

>>> SPRING NEWSLETTER <<<



Pictured: Fallen tree at the Watershed Center

The storm event of April 29 was probably the most significant for Springfield since “the Great Ice Storm of 2006,” leaving many without power. Here at the Watershed Center, we could hear trees snapping as the storm roared in. One of those happened to be a large hackberry which fell over the entrance drive (see above). Minutes after the storm, our colleagues from Parks arrived with a chainsaw and gloves on, and we began hauling limbs out of the way. I couldn’t help but enjoy focusing on a singular task, and the chance to work together on a shared goal which was immediate and urgent. This spring has been filled with dark skies and storms in the metaphorical sense, and the actions to address them less clear than the April 29 storm. But back on the bright side, the opportunity to do good work together remains. – [Mike Kromrey, Watershed Director](#)

EDUCATIONAL UPDATE

Spring is one of our favorite times of the year to be outside here at the park! If you only used your sense of hearing, you would know it is spring. The sounds of nature are interspersed with the sounds of children out on field trips.

Despite the frequent rains and thunderstorms, it has been a busy spring for field trips to the Watershed Center. School groups ranging from kindergarten to college students have participated in field experiences this spring. Activities ranged from guided nature hikes exploring the connection between healthy land and healthy water, Project WET activities like a stream crossing challenge, to the classic wading in an Ozarks stream and catching critters to learn about stream ecology.



Students exploring aquatic life at the confluence



MSU students studying stream ecology

EDUCATIONAL UPDATE CONT.

We were thrilled to collaborate with Kate Baird and Parents as Teachers (PAT) to host the inaugural PAT Adventures in the Ozarks Fair. This event focused on getting younger kids and their families out in nature. Partnering organizations included James River Basin Partnership, Missouri Department of Conservation, and the City of Springfield's Environmental Services. Each organization hosted engaging activities targeting pre-kindergarten through kindergarten aged students. Participants had a chance to explore the park and visit a variety of stations located along the trails.



Investigating stream life and catching their first crayfish!



Mike jumps back into action to lead a hike



WATERSHED natives

Native plants are a key strategy for improving soil health and water quality, along with many other benefits. We have made significant upgrades to the Nursery and opportunities for our customers.

NURSERY GROWTH

Thanks to the Cooperative Agreement with the Missouri Department of Conservation, we've made significant progress in site development. Recent upgrades include a deer fence around the tree nursery (to reduce browsing and rubbing), the beginnings of our gravel parking lot, and a new entry sign to welcome visitors and connect them to social media. The nursery is located at 3452 S. Farm Rd. 119, Brookline, MO. Be sure to check it out on your next visit!

