream cleanup along the South Dry Sac River

AMERICORPS

Two AmeriCorps members, Rowan Hoffman and Kaitlin Marshall, were assigned their year-long term of service with the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks. They began their service mid-January of 2020 and are scheduled to conclude their service with WCO January of 2021.

From Kaitlin's perspective, AmeriCorps service with Watershed Committee of the Ozarks was a constant (and gratifying) learning experience. A recent graduate from Missouri State University at the start of this service, she hadn't much experience in her field of study. Serving at WCO gave her the opportunity to experience and assist with local Natural Resource Education and Outreach for students of all ages, and under the leadership of a distinguished educator.

Kaitlin also had the opportunity to help WCO build up their new Watershed Natives program, which was a project she enjoyed playing a part in. Much of her time at the Watershed Center focused on growing and managing the native plants the Watershed Natives program utilized. Kaitlin led students as well as volunteers with various program tasks, from seed stratification to seed harvest. Here are her thoughts about the new program:

"I love the nature of working with native plants. It takes the seasonal life of the farmer to the next level. The plants the Watershed Natives program provides students and volunteers the opportunity to work with are plants they will always find in the Ozarks. The plants aren't just a part of their school studies or their future careers in Agriculture or Natural Resource Conservation, they are part of their home. That connection is truly unique to native plants in the realm of agriculture. Unlike tomatoes or corn or other common seasonal crops grown here, the native plants students grow will establish themselves; they will flourish and expand where they are planted. They will nurture the other living beings around them. They will assure the health of our water and soil. The future of these native plants in our local natural communities parallel the future impacts these students will make as they build on their education and professional skills in this program."



Kaitlin taking care of the plants Photo Aaron J. Scott

Kaitlin led volunteers with various projects at Valley Water Mill park throughout the year. Many of the projects coincided with the Watershed Natives program. Some of these projects included transplanting seedlings, propagating cuttings, harvesting and sorting seeds, removing invasive plants from habitat restoration areas, and planting natives in their respective habitats at the park. Kaitlin also helped direct volunteers on trail maintenance projects and with upkeep of the Center's rain garden. Kaitlin contributed to WCO's social media by creating fun, educational clips about native plants and by documenting WCO events and projects through her photography. Some of her photos were also used as auction pieces to raise contributions at the 2020 Summer Gala.

Her year of service with the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks and to the Springfield community is an experience of great value to her and to this organization. We look forward to giving more AmeriCorps members the opportunity to serve this community through our programs in 2021.

-Kaitlin Marshall

AMERICORPS

My AmeriCorps position began in January 2020. During my time with the Watershed Committee, I started several projects and learned multiple new skills along the way. For the first several months of my service, I learned about the educational aspect of the Watershed Committee and was able to lead multiple field trips. During that time, I created the framework and budget for an Artist Fellowship Program at the Watershed Center and sculpture walk throughout Valley Water Mill Park. I also helped with the Watershed Natives Plant Nursery and took part in both the spring and autumn plant sales.

During the spring and summer months, I created invasive and native plant identification training materials for volunteers. I also began virtual volunteer orientations via Zoom, the Grow in Place and Harvest and Chill Programs, as well as assisted with starting the first Volunteer-Palooza. During the winter, I took on the volunteer program and set up new scheduling methods for volunteers. I led the Youth Volunteer Corps in a virtual volunteer day with the Harvest and Chill program and wrote the End of the Year Volunteer Newsletter.

During my time as an AmeriCorps member at the Watershed Center, I learned so much about water quality, conservation, and volunteer leadership. The thing I hold as my greatest personal accomplishment, however, was overcoming my terror of chainsaws and using one for the first time with the Watershed Conservation Corps at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. Not only did the AmeriCorps and WCO teach me and help me develop leadership skills, I also gained confidence in my abilities both old and new. This year forced me out of my bubble and my comfort zone and to become more flexible. With the unpredictable changes during the year, my plans and projects also changed drastically, but I am so thankful for it. While the challenges sometimes seemed impossible, I learned how to face them and adapt, which I feel not only made me a better professional, but also a better person as a whole.

