

# Mississippi Hills Newsletter

October, November, December 2022  
Volume 2, Issue 4

*Missouri*  
**Master Naturalist**™



## Banding Wood Ducks at Ted Shanks Conservation Area

*By Beth Whelan*

Monday evening, August 22, 2022 was a warm summer's evening, and duck banding was about to begin. As MDC staff and volunteers gathered at the Ted Shanks Conservation area to wait for the sound of the net cannon to be fired, everyone was in full anticipation of what was about to take place.

Once the cannon was fired, we all jumped in our vehicles and drove to the landing where the wood ducks were captured under the net. Everyone quickly ran to the site and began untangling the ducks from the net and put them into crates one by one. We carefully and gently repeated this process until all the ducks were in the crates.

About 10-15 ducks were in each crate and carried to a shaded part of the "beach" and a fan was directed towards the ducks to cool them off.

One crate at a time was then gently picked up and brought to the MDC staff so the banding process could start. Each volunteer picked up a duck out of the crate and carried it to the staff so the band could be placed on the duck, its coordinating number recorded properly, and the sex of the duck recorded as well. Some of the ducks had bands from a previous event, but we gathered 129 new ducks.

We were invited to attend the next duck banding event which took place on Friday, August 26, 2022. It was a bit hotter, and we worked a little faster, and caught even more ducks. I did not hear how many were banded, but my guess would be about 150 ducks, and even more were already banded.

It was very exciting to be part of the event to help band wood ducks.

**What an interesting way to study nature!**

**NOTES FROM MDC ON DUCK BANDING EVENT:** "MDC conducts research projects year-round across the state to ensure wildlife populations are being monitored. Staff and volunteers at Ted Shanks Conservation Area in the northeast region banded wood ducks yesterday (8-22-22). Banding waterfowl allows biologists to track the ages and migratory patterns of certain species as they progress through their life. Banding the ducks does not hurt them, and they are released immediately after the band is added to their leg."

For more information on Wood Ducks in Missouri, visit MDC Field Guides:

<https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/wood-duck>

# Naturalists Participate in Family Field Day

By Carolyn Trower

Twelve members of the Mississippi Hills Missouri Master Naturalists attended the Exploring Nature Family Field Day at the Carnegie Ranch in Eolia, Missouri. The event was held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, September 10.



MHMN booth is seen in the background.



A huge oak tree stands in a field on Carnegie Farm.

Organizations focusing on nature, outdoor sports, and conservation had booths and presentations with information for the public. Children were attentive to the Missouri Master Naturalists and especially liked the nature-themed stickers they were given.

Some of the topics featured were soil health, composting, prescribed burning, plant ID, shooting sports, archery and Bees, Bugs and Butterflies. The Department of Conservation had two booths. Two-hour tours of the land management practices used on Carnegie Ranch and the neighboring Napoleon Hills Farm were given in the morning and the afternoon. Forest management was highlighted in several areas. Wildlife management practices have resulted in more robust populations of deer, turkeys and quail. The weather was perfect and the hosting personnel very accommodating. It was an excellent opportunity to spread the word on what Missouri Master Naturalists do for the land and people in the communities they serve.

The Missouri Master Naturalist program is a community-based natural resource education and volunteer service program for adults, sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the University of Missouri Extension.

Its purpose is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the state of Missouri.

The Mississippi Hills Master Naturalist Chapter is located in Hannibal, Missouri, and serves the surrounding counties. We are involved in citizen science, community projects, nature interpretation, and community nature education.

FIND US ON THE WEB: <https://www.mississippihills.missourimasternaturalist.org/>

And on Facebook [@MississippiHills](#)

# Missouri Master Naturalist

## Mississippi Hills Chapter

### Receives Award



On October 3 2022, the Mississippi Hills Master Naturalist Chapter was presented with the Regional Partnership Award from the Missouri Department of Conservation.

*"Northeast Region Resource Management Partnership Award. Mississippi Hills Master Naturalist Chapter for their partnership work in environmental education, community outreach, and resource management. Their work in hosting Discover Nature events, restoring prairies on public and private lands, trail maintenance, graduating interns, and volunteer service have been essential in upholding the mission of the MDC Northeast Region."*



Dear Mississippi Hills Master Naturalist,

Congratulations on receiving the Northeast Regional Resource Management Branch Partnership Award! The amazing work you are doing is definitely being noticed. Attached is a picture of AJ Campbell, Recreational Use Specialist, presenting the award to George Wisdom, Chapter President. I have invited Danny Hartwig, Northeast Regional Administrator, to the December 13th meeting to present the award to the membership.

