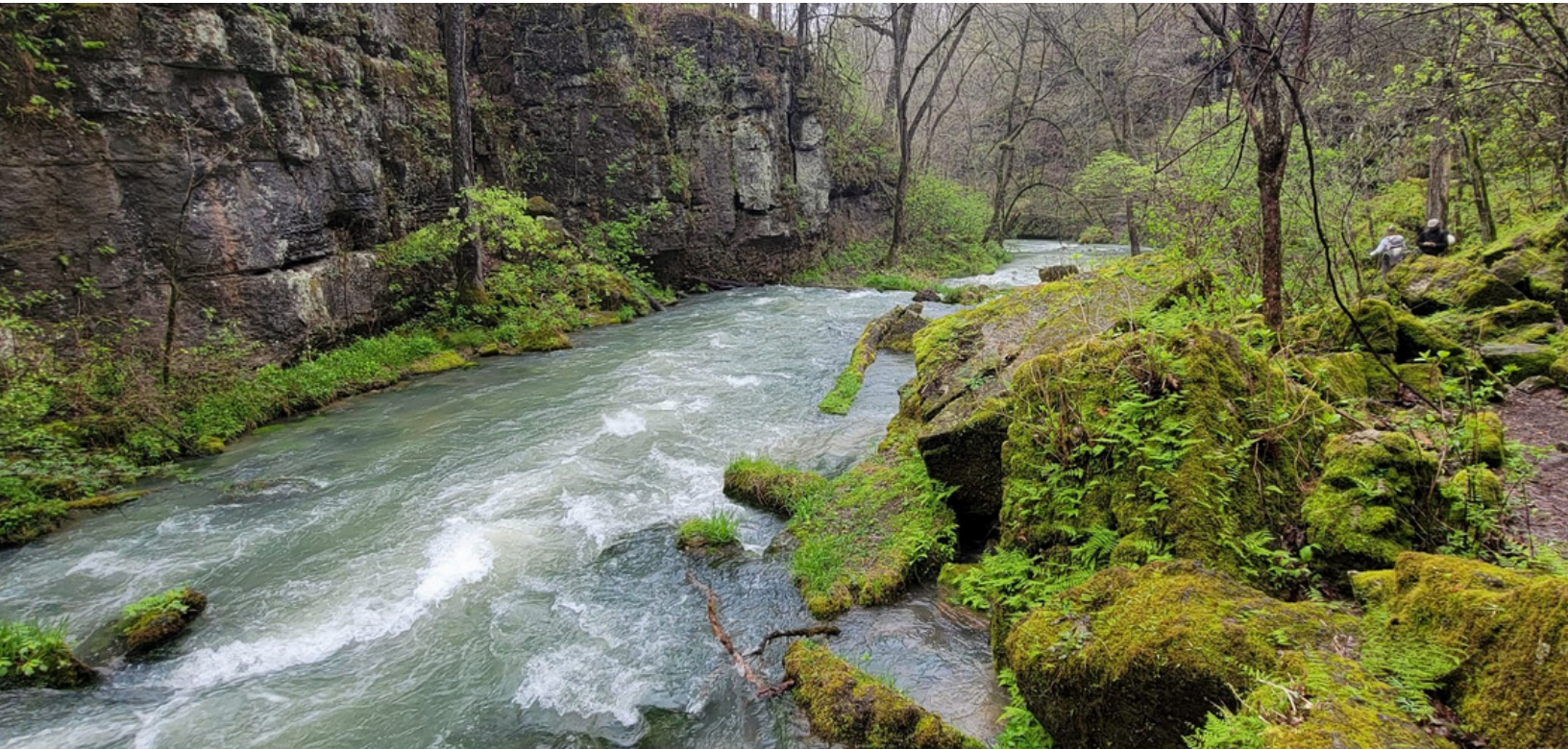


»» SPRING NEWSLETTER ««



**Watershed**

Clean Water for Life.™



*Pictured: Greer Spring*

**A NOTE  
FROM OUR  
DIRECTOR**

**Mike Kromrey**

Said Wendell Berry: "Care of the Earth is our most ancient, most worthy, and most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, offers legitimate hope." Wendell's words hit home as I write this on April 22 (Earth Day), a full quarter into the 40th year of Watershed's work. We are focused this year on renewal, using 40 years of learning to propel, launch, scale up, refocus, and reinvent. We plan to share some exciting developments with you at the Watershed Summer Gala at Wire Road Brewery on June 21, so we hope you can make it!



