



# **2022 ANNUAL REPORT**



## 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!

**Passion, stewardship, love, and ethic powers our mission and pursuit of clean water for life.**





## 2022 Takeaways



**18 Partners:** We collaborate with local institutions and organizations



2,499 Native plants distributed



Over 6,000 students engaged through educational programs



5 Septic and soil health education events



36 Groundwater quality samples recorded



800 Native seed packets distributed



Estimated 4,000 acres impacted by habitat restoration efforts through WCC



3,164 Participants at outreach activities



3,063 Students engaged through field trips at the Watershed Center



\$150,258 In grant funding



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*Pictured: Watershed Committee and Fellows Lake staff  
at the Watershed Summer Gala*

## 2022 STAFF

Mike Kromrey, *Executive Director*

Stacey Armstrong Smith, *Projects Manager*

Kelly Guenther, *Director of Business Operations*

Jeff Birchler, *Watershed Center Director*

Christy Wilder, *Watershed Natives Program Manager*

Marra Holt, *Communications Coordinator, WCC Conservation Specialist*

Sarah Crooke, *AmeriCorps Member*

### **Watershed Conservation Corps**

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

Rodney Edwards, *WCC Local Project Manager*

Adam Barton, *WCC Program Manager*

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Brendan Brothers, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Alex Love, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Taylor Dye, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

Henry Wilbers, *WCC Conservation Specialist*

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### **Fellows Lake**

Matt Taylor, *Fellows Lake Operations Director*

Vince Currao, *Fellows Lake Operations Manager*

Brian Grimm, *Fellows Lake Crew Member*

Christopher Tobias Clary, *Fellows Lake Crew Member*

Dellon Myette, *Fellows Lake Crew Member*

Maximo Reyes, *Fellows Lake Crew Member*

Phil DeCarlis, *Fellows Lake Crew Member*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Stelzer, *Chair*

Aaron Robison, *Vice Chair*

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Michael Finch

Jason Hainline

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## OUR SPONSORS

City Utilities of Springfield

Greene County

City of Springfield

## OUR PARTNERS

Drury University

Community Foundation of the Ozarks

Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District

Fantastic Caverns

James River Basin Partnership

Missouri Master Naturalists, Springfield Plateau

Missouri Department of Conservation

Missouri Farmers Association

Missouri State University

National Park Service

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Ozark Greenways

Ozarks Technical Community College

Project WET (Water Education for Teachers)

Springfield-Greene County Fairgrounds

Springfield-Greene County Libraries

Springfield-Greene County Park Board

Springfield Public Schools

This report covers our fiscal year: January 1–December 31, 2022

## DEAR FRIENDS,

Time is like a river, and it often seems the flow and current of the river is increasing as we travel along! Over the past couple of river miles, we have gained several confluences, where converging currents provide flow and momentum towards our destination. The joining of people, partners, and vision are key contributors to our work and flow.

After a couple years of community input, visioning, and collaboration, the City of Springfield adopted a new comprehensive plan called Forward SGF 2040. Much like Vision 2020 before, the Forward SGF 2040 plan was created with a tremendous amount of community input, and it contains goals we can embrace and focus on to make our community better. The plan contains important and “juicy” goals like “Ungap the Map” to fill in gaps in our regional trail system, become a leader in sustainability, improve our urban tree canopy, and enhance our waterways for conservation and recreation, among many others. These goals are both unique and intertwined, they are also aligned with best practices and nature-based solutions. Maps are good, and it’s a good map.

The Regional Conservation Partnership Project is now beginning in earnest, and landowners are able to sign up for a host of practices to address conservation concerns in the upper James River Watershed. While this new platform has been challenging, it is clear that the exercise will provide more resources than ever before, and make us even better at working together with partners which are too numerous to list here. We are confident the combined effort will generate positive impacts.

Overall, our impact is growing, but so are the challenges we face. Population growth in our region continues to be robust, and driven by factors related to climate change, such as fire, drought, and extreme storms jacking up the cost of living and insurance in other parts of the country. To stay good, we have to do better. We must paddle a little faster than the stream so we can rudder and steer.

In light of our achievements and challenges, we greet the new year with optimism and focus. Our incredible board, staff, sponsors, partners, donors, volunteers and sustainers will continue to drive us ahead and steer around the rocks. Thank you, for your time, talent, and support in pursuit of our mission. Clean water...for life!



*Partners float on Integrated Plan Day*





# Education and Outreach

*Above: Carver 7th grade at field trip at the Watershed Center*

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

Some schools and other educational groups continued to show a willingness to return to pre-pandemic routines. Fortunately, the number of in-person activities offered to the public continued to grow. We were able to have many community events that had been cancelled in recent years. Many schools still showed a cautious approach, so this year was still a blend of field trips to the Watershed Center, Jordan Creek underground tours, classroom visits and collaborative programs combined with virtual conferences, distance learning, and Zooming along. For example, the Greener Greenspaces was modified to give individual schools the flexibility to participate in spring or fall field experiences and/or to include classroom visits by Watershed staff. 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 Ozark stream or catch a crayfish. For some, it is even their first experience hiking a trail through the woods. These first impressions have lasting impacts on students that will stay with them for a lifetime.



*Our most requested activity—stream sampling*

## Watershed Center Education and Outreach (cont.)

One of our most impactful programs made its return this year. Greener Greenspaces reaches every 7<sup>th</sup> 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 a \$1,000 budget 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.



*Studying aquatic life at Streamside Learning Station.*



*Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) raft building contest – a student and staff favorite*

Our partners play an invaluable role. **Fantastic Caverns**, led students on off-site field trips to Fantastic Caverns as they explored the role solid waste disposal and karst topography play in protecting our groundwater quality. The **City of Springfield Environmental Services** provided in-class outreach activities, emphasizing the role of solid waste disposal on water quality. Students applied this knowledge in their designs for campus improvements. They later presented their designs to a review committee where winning designs were selected. Springfield Public Schools then provided funding and support to assist the students in installing the winning designs on each campus.

