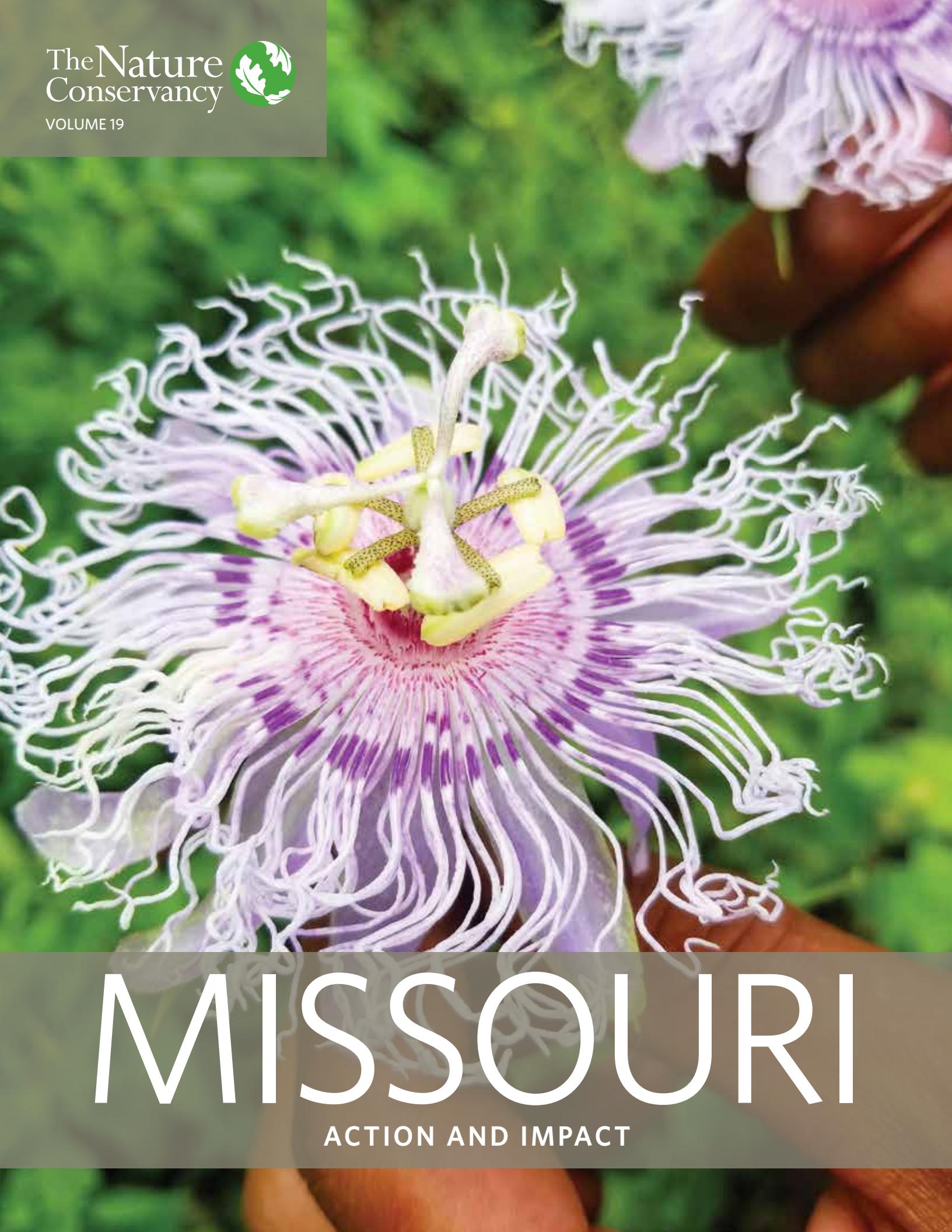


The Nature  
Conservancy



VOLUME 19



# MISSOURI

ACTION AND IMPACT

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## OUR LEADERSHIP



The quote "**many hands make light work,**" attributed to John Heywood, has stuck with me over the years. It rings true—always.