Thank you for all the amazing Conservation work you do. Keep up the good work.

Kathi

Kathi Moore

Conservation Educator

Missouri Department of Conservation



### Toni Black-Blackman

March 3, 1947 - September 27, 2022

Toni Black-Blackman, passed away on September 27, 2022, at Hannibal Regional Hospital. Funeral Services are pending at the James O'Donnell Funeral Home in Hannibal, Missouri.

Toni was a founding member of the Mississippi Hills chapter of Missouri Master Naturalists who participated in core training in 2018. Toni spent many volunteer hours at Becky's Garden, Broadway Garden, and Sodalis Nature Preserve providing loving care to plants and pollinators. She will be greatly missed.



# WELCOME to our New Master Naturalist Interns

Congratulations to the graduating class of Missouri Master Naturalists 2022!



Front row-Shyenne, Meagan, Tracy, Rebecca, Keely, Barb, Natalie  
Back row-Luke, Derek

The Mississippi Hills chapter welcomes the following interns:

Shyenne Cline  
Tracy Fuller  
Meagan Garey  
Luke Greving  
Barb Holmer

Natalie Holmer  
Rebecca Romig  
Derek Wheeler  
Keely Wheeler



After twelve weeks of intensive training on a wide variety of conservation and nature topics, the class was honored during an August 29<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony.

A very big thanks to all the volunteers who made the core training program successful, especially the many speakers who share their time, knowledge, and passion to educate others in their area of expertise. Also, a special call-out to Kathi Moore and Bob Kendrick—thank you for the time and dedication required to plan, organize, and execute the core training sessions.



Their Capstone Project took place at Indian Creek cemetery. The group planted native plants in front the cemetery wall.

## Election Slated for Mississippi Hills Chapter Board of Directors

Nominations for 2023 officers are due at our November General Meeting. Election for new officers will be held at our December meeting.

Current Nominations received are:

**President:** Vanessa Laatsch

**Vice President:** Kristy Trevathan

**Secretary:** Jan Golian

**Treasurer:** Theresa Casey

# WINTER SOWING.. THE TIME TO START IS NOW!

Start your garden seeds outdoors in winter with Winter Sowing



In our last newsletter, Pam Whiston shared her experience with Winter Sowing. I hope it made you want to try this method because I know it inspired me. I wanted to recap what Pam shared so that you can start taking steps to prepare for planting.

By Anne Coleman

## First a reminder--what is winter sowing?

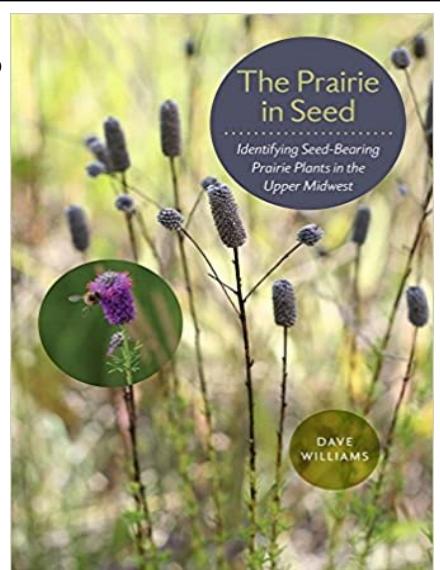
Pam included a definition from USDA, "A propagation method used throughout the winter where temperate climate seeds are sown into protective vented containers and placed outdoors to foster a naturally timed, high percentage germination of climate tolerant seedlings."

The method Pam pictured used recycled gallon sized milk or water jugs which are readily available to most of us. While she stated that many types of plants could be propagated with this method, we are going to focus on native plants that require "cold stratification" to germinate. Basically, this means that their seeds need to go through cycles of freezing and thawing to soften the outer covering. This freezing and thawing is what happens naturally in the prairie or anywhere where native plants drop their seeds in nature.

The list of natives that do well using this method is long, but a few would include:

- Aster (Aster)
- Bee Balm (*Monarda*)
- Blue Wild Indigo (*Baptisia australis*)
- Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- Coneflower (*Echinacea*)
- Lead Plant (*Amorpha canescens*)
- Sunflower (*Helianthus*)
- Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

If you are new to seed collecting, "The Prairie in Seed" by Dave Williams is a great introduction to seed identification.