## Outreach

Not everyone finds their way to the Watershed Center (yet!). Fortunately, field trips are not the only thing that made their return this year. More and more community events reappeared on the calendar this year. These events allow us to connect with a wider audience. Not only is this a fun way to engage with the public, but they leave better informed about our organization and the important role each individual plays in protecting our water quality. In October, WCO participated in the Homeschool Outdoor Fair held at the MDC Nature Center.



*Combining art and science in a fish printing activity*



*Christy leading students through the wetland*



In July we partnered with **Greene County Library** to host **Fantastic Friday** at the Watershed Center. This event was open to the public. Students explored our past, present, and future connections to water by enjoying reading adventures along with hands-on activities and art-themed explorations of our Ozark water resources. The Mobile Library was on site for guests to enjoy. A story walk based on the children's book *Hello Water* was located along a section of the trail and remained in place for a few weeks for guests to enjoy.



*Guests enjoying the 'Hello Water' story walk.*



*Enjoying Mike's secret Bull Creek Tea recipe*

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 Kipfer's place on Bull Creek to taste Bull Creek Tea.

## Jordan Creek Tours

We continue to offer a unique educational experience with our Jordan Creek tours, in which we take members of our community on a hike 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.



*Clarissa leading a tour at the Jordan Creek box culvert*



Daylighting Jordan Creek has long been a topic during our tours. It is very 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](mailto: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. 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.



*Drury Green Team exploring the park*



*MSU students stream ecology activity*

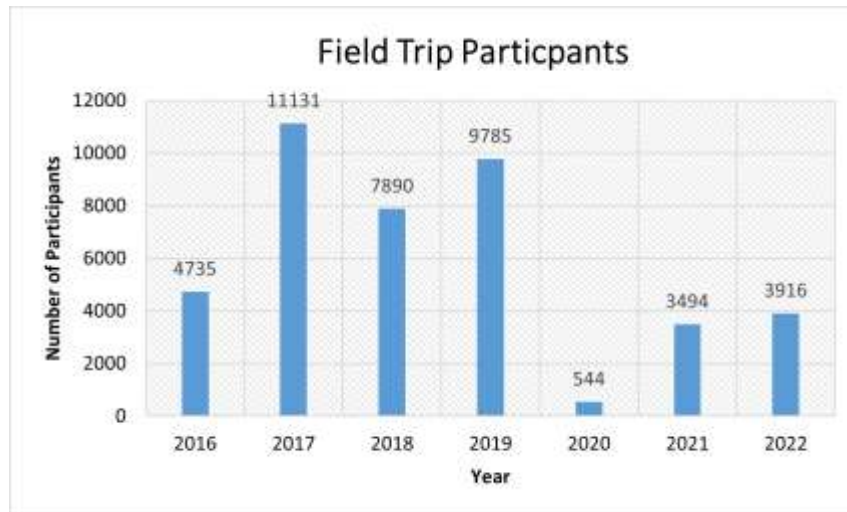
**Missouri State University** has the Citizenship and Service-Learning (CASL) program in which students can earn extra course credit for participating in a local organization's work for 40 hours over the course of a semester. These students helped us in a variety of ways from providing Spanish translations of our educational materials, 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 here while learning about native plants, macroinvertebrates, and how to teach the Discover Nature Schools Curriculum.

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





## Education and Outreach: A Look at the Numbers



### Year at a Glance: Field Trips

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Field Trip Participants in WCO Programs</b>	7,890	9,785	544	3,494	3,916
<b>WCO Field Trips</b>	173	180	21	64	96
<b>Booths at Community Events</b>	12	10	1	4	21
<b>Jordan Creek Tours</b>	28	20	9	22	25
<b>Outreach Activities Participants</b>	4,964	3,450	525	2,728	4,354

At first glance, it may appear that there were fewer participants in the program in recent years, however, we have worked diligently with our partners to foster a more sustainable yet impactful program for all students.

As a part of this effort, we have modified the program to better meet the needs and budget of Springfield Public Schools, therefore, fieldtrips were reduced from three to two visits a year. Collaborating with Fantastic Caverns and Environmental Services made the program stronger but meant that the second field trip was away from the Watershed Center and reduced our count of participation numbers. This year, to further accommodate our audience, we offered outreach programs where we visited the schools in lieu of a second Watershed Center field trip.

We continue to make improvements and changes to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Greener Greenspaces program: following input from SPS staff, we shifted seven middle school field trips from the fall to the spring. Another contributing factor is that our fiscal year does not align with the school's schedule. This means that we will see an additional 750 students participating in field trips in the year of 2023.

We also reduced the maximum capacity from 150 students to 75 students so that the park was less crowded and resources less overwhelmed. This enabled each student to get the most out of their experience with us. Since COVID, SPS has eliminated the Explore! Program held in conjunction with the Watershed Center programs. This has lowered the amount of elementary students and SPS staff participating in summer programs in comparison to the early years of the program. In the spring and fall the program operated at near capacity. In October, there were only two business days in which there were no field trips or outreach events.





# Programs



WATERSHED  
natives

*Pictured: Hillcrest Students setting up for Plant Sale*

**Watershed Natives** has focused on **deep-rooting** over the past three years, with its main emphasis in workforce development. The program enables students to connect with community, nature, and career paths by helping them attain new skills and gain access to valuable networking for their futures.

Watershed Natives hosted many plant sales and workshops at a variety of locations where we met many new friends, building the native plant community. We held several workshops which allowed participants to use native plants to create artwork. Our favorite being the Color Sense workshop hosted by Kate Baird in October where participants dyed paper using native plants. We are excited to host more workshops like this in 2023!