The very best things I have been a part of in life have involved the sharing of talents and burdens. Meeting our conservation objectives is no exception.

In simple terms, The Nature Conservancy's mission is about creating a world where both people and nature thrive. There is no silver bullet, no single idea, no brilliant individual strategy capable of creating such a vision. Hope lies in the fruits of collective talent, shared burden, and cooperative action.

This volume of *Missouri Action and Impact* celebrates that reality and highlights a collection of the many partnerships made possible by your investment in us—your impact.

We fully recognize that talking about conservation strategies is only conversation. It's your support, guidance, and partnership that turns those conversations into action.

Thank you for helping move conservation in such amazing ways. We hope you enjoy reading about the power of your generosity.

Adam McLane, Missouri State Director



The Nature Conservancy is the largest conservation non-profit in the world, with deep science and policy resources. We regularly have a seat at the table and the unique ability to get things done.

But we are also very local—working in Missouri with partners, corporations, landowners, legislators, and supporters who all share a vision of a world where people and nature thrive.

Throughout this volume of *Missouri Action and Impact*, you will meet many people.

You will meet the three generations of farmers who TNC is working with to stop their land from washing away. You will meet a major league soccer star who has partnered with TNC to help engage the youth in conservation awareness. And, you will meet a church pastor and volunteer who want a better future for their community and for their world.

We thank you for supporting us in our mission and all the work you make possible. Please enjoy this newsletter and know that this is just a small sample of your impact.

Nancy Ylvisaker, Missouri Board Chair

# Fire is the Prescription for Managing Missouri's Lands

The Nature Conservancy has been conducting prescribed burns in Missouri for over 36 years, understanding the ecological value and economic benefits they bring for both people and nature.

"Prescribed fire equals diversity," said Aaron Jeffries, deputy director of the Missouri Department of Conservation. "Our natural communities depend on fire to control woody vegetation and invasive plants, facilitate seed germination, rejuvenate plants, remove heavy thatch, and create bare ground for grassland birds. Prescribed fire is essential, and it's one of our most important management tools," he said.

Beyond diversity, prescribed fire also helps by reducing the buildup of dead wood and other debris that can contribute to and fuel intense wildfires. Removing fire from the landscape causes forests to grow thicker and denser. When unexpected fire returns, the results can be devastating.

Missouri is one of five states, including Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, that does not have



prescribed fire liability defined in its state statute.

"Liability and insurance are the second-highest barriers limiting prescribed fire use nationwide, with weather being the first," said Holly Neill, TNC's director of external affairs. "It's time to remove this obstacle for this important conservation management tool."

With partners, TNC will support moving this prescribed fire bill successfully through the upcoming legislative session.

Rep. Jeff Shawan (R-Mo. District 153), who is sponsoring this bill in the Missouri House of Representatives, agrees that it will aid in the protection of Missouri's resources and the safety of its communities.

"One of my first concerns is safety," Rep. Shawan said. "If we don't manage our forests efficiently with prescribed burns, things can get out of control. Protecting contractors and landowners from the liability end is a critical component," he said. "I grew up in the Ozarks, and I want to make sure they are here for future generations to enjoy."

Many landowners are nervous about conducting a prescribed burn and may not have the experience, equipment or time to complete the burn.

"This legislation would simply allow an insurance company the ability to insure a certified contractor wanting to offer this service to landowners interested in improving their property for wildlife," said Aaron. "It's a win for everyone, including nature."



# A Plan to Protect Our Rivers

Riparian buffers, vegetated areas bordering rivers, streams, and lakes, are critically important in protecting the water from the impacts of urban, industrial, and agricultural land use.

They play a key role in increasing water quality, stabilizing the streambanks, and enhancing aquatic and wildlife habitat. They also help to moderate water temperature and slow down runoff to allow soil and nutrient pollutants to settle before they reach the stream.

Recently, The Nature Conservancy was awarded a grant of over \$200,000 from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for riparian buffer restoration and protection along Shoal Creek in southwest Missouri.

