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2022 Summer Quarter Newsletter

Director's Update: All Forward, All Forward!

One summer, in what seems like another life, I was a whitewater rafting guide on the Chattooga River. Flowing from the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Chattooga forms the border between South Carolina and Georgia for a time. We guided guests down the wild and scenic river rapids in paddle rafts. Each person held a paddle and was responsible for strokes like forward or backward, on the left or on the right. The guide's refrain "all forward, all forward" still brings the excitement of approaching rapids...something between a charge and an acknowledgement of the underlying and inevitable progress of the river.

In 2020, our community embarked on the Forward SGF initiative to create a new strategic plan. Now in it's final stages, the process included thousands of hours of public input, writing and revision, surveys, technical advice and more. The Forward SGF plan includes chapters spanning a comprehensive list of interconnected topics from trails and transportation to water quality and watershed health. The Forward SGF plan will help our community unite and focus on a course, or in other words, it will help to get us paddling in the same direction. Please consider familiarizing yourself with the plan, which is available online. Hop aboard...all forward, all forward (SGF)!

Mike Kromrey, Executive Director





Watershed Center Update

Educational Update

There is no substitute for directly experiencing nature. Given the right opportunity, students can create meaningful connections that last a lifetime. Here at the Watershed Center, we strive to provide educational programs that are built on the foundations of inquiry-based and experiential learning. Our location at Valley Water

Mill Park enables visitors to experience some of the best natural features the Ozarks has to offer. The Park's 100 acres contain very diverse aquatic and terrestrial habitats. Trails meander through wetlands, bottomland forests, glades, upland forests, and savanna ecosystems. Sanders Spring, Valley Water Mill Lake, and the South Dry Sac River allow visitors to explore diverse water ecosystems. Karst features such as caves, sinkholes, a spring, and losing stream provide additional opportunities to experience nature.

Despite the very wet June and the very hot and dry July, summer was a busy time for field trips and outreach programs. Fortunately, teachers are some of the most flexible folks I know, and we were able to adapt our programs to fit the ever-changing conditions. Stockton, Republic, Willard, Logan-Rogersville Public Schools along with many home school groups were able to schedule visits to the Watershed Center.



Confluence Macros

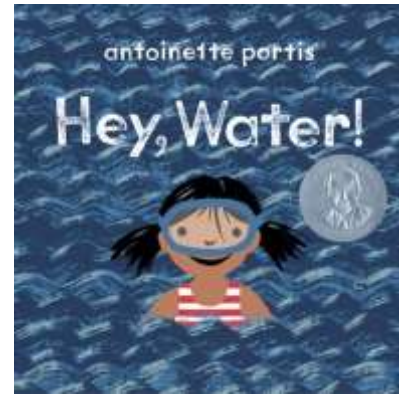


Streamside Learning Station

Watershed Center Update Cont.

Greene County Public Library Programs

This summer we were able to collaborate with the Greene County Library on a variety of programs. A **Story Walk** based on the children's book "**Hey, Water!**" by Antoinette Portis encouraged young visitors and families to hike a section of the trail as they read pages from the book. Locating the hike alongside the lake made the connections to water even more impactful. Story walks are a great way to combine reading, walking trails, and exploring nature.



The **Fantastic Friday** event allowed students to explore past, present, and future connections to water through reading adventures and hands-on activities. Visitors were able to explore the Mobile Library, hunt for fossils, explore aquatic life, take guided hikes, and explore nature using all their senses.

The Library facilitated registration for two **Jordan Creek Tours** that were open to the public. These popular programs combine history and water ecology as we explore the close connections between Jordan Creek and Springfield. The graffiti covered underground passage provides unique insight between stormwater runoff and what was once a pristine Ozark stream. We also focus on what the future holds for Jordan Creek.

Volunteering

We continue to refine our Volunteer Program to make the experience more rewarding for all. Volunteers have the opportunity to assist us in a variety of ways. Many volunteers help with aquatic and terrestrial habitat improvements throughout the park as part of our restoration efforts. There are also many options to helping us with our educational and growing Watershed Native programs. Please check out all the ways you can get involved by clicking on the About tab at watershedcommittee.org.