*Color Sense Workshop- Dyed Paper drying*

## Partnerships & Collaborations

### Springfield Public Schools

The nursery and Springfield Public School's College and Career Academies watched its first class graduate through the program in May. At Hillcrest High School's Environmental and Natural Resources Pathway these seniors spent the last 3 years gaining new experiences, learning job skills, and understanding the fundamentals of native plants. Students begin the program as Sophomores in Environmental Science, then Juniors in Watershed Science, and finally Seniors in Restoration Ecology. This year, Academy students have been eager and ready to learn. Students participated in several workdays throughout the year, including garden bed maintenance at the **Ozark Empire Fairgrounds** and at the **Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)** Southwest Regional office.



## Watershed Natives (Cont.)

Seniors were also given an amazing opportunity to complete their capstone project the by designing management plans of the landscaping beds for **MDC Southwest Regional office**. In early December, they presented their plans to a panel of professionals at the office where plans will be implemented.

### Missouri Department of Conservation

Valley Water Mill Lake is a unique partnership of many different agencies. In continuation of this partnership, Watershed Natives assisted in native planting with the **Missouri Department of Conservation** in mid-July. With lead efforts from Fisheries Management Biologist Kara Tvedt, four native aquatic species were planted in the lake's shallow upper end. Due to many factors in the watershed, Valley Water Mill Lake is rich in nutrients which can cause algae on the lake. In efforts to help catch some of these nutrients that are introduced during high flow, native aquatics like Pickerelweed, Prairie Cordgrass, Soft Rush, and Spatterdock were planted. This helps to take up nutrients and slow down sediment entering the lake from Sanders Spring and the creek. The mid-July planting is part of a continuing effort to establish native aquatic plants in the upper end of Valley



*Restoration Ecology Seniors presenting to MDC*

Water Mill Lake.

In August, the Nursery entered into a Cooperative Agreement with the Missouri Department of Conservation. The purpose of this agreement is to support education and workforce development within Watershed Natives. The concept is to use the developing skills of these students to increase the demand and supply of native plants to consumers for use on public lands while providing educational opportunities to stakeholders. As part of this agreement, the nursery is focusing on establishing an aquatic plant nursery and a Missouri gravel bar tree nursery.



*MDC employees planting aquatics in Valley Water Mill Lake*

In February, the Watershed Natives were awarded the 2022 Community Impact Grant from the **Community Foundation of the Ozarks** to continue support of the nursery. These funds will allow the nursery manager to continue facilitating the program and working with area schools through education and plant propagation. In May, the nursery was awarded a grant from the **Springfield Rotary** to continue developing infrastructure within the greenhouse. These funds will provide tables, potting benches, soil containers, and a shed to store supplies during the season. Over the winter season Watershed Natives, with the help of the SPS Environmental Pathways and Greener Greenspace, harvested seeds and packed them to donate and support the **Springfield-Greene County Library** Heirloom Seed Library. The Seed Library held its grand opening in early February, and the nursery presented a program on the importance of native plants. Program participants planted just over 800 seed packets in our community. In the last weeks of the year, Academy students have been working hard to package seeds for the next growing season.



*Watershed Natives Greenhouse*

## Watershed Natives (Cont.)

### Ozarks Empire Fairgrounds

The Natives nursery location at the fairgrounds has given us access to a wider audience while supporting the agriculture programs during fairground events. This season, we completed the greenhouse with the help of SPS students and staff, WCO, and Ozark Empire Fair staff. This has allowed us to continue providing internship opportunities to maintain landscaping beds on-site while displaying the greenhouse during large events such as the Empire Fair or Farm Fest. We are excited for the construction of the new Arena at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds as it will serve as a hub for Youth Agriculture Education.



*Pulling plastic poly onto the greenhouse*

### Looking Ahead

We are in a good position to meet the growing demand for job skill training in our community. We are excited about new partnerships with the **Missouri Department of Conservation, Springfield Southeast Rotary, and Rotary International** to help us meet this need in our region. The opportunities look endless for 2023. More broadly, we are excited about the Forward SGF 2040 plan which strongly aligns with the Watershed Natives Program and overarching mission of the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks.

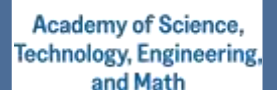


*Interview with KY3's The Place*

-Christy Wilder, Watershed Natives Program Manager

	2020	2021	2022
Number of plants sold/distributed	1,974	1,462	2,499
Community events, programs and plant sales	2	19	34
WN Workshop/ classes hosted	0	1	2
Educational programs conducted	2	49	72
Number of students participating in educational programs	40	1,763	2,785
Revenue from plant Sales	\$7,568	\$7,847	\$15,065

Thank you to our partners !







Fellows is an 860-acre lake created in 1955 by the impoundment of the Little Sac River. It is the main source of drinking water for Springfield and holds ample opportunity for public outreach. Fellows Lake has a family-friendly atmosphere with recreational and educational activities including fishing, floating, trails for hiking, running, and mountain biking, and more.

Our second season operating the recreation area at Miller Park was a great success. Our goal of providing a fun, safe, and educational experience for all our guests was achieved through great partnerships, dedicated and

hard-working staff, and strong leadership from our colleagues at Watershed Committee of the Ozarks.

Between March 1 and September 30, we processed over 4,700 transactions at the lake shop. Considering that most visitors consisted of anywhere from 2 to 8 individuals, and taking into account the large number of visitors that we interacted with and provided a free map or information about the lake, the number of guests we interacted with during the season was easily over 10,000 folks! That's over 10,000 opportunities to deliver our message about the recreation, education, and environmental elements at Fellows Lake. The amount of feedback we receive from our guests about how great their experience was at the lake is overwhelmingly positive and really fuels our enthusiasm for furthering our mission.

During the inaugural 2021 season, we worked hard to build a foundation with the Fellows Lake community. Through community outreach events, social media campaigns, and extensive interaction with our partners at City Utilities, Missouri Department of Conservation, Ozark Greenways, and a litany of other groups, Watershed Committee of the Ozarks established itself as a good new steward of Fellows Lake and the entire recreational area.