“Over the next three years, this grant will help landowners implement streambank stabilization efforts by replanting grasses and trees along the creek, and also by fencing off and providing alternative watering systems for cattle,” said Drew Holt, TNC’s western Ozarks water coordinator.

But beyond the reach of Shoal Creek, this grant will act as a pilot project for TNC. “We will utilize a number of tools, including conservation easements, as we develop a statewide riparian buffer protection strategy,” said Drew.

The goals of the strategy are to protect stream corridor systems with natural cover and floodplain connectivity; and, to increase resources for public and private landowners for conservation practices.

Larry O'Reilly knows firsthand the benefits of establishing and protecting riparian buffers. In 2012, he was the first landowner to take advantage of a similar program for his property in Stone County, which utilized DNR grant funding for pollution reduction through the James River Basin Partnership.

“I've always enjoyed rivers and floating,” said Larry. “My decision to protect my land will ensure that future generations of river enthusiasts will be able to enjoy an unspoiled view of a healthy riparian corridor along this reach of the river.”

His 3.5-mile stretch along the meandering James River includes a conservation easement protecting the buffer that ranges from 100-300 feet wide and will stay with the property forever—even if it is sold.



“Protecting the assets of the property was important to me,” said Larry. “The riparian buffer will help reduce erosion and maintain the natural beauty of the area. By protecting the real assets, it enhances the value.”

Larry said it gives landowners, like him, peace of mind knowing that their land will be protected for the value of its nature, during their lifetime and beyond.

“I'm hopeful that other landowners with river property will consider doing what they can to protect the river, wildlife and the water quality,” he said. “It's very important that we protect our resources—if not just for us, then for future generations.”

# Little Creek Farm

## HEALTHY LAND, HEALTHY COWS



Ryan Cox was 13 years old when he began farming. Now 27, with a full-time job, a family with young children, and active in the military, he continues to cultivate the land.

Ryan has partnered with The Nature Conservancy by leasing land at Little Creek Farm, TNC's first sustainable grazing demonstration farm in Missouri. Located in Hatfield, in the Grand River Grasslands, Ryan and TNC will collaborate with additional partners to put sustainable grazing practices into action and test strategies.

"It makes sense to want grazing systems in place that will extend my grazing period, make my operation more profitable, and increase the health of the land," said Ryan.

After purchasing Little Creek Farm, TNC installed fencing to restrict the

cattle from the creek. This helps to reduce streambank erosion, restores habitat, and improves the overall health of the creek, which is home to the federally endangered Topeka shiner. Alternative watering systems were added for the cattle, and soon, much of the land will be converted to native warm season grasses.

"By incorporating warm season grasses, you extend your grazing period," said Ryan. "So, when it's hot outside and your cool season grasses slow down, you can put your cattle on your warm season grasses. That grass is going to have more nutrients in it and your cattle are going to do better, while allowing your cool season grasses to recover."

Ryan hopes that by working with TNC his operation will be more profitable, and together, they will be able to show

other producers the benefits of making similar changes to their farms.

"In the end, farmers are just trying to run a business. If we can prove that simple practices will allow them to run more cattle per acre, while increasing the condition of their cattle and benefiting their land, I think that will get people interested," said Ryan.

"We are excited to have Ryan on board with us at Little Creek Farm," said Kent Wamsley, TNC's grasslands and sustainable grazing strategy manager. "We have the ability to test strategies that will not only benefit the producers' bottom line, but will increase the health of the land and wildlife habitat. For us, this is a win for nature and for sustainable grazing."

# A Voice for the Hellbender

## PROTECTING MISSOURI'S ENDANGERED SPECIES

Growing up in the small farming community of Linn, Mo., Cameron Gehlert always had an interest in agriculture and a passion for the environment.

"When I was young, I'd make my mom pull over so I could pick up trash from the side of the road," Cameron said, smiling.

In the 8th grade, he started a recycling program at his school and has also earned an American FFA Degree—the highest degree achievable in the national Future Farmers of America organization.