Day of Caring

Special thanks to our Volunteers from **KY3, Bass Pro, City of Springfield, Amwins Access, and American National** who helped with various projects as part of #417DayofCaring. Groups at the Watershed Center helped repair trails, mulch the rain garden, stain and seal handrails, construct Leopold benches, and clean up trash in Valley Water Mill Lake. Out at Fellows Lake, groups helped clean up trash in and around the Lake. The Watershed Committee could not be as effective at accomplishing our mission to protect and improve the area's water resources without volunteers like these. Thank you for your hard work as we continue to make connections through nature!



Day of Caring volunteers building Leopold Benches

Jeff Birchler, Watershed Center
Director

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 and extending the grant until September 2022. The project is to promote public awareness and implementation of Farm Bill activities, especially in historically underserved communities and in watersheds critical to drinking water supply.

The grant will be wrapping up at the end of September and we are excited to host one last Soil Health Workshop. On Monday September 12 at the Ray. H. Zumwalt Expo Center in Stockton, MO from 8:30am to 4:30pm Eric Fuchs and Doug Peterson from Understanding Ag will present on how to restore soil to increase farm profits and wildlife.

The workshop will feature a rain simulator, producer panel and a full lunch which is made possible by a sponsorship from the Missouri Grassland and Forage Council. This workshop is FREE but registration is required for lunch. Contact Stacey at stacey@watershedcommittee.org or 417-408-3310 to register. Come join us for a fantastic day of learning and networking! Stacey Armstrong Smith, Projects Manager



Soil Health Workshop

Learn to Restore Soil to Increase Farm Profits and Wildlife!

- Monday, September 12
- Ray H. Zumwalt Expo Center at RB Road Stockton, MO 65785
- 8:30am to 4:30pm

Workshop is FREE but registration required for lunch. Contact Stacey at stacey@watershedcommittee.org or 417-408-3310 to register.

- Speakers from Understanding Ag: Doug Peterson and Eric Fuchs
- Topics: Soil Health, Water Quality, Nutrient Management, Systems Approach and Regenerative Agriculture
- Featuring Producer Panel and Rainfall Simulator
- Workshop is funded by USDA Conservation Technical Assistance Grant
- Lunch sponsored by Missouri Grassland and Forage Council





Watershed Conservation Corps

The second quarter of 2022 was a challenging one for the Watershed Conservation Corps (WCC). Seemingly constant rains in May followed by excessive heat and drought in June and July created obstacles for our crew members to overcome. The weather couldn't stop us though! We continued our efforts in invasive species management, habitat restoration, and trail maintenance across the Ozarks. Team members also proved themselves by earning specialized certifications and even leading their own certification courses this quarter. We are extremely proud of the high morale and determination shown by our team.

All of our work is possible thanks to your support. We thank you and look forward to continuing our conservation efforts into the (hopefully cooler) autumn months.

May Showers Bring Trail Maintenance

Many of the tasks that WCC normally does this time of year require the use of herbicide. However, the constant rains in May prevented our typical invasive plant spraying as we wouldn't want the chemicals mixing into the local watershed. Instead the weather provided the perfect opportunity to see how running water affected trails by eroding and reshaping them. WCC worked with the United States Forest Service to implement a plan for upkeep in Mark Twain National Forest. The trails WCC built in the previous quarter were especially considered during this time. The Greer Mill Trail near Eleven Points, MO, and the Coy Bald trail at Hercules Glade received edge improvements along with re-grading and improving the treads over several weeks.



WCC Local Crew conducting a prescribed burn on private property in rural Webster County

Little Crew on the Prairie

Once the rain cleared up, it was business as usual for our crews in quarter two. We spent our days in the sun treating problematic and invasive plant species from open grasslands, prairies, and glades. Invasive plants such as sericea lespedeza (*L. cuneata*) and kudzu (*Pueraria montana*) crowd out native grasses and forbs, lower biodiversity, and provide overall less benefit to the Ozarks ecosystem. Meanwhile, problematic woody trees such as smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*) and wild plum (*Prunus americana*) attempt to transform the habitat away from grasslands. Projects took place locally with both public and private landowners as well as across multiple national parks thanks to the United States Forest Service.

Multiple weeks were spent managing prairies at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield and GW Carver National Monument. When it became too hot to stay in in the open, the team worked with the National Park Service to improve retaining walls and garden beds at the sites. The USFS also sent our crews to multiple national parks including Hot Springs, Arkansas and Herbert Hoover, Iowa to treat invasive plants in riparian zones.



