

2013

# missouri UPDATE

The Nature  
Conservancy



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Todd Sampsell © Amy Hepler Welch/TNC

*Todd Sampsell is the Missouri State Director for The Nature Conservancy. An ecologist by trade, Todd grew up enjoying the outdoors and his family's farm. He has well over a decade of experience in conservation planning and project implementation, land trust and organizational development, and aquatic and watershed research. He lives in Eureka with his wife, Jennifer, and their sons, Joshua and Jacob.*

We've all heard the saying, "not seeing the forest for the trees." Figuratively, it means if we are too focused on details, we may miss the more significant bigger picture. Taken literally, it might describe our tendency to miss all the important functions provided by a healthy forest.

Missouri has millions of acres of Ozark forests, which sustain water quality and wildlife, support local economies, and provide us with globally important products. The trees cover the areas surrounding our beloved Ozark rivers, stabilizing their banks, filtering rainwater, and providing habitat for wildlife.

Healthy forests keep our waters clean, but what keeps a forest healthy? Forests are living systems with complex processes always at work. For thousands of years, people influenced those processes, and today, human management is an important part of maintaining healthy forests. Careful harvesting, replanting, and controlled burning allow us to improve economic returns on working lands while still preserving the many other benefits we receive from trees: wildlife habitat, cleaner air and water, carbon storage, cooler temperatures, and more stable weather.

The Nature Conservancy works to balance the needs of both people and nature through this type of careful land and water management, but we can't accomplish this alone. We depend on the support of our members, and we work with a myriad of partners, including state and federal agencies, universities, land trusts, private landowners, and the forest industry. In fact, our work in Missouri's watersheds was honored by the St. Louis Region Open Space Council when we were awarded the William C. Shock Water Conservancy Award this summer.

I hope this issue of the Missouri Update will inspire you to get involved with our forest conservation efforts in the Ozarks and around the world. Visit our website ([nature.org/Missouri](http://nature.org/Missouri)), "like" us on Facebook ([nature.org/mofacebook](http://nature.org/mofacebook)), or join us for our next event. Please call me at (314) 968-1105 to learn more. And the next time you're out in the woods, take a moment to see the forest beyond the trees.

Todd Sampsell  
Missouri State Director

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Dunn Ranch Prairie © Hilary Haley/TNC

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© Courtesy of Wendy Anderson, Ph.D.

**Wendy Anderson, Ph.D.**

Dr. Wendy Anderson is a Professor of Biology and Environmental Science at Drury University, where she serves as the department chair of Environmental Programs. She received her Ph.D. from Vanderbilt and is now conducting a research program in the San Juan Islands. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Springfield Urban Agriculture Coalition and the Springfield-Greene County Environmental Advisory Board.



© Courtesy of Claire Carstensen

**Claire Carstensen**

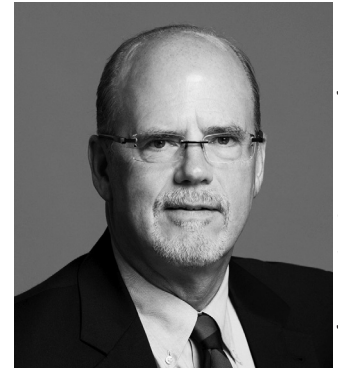
Claire Carstensen is the Sustainability Project Manager for Enterprise Holdings. She has managed several sustainability initiatives for the company, directed working relationships with sustainability partners, developed a carbon inventory process, and created two sustainability reports, including Global Reporting Initiative verification in 2012. Claire lives in Ballwin with her son, Isaac.



© Courtesy of Stephanie Hurt

**Stephanie Hurt**

Stephanie Hurt is an investment manager for BKD Wealth Advisors, LLC. She is an active member of many local organizations, including the Rotary Club of Springfield and The Network with the Springfield Chamber of Commerce. She also serves as an advisory board member for Missouri State University's Finance and General Business Department. Stephanie lives in Springfield with her husband, Jacob, and their three dogs.