One day, while reading about state designations in Missouri, Cameron noticed there was not a designation for an endangered species.

"I thought that would be a great way to bring awareness to a species that needed our help," he said. "There's a quote from *The Lorax* that has always stuck with me, and I thought, 'This is something I could do that could really make something better.'"

**"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."**

—Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*

Missouri is well-known for its rivers and streams, and Cameron decided the hellbender should be a contender, since the state is the only place in the world that both subspecies—the eastern hellbender and Ozark hellbender—can be found.



Working with a couple of Missouri representatives, Cameron, now a student at Westminster College, helped create the legislation to make the hellbender the official endangered species of Missouri.

The bill received support from groups including The Nature Conservancy, the Saint Louis Zoo, the Sierra Club, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and the Canoe & Floaters Association. In July 2019, Gov. Michael Parson signed the bill into law.

One legislator asked if this bill would be repealed if the hellbender is removed from the state and federal endangered species list. Cameron's reply: "Your outlook is more optimistic than mine. If the hellbender makes a comeback, I'll happily help get it changed to the official saved species of Missouri."

### What's a Hellbender?

The hellbender—also known as the snot otter and lasagna lizard—is a large aquatic salamander that requires clean, cool rivers and streams to survive.

The hellbender has been on our continent for over 6 million years, but populations have continued to drastically decline due to habitat loss, lowered water quality, illegal collection, and disease. Research shows that their population has decreased by 75 percent since the 1980s. In 2011, the Ozark hellbender was listed as a federally endangered species.



THIS PAGE TOP Cameron Gehlert (center) with Gov. Mike Parsons (left) as the hellbender bill is signed into law. © Courtesy of Cameron Gehlert; BOTTOM Ozark hellbender. © U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# Missouri Conservation is a Shared Responsibility

We've all heard the proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." Modern conservation is no different. "It takes the strength of partnerships, the innovation of collaboration, and the support, engagement and enthusiasm of everyone to accomplish goals," said Sara Parker Pauley, director of the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC).

Throughout the years, The Nature Conservancy and MDC have collaborated on numerous projects, including grassland restoration, woodland/savanna management, Topeka shiner recovery efforts, critical work to improve and sustain the health of the Meramec River Basin, and much more.

"We both have world-class staff, immense passion, and true grit when it comes to solving challenges and capitalizing on conservation opportunities," said Sara. "That only increases the impact our work has on our natural resources and Missouri's unique biodiversity."



Missouri is bordered to the east by the mighty Mississippi River and bisected by the Missouri River.

"As a result, Missouri houses an incredible diversity of natural communities and associated native flora and fauna," Sara said. From showy native prairies to desert-like glades to deep, dark caves, our rich natural heritage offers unique conservation challenges and opportunities.

Sara's hope is that together, conservation partners and Missouri citizens, can build and sustain a strong conservation ethic that supports healthy, diverse landscapes for future generations.

"It's our shared heritage, but it's also our shared responsibility. No one entity can conserve and protect Missouri's vast biodiversity alone."

## Fulfilling Her Dream

Sara Parker Pauley always knew she wanted to pursue a career in conservation.

"My grandmother really inspired me. She was so confident in the outdoors and had such a connection to the land," said Sara. "I always wanted to be right there with her."

A native of Columbia, Mo., Sara received her law degree and bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri—Columbia, and did post-graduate studies in Australia as a Rotary Fellow.

"I feel fortunate to work in this field with our partners, staff, and our citizens," she said. "MDC's history was created by the citizens and well-funded by the citizens. Our very existence is dependent on citizens' support. I never want to forget that."

"I pursued my journalism degree with the hopes of writing for *Conservationist Magazine*," she said. "Now, I get my own column every month," she joked.



LEARN MORE about  
Biodiversity in Missouri at  
[nature.org/mobiodiversity](http://nature.org/mobiodiversity)

# The people who are crazy enough to think they

## 150,000



acres protected in Missouri by TNC through partnerships with private landowners, governmental organizations and other conservation agencies.