WCC Director Caleb Sanders helps the crew fill their spray packs with herbicide at George Washington Carver Monument

Keeping Up with the Riparian's

We have been carrying out site preparation and seeding of warm-season grass stands around Springfield. Invasive species management, intense mowing, and calculate seedings took place in the early spring to increase the germination rate of the native grass seed. We have partnered with Hamilton Native Outpost in Licking, Missouri, to supply us with enough seed to cover our project areas. Warm-season grasses are a great way to heal a broken landscape, while providing vital habitat for many wildlife and pollinator species.



WCC local crew Adam, Rachel, and Brendan preparing to plant trees along the Little Sac River

The goal of these projects is to increase native species diversity of both grasses and forbs. Very small patches of remnant prairie exist in Missouri these days, so recreating these historical landscapes is an exciting challenge for the WCC.

Adam Barton, Watershed Conservation Corps Program Manager

Getting Things Dunn

The WCC crew also had the exciting opportunity to travel north to the Dunn Ranch Prairie near Hatfield, MO, thanks to a partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Aside from the usual backpack spraying, our team was given the opportunity to spray from UTV's. The aid of UTV's help us cover more ground to apply herbicide when dealing with fields of invasive or problematic plant species. Over the course of four weeks WCC crews sprayed 750 acres of prairie. Stamping out a chunk of invasive plants like sericea lespedeza (*L. cuneata*) and providing ample room for beautiful native wildflower species to thrive. This work helps to preserve the native temperate grassland habitat for a thriving bison herd and threatened game bird species such as the greater prairie chicken and bobwhite quail.

We are grateful for the educational and networking opportunities given to us by The Nature Conservancy staff including the Grasslands and Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Manager, Kent Wamsley. We thank TNC for the fantastic living quarters and accommodations for our crews.

Rachel McManus and Brendan Brothers, WCC Conservation Specialists



TL: Crew members Jeremiah Cline, Marra Holt, Henry Wilbers, Taylor Dye, and Trey Thompson are excited to begin the project.

TR: The herd of bison appreciate our hard work.

BL: UTV 's help make quick work with herbicide application

BR: Crew member Henry Wilbers watching the sun set as he and his crew finish spraying for the day.



WATERSHED natives

The summer season kicked off with the last of Spring Plant sales. Summer was full of watering through the heat and watching the sky for rain clouds. Over the last several months has been the start of seed collection and gearing up to the start of the school year

Partnerships

The Management of Valley Watermill (VWM) Lake is a unique partnership of several different agencies. As an extension of this partnership, Watershed Natives assisted in augmenting the native plant species at VWM Lake with the **Missouri Department of Conservation** (MDC) mid-July. With lead efforts from Fisheries Management Biologist; Kara Tvedt, 4 native aquatic species were planted in the headwaters of the lake. Due to many factors in the watershed Valley Watermill Lake is rich in nutrients with causes the algae on the lake. In efforts to help catch some of these nutrients that are introduced in during high inflow, native aquatics like pickerelweed, Prairie Cordgrass, Soft Rush and Spatterdock were planted to help take up these nutrients and slow down sediment entering the lake from Sanders spring and the creek.

Watershed Natives also entered another exciting partnership with the MDC through a cooperative agreement. Through this agreement the nursery is excited to grow capacity with a Missouri Gravel Bar bed system for trees and beginning production of aquatic plants. The plants will help supply restoration projects, landscapers, the public, area schools and city entities.



MDC staff planting at Valley Watermill Lake



Aquatic Corner at the Greenhouse

Activities

This summer was the first season of the “high tunnel” being open weekly to the public, so folks could come to shop and see the student’s hard work. We plan to be open on Tuesdays again next spring, starting in April! Summer is slow for plant sales, but we are anxiously awaiting the cooler weather to start the fall sales. We hosted our first Greenhouse workshop in July called “Crafting with Plants.” Participants used native plants to observe and draw, make ink prints, and experience photochrome.

Christy Wilder, Watershed Natives Program Manager

Make sure to join us for our Fall Sales starting in September!