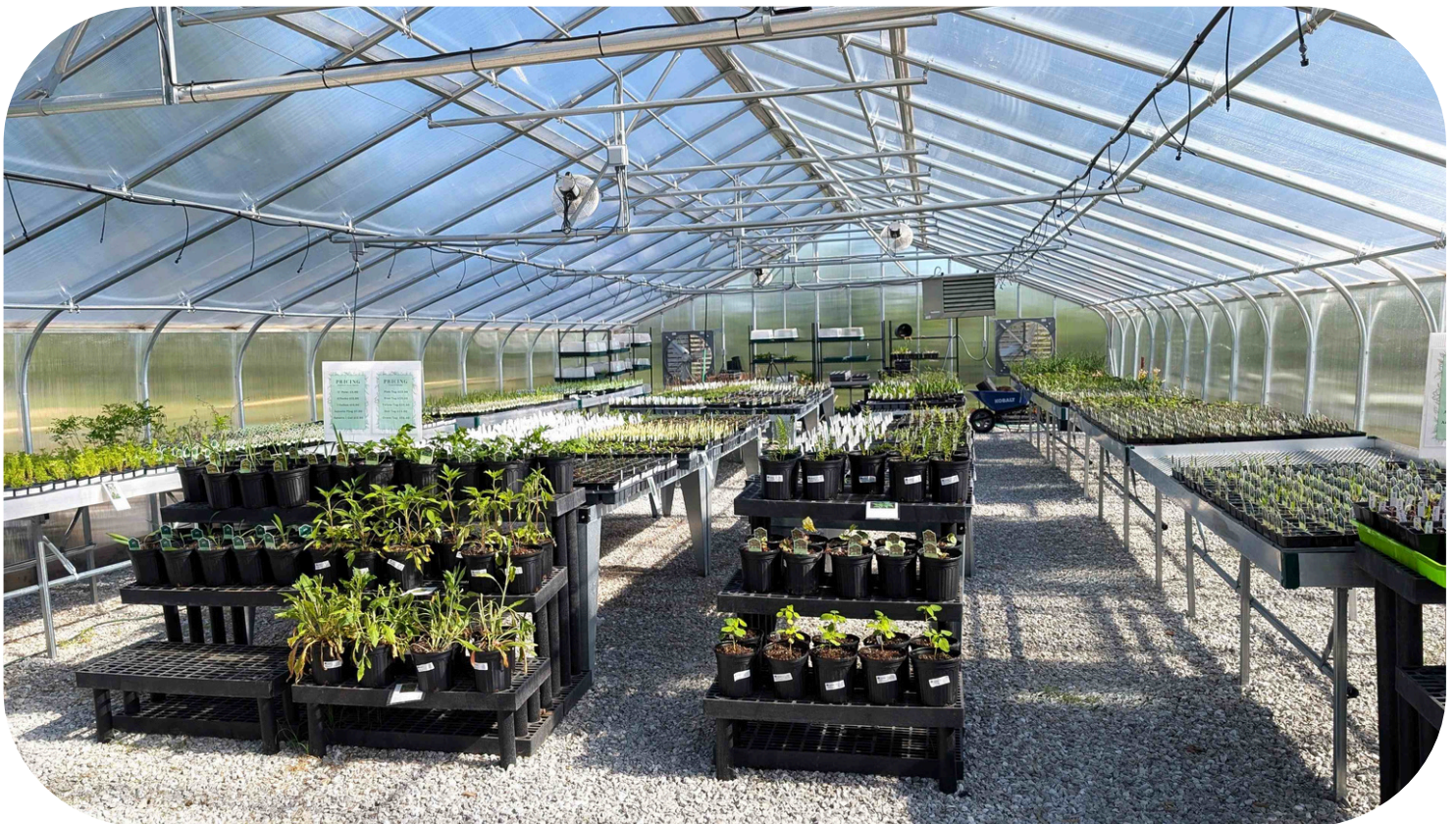


PLANT SALES AND MORE...

Our spring plant-sale season is under way! New this season, the Watershed Natives Nursery will be open for plant sales every Tuesday in May and June from 9am-1pm. You can shop for plants, pick up helpful tips and resources from our team, and purchase lovely native plants for your personal landscaping or larger restoration projects.

But that's not all! Our location, which is adjacent to the City of Springfield's Yard Waste Recycling Center, provides the opportunity to drop off your recyclables and yard waste, and pick up some mulch or compost for your gardening needs on the same trip.

Inside the nursery greenhouse



MAY 31 10am-2pm

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

JUNE 7 10am-2pm

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

JUNE 14 10am-2pm

- Wire Road Brewing

JUNE 3,10,17 & 24

10am-2pm

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

FLOATING WETLANDS

We kicked off April in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation for the Floating Wetlands Project. This collaborative effort also includes City Utilities, City of Springfield, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri State University, Ozarks Technical College, Springfield Public Schools, the James River Basin Partnership, and Watershed Natives.

This year, we've been working closely with local schools to develop new wetland designs capable of withstanding harsh weather and extreme conditions. These man-made wetlands feature recycled glass aggregates housed in aluminum cages, planted with native aquatic species.

The wetlands help filter contaminants, absorb excess nutrients, and improve the quality of our drinking water by reducing stormwater runoff. The floating wetlands have been installed in Fellows Lake, McDaniel Lake, and Valley Water Mill Lake—continuing our mission of Clean Water for Life.



Mid-way through construction, assembling baskets



Final step, installing native plants



NEW MANAGEMENT

Fellows Lake Store and Dock 66 have a new leadership team this season, featuring Kelce Fritz as the Director of Operations, and Ashley Long as the Operations Manager. Kelce and Ashley look forward to engaging the Fellows Lake Community and providing the information and education folks need to enjoy the lake and keep it clean. They are joined by a stellar crew, which includes some new members and some familiar faces from the last few seasons. Come on out and say hello!

WHAT WE OFFER

The Fellows Lake Store and Dock 66 provide for all your lake needs, including:

- Motorized and nonmotorized vessel permits (required)
- Kayak, canoe, and Tracker Boat rental options
- Bait and tackle
- updated/upgraded snack and beverage options
- Ice Cream
- Maps and information about Fellows Lake
- 1st Moonlight Paddle is June 14



*Pictured from left to right:
Kelce Fritz, Fellows Lake Operations
Director and Ashley Long, Fellows Lake
Operations Manager*



SPRINGFIELD SAILING CLUB

Our Fellows Lake team is happy to announce continued partnership with the Springfield Sailing Club (SSC) for the 2025 season!

SSC will have sailing lessons available and some fun events for you to attend, where you can meet and socialize with others passionate about sailing.

The Springfield sailing club has several sailing regattas planned for the season, and the first event is on May 17, starting at 8 a.m. The Springfield Sailing Club offers weekday events such as Women on the Water (W.O.W.), and open sail night every other Thursday.

Find more information on the Springfield Sailing Club website <https://springfieldsailingclub.com/>



HATCH PLAYGROUND

The Hatch Playground for All is a brand-new, accessible playground at Miller Park. The ribbon cutting was held on April 18, 2025. Per the CU Press Release: "The Hatch Playground provides state of the art features such as wide walkways and accessible routes of travel, a rubberized surface, sensory integrated panels, and a merry-go-round with entry to the ground that eliminates the need to transfer from a wheelchair."