## 4,040

linear feet of streams in Missouri restored by TNC using nature-based techniques and bioengineering. Learn about this technique on page 10.



## 159,360

pounds of food waste reduced through the Sporting Sustainability initiative in 2018. Learn more on page 11.



## 5,000

pounds of native seed collected at Dunn Ranch Prairie on average each year. Celebrate the 20th anniversary of Dunn Ranch Prairie on page 14.

## 150,000

gallons of water held by the underground cistern that irrigates the urban garden and orchard at Project Oasis. Go to page 13 for more on this project.



### 1956

The Missouri chapter is formed

### 1991

Current River Project launched to protect the most biologically significant river in the Midwest

### 2007

Ozark Conservation Buyer Fund is established

### 1983

First prescribed burn conducted at Bennett Spring Savanna

### 1999

Dunn Ranch Prairie is acquired

### 2011

Bison are reintroduced at Dunn Ranch Prairie

### 2014

Meramec River Conservation Action Plan is published

### 2015

Western Ozark Waters Initiative is launched in southwest Missouri

# can change the world, are the ones who do.

— STEVE JOBS

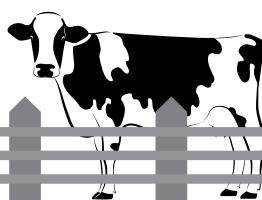


# 36

years TNC has been conducting prescribed burns in Missouri. Read about prescribed fire legislation TNC is supporting on page 3.

# 7

private, state, and federal partners who are collaborating on sustainable grazing strategies at TNC's Little Creek Farm. Learn more on page 5.



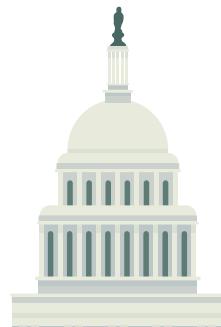
# 34

preserves owned in Missouri by TNC. To learn more about these sites visit [nature.org/MoPreserves](http://nature.org/MoPreserves).



# \$7 Million

in land acquisitions and conservation easements in the Ozarks leveraged by a \$2-million gift to launch TNC's Ozark Conservation Buyer Fund.



# 22

meetings held with legislators at our state and federal advocacy days in 2019.

# 500+

volunteer hours logged at Dunn Ranch Prairie and Little Creek Farm in 2018.



## 2016

Campaign 2050 is launched in Missouri

## 2017

Missouri's 4R program is launched to focus on nutrient management and conservation practices to improve soil health

## 2019

Permanent reauthorization of Land and Water Conservation Fund signed into law

## 2017

TNC's first sustainable grazing demonstration farm in Missouri is launched at Little Creek Farm

## 2018

Missouri's Cities Program is launched in St. Louis

## 2019

TNC launched Site Wind Right to promote smart, renewable wind energy in the right places



## Just Moments in Time

Steve Yocom has been a farmer his whole life.

"My grandmother and grandfather bought this property in the 1930s, and it's been in the family ever since," he said. "I never left."

The family farm, located in the small town of Davisville in Crawford County, Mo., has grown to encompass over 1,100 acres with well over 2 miles of frontage along the Huzzah Creek—a tributary of the Meramec River. It was historically a grass-based dairy and beef farm and remains a cattle farm today.

Since 2009, Steve and his daughter, Rachel Hopkins, his partner in the cattle operation, have fought severe erosion along their streambanks. "We've tried a lot of options, including planting willows and laying down erosion control mat, but none of them held," said Steve. "We were losing our land with every flood," said Rachel.

When Rob Pulliam, a biologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), connected Steve and Rachel with Dr. Steve Herrington, TNC's director of science & impact measures, they learned there was another solution.

"Nature-based solutions or bioengineering isn't a new concept, but it's rarely used in Missouri," said Herrington. "It's using the fundamentals of engineering but utilizing nature for the materials, which not only increases the

stability of the structure, but also provides critical habitat for fish and wildlife."