© Courtesy of Frederick (Fritz) Riesmeyer II

**Frederick (Fritz) Riesmeyer II**

Fritz Riesmeyer is a lifelong resident of Missouri, growing up in St. Louis and residing in Kansas City following his graduation from law school. Fritz has a life-long interest in the outdoors, which has evolved into an interest in the environment and its preservation for future generations. Fritz is currently practicing law at Seigfreid Bingham in Kansas City. He has been awarded the H. Michael Coburn Professional Excellence Award, 2011 and spends a significant amount of time teaching trial advocacy in various venues.

When one of Kansas City's busiest former corporate executives, Jim Miller, was asked why he makes The Nature Conservancy a top priority in his life, he said, "It's really quite simple. The mission of the Conservancy is to protect the lands and waters on which all life depends. This is a straightforward bottom line, one that represents a good investment of personal time and resources; in short, the Conservancy adds value to our quality of life now and for future generations."

Jim's childhood was spent outdoors on a farm in Wisconsin, and his "heart is in the land and waters." As the Missouri Board Chair and a Trustee for the past 12 years,

Jim leads by example. He put a conservation easement on his property in Wisconsin, joined our Legacy Club, and became a member of the Oak Leaf Alliance strategic partnerships program.

Jim's leadership is enhanced by the gracious support of his wife, Ursula Terrasi, a small business owner who is actively involved in the leadership of several community organizations. Through their joint efforts, more people now know about the mission they both support. The seeds planted by this committed duo will continue to improve conservation efforts, benefitting people and nature around the globe.



Jim Miller and Ursula Terrasi at their home on Weatherby Lake with a purple martin house in the background. © Courtesy of Jim Miller

Our work is made possible by the **generosity** of our **donors** and **members**. Thank you for all you do for conservation.

*For a list of this year's major donors, visit [nature.org/modonors2013](http://nature.org/modonors2013)*



We all know that everything is connected, so it's not surprising that healthy Ozark waters depend on healthy Ozark forests. Forests collect rainfall and hold soil in place, recharging groundwater and preventing soil erosion into rivers. When forests are damaged by inappropriate land use, nearby rivers become threatened by too much sediment and runoff.

To combat these threats, stakeholders throughout the region are working together to manage forests in ways that benefit not only the lands and waters of our state, but also the people who call Missouri home.

## **The Connection**

Stand on the bank of any Ozark river on a hot summer day and you'll likely see groups of happy people floating, fishing, swimming, or relaxing on a gravel bar. Drive through the Ozarks and you'll pass truck after truck hauling loads of timber. Each year, millions of visitors enjoy the recreational opportunities the Ozarks have to offer, and \$5.9 billion in wood products is generated annually in Missouri.

But what would happen to all the restaurants, shops, outfitters, campgrounds, and other businesses if the beauty of the scenery was marred or the waters were muddied? What would happen to the timber industry if the forests were destroyed and never replanted? The Ozark economy depends on healthy forests and waters; the forests and waters, in turn, depend on people to ensure they stay healthy for generations to come.

## **Conservation in the Ozarks**

The Conservancy uses a variety of techniques to conserve Ozark forests. One of the most effective methods is the use of conservation easements, which help landowners conserve certain features of a property. An easement might allow timber to be harvested, for example, but would restrict practices that could harm the forest or neighboring waters. These agreements promote healthy forests and sustain the wood products industry, while keeping lands in private ownership and contributing to the local tax base. To date, more than 7,500 acres of critical Ozark lands have been conserved with working forest easements.

Gushing Ozark stream © Bill Duncan



Lexmark tree planting at Queeney Park © Amy Hepler Welch/TNC

The Conservancy also collaborates with partners to develop strategies for sustainable forest management. In the northern Ozarks, more than 25 agencies and organizations contributed to an assessment of the Meramec River system. This assessment provides a unified blueprint of conservation resources, issues, and opportunities, which can be used for planning conservation projects.