We are excited for visitors to enjoy this one-of-a-kind amenity, and grateful to the Hatch Foundation, Kiwanis Club of Springfield, City Utilities and many partners who made it happen!



Hatch Playground at Miller Park

WATERSHED CONSERVATION

For the first part of the year, Watershed Conservation has continued ongoing conservation projects within the greater Springfield area, with a heavy focus on invasive plant removals, prescribed burns, and native vegetation conversions.

We have completed the next step with native vegetation conversions by seeding a diverse mix of native plants across multiple new sites, including two different areas on City Utilities properties and inter-seeding a custom wildflower mix into a stand of established native grass at Conco Quarry along Galloway.

Watershed Conservation has also completed invasive plant removals (predominately bush honeysuckle) across multiple sites for City of Springfield, including along a section of the Greenways trails. Over the past few years, by utilizing the combination of a ground crew and a skid steer with a forestry mulcher, Watershed Conservation has made a significant positive impact across multiple areas where bush honeysuckle has been the dominate vegetation type.

We have also made great progress with ongoing habitat enhancement at Valley Water Mill Park, mostly by completing two more sections of Timber Stand Improvement (TSI), including facilitating a timber harvest on-site, and beginning another section of TSI by using a forestry mulcher to get a jump start on the invasive species dominance and reducing the stand density of smaller diameter trees/shrubs. We plan to continue working on the new TSI section this year and continue invasive plant management across the entire park.



*Coreopsis
blooming in
a DNG
(Diverse
Native
Grassland)
restoration*

UPPER LITTLE SAC 319 GRANT

We've completed another significant milestone in enhancing the Little Sac River!

Recent project updates include the completion of two educational factsheets for native vegetation and nonpoint source runoff.

Also, construction of the rain gardens at Dickerson Park Zoo is complete, which includes four bioretention areas with dry gravel bed swales. The new bioretention areas combined can store 3,424 cubic feet of runoff and capture 99% of the water quality volume.

Native vegetation planted in the rain gardens included 48 shrubs and 2,207 grasses and perennial flowers. Section 319 funds helped pay for the design of the zoo rain gardens.

These water quality improvements would not be possible without the grant steering committee and project partners to assist with implementation and performance monitoring of the selected practices.

Rain garden at Dickerson Park Zoo



UPPER LITTLE SAC 319 GRANT CONT.

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 projects 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 continue our work!



Rain garden at Dickerson Park Zoo



SEPTIC TANK PUMP-OUT REBATES

Residents with septic tanks living in the Upper Little Sac Watershed are eligible for a \$60 septic tank pump-out rebate funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

So far, this septic pump-out rebate program has removed approximately 7,740 gallons of onsite wastewater sludge from the watershed. To receive the pump-out rebate, you must fill out the form at the time of pump-out and contact Watershed to confirm rebate funds are still available prior to pump-out.

**TO FIND THE REBATE FORM, PLEASE
VISIT:**

[WATERSHEDCOMMITTEE.ORG/
UPPER-LITTLE-SAC-319/](http://WATERSHEDCOMMITTEE.ORG/UPPER-LITTLE-SAC-319/)

SNAPSHOT SAMPLING JULY 12

In collaboration with the James River Basin Partnership and the City of Springfield Southwest Wastewater Treatment Laboratory, the Watershed staff and volunteers will be collecting water quality samples on Saturday, July 12 in the Little Sac Watershed.

This data is part of a local snapshot sampling project that occurs every three years. The rain backup date is Saturday, July 19.

If you are interested in volunteering to help collect water samples, a volunteer training is required prior to the collection date, and a vehicle will be needed to drive to and from the collection sites.

**TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT VOLUNTEERING**

CONTACT STACEY AT 417-408-3310 OR
STACEY@WATERSHEDCOMMITTEE.ORG

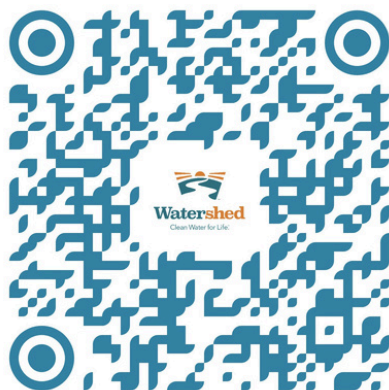


SUMMER *Gala* 2025

Celebrate with us at our annual Summer Gala, which will be held on Friday, June 20, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Wire Road Brewing Company's event space. The evening includes:

- Taco bar, desserts, tea and water catered by Simply Delicious
- Craft brews from Wire Road Brewery and Homebrewers
- Wine by the glass
- Live Music
- Silent Auction
- Whiskey Pull and Duck Race
- Signature Cup

This year, our fundraising efforts will help us to continue to provide hands-on, place-based, outdoor education at the Watershed Center, and support programs which advance our mission. [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

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