Steve and Rachel were in. "We knew we had to try this and hope it works, or don't and know what that outcome will be," said Rachel.

Working with The Nature Conservancy, MDC, and the Ozark Land Trust, nearly 2,000 feet of streambank has been stabilized using bioengineering.

Trees from the Yocoms' property were selectively harvested and used on the project to cut costs and utilize homegrown resources. They were then able to take advantage of an MDC cost share program to revegetate the area and add diversity to their grazing mix.

Throughout the process, Steve made sure Rachel was a part of all conversations and decisions. "This land will be hers someday and I want her to be involved in the day-to-day operations and long-term decisions," said Steve.

The Yocoms' goal was to stop losing their land to the creek now and into the future. "We are just trying to continue what is not just ours, but our future generations'," said Rachel. "We are just moments in time."



**LEARN MORE** about bioengineering at [nature.org/HuzzahCreek](https://nature.org/HuzzahCreek)

# Graham Zusi with the Assist

In 2018, The Nature Conservancy partnered with Major League Soccer Club Sporting Kansas City to raise awareness about food waste and the environmental impacts that come with it. Now, the initiative, Sporting Sustainability, is in its second year and is getting some help from Sporting Kansas City soccer star, Graham Zusi.

"I have always cared deeply about protecting our environment especially through living sustainably," said Graham. "When I heard about our partnership with TNC, I jumped at the opportunity to help educate others on how they can also live a sustainable lifestyle."

Sporting Sustainability uses educational tools to encourage sustainable practices among consumers, such as greenhouse gas emissions reduction, responsible agricultural land use, and freshwater conservation.

Besides promoting the initiative to fans during gameday activities and public service announcements at Children's Mercy Park, there is a big push to engage the youth through the Sporting Club Network, which covers six Midwest states, in 35 cities, with players as young as 2 years old.

"Many lifelong habits are formed at a young age. If we can educate and instill these good habits through the youth programs, the future of their world will be better off for it," said Graham.



The success of Sporting Sustainability relies on the individual actions of people who take the pledge to reduce their household food waste. "You would be shocked at what just one person's act of living sustainably can do," said Graham. "All of those small acts build up to create a real impact. You may think you are a small fish in a big sea, but a collective effort can make a huge difference."

Being a part of this initiative has also made Graham more mindful of his own actions. "One thing that Sporting Sustainability has made me most aware of is how much perfectly good food is thrown away. I have been much more conscious about saving leftovers, meal planning, and buying sustainably-made products," he said.

Last year alone, participants who took the Sporting Sustainability pledge

reduced their collective household food waste by 159,360 pounds. It takes 1,752,960 square feet of cropland—or nearly 23 soccer fields—to grow this amount of food.

"It makes me feel proud that Sporting Sustainability and TNC are doing what they can to educate, inspire, and change how we look and act toward food waste and its impacts on our environmental future," said Graham.

That pride is shared at TNC. "We are proud to be partners with Graham Zusi and Sporting Kansas City on this initiative," said Adam McLane, TNC's state director in Missouri. "It's estimated that 40 percent of food produced is wasted at the retail and consumer level. Reduction of this percentage will have direct impacts on our water and land resources and greenhouse gas emissions."

**Join Graham Zusi, Sporting Kansas City, and TNC and take the Sporting Sustainability pledge at [www.sportingkc.com/sustainability](http://www.sportingkc.com/sustainability).**

# Conserving the 'Right' Way

## Implementing the 4Rs in Missouri

When the 4R program was launched in Missouri in 2018, it brought together a diverse group of partners—the Missouri Fertilizer Control Board, Missouri Agribusiness Association, Missouri Corn Merchandising Council (MCMC), Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council (MSMC), and The Nature Conservancy.

“Our reasons for collaborating may be different, but our goals are the same,” said Darrick Steen, environmental director for MCMC and MSMC.

4R focuses on nutrient (fertilizer) management and conservation practices to improve soil health and limit the amount of harmful runoff into our rivers and streams.