# EDUCATIONAL UPDATE

Spring has been busy with field trips at the Watershed Center and Jordan Creek tours. Students of diverse age groups have been actively engaged in a wide range of activities. These include guided nature hikes, which delve into the interconnectedness of healthy land and water systems, the classic wading adventures in an Ozarks stream, where students catch critters to gain insights into stream ecology, and underground tours of Jordan Creek to examine stormwater issues and their impact on urban streams.



*Drue leads field trip at Valley Water Mill Park*

Almost every day was booked with some type of program, resulting in record-setting participation in spring educational programs. We are delighted to see students' enthusiasm as they explore the complexities of protecting and enhancing water quality.

*Erica connects healthy land and water*



*Drue helps a student identify macroinvertebrates*





# JORDAN CREEK TOURS

Jordan Creek tours have always been a key component of our educational programs. For many years, we have discussed the potential of daylighting Jordan Creek with our tour participants.

It is exciting to see this long-held vision become a reality. Phase one of the Renew Jordan Creek daylighting process is scheduled to begin in August.



Go CAPS  
students  
at Jordan  
◀◀◀ Creek

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE  
DAYLIGHTING PROCESS AT  
[RENEWJORDANCREEK.COM](http://RENEWJORDANCREEK.COM)**

We're not yet sure how this will impact our popular tours. If you are interested in seeing the box culvert system in its current condition, please contact us to arrange a tour.

*Clarissa and Brooke lead a tour of Jordan Creek*





◀◀◀ *Elise Bowsher*

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: ELISE BOWSHER

Born and raised in the Ozarks, Elise obtained her B.S.E and M.A.T. in Childhood Education from the University of Arkansas. She spent six years as a fifth-grade math and science teacher at Nixa Public Schools and will join the Summit Prep community this fall as their Outdoor Education Specialist.



*Elise seals Sycamore bench at Watershed Center*

She enjoys spending time with her family, friends, and dog, Zeke. In her free time, Elise can be found floating, camping, foraging, gardening, traveling, or reading.

While volunteering with us, she has participated in a wide array of field experiences. She enjoys sharing a transfer of knowledge, most of all when she is able to aid in someone's "aha" moment or when she has one herself. Elise says she is thankful for the relationships that she has formed with others who love and appreciate the Ozarks as much as she does.

**TO GET INVOLVED, VISIT:  
[WATERSHEDCOMMITTEE.ORG](http://WATERSHEDCOMMITTEE.ORG)**



◀◀◀ *Elise helps students identify macroinvertebrates*





# WATERSHED natives

As the season unfolds and nature awakens, we are eager to share the growth of the Watershed Natives program! With the help of our new team members and volunteers, we have continued enhancing our new nursery on the southwest side of town.

## PLANT SALES

Our sales are from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m, see days and dates below. Check our website for a list of plant species, and bring containers to carry your plants home with you!



### MAY 4TH

- Wire Road Brewing

### MAY 11TH

- Watershed Natives Nursery
- 3452 S. Farm Rd 119  
Brookline, MO 65619

### JUNE 1ST

- Wire Road Brewing

### JUNE 8TH

- Watershed Natives Nursery
- 3452 S. Farm Rd 119  
Brookline, MO 65619

## PARTNERSHIPS

This winter, we attended several meetings hosted by the Missouri Department of Conservation to plan for our upcoming Wetlands projects. Floating wetlands will involve many organizations this year, including the City of Springfield, Greene County, City Utilities, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, James River Basin Partnership, Missouri State University, and Ozarks Technical College. These students will assist in the design process alongside professionals working to solve excess nutrient problems in our waterways.

Wetland planning >>>





# NURSERY GROWTH

In January, we launched two internships, enabling college students to explore plant-related career paths early in their academic journey. These internships provide hands-on experience and exposure to various aspects of the field. In March, we welcomed Jenna Rotert, a student at Missouri State University majoring in Environmental and Evolutionary Biology.