In 2022, we used that foundation to build even stronger relationships with our neighbors, guests, and partners. Whether putting families into rental watercraft, inspecting for invasives on personal craft, selling bait, or handing out a map, the staff at Fellows Lake takes every opportunity to further the mission of WCO and how we all work together to protect this valuable resource.



*Ship sets sail at Fellows dock*



*Fellows Lake Crew*

Day to day, the Fellows Lake operation is unique from other recreational lakes in the region. As a public water source, guests understand that certain activities are not allowed to protect the water quality. In addition to normal water activities such as renting watercraft, we also provide support to an extensive trail network, our private slip holders, a burgeoning sailing program, and multiple large attendance events throughout the season.

Managing these multiple responsibilities falls on Director of Operations, Matt Taylor, Operations Manager, Vince Currao and a seasonal crew that is second to none. With operations running sunrise to sunset seven days a week for eight months straight, the

days and weeks can be long and hard. The Fellows Lake staff is proud of what we achieved in this second season and can hardly wait to get back to it when we kick off the 2023 season on March 1st!

## Fellows Highlights

### Springfield Sailing Club: First Season

Four of our instructors completed the U.S. Sailing certification for Keelboat Level One. Fellows Lake was host to three successful regattas, including a well-received Women on Water Regatta paired with a fun summer social following the race. Interest in sailing in our community is prevalent as 85 members have joined the club this season!

### Special Events

Fellows Lake hosted a number of events to foster outdoor recreation and connection in our community throughout 2022:

- 2 Missouri Department of Conservation fishing workshops
- National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) national event
- ACA level one introduction to paddling hosted by Fellows, Ozark Mountain Paddlers, and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
- Ozark Greenways/Trail Springs Trail ribbon cutting
- Watershed Committee of the Ozarks Summer Gala
- Celebrate Springfield: Fellows Lake Fun Day
- Empower Abilities "Day at the Lake"
- City Utilities Family Picnic
- 3 Moonlight Paddles
- Concrete Man Triathlon



*Fellows Lake Fun Day*



*The Third Moonlight Paddle*

### Volunteer Activities

- Day of Caring: over 20 volunteers assisted with trash cleanup and weeded the native garden
- Bass Pro Interns: 28 interns completed four hours of trash cleanup followed by an afternoon of paddling
- Eagle Scout project
- Kid's Fishing Derby



*Couple fishing at Fellows Lake Fun Day*

Thank you to our partners who made another successful season possible!







**Watershed Conservation Corp (WCC)** blends projects and educational components of WCO's mission by employing young people in hands-on watershed improvement. The program provides a unique blend of work experience, training, and field education for crew members, most of whom intend to pursue careers in natural resource management. WCC provides a cost-effective, value-added option for carrying out successful water-related projects. An evident demand for these services makes the program largely self-funding while simultaneously supplying the region with a trained labor force for green infrastructure and water quality related projects.

## PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

The WCC completed another year-long agreement to work at many different national parks and monuments within the region under a cooperative agreement with the **National Park Service (NPS)**. This year a crew of five traveled from southern Arkansas to eastern Iowa managing **invasive plant species and conducting habitat management** with tools such as prescribed fire. This year WCC aided NPS crews with burning nearly 600 acres at three different parks. NPS staff also utilized the WCC crew to monitor a wildfire and provide support for a search and rescue incident near the Buffalo National River. However, the projects weren't limited to ecological preservation, some projects included historical preservation. WCC helped with clearing the historic Federal trench at Pea



*NPS crew managing invasive species at Arkansas Post Historic Site*

Ridge National Military Park as well as the preservation of the historic rock wall around the Carver family Cemetery at George Washington Carver National Monument. WCC continued its use of 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.



*NPS crew overlooking Buffalo National River*

WCC remained partnered with the **U.S. Forest Service** to maintain trails in the Ava, Cassville, Willow Springs, and Eleven Point ranger districts of the Mark Twain National Forest. This included construction of the mile-long trail at Greer Spring Mill near Alton, Missouri as well as 50 miles of corridor clearing, and nearly two miles of improvement at the Coy Bald Trail at Hercules Glade Wilderness. Our work in the National Forest is mostly completed with non-motorized equipment to reduce the human



*Prescribed Fire*

impact on the surrounding landscape.

WCC also worked with the **Mark Twain National Forest**, to conduct National Visitor Use Monitoring surveys at various trails located in the southeastern portion of the state.



*Trail clearing at Hercules Glades*



## WATERSHED CONSERVATION CORPS PARTNERS & PROJECTS (CONT.)

WCC traveled to Dunn Ranch Prairie near Hatfield, Missouri, through a partnership with **The Nature Conservancy**. Our team used UTVs to apply herbicide to stands of invasive species and woody plants. WCC crews sprayed over 750 acres of prairie helping to preserve the native temperate grassland habitat for the bison, greater prairie chicken, and bobwhite quail populations nearby.



*Spraying invasives at Dunn Ranch Prairie (TNC)*



*Planting native trees along the James River in Webster County*

WCC partnered with the **Missouri Department of Conservation** to repair riparian corridors in the Upper James River and Little Sac River watersheds via cooperative agreements. Over 500 woody shrubs and trees were installed and maintained throughout the year across two separate sites.

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, and landscape maintenance.

WCC continued the ongoing habitat restoration project at **Bass Pro Shops** Base Camp. In 2022, invasive vegetation management was conducted across the entire property. American lotus was treated in ponds and numerous broadleaf invasive species were treated across the established warm-season grass stands.



*Hand-broadcasting native grass seed at Conco's Galloway Quarry*

WCC was contracted by **Conco Quarries** to provide ecological stewardship of four sites around Springfield. In 2022, WCC seeded over seven acres of native grasses while providing landscape maintenance in preparation for work in 2023.

WCC continued its partnership with the **Springfield-Greene County Park Board** and **Ozark Greenways** to maintain and improve the Frisco Highline Trail corridor from Springfield to Bolivar. WCC completed three days of tree trimming to improve visibility and reduce potential hazards for trail users.