### The 4Rs refer to using the right fertilizer at the right rate at the right time and in the right place.

While we need fertilizers to produce food, a significant amount of fertilizer is washed away by rain, leaving the fields and entering our rivers and streams. This causes issues for fish, recreation and drinking water, which not only affects water quality in Missouri, but eventually travels to the Gulf of Mexico increasing the hypoxic or dead zone.

“By collaborating with our partners, we will be able to address the needs, benefits, and outcomes from the growers, producers, and suppliers, while also measuring the impacts to the land,” said Holly Neill, TNC’s director of external affairs.



Steve Taylor, executive director of the Missouri Agribusiness Association and program director of the Missouri Fertilizer Control Board, has been working to bring the 4Rs to Missouri for nearly a decade.

“For years we’ve been talking about the problems and looking for answers. When this came out as a possible solution, we knew that the 4Rs was just good common sense,” said Steve. “It’s good agronomics, but it also shows a process to make sure we get there.”

Steve and Darrick also worked to get the 4Rs included in the Missouri Department of Natural Resources nutrient reduction strategy in 2014, the state’s plan to reduce nutrient run-off.

“This is our industry’s solution—or one of our solutions—to address nutrient run-off,” said Steve.

Bringing TNC into the collaboration not only brought financial support, but also some skin in the game. “They are in the trenches and in the meetings with us to push this forward,” said Steve. “It’s their time and investment that makes this a true partnership.”

Looking to the future, the group is working to get pilot projects on the ground and to continually improve agriculture.

“We want to share with our farmers new technologies and new ways of doing things that ultimately mean a more sustainable investment for them and the next generation that they bring to the farm,” said Darrick.

“We want to make sure that our farms are productive and sustainable for our kids and grandkids.”



**LEARN MORE** about the 4R program at [nature.org/Missouri4R](https://nature.org/Missouri4R)

# An Oasis in the City

Growing up in North St. Louis, Donna Washington remembers her parents bringing home fresh fruits and vegetables from the market. “Now, it’s hard to find any fresh produce in my neighborhood,” said Donna.

Over the past few years, leadership and volunteers from Jubilee Community Church in the city’s Fairgrounds neighborhood have been building a concept that will do more than just bring fresh produce to their community. Project Oasis will provide a community garden, reduce stormwater flooding, create employment opportunities, and serve as a demonstration site for other local communities.

“We recognized multiple problems and wanted to come up with solutions that would address them,” said Andy Krumsieg, pastor of Jubilee Community Church. “Stormwater is a big issue in the city of St. Louis. We wanted to reduce the pressure on the sewer system and capture rainwater as a resource to reuse in our garden.”

The first step of Project Oasis was the installation of a 150,000-gallon underground cistern that collects rainwater from the church’s roof, which then irrigates the half-acre urban orchard and garden that were recently planted behind the church.

During the last growing season, the group worked with partners, Good Life Growing and Custom Foodscaping, to plant cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers in the garden

and blackberries, figs, cherries, serviceberries, jujubes and pawpaws in the orchard.

The produce that is grown will be used by the church and made available for community members to harvest. Additionally, they will sell the produce to local restaurants.

“Proceeds from the sales will be used to help employ two or three people from the community during the growing season,” said Pastor Andy. “We will also be planting wildflowers throughout the garden, which will provide food for pollinators.”

“The work Jubilee Community Church is doing through Project Oasis and partnership collaboration can be replicated in neighborhoods throughout St. Louis or around the state,” said Rebecca Weaver, TNC’s cities program manager. “We felt it was important to support this project and the community-driven transformation it could inspire.”

The Nature Conservancy provided a grant to Jubilee Community Church that supported the garden design, installation and materials. Funds were also provided to help with storytelling, outreach and training activities.

Now, Donna Washington volunteers her time to tending to the garden each week. “I enjoy working in the soil and getting my hands dirty,” said Donna. “And, I’m excited to have fresh produce in our neighborhood again.”