Saturday, September 10th- Wire Road Brewing 10-2pm

Saturday, September 17th- GrowNative Fall sale at Watershed Center 10-2pm

Sunday, September 25th- Celebrate Springfield at Fellows Lake Plant sale 10-2pm

Saturday, October 1st- Color Sense- Paper Dyeing with Plants at the Watershed Center
Learn how to dye paper from native plants. Reservations Required. Email Christy@watershedcommittee.org

Friday-Sunday, October 7-9th- FarmFest at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds

Saturday, October 22nd- Wire Road Brewing 10-2pm



Spring Plant Sale



Join us for our Fall Workshop- Color Sense



Fellows Lake Update

Fellows Lake is a great place to hike, ride, sail, bird watch, run, paddle and fish! Every weekend, hundreds of outdoor enthusiasts make the short drive to this hidden gem of the Ozarks. Today, Fellows Lake continues to work with City Utilities and many other partners making improvements and expanding programs both on and off the water. You can stay up to date on Facebook on the “Fellows Lake Recreation and Marina” page, and “Fellowslakesgf” on Instagram.

On the Trail

Get your kicks on Dirt 66! The Dirt 66 trails at Fellows Lake are a part of the regional trail system, already much beloved by hikers, cyclists, and trail runners. Dirt 66 Trails at Fellows Lake are the incredible product of the successful partnership of TrailSprings, City Utilities, and Ozark Greenways. These multi-use trails welcome trail users that are causal walkers, to the fresh air followers, to the weekend warriors. Though you are welcome to hike and walk the trails, Dirt 66 also hosts several local and regional races, both cycling and running. This summer, we have already seen the ConcreteMan Triathlon, Truman Lake Adventure Club’s Wampus Cat Race, and the Missouri Off-road Cyclists’ Summer Crit Series Race, to name a few. We look forward to having Springfield Youth Cycling Club compete in the upcoming NICA race taking place on our Liberty Loop trail.

On Saturday, July 30th, the Dirt 66 Trails at Fellows Lake was officially opened with a ribbon-cutting event. Mayor McClure, Greene County Commissioner Bob Dixon, and City Utilities General Manager Gary Gibson spoke about the values of the project and the partnerships that made it happen.

Chelsea Russel-Ice, Ozark Greenways



Ribbon Cutting to Celebrate Dirt 66

On the Water

Hello from Fellows Lake! We are enjoying our 2nd season operating the store and dock here at the lake and we love it! We have been able to share the beauty and serenity of the lake with anglers, hikers, bicyclists, sailors, paddlers and other outdoor enthusiasts. So far this season we have issued over 560 annual motorized boat permits and over 1,000 annual non-motorized permits - plus 130 day passes. In addition to boat owners, we have been able to get over 200 folks on the water with our rental motorboats and over 500 have enjoyed paddling our rental fleet of canoes and kayaks.

Sailboat rentals are picking up as well and we expect this service to become very popular as we begin graduating sailors from our “Learn to Sail” classes this fall. Interested? Classes are filling up fast at <https://fellows-lake-llc.square.site>

Speaking of sailing, we hosted the second regatta of the season on August 13th. The Women on The Water event was a great success followed by a social with tacos and a live band. A fabulous time was had by all and we are anxiously anticipating Hunter Moon Regatta on October 8th followed that evening by the Hunter Moon Moonlight paddle! Registration and information available on the square site above.



WOW Regatta

On the Horizon

The approach of fall brings exciting developments on and off the water. Our first pair of migrating loons have arrived with many more migrators to follow. Fall birdwatching from the trails or a boat is the best of the year at Fellows. Cooler nights bring cooler mornings and great fishing action. The “early bite” is the path to success when fishing on Fellows. Soon the leaves will begin to turn and our surrounding 800 acres of forest and trails will be an even more spectacular place to ride and hike.

We are excited to have NICA (National Interscholastic Cycling Association) here at the trails September 10th & 11th for the 2022 Mountain Bike Festival at Fellows Lake. More info here: <https://missourimtb.org/2022-race-series/>



Enjoying the trails at Fellows Lake

Fellows Lake is also a part of Celebrate Springfield with events happening out here on Sunday, September 25 from 10am—2pm.

See you at the lake!

Matt Taylor, Fellows Lake Operations Director and Vince Currao, Fellows Lake Operations Manager



Hunter's Moon Regatta

October 8th



Come join us
for the Hunter's Moon Regatta
and Hunter's Moon Moonlight Paddle!