*Trimming along the Frisco Trail*

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.



## 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 for the first half of the year, total attendance was around 400 in 2022. 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 2022 were:

- **January:** Paddling with a Purpose: Eco Tourism as a Water Quality Outreach, Todd Wilkenson, Project Manager, James River Basin Partnership
- **February:** A look at Heartland Inventory's work in NPS, Hope Dodd, National Park Service
- **March:** Forest Restoration Methods, David Wise, Watershed Restoration Manager, Stroud Research Center
- **April:** Collaborate for a Flourishing Community When Trails and Streams Collide, Todd Wagner, PE, D.WRE, CFM Wagner and Associates
- **May:** Economics of Natural Resources: Valuing the Benefits derived from Wetland Ecosystem Services, Dr. Sophie McKee and Nicole Didero
- **June:** Organic Amendments in Dry Rangelands to Build Soil Health, Eva Strickler, Director of Carbon Ranch Initiative, Quivira Coalition
- **July:** Tools for Watershed Protection: Examples from New Hampshire, Lauren Zielinski, New Hampshire Water Resources Program Manager, Merrimack River Watershed Council
- **August:** Chautauqua style: Extended updates and networking
- **September:** Transforming Idle Fields into Diverse Native Prairie: Dr. Robert Elworth
- **October:** State Forest and Wildlife Action Plan, Michael Bill, Missouri Department of Conservation Statewide Habitat Management Coordinator
- **November:** Watershed Conservation Corps Program, WCC Local and Federal Crews
- **December:** A Missouri Master Naturalist View on Farm Ponds, Linda Bower, Missouri Master Naturalist

## 2022 PRESS

- *February 14 — Springfield Daily Citizen, Fellows "5 easy trails within one hour of Springfield"*
- *February 22 — Community Foundation of the Ozarks, "Grant program expands following hiatus due to pandemic"*
- *March 7 — Springfield Public Schools, "HHS Environmental Science Pathways Students Grow Experience, Expertise in Watershed Natives program"*
- *March 25 — Springfield Daily Citizen, "You Can Now Rent a Sailboat and Take Sailing Lessons on Fellows Lake"*
- *March 25 — KSMU, "SPS Students get their hands dirty while learning about the environment"*
- *May 16 — Rural Missouri, "Fun at Fellows Lake"*
- *August 25 — Springfield Daily Citizen, "Fellows Lake is entering a new era of recreation. Will City Council OK Paddleboards?"*
- *October 7 — KY3, "Watershed Natives featured on The Place"*



# Projects & Management

*Pictured: Soil Health Demonstration from Drexel Atkisson 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.

## WCO UTILIZES 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 watershed. The funding has been provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The project focuses on reducing bacteria in the Upper Little Sac River watershed 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.



*Subbasins for implementation of the Upper Little Sac Watershed*

Community partners have provided a contribution of \$266,667 over the life of the project, bringing the total amount of the project to \$666,667. The project is expected to be completed in the summer of 2025. This year's efforts focused on meeting with the grant steering committee and planning for water quality improvement efforts which 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.



## 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



*Doug Peterson involves participants in an aggregate demonstration*

\$78,000 and the grant ended on September 30, 2022. The project goal was to promote public awareness and implementation of Farm Bill activities, especially in historically underserved communities and in watersheds critical to drinking water supply.

During the project, a total of 426 participants were provided educational opportunities from the two soil health field days and four workshops held in Springfield and Stockton areas. One hundred and seventy-one surveys were collected at five events from 2019 to 2022 which included three soil health workshops and two grazing schools.



*Speakers at the Soil Health workshop hosted by WCO in Stockton, MO*

The table below summarizes the number of participants that completed the surveys from each event. The overall finding from the surveys collected discovered that most participants were either in their first five years of farming or had been farming for more than twenty years. The primary challenge for soil health was lack of education and the largest water quality problem in the watershed was sedimentation and erosion. An increase in no till/cover crops and more education were the top improvements wanted by survey participants. The Farm Bill programs which most participants were familiar with were Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Also, 34 percent of participants had never utilized any Farm Bill programs. The workshops and field days held with this grant were able to reach underserved producers and landowners in our primary drinking-water watersheds by providing valuable educational opportunities to share information about the Farm Bill programs available to improve water quality and quantity.

Event	# of surveys completed
Soil Health Workshop 9/24/19	45
Dade Co Grazing School 9/9/19	24
Greene Co Grazing School 10/16/19	22
Everton Soil Health Workshop 7/21/21	62
Stockton Soil Health Workshop 9/12/2022	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>

### Groundwater Monitoring

The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks launched a groundwater monitoring program in partnership with City Utilities of Springfield 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. Data collected quarterly, at these nine locations in Greene County include field data, microbiological data, volatile organic compounds, and metals which includes thirty-six parameters in total. Continual sample collection is building the local groundwater dataset and will help yield background water quality trends.