# Bison Roam, Grasslands Thrive Again at Dunn Ranch Prairie

When the Dunn family homesteaded in northern Missouri 150 years ago, the land was miles of virgin bluestem and switchgrass—a sea of grass as far as the eye could see.

Through the years, the countryside changed. Most of the land was used for grazing cattle or turned into corn or wheat fields. The prairie grasslands diminished. By the mid-1900s, of the original 15 million acres of grassland in Missouri, only remnants of the tallgrass prairie remained.

Doug Ladd, TNC's former director of conservation, saw the land at Dunn Ranch Prairie, located in Hatfield, Mo., firsthand in the 1980s.

"It was beautiful property," he said. "More than 2,000 acres, half of which had never seen a plow."

In 1999, The Nature Conservancy purchased Dunn Ranch Prairie from descendants of the Dunn family. In 2019, we celebrated its 20th year of protection.

Now at 3,258 acres, the prairie buzzes with activity as staff and volunteers re-seed native species, remove non-native plants, share insights with local farmers, and teach area school children about the value of the land.

Throughout the years, TNC has collaborated with other conservation partners such as the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Bison have been reintroduced; the federally endangered Topeka shiner population has been improved; and greater prairie-chicken breeding grounds have been reestablished.

Community and landowner outreach is also vital so that knowledge gained from testing strategies and research can be shared. Learning what issues face local landowners and working together is a priority.

James Cole, TNC's director of conservation programs, is optimistic about the future.

"We get to celebrate this milestone because of the dedicated support of our donors through the years. We hope that Dunn Ranch Prairie thrives for another 20 years and continues to influence and inform grassland conservation. We are still learning from the prairie every year, and we want future generations to learn from it, as well."

*This story was written by longtime Conservancy member and writer Ann Vernon, who felt inspired by the beauty of Dunn Ranch Prairie and wanted to help share its story. "Dunn Ranch Prairie is such a special place to so many people," Ann said. "I am happy to help share its rich history and celebrate 20 years of prairie restoration."*



# Pinkie's Prairie Garden

In 1998 Val Terry and her younger sister Lucinda (Pinkie) Pantaleoni made a generous gift to The Nature Conservancy in memory of their mother. The gift helped protect TNC's Bennett Spring Savanna preserve.

When Pinkie passed away in 2017, Val wanted to memorialize her life, as they both had done for their mother. She decided on a gift for TNC's Little Creek Farm, part of the Grand River Grasslands in Hatfield, Mo.

"I learned about Little Creek Farm and the work being done to create a sustainable grazing demonstration farm, and it intrigued me," said Val. "I thought it was a wonderful way to honor my sister and create a conservation legacy."

## **Her gift did that and more.**

"By design, our work at Little Creek Farm will engage partners and local farmers to help transform the way we think about grazing practices," said Kent Wamsley, TNC's grasslands and sustainable grazing strategy manager. "Val's gift in memory of Pinkie expands beyond the borders of Little Creek Farm and will make a difference for people and nature everywhere."

In addition, a more tangible memorial is Pinkie's Prairie Garden, a native prairie garden established at Little Creek Farm to bring joy and beauty for visitors—and habitat for pollinators—for years to come.



## **What's Your Legacy?**

In 2018, The Nature Conservancy commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Legacy Club. We celebrated with the nearly 26,000 people who have made a commitment to nature and to future generations by making a life-income gift or naming TNC in their will, retirement plans, or trust.

Legacy gifts allow us to plan ahead and work more efficiently at a larger scale—meaning even better results. In Missouri, this means we can think at a local, regional, and system-wide scale to invest in projects that make the biggest impact for people and for nature.

If you are interested in joining the Legacy Club or have any questions about how you can leave your Legacy, please contact us.

Together we can protect the world we love.

**To learn more about memorial gifts or the Legacy Club, contact Mona Monteleone at (314) 968-1105, ext. 1118 or [mona.monteleone@tnc.org](mailto:mona.monteleone@tnc.org).**



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