# WINTER SOWING, CONT.

Here are some basic steps to help you use the Winter Sowing method of starting seeds

## Fall

- Collect recyclable containers and prepare them for use
  - Make a hinge in containers without a top (like milk jugs, pop bottles)
  - Cut drainage holes in the bottom of each container
  - Cut air circulation holes in the top of each container (or take off cap)
- Buy, trade, or collect seeds
  - Many vendors have their seeds on sale this time of year, although popular varieties may be in short supply.
  - Make sure they are native—stay away from cultivars and seed mixes
  - Like-minded friends may be collecting their own seeds and will trade for new natives
  - Collecting seeds from known sites (for which you have permission) is a great way to add more seeds

## Winter

- Fill each container with potting soil, about 3"-4" deep
- Lightly dampen potting soil with water
- Plant one type of seeds in each container
  - Tiny seeds are sprinkled onto the surface and patted down
  - Larger seeds are pushed down into the soil to specified depth
  - Label each container with a UV-resistant garden permanent marker
- Tape the top of the container down to the bottom with duct tape
- Place the planted container outdoors--exposed to sun, rain, and snow

## Spring

- Watch for seeds to sprout in the spring
- Adjust containers to increase air flow as temperatures warm
  - Cut more holes/side windows in containers
  - Open the top on warm days and consider removing it after last chance of frost
- Gently remove the seedlings from the container
- Transplant the seedlings into individual pots or into the garden



# OUR PRAIRIES

Seven Prairies Per Year For Seven Years

## HIGHWAY 107 PRAIRIE

By Beth Whelan, Anne Coleman and Dennis Foss

If you've driven by the Prairie Restoration project on Hwy 107 near Mark Twain State Park in the past few months, you would have been treated to the glorious colors splashed on nature's canvas exhibited by the native wildflowers that are found there.

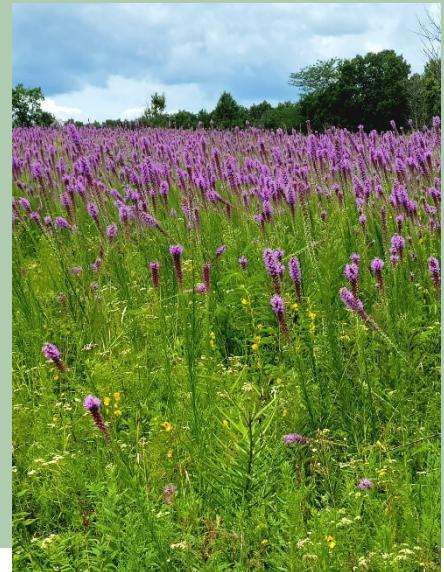
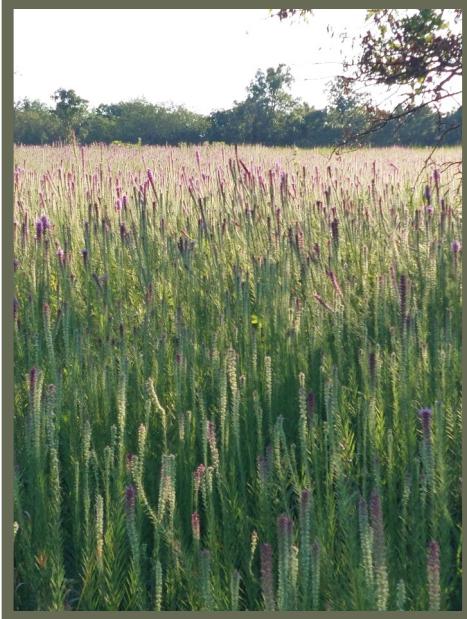


Photo by Dennis Foss



Many of us were introduced to this prairie remnant by Sam Lord who at the time was serving as Natural Resource Steward with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Through Sam we learned much about the importance of soil health, the plant species found here (130 species at one sample site) and land management practices to protect and restore prairie soil health.

More information about Sam Lord's work can be found in MDC's Natural Areas Newsletter 2019 (page 15).

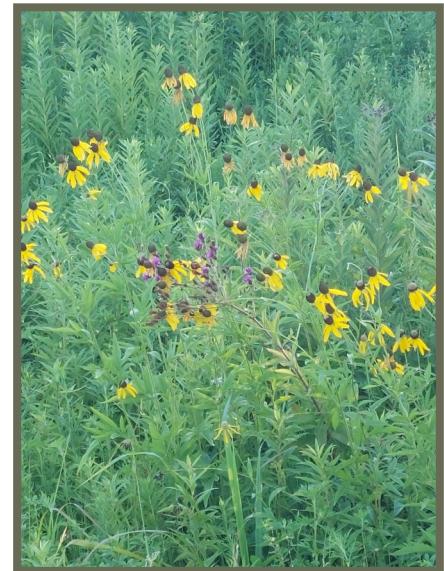
<https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places/natural-areas/natural-areas-newsletter>