Over the past few months, we've made significant progress at our new nursery location on the southwest side of town. We've expanded our gravel tree beds and prepared our office space for the upcoming season.

# HILLCREST PATHWAY

Students in the Environmental and Natural Resources Management Pathway have been engaged in potting trees and shrubs. This is one of our favorite activities because it fosters connections with growing plants that are destined for restoration projects or adoption within the community.

Hillcrest >>>  
students  
pot  
trees



*Staff work on the Watershed Natives office at the nursery*







## ON THE WATERFRONT

Season Four at Fellows Lake is off to a roaring start! We have already had some high-volume weekends, and many special events are coming up fast. To kick off, we hosted “Get Eclipsed on Dock 66” on April 8th to celebrate the solar eclipse.

Lots of folks came out to experience the eclipse from their personal watercraft or on our rental boats. Fellows Lake Operations Director Matt Taylor even took some guests on a once-in-a-lifetime Eclipse Sail!

Elsewhere on the water, the spring muskie bite has been exciting for anglers across the lake. These apex predators can grow over 50 inches, and even if you think you are ready for it, a muskie’s boat-side strike on your lure is a thrill!



◀◀◀ Patrons enjoyed the Eclipse from a sail boat

The Missouri Department of Conservation has been conducting spring surveys for muskie, bass, and bluegill, and initial reports indicate that the Fellows Lake fish habitat is healthy and thriving— in part due to the brush pile habitat improvements that MDC provided this winter. We’d like to give a special shout-out to our MDC friends for all that they do for the lake lovers!





*New pedal boat at Fellows*

Of course, there is so much more to do at Fellows than just fish. Our non-motorized fleet of canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddle boards has grown to include pedal boats! If you have not been out on one of these in a while, we can attest that they are a total hoot to drive around the lake. Plus, if you rent one, you get a free leg workout at no extra charge.

We are thrilled to partner with Bass Pro Shops for a fourth season to provide motorboats for rent at Fellows. Our fleet received some needed maintenance in the off-season, and our dock crew is as diligent as ever at keeping our rental fleet in top condition for our guests.

Speaking of our dock crew, we are happy to welcome back several members from previous seasons. Come say hello to our veteran crew and help us welcome some new faces, too.

There is a full season of special events happening this spring, summer, and fall, including three sailing regattas, three moonlight paddles, a kid's fishing day, two accessibility days, and lots more. To see our full calendar and to register for events, visit:

**FELLOWS-LAKE-  
LLC.SQUARE.SITE/**

Moonlight  
Paddle  
sticker





## INTO THE WOODS

The improved hiking and biking trails spanning 29.5 miles around Fellows Lake attract numerous adventurers every week. Thanks to our great partners at Ozarks Greenways, these trails remain a source of inspiration and challenge for both amateur hikers and seasoned athletes.

We look forward to another wonderful season with our trail-loving friends as they explore the woods around the lake!



*MSU Outdoor Adventures hike at Fellows*

## INTO THE FUTURE

Thanks to the Kiwanis Club of Springfield South and City Utilities, construction on our new accessible playground at Miller Park will begin this May! Join us on May 2nd at 1 p.m. for a groundbreaking ceremony.

Soon, we will host two accessibility events hosted by MSU's Master of Occupational Therapy department and Empower:Abilities. These are two of the most fulfilling and moving days of our entire season. Thanks to our partners, including City Utilities, The Hatch Foundation, Eric Peterson, and many others, we can provide an on-the-water experience to diverse groups!

The Fellows Lake crew is grateful for yet another season to share this incredible resource with the public. We could not do it without the help of our sponsors, volunteers and special partners. Thank you for all you do to help us protect and promote Fellows Lake.



The Watershed Conservation Corps spent the season onboarding new crews and training them in prescribed fire, cross-cut and chainsaw use, and wilderness first aid. Local crews focused on native seeding, tree planting, and prescribed fire. Traveling crews continue working with partners to manage invasive species and conduct prescribed fires.