-Rowan Hoffman



Rowan working with the Watershed Conservation Corps



Rowan working at the native plant sale



INTEGRATED PLANNING DAY

WCO participated in a hydrilla inspection and an afternoon of touring project sites. It was a pleasure to have Sara Parker Pauley, Director of the Missouri Department of Conservation, as the lunch speaker. The theme of the day was collaboration. Collaborative efforts of community partners in Southwest Missouri have led to many successful outcomes for local natural resources and citizens that depend on them. One prime example of that is the Hydrilla Working Group which was presented with the Invasive Plant Action Award for their outstanding collaborative work to fight the spread of invasive hydrilla which helps protect native habitats, plants, and animals. At times, the amount of work to be done can be overwhelming, but we are not alone in our efforts. We are very fortunate to have a community full of bright minds protecting and improving our natural resources who are willing to join efforts toward a common vision. Remarkable work can be accomplished when we join together.



Mike Kromrey, Tim Smith, Sara Parker Pauley, and Loring Bullard



Invasive Plant Action Award

INTENTIONAL PARTNERSHIP

On a quarterly basis the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks and James River Basin Partnership convene to discuss the same topic: Partnership. Our missions and geographies are similar, and even overlap. We have found that through open dialogue, planning and focused intention, we can help each other more effectively protect the waters we love, and have more fun in the process. Our third quarterly meeting was particularly special. Our circle is bigger than it ever has been, and not just because of social distancing. With the growing staff of both organizations, our ranks reached 20 water warriors, even with a few missing. That alone was inspiring, and several new friendships were kindled. The work of clean water is, after all, about relationships and people.



James River Basin Partnership and WCO staff

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 37th year!

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.



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.



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.



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.



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.



AdriAnn Rode: City appointed board member, 1st term Expires December 2023

AdriAnn is a Principal Compliance Services Manager at Environmental Works, Inc. and has more than 20 years of professional consulting experience in environmental compliance management. Her areas of expertise include regulatory compliance, storm water compliance and permitting, hazardous and solid waste management, environmental compliance audits, and administration of environmental compliance databases and management systems. AdriAnn has an MBA with an emphasis in Management of Sustainable Business. She enjoys helping her clients reach their sustainability goals. She also loves to work with clients through a common-sense approach to obtaining environmental compliance. AdriAnn has worked closely Mr. Dan Hoy from Bass Pro Shops for over 11 years. They have worked together to assist all Bass Pro and Cabela's associates understand their environmental responsibilities through pollution prevention. AdriAnn grew up in rural Douglas County and enjoyed living near several small streams, hiking in the woods, and making trails with her father.

(AdriAnn relocated for her career and resigned at the end of 2020, but we greatly appreciate her service and wish her success in her new endeavors!)

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 \$40,000 in 2020 through the Watershed Summer Gala event, 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 (CFO). Thanks to some donations, a CFO matching grant and interest accrued, this year, the endowment fund has surpassed the \$31,000 mark.

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 33-35 showcase the variety of grantors we receive funding from, and the variety of projects grant funding allows us to invest in.

Watershed Summer Gala

We had a bit of a twist this year. Those who attended our Summer Gala, did so by **becoming Watershed Sustainers**. We all adapted to unexpected circumstances, partied in place and shared our homes, friends and families with each other. We are proud to announce our Watershed Summer Gala, thanks to our business and individual sustainers, raised just shy of \$30,000. These funds will help continue to pay for our Watershed Center Fellowship Program and will enable us to keep pace with the growing demand for our education programs. Thank you to our generous sponsors, online auction donors, the bidders, the partners, and our new Watershed Sustainer family. Fingers crossed we can all get together next summer in person for our annual Summer Gala.