Enjoy watching two heats, 1st race starts at 11am; 2nd race starting at 2pm. Then register online and join us for the moonlight paddle starting at 6pm and stay on the lake with your non-motorized boats until midnight to enjoy the Hunter's Moon from the water!



4200 E FR 66 • Springfield, MO. 65803 • 417-840-2965

register at: <https://fellows-lake-llc.square.site>

Sponsor Spotlight: PC NET

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks is pleased to welcome PCnet aboard as a business sustainer. PCnet focuses on total IT management and has over 35 years of experience doing so. Community is central to PCnet's culture: "Our community partners in Missouri have supported us throughout our existence, that's no small thing. This is why we take pride in working with many philanthropic partners in the Springfield and Ozarks communities. Together we share one of the most incredible places to live, work, and grow." Owner Marty Roach has long been passionate about Ozarks streams, rivers, and lakes. Like many of us, he enjoys floating, boating, and fishing.

With the support of PCnet, Watershed will be able to make important upgrades in technology and cyber security. PCnet has a robust service department, and also specializes in helping people learn and utilize technologies and applications to increase efficiency. Being effective at our mission "to sustain and improve the water resources of Springfield and Greene County through education and effective management" has never relied more on our electronic capabilities, and we are thrilled to have PCnet aboard!



Join the Watershed Sustainer Team

Watershed Sustainers are a dedicated group of local individuals, families, and businesses who support clean water and give back to the community by automatic monthly or yearly contributions. Sustainers provide WCO with a reliable stream of support for projects and education to sustain and improve the Water Resources of Springfield and Greene County.

If you, your family, or your business would like to become a sustainer, you can learn more and sign up on our website. Please join us!



SUMMER *Gala* 2022



Presented by

Peterson Wealth Advisors

Legacy

Bass Pro Shops

Platinum

Vital Farms

PC NET

Silver

Bailey Pyle Builders & Nahon Family Memorial Fund

Bronze

Arkifex Studios, Elite Promotions, Hogan Land Title, Commerce Bank, Commercial Metals Company, Ozarks Coca Cola Dr. Pepper Bottling Co., HDR, People Centric Consulting Group

Supporting

Olsson, Central Bank of the Ozarks, Environmental Works, Ball Architects, At Home Real Estate, Crawford, Murphy, & Tilly, Greater Ozarks Audubon Society, Master Naturalist-Springfield Plateau Chapter, GeoEngineers, Advanced Auto Care, Mother's Brewing Company, Wire Road Brewery

Thank you to all of the sponsors of our Watershed Summer Gala!

Watershed Summer Gala Wrap Up

The Watershed Summer Gala was extra special this year. The weather forecast 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. Folks enjoyed each other, and the amenities of the evening. 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 they few special selections this year, including E.H. Taylor Small Batch Bourbon, W.L Weller Special Reserve, Eagle Rare Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey and Blanton's Single Barrel Bourbon. The Silent Auction component of the Watershed Summer Gala was filled with local artisans work and creations; attendees kept bidding, even in the rain. 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.





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

Artifacts from (before) Fellows Lake

An inescapable part of watershed stewardship is the human part—which spans generations, past and future. Sometimes we get a glimpse of our past, like when Fellows Lake employee Brian Grim brought in his artifact collection. The artifacts were collected by his father on their family farm, much of which went under water with the filling of Fellows Lake in 1954. Notably, the Wommack Family donated some of their land to Liberty Baptist Church and Cemetery, located just east of the Miller Park at Fellows Lake.

The artifacts in the collection tell a story of residents and travelers who walked the Little Sac valley long before Brian's family. Archeologist Jack Ray explained the artifacts were used as projectile points, each fastened to a short spear and propelled with an atlatl (not with a bow and arrow). Jack grouped the artifacts from youngest to oldest, the oldest dating back to 7,000-9,000 before present!

Here's an important thing about artifacts: if you don't have records of them, they eventually end up in a shoebox and lose their significance. Thankfully, Brian not only shared the story and location, but also donated the collection to MSU, where it will be reunited with an existing, documented archeological site from nearly the exact same area. We applaud Brian's exemplary stewardship and are grateful he shared this experience with us.



Archaeologist Jack Ray examining Brian Grim's Collection from Fellows