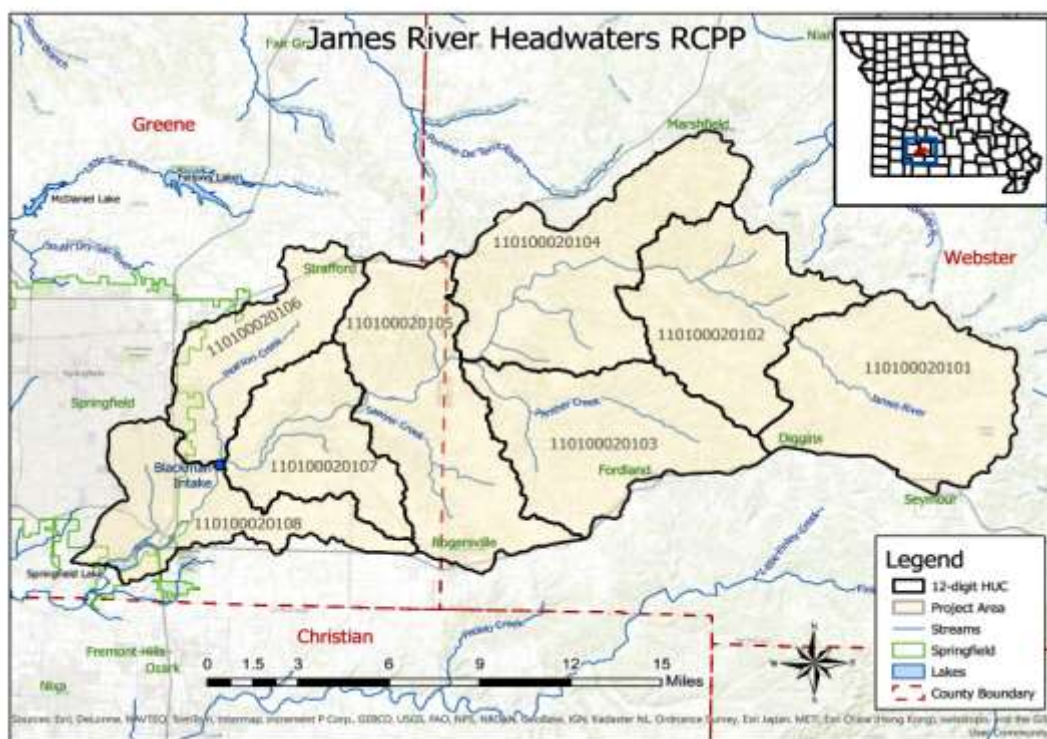
## JAMES RIVER HEADWATERS REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (RCPP)

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 Watershed Committee of the Ozarks and its partners were awarded \$2,115,247 toward the protection of clean drinking water for more than 150,000 Missourians, improvement of 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.

RCPP funds will provide significant cost-share opportunities for producers and landowners in the James River Watershed upstream of Lake Springfield. This includes activities such as planting trees along waterways, fencing infrastructure for prescribed grazing systems, improving wildlife cover and habitat, forest and soil health improvements and voluntary conservation easements and land rentals. RCPP partners offer value-added contributions to amplify the impact of RCPP funding and 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. Local partners for James River Headwaters RCPP are City Utilities of Springfield, Greene County, City of Springfield, Missouri Department of Conservation, Ozark Greenways, James River Basin Partnership, MFA Incorporated, Missouri Rural Water Association and Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District.

On November 7, 2022, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service announced that qualifying farmers and landowners are invited to apply to receive technical and financial assistance through the James River Headwaters RCPP.

This project aims to support the protection of clean drinking water, improve the local farming community, and assist municipalities in meeting federal water quality requirement and improve aquatic ecosystems within the Upper James River Watershed.



To accomplish this, the project is emphasizing practices such as riparian buffers, rotational grazing, and soil health. Landowners in Greene and Webster counties in the Upper James River Watershed are eligible to apply. Applications must be received by January 13, 2023 for the fiscal year 23 funds. However, signups for the next fiscal year will be available throughout the year. If you are interested in applying please contact Stacey at [stacey@watsrshcommittee.org](mailto:stacey@watsrshcommittee.org) or 417-408-3310.

Local partners for James River Headwaters RCPP include City Utilities of Springfield, Greene County, The City of Springfield, The Missouri Department of Conservation, Ozark Greenways, James River Basin Partnership, MFA Incorporated, Missouri Rural Water Association, and Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District.



## 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. Going into 2023, 13 sites are in the "treatment" phase, 21 sites are in the "monitoring-only" phase, and two sites have made it to "eradication" phase. In other words, hydrilla has been reduced to non-detectable levels in over 50 percent of the sites and two of those sites have stayed hydrilla free for five consecutive years. This is progress. The one remaining site made it to the "monitoring-only" phase before the site changed ownership in 2021. Since then, we have been unable to engage with the new owner. Efforts on that front will continue in 2023.

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 (2022) was the second year for the site to be in the "monitoring-only" phase. MDC 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 illustrates the importance of early detections and rapid responses in our overall battle against hydrilla.

Similar search efforts were undertaken at Lake Springfield. Staff from MDC, JRBP, and Greene County searched the upper portions of the lake with rakes. No hydrilla was detected in their efforts.

In 2023, treatments will resume in 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.

With hydrilla on the landscape, we cannot afford to let up. Diligence is key to controlling this invasive.

Contributed by Kara Tvedt, Fisheries Biologist, MDC





# People

*Pictured: Kansas State students volunteering at the Watershed Center*

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

The tremendous successes of 2022 simply would not be possible without the help of an impressive group of volunteers. We are continually amazed by the number of individuals and organizations willing to dedicate their time to helping us protect and improve the region's water resources.

### Multiple Opportunities

As we increase our programs, opportunities for volunteers also increase. Individuals may act as park docents, which allows 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. Some of our volunteers enjoy working with the Watershed Natives Program located at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds. In 2023, there will be even more ways in which you or your organization can become involved.



*Day of Caring*



*Fellows Lake Day of Caring*



Group volunteer days are a fun way to socialize, give back to the community, and learn some things along the way. **United Way of the Ozarks Day of Caring** is always a huge benefit to the Watershed Committee. Each year many businesses and their employees donate half of their day to help with needed projects. This year volunteers from **KY3, Bass Pro, City of Springfield, Amwins, and American National** helped with various projects. Groups at the Watershed Center helped repair



*Drury University Volunteers*



*Summit Prep students restoring glade plants.*

trails, mulch the rain garden, stain and seal handrails, construct Leopold benches, and clean up trash in Valley Water Mill Lake. At Fellows Lake, groups helped clean up trash in and around the Lake. Thank you for your hard work as we continue to make connections through nature!

One of our favorite group volunteer events is the **Summit Service Day**. The entire Summit Preparatory School student body, from kindergartners to seniors, spent a volunteer day at the Watershed Center. The staff, students, and many parents planted native species in the restored glade, improved trails, cleared brush, and started new native grass plugs. Having the students return each year allows them to see the impact their efforts are having on the park and take pride in their work.