PRESENTED BY



GOLD



SILVER



BRONZE



SUPPORTING



OUR GENEROUS 2020 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

Gold \$5,000

Vital Farms

Silver \$2,500

Bailey Pyle Builders

Bronze \$1,000

Arkifex Studios

Commerce Bank

Commercial Metals Company

Elite Promotions

Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr. Pepper Bottling Company

Supporting \$500

Arvest Bank

Central Bank of the Ozarks

Crawford, Murphy & Tilly

Greater Ozarks Audubon Society

Missouri Master Naturalist-Springfield Plateau

Chapter

Olsson

Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Drain Service

Wildscape Environmental Services

Individual Sustainers

Aaron J Scott

AdriAnne Rode

Ashley Beard-Fosnow

Barry Rowell and Debbie Bellotti

Benjamin Tegeler

Bill Cheek

Bob and Barb Kipfer

Bob Wilson

Brendan Brothers

Brian Edmond

Bruce Adib-Yazdi

Bud and Mary Hogan

Calvin and Barbara Armstrong

Carmen Poff in honor of Cedar Joseph Pearson

Cath and Alex Primm

Charlie Burwick and Lisa Berger

Chris Ball

Cody Danastasio

Dan and Diane Hoy

Dave and Elisa Coonrod

DeDe Vest

Dennis Barnicle

Eric Dove

Fredrick Eck

Gary Gibson

George and Sandy Kromrey

Georgia Virnig

Greg and Martha Swick

Harwood Ferguson and Carrie Coleman

Jacob Berger and Kelly Owens

Jane Earnhart

Jason and Amber Hainline

JD Slaughter

Jeff and Kathy Munzinger

Jeff Bromberger

John and Nicole Montgomery

Jordan and Casey Wilson

Karen Myers

Jordan and Casey Wilson

Kira Howerton

Lara and Jason Plass

Laura and Chuck Greene

Leslie and Ron Carrier

Loring and Beth Bullard

Mark and Janet Bower

Mary Sturdevant

Michael Stelzer

Mike and Mary Kromrey

Mike Pessina

Mona Menezes

Nicole Brown

Paden Wilcox

Piper Lee

Rick and Debbie Smith

Rina Edge

OUR GENEROUS 2020 DONORS CONT.

Watershed Sustainer cont.-

Saki Urushidani
Sam Freeman
Shae and Dick Johnson in memory of Linda Ellis
Stephanie and Jacob Hurt
Tamera Jahnke
Tammy and Wes Trantham
Tim and Sally Smith
Todd Polk
Tom and Angela Blevins
Trent Jackson

Monetary Donations

\$0-\$99

Brentwood Garden Club
John Montgomery, in memory of Zeke Kuehn
Kelly & Rod Strella, in memory of Zeke Kuehn
Matthew Simpson, in honor of Don Simpson
Missouri Prairie Foundation
Pink Dogwood Garden Club
Zach Morris, in memory of Zeke Kuehn

\$100-\$499

Bridget and Andy Dierks, Dierks Family Fund
Mike and Mary Chiles
SMC Packaging Group, in memory of Zeke Kuehn
Springfield Plateau Grotto

\$500-\$999

Brian Kuehn, in memory of Zeke Kuehn
Gary Leonard, Steak n Shake
Harold and Darlene Bengsch

\$1,000-\$2,499

Bud and Mary Hogan, Hogan Land Title Co.
Harwood Ferguson and Carrie Coleman
Tal and Rosalie O'Reilly Wooten Family Foundation