After a year of site prep work, WCC seeded a diverse mix of native seeds across four different conversion projects around the Springfield area:

- Canopy Development
- Coca-Cola of the Ozarks
- Fellows Lake
- Springfield Catholic High School

The seed contains a varied mix of native grasses and forbs intended to resemble the native prairies that once thrived around the Springfield area.



*Seeding native grass*



*WCC with new truck from Hatch gift*





# PRESCRIBED FIRE

In March, our National Parks Service crew helped conduct a prescribed Fire at Hot Springs National Park. Prescribed fires benefit native plants and wildlife, recycling nutrients and improving the habitats they depend on.

WCC also burned at the Onsite Wastewater Training Facility, a neighboring site to Valley Water Mill Park. It was treated as a workshop for Watershed staff. The 1.5-acre native warm-season grass field was divided into three separate units, allowing crew members to gain experience serving as “burn bosses” on their own units.

*Fire at Hot Springs National Park*



In the absence of fire, native habitats such as glades, savannas, and woodlands can suffer from an overgrowth of woody species. We enjoy helping landowners and agencies in our region implement safe and successful burns to improve native habitats!

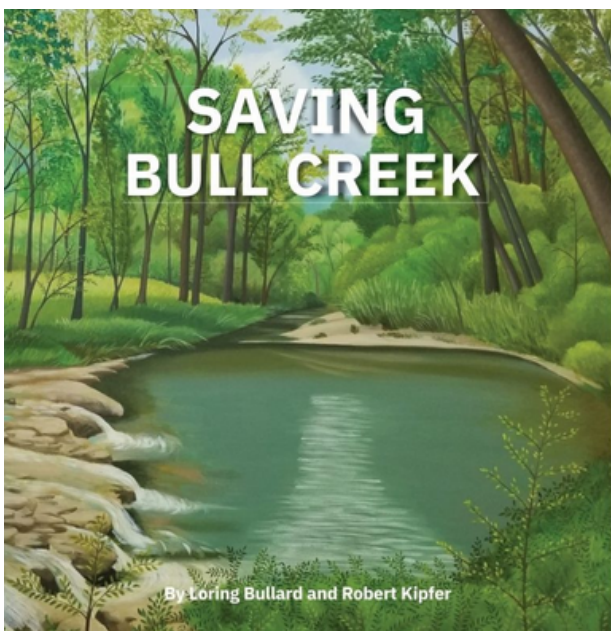
*WCC crew in Hot Springs, Arkansas*



# BULL CREEK BOB & BARB BURN

In March, our Corps got the chance to burn on Bob and Barb Kipfer's property near Bull Creek! The twelve-acre glade had not seen fire since the initial restoration phase of heavy woody removal/thinning.

Our friend Dave Shanholtzer, who is involved in the new local Prescribed Burn Association, was able to lend a hand. The burn was a success, and we expect a favorable vegetative response based on the timing and fire intensity of the burn.



*"Saving Bull Creek" art by Jane Troup*

*Fire crew at  
Kipfer's*



## SAVING BULL CREEK

Bull Creek has a special place in our hearts! The newly released book, "Saving Bull Creek," written by Loring Bullard and Bob Kipfer, describes the history of the Bull Creek watershed from Native American habitation to the present and looks at the impact of human activity on a fragile ecosystem. "The authors ask readers to do their part to protect this unique natural resource for the enjoyment of future generations of people, plants, and animals," says the Missouri State University's Ozarks Studies Institute.



# BLADDERPOD AT VALLEY WATER MILL

Bladderpod is back in full force on the glade of Valley Water Mill Park. Missouri bladderpod is a non-woody, annual plant that produces numerous slender stems from its base. It is a small, yellow-flowered member of the mustard family found only in Southwest Missouri. The flower gets its name from the spherical fruits or “bladders” that contain seeds.

The Watershed Conservation Corps conducted a prescribed burn in the late summer of 2023 to encourage bladderpod density and reduce woody encroachment.

*Bladderpod at Watershed* >>>



*Bladderpod prepares to seed* <<<

The results of our latest annual survey are quite promising! We saw the most significant population surge yet.