## Staff Development and Professional Involvement

In March, Jeff attended the **Plains Environmental Education Partnership (PEEPS) Leadership Clinic** at Lied Lodge in Nebraska. This gathering of environmental education leaders from Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Wyoming was the first step in a collaborative effort to build capacity at state and regional levels for environmental education.



In April, WCO hosted a workshop sponsored by the Missouri Environmental Education Association (MEEA) titled **K-5 Guidelines for Excellence Workshop**. This program, in which Jeff attended, presented techniques for presenting hands-on activities aligned to both Missouri Learning and Environmental Education Standards. Valuable information for both formal and informal educators was shared. This successful program will be offered again in April of 2023.



Many WCO staff members participated in the Missouri Conservation Partner's Roundtable "Charting the Course for Conservation" held in September at Bass Pro's White River Conference Center. Inspirational keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and multiple networking opportunities provided a unique opportunity for environmental groups from throughout the state to collaborate and share information about pressing issues currently impacting Missourians.

In October, the Ozark Rivers Conference was held at Missouri State University's Darr Agricultural Center. It was the first annual conference organized by the Ozark Society's Schoolcraft Chapter. The event featured diverse and exceptional speakers with more than seventy attendees, including a number of WCO employees. In November, also at the Darr Agricultural Center, the Tri-State Water Coalition held *Water: The Future*. Here, WCO employees were a part of important conversation with field experts about the future of our water sources in the Ozarks and beyond.

## 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 39th year!*

**Michael Stelzer, Chair:** at-large board member, 1st Term Expires December 2022

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.



**Aaron Robison, Vice Chair:** 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 Missouri 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.



**Bobbilynne Koepke, Secretary:** City appointed board member, 1st term Expires Dec. 2022

Bobbilynne is a Principal Geologist with Environmental Works, where she has proudly worked for the past 10 years. As 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, 2nd Term Expires December 2023

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, Missouri 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, Missouri. 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.



**Angela Blevins :** at-large board member, 2nd Term Expires December 2024

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.



# 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. In addition, we work to expand our revenue and impact by diversifying our income streams which include **Grants and Awards, Fundraising, Program Revenue, and Investments/Endowment.**

## Sponsor Support

Organization	2019	2020	2021	2022
City of Springfield	\$ 52,000	\$ 65,000	\$65,000	\$ 66,950
City Utilities of Springfield	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$205,000
Greene County	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$65,000	\$ 66,950
Springfield-Greene County Parks	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	\$16,000	\$ 16,000

## Grants and Awards

The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks has earned over 11 million dollars in grant revenue over our 39-year history, and over 3 million in the last 5 years. These funds have enabled us to positively impact valuable and irreplaceable water resources and our community's connection to them. Grants and awards are a great way to leverage local funds and advance our mission. Below is a table representing grant activity within the last three years:

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
USDA James River Headwaters RCPP Award	2021	\$2,115,247
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	\$400,000
Community Foundation of the Ozarks CIG grant	2022	\$ 21,060
National Parks Service Foundation	2022	\$ 84,628
Southeast Rotary and Rotary International	2022	\$14,630
Springfield Metro Rotary	2022	\$ 6,500



## Fundraising

The Watershed Committee raised just over \$121,000 in 2022 through the Watershed Summer Gala event, one-time donations, and sustaining donors, and gifts from organizations.

The Watershed Summer Gala was extra special this year. The weather forecast on July 18, 2022 looked daunting at a hundred and one, but hardy water warriors headed to Fellows Lake and were greeted with clouds, a breeze, and even a pleasant rain shower. Spirits were not dampened, and the musicians safely sequestered their electronics under the pavilion and continued to perform some of the finest music ever to have graced the lake.

Presenting Sponsor Eric K. Peterson with Peterson Wealth Advisors shared his passion for the lake and alignment with the mission of WCO. Mother's Brewery and Wire Road Brewing served up delicious craft beers, and everyone seemed to enjoy the variety of fine foods prepared by Allen Event Group. The Whiskey Pull was over in twenty minutes and some folks cheered as they pulled one of the special selections this year. The Silent Auction component of the Watershed Summer Gala was filled with local artisans' work and creations. A common thread heard throughout the evening was folks attending said the Gala at Fellows Lake has the feel of a family reunion, which made our hearts swell with gratitude. (Additional Supporting Sponsors: Advanced Auto Care and Wagner and Associates, LLC)



# OUR GENEROUS 2022 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 \$15,000

Peterson Wealth Advisors

### Legacy \$10,000

Bass Pro Shops

### Platinum \$7,500

PCNet

Vital Farms

### Silver \$2,500

Bailey Pyle Builders

Nahon Family Memorial Fund

### Bronze \$1,000

Arkifex

Commerce Bank

Commercial Metals Company

HDR

Hogan Land Title Company

Elite Promotions

Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr. Pepper Bottling Company

People Centric

### Supporting \$500

Advanced Car Care

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

Mother's Brewing Company

Olsson

Wagner and Associates

Wire Road Brewing

## Donors:

### up to \$99

Blayne Radford

Brian Edmond

Christine Bailey

Danny and Linda Medcalf in memory of Rick Smith

Danny Perches

Diventures of Springfield

George and Sandy Kromrey

Kira Howerton

Kristin Binder

Mandi Hubbs

Michael and Kelly Guenther

Rita Bishop in memory of Rick Smith

Scott and Kelli Stricklin

Wesley and Penny Roberson in honor of Mr. and Mrs. David  
Millsap 50th Wedding Anniversary