\$5,000

Coca-Cola Company

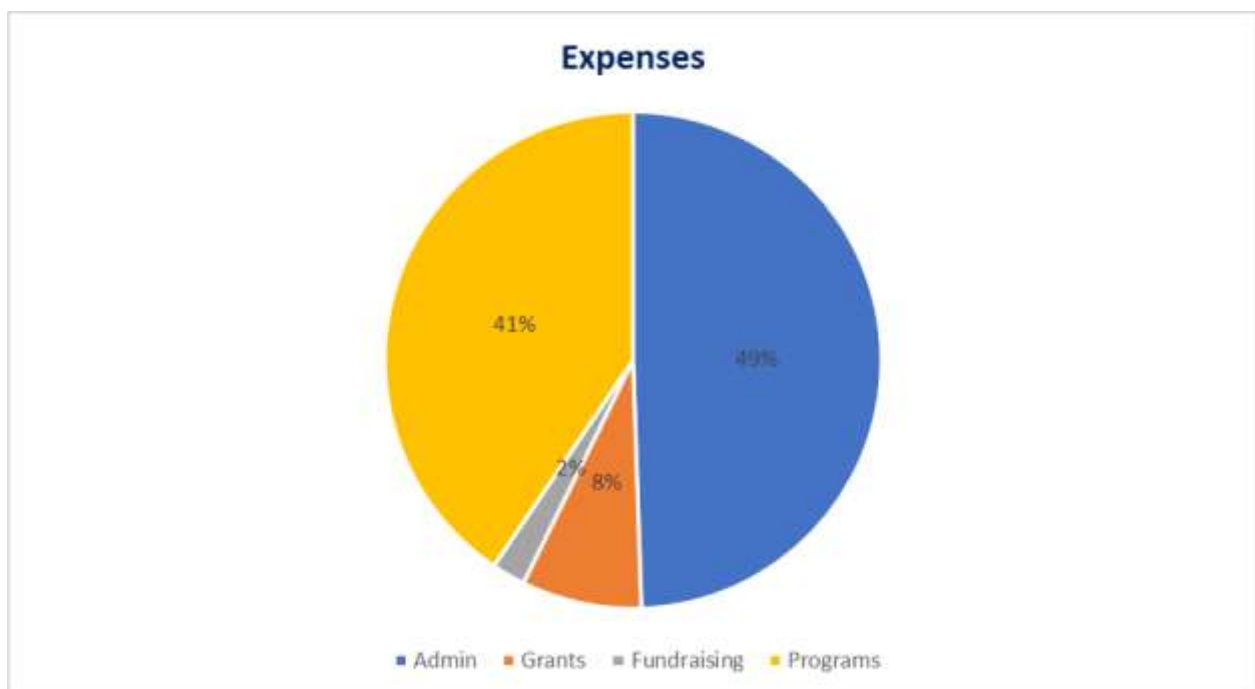
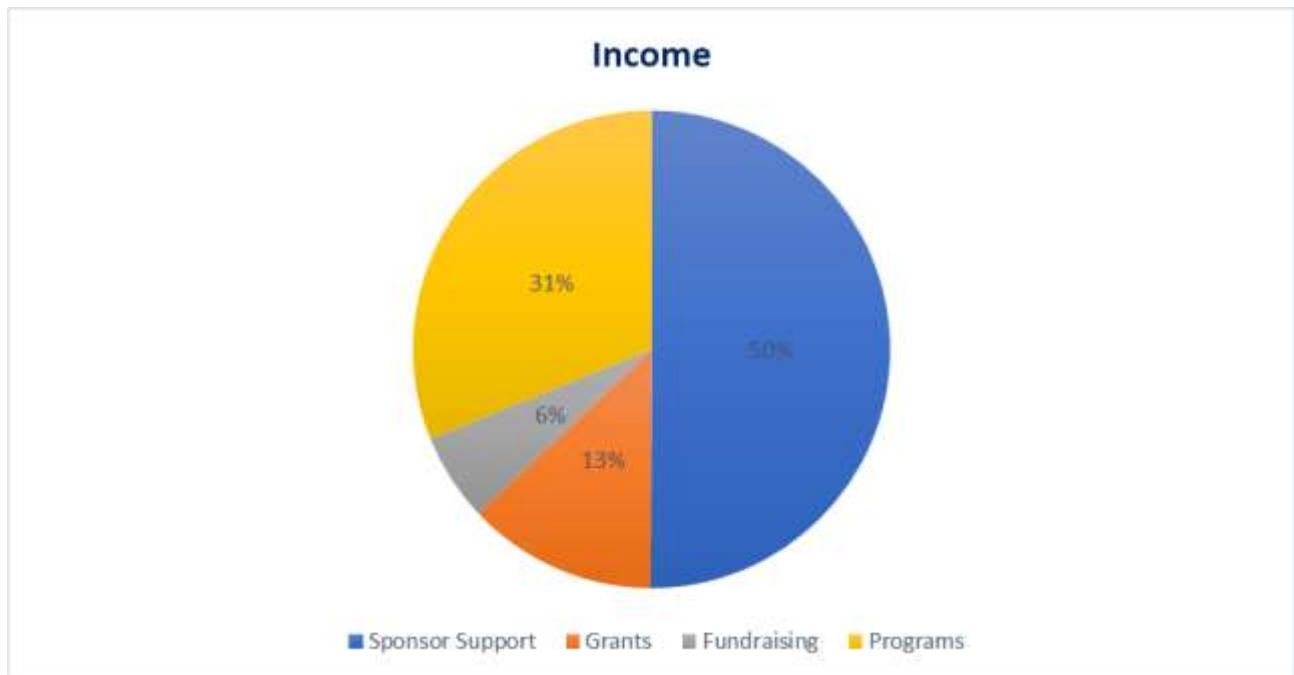
In-Kind Donors

Bass Pro Shops
Greater Ozarks Audubon Society
Husch Blackwell
J.D. Slaughter
Kaitlin Marshall
Marc Bower
Mary Sturdevant
Mike Kromrey
Watershed Conservation Corps

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

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, 13% of our income came from grants, and this money is restricted to specific projects and programs, such as the Native Plant 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	
Total		\$8,690,210	5,378,756

SPONSOR SUPPORT

Organization	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
City of Springfield	\$ 20,000	\$45,000	\$ 52,000	\$ 52,000	\$65,000
City Utilities of Springfield	\$188,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Greene County	\$ 15,000	\$15,000	\$ 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, 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 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 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 to read these paragraphs and 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.