*WCC and Watershed Natives staff survey bladderpod*





# RESTORING THE UPPER LITTLE SAC

We reached a significant milestone in enhancing the Little Sac River! Last fall, we completed a 642-foot stream restoration project. We employed a method known as longitudinal peaked stone toe protection. This approach fortifies vulnerable streambanks with rock and incorporates multi-stone bendway weirs to redirect the river's flow away from erosion-prone areas.

This stabilized a highly eroding section of the streambank in the Upper Little Sac drinking watershed, setting the stage for further improvements. To complement the stabilization, we worked to establish a riparian corridor.

In recent stages, Watershed's programs joined forces with the Tucker family to plant 325 native plants along the streambank, which provides habitat for local wildlife. Watershed Natives contributed trees cultivated with the help of Hillcrest High School students and volunteers. The Watershed Conservation Corps planted trees, reinforced the ground, and seeded native grasses. It was a special moment for us to witness our programs work in harmony.

»»»  
*AmeriCorps member, Drue plants trees with WCC*



*Upper Little Sac 319 stream bank stabilization*





# UPPER LITTLE SAC 319 GRANT CONT.

These efforts will reduce bacteria levels, combat soil erosion, and lower nutrient concentrations within the watershed and are crucial for safeguarding the water's ecological integrity. This has been made possible by the Upper Little Sac 319 Grant: The Missouri Department of Natural Resources announced that the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks secured a generous \$400,000 grant from the U.S. EPA, under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act in 2021. This funding, coupled with \$266,667 in contributions from our dedicated community partners, has propelled our restoration project forward. With a total project cost of \$666,667, our focus is set on restoring the health of the Upper Little Sac River basin.

As we continue our journey towards a healthier Little Sac River, we are grateful for the support and dedication of our community partners and supporters. Together, we are making a difference in the ecological health of our cherished waterways. Stay tuned for updates as we work towards completing this project by the summer of 2025!

Mr. Tucker >>>

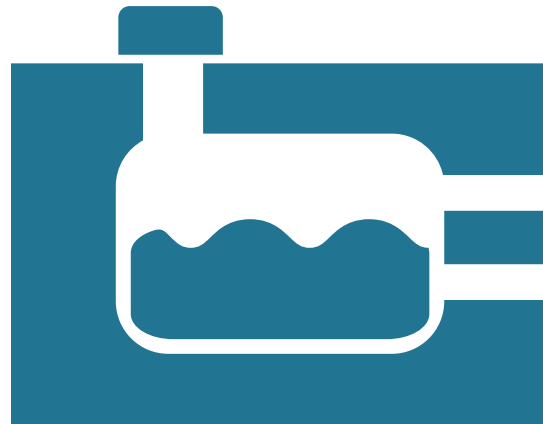


*Seedlings planted in the riparian corridor*



# SEPTIC PUMP-OUT REBATES

Septic residents living in the Upper Little Sac Watershed are eligible for a \$60 septic pumpout rebate funded by the U.S. EPA through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. To receive the pump-out rebate, you must fill out the form at the time of pump-out and contact Watershed to confirm that rebate funds are still available prior to pump-out.



## UPCOMING WORKSHOP

### Onsite Wastewater Realtor Workshop

- May 2nd, 8 am to 1 pm
- at Praise Assembly and Onsite Wastewater Training Center
- find information and register: [jamesriverbasin.com/owts-workshop](http://jamesriverbasin.com/owts-workshop)

TO FIND THE REBATE FORM,  
PLEASE VISIT:  
[WATERSHEDCOMMITTEE.ORG/  
UPPER-LITTLE-SAC-319/](http://WATERSHEDCOMMITTEE.ORG/UPPER-LITTLE-SAC-319/)





# UPCOMING: WATERSHED SUMMER GALA

**Celebrate with us at our annual Summer Gala, which will be held on Friday, June 21, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Wire Road Brewing Company's newly expanded event space!** Our fundraising goal is \$80,000 to help support our expanding education and outreach efforts and our growing Watershed Conservation Corps and Watershed Natives programs. Tickets are available online and in the Watershed office and must be purchased in advance to accommodate catering.



*Get your  
tickets here  
or at the  
Watershed  
Center*