### \$100—\$299

Aaron Scott

Barry and Debbie Rowell

Ben and Jodi Caruthers

Bobbilynne Koepke

Brian Edmond

Calvin and Barbara Armstrong in memory of Rick Smith

Cathy Primm

Craig and Ann Young

DeDe Vest

Elizabeth Robertson

Gary Leonard

Gary Gibson

Jan and Michael Wooten

Jeff Bromberger

Jordan Wilson

Linda Chorce

Mary Sturdervant

Mike Finch

Mike and Mary Kromrey

Nancy Williams

R.L. Creson in memory of Rick Smith

Stephanie and Jacob Hurt

Tim and Sally Smith



## OUR GENEROUS 2022 SUSTAINERS CONT.

### \$100—\$299

Charlie Burwich and Lisa Berger  
Gary Gibson  
Jane Earnhart  
Laura and Chuck Greene  
Phil Graves  
Ron and Leslie Carrier  
Sean Patrick Fay

### \$300—\$499

Todd Polk  
Tom and Angela Blevins  
Trinity Presbyterian Church

### \$500—\$999

Andrew Tulchin  
Bill Cheek  
Brian Kuehn  
Dave and Elisa Coonrod  
Jacob Berger  
Loring Bullard  
Missouri Forage and Grassland Council  
Scott Bratcher  
Tamera Jahnke

### \$1,000—\$3,500

Dan Hoy  
Harwood Ferguson  
Messiah Lutheran Church  
Tal and Rosalie O'Reilly Wooten Family Fund  
The Hatch Foundation

### Earth Day

We were honored to be one of the 2022 Earth Day Festival Non-Profit Beneficiaries. The leave-no-trace, sustainable festival was held at Mother's Brewing Company and raised \$18,000 for three local environmental organizations including the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, Inc., James River Basin Partnership, and Ozark Greenways, Inc.

### Watershed Conservation Corps Gifts

The Thurman Family donated \$5,000 to the Watershed Conservation Corps program.

Louis & Caroline Griesemer Fund donated \$2,000 to the Watershed Conservation Corps program.

\$25-\$100 donations to the Watershed Conservation Corps program included Barry and Deborah Rowell, John and Nicole Montgomery, Stephen Sample, Greg and Martha Swick, and Diventures of Springfield.

### Sailing Program Gifts

Eric Peterson donated \$15,000 for accessibility equipment for the Sailing Program.

Mike and Gayle Ashely donated \$6,000 for the educational component of the Sailing Program.

The Nahon Family Memorial Fund donated \$2,000 to the Sailing Program.

The Slip or Sail Raffle raised \$2,434 for the Sailing Program.

### In-Kind Donors

Bob Kipfer  
Casey Callison  
Greater Ozarks Audubon Society  
Bass Pro Shops  
Bird Dog Woodworking  
Fellows Lake LLC  
Gentleman of the Woods  
Julie Leeth  
Marc Bower  
Mary Ellen Chiles  
Michael Stelzer  
Mike Kromrey  
Ozarks Euro (Chris and Amanda Miller)  
Todd Parnell  
Watershed Natives  
Watershed Committee of the Ozarks



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

If you see an error, please report it to [Kelly@watershedcommittee.org](mailto:Kelly@watershedcommittee.org)

## Money Matters

Program revenue has been an increasingly important strategy for the growth and impact of our mission. We have seen many wonderful programs in our field come and go with the funding source. We are keenly focused on creating financially sustainable programs with enough funding diversity to stand the test of time. As the old saying goes, “no margins, no mission.” The following graph illustrates the growth and impact of program revenue:

Year	# Employees	Hours Worked	Payroll	Donations	Grants	Program Revenue
2019	13	18,754	\$337,031	\$62,328	\$68,273	\$119,140
2020	18	23,714	\$415,950	\$43,850	\$88,958	\$215,896
2021	25	28,564	\$547,690	*\$1,224,178	\$92,603	\$308,764
2022	23	32,841	\$658,222	\$121,800	\$150,258	\$691,226

## Investments/Endowment

### Long-Term Fund

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 \$140,167 at the end of the year.

### Endowment Fund

The Watershed Committee established a restricted Endowment Fund in 2008, held at the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. Thanks to a generous, anonymous gift of \$1.1 million dollars in 2021, 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 2022 the endowment was at \$1,017,613.

### Fredrick Memorial Scholarship Fund

The Fredrick Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 2009 by the Fredrick Family in honor of Jeff Fredrick. The initial funding provided financing for high school or college students’ attendance to a workshop, conference, or symposium related to water resources. Since that time donations have been used to supplement our Watershed Fellowship Program, which we believe is in line with the original vision for the fund. The current balance of the fund is just over \$31,000.

### 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.

## Charitable Giving through IRA’s

*Presented by Eric K Peterson, CFP® Peterson Wealth Advisors*

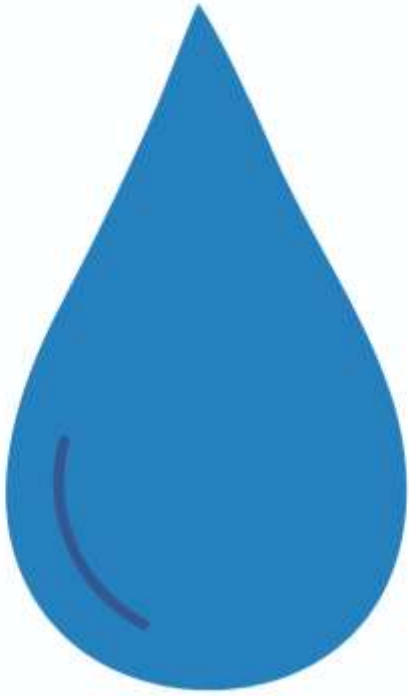
A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a payment made directly from an IRA to a charitable organization. Specific requirements and circumstances must be met before an IRA owner can make a QCD. To help you understand the ins and outs of this charitable distribution, Peterson Wealth Advisors have summarized the rules in a blog post on our website. Learn more at [watershedcommittee.org/blog/](https://watershedcommittee.org/blog/)



## REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization that depends on sponsor support, 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, almost 12% 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 our programs and maintain and improve the Watershed Center and Valley Water Mill Park.





# CLEAN WATER FOR LIFE