Effective conservation uses sound research as a planning tool. One example of this is an ongoing, 80-year study at the Conservancy's Chilton Creek Research and Demonstration Area. Each spring, crews burn thousands of acres to recreate fire cycles that were present historically; the following summer, researchers study the impacts the burns had on the vegetation. This research demonstrates how controlled burns affect forest health and how they contribute to better regeneration and healthier stands of commercially desirable hardwoods. Studies like this are essential for determining the most effective methods of proper forest management.

### Seeing the Forest

Forests provide habitat for wildlife, drinking water, and recreational opportunities. They keep our waters clean, prevent flooding, and sustain our economies. It's time we step back and start seeing our forests for our trees... and our waters.

**Learn more:  
[nature.org/moforests](https://nature.org/moforests)**





Greater prairie chicken © Bill Graham/MDC

## Greater Prairie Chickens

Thirty-four greater prairie chickens were released at Dunn Ranch Prairie this spring. The release is the first of three that will take place over the next two years to enhance the existing population. The hens were fitted with tracking collars; one bird traveled over 1,100 miles in just a few months! The data will be studied to assess habitat use, survival rates, and nesting behaviors.

## Meramec River

The Meramec River Conservation Assessment was completed in August 2013. The assessment is a multi-partner effort to provide background information about the river. It defines, ranks, and prioritizes conservation targets and threats in the Meramec River watershed. The Conservancy and its partners will use the assessment as a tool for developing conservation strategies.



LaBarque Creek, a tributary of the Meramec River © Bill Duncan



Cow and calf at Dunn Ranch Prairie © Hilary Haley/TNC

## Bison

Dunn Ranch Prairie is now home to over 50 bison, and the herd is thriving. Their grazing, trampling, and wallowing restore key processes that benefit native prairie plants and animals. Tracking collars are in place on several bison; the resulting data will help scientists analyze the herd's impact on the grassland.

## Topeka Shiners

These federally endangered silver minnows were reintroduced into headwater streams at Dunn Ranch Prairie this fall. The loss of prairie over the last 175 years has resulted in impaired stream habitat and a severe decline of the fish, which are now only found in a fraction of their former range. The return of healthy Topeka shiner populations will restore an aspect of Missouri's natural heritage and serve as an ongoing indicator of good conservation and land use practices.



Current River © Bill Duncan

## Current River

A 713-acre forested tract near the Current River has been conserved for public use. The property includes more than a mile of Rogers Creek and connects the Conservancy's Chilton Creek Research and Demonstration Area. The tract was scheduled for foreclosure, but the Conservancy was able to step in and secure the property, which was then transferred to the Missouri Department of Conservation.



Steve Herrington  
© Amy Hepler Welch/TNC

## New Director of Freshwater Conservation

Dr. Steven Herrington has joined the Missouri team as its first Director of Freshwater Conservation. Steve was previously employed by The Conservancy in Florida, where he held the same role. He will work to increase freshwater conservation across the state, from championing the development of a state water plan to increasing conservation along the Missouri and Mississippi river systems. Steve lives in St. Charles with his wife, Karen, and their two children, Ben and Nora.

## Chilton Creek Burn

Despite unusually cold and wet weather this spring, the Conservancy's burn crew conducted safe and effective burns on more than 2,500 acres. The work included several large burns at Chilton Creek Research and Demonstration Area, completed with assistance from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and National Park Service crews. This work is part of a long-term research project, conducted in conjunction with MDC, to examine the effects of fire on woodlands.



Controlled burn at Chilton Creek Research and Demonstration Area © Doug Ladd/TNC

## New Current River Project Manager

Rebecca Landewe has been hired as the new Current River Project Manager. Rebecca has extensive conservation experience, ranging from applied forestry work to serving as a water quality coordinator for the Environmental Protection Agency. Rebecca lives in Van Buren, where she enjoys hiking, kayaking, swimming, and maintaining trails with the Ozark Trail Association.



Rebecca Landewe in Big Spring Pines Natural Area, Carter County © Rebecca Landewe/TNC

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Bobcat kittens © Summer M. Tribble



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