**Phil and Beth Whelan did several drive-bys in July to check on the progress of the Prairie Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnostachya*), and to capture and record what was blooming.**

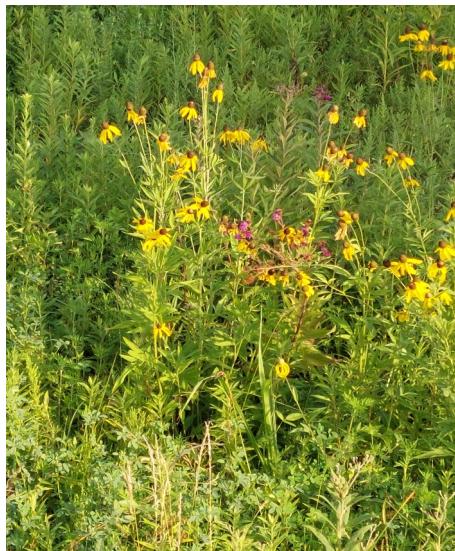
Remaining Photos all by Beth Whelan

July 21, 2022

Phil and I drove to Hwy 107 boat ramp to see the progress of the prairie flowers on the prairie. We were a bit too early to see the Liatris, Iron weed, Yellow Coneflower, and Black eyed Susans in their full glory, but at least we had a starting point. There were many other flowers just starting to bloom, but I listed the ones I could identify.



## Hwy 107 Prairie Continued



July 23, 2022,

*Phil and I returned to HWY 107 Boat ramp, and our anticipation grew, but still just a wee bit early. The Iron weed had really taken off, but the Liatris was slow about blooming.*



July 28, 2022

*Phil and I returned once again, WOW! Just WOW! Now we are talking! Full blown color everywhere! Sam Lord should be so proud of this little area of prairie! He has spent many hours and days protecting, studying, and beautifying this area, and restoring this acreage back to its glory days. I am not sure how many species of flowers are listed on this property. I believe Sam Lord has documented close to 60. As you can see from some of the pictures, there were many butterflies, and singing bugs buzzing around the area.*



*Thanks to the DNR and MDC for allowing this prairie restoration project to happen. Missouri Master Naturalists, it's our turn to get in on this and restore many more properties like this in our beautiful state and to make Missouri proud.*

***Get outside and enjoy what nature has provided!***



## ADVISOR'S CORNER

### University of Missouri Update from University of Missouri Extension

I would like to provide an update with some information coming from the University of Missouri Extension. As many of you are probably aware the budget situation has not been great the last couple of years. As field faculty we went through a 5% salary reduction and a 10% reduction in FTE (Full Time Equivalent).

In August of 2022 we received some exciting news which is shared in the letter below from the Vice Chancellor for Extension and Engagement, Marshall Stewart.

*I want to share with you some important and exciting news. The FY2023 budget approved by Missouri Gov. Mike Parson includes an additional one-year, \$5 million investment in MU Extension. This much-needed boost will allow us to fill and expand positions in the field, growing our capacity to provide a strong, program-focused presence in every county of the state.*

*We are also transitioning to a new staffing model that has been developed in response to feedback from communities, councils, field faculty and other stakeholders. You will be hearing more details about this change in the months to come.*

*The result will be more specialists in the field to deliver programming that is responsive to local needs.*

*Right now, we are actively recruiting for more than 40 positions, and we will be seeking to fill even more positions in the coming months.*

By Daniel Mallory

# UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI Extension

### What does this mean for MU Extension and Missouri?

First, the model in which we have operated is shifting from a community engagement specialist (CES) and field specialist to an extension engagement specialist (EES) and field specialist model.

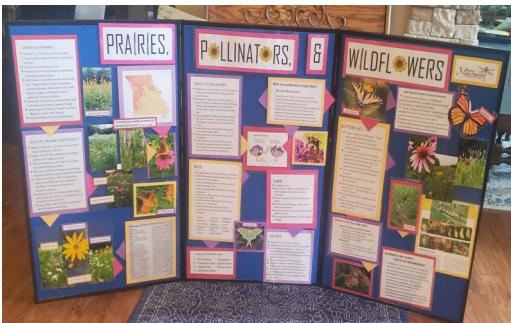
In this previous model the CES for each county was responsible to engage with county councils, civic groups and stakeholders as well as maintaining a programmatic plan within their discipline.

In the updated model the EES will become more an administrative leadership role with up to 90% of the duties including collaborating with regional directors and county extension councils, engaging with communities, stakeholders, elected officials and assisting field specialist to connect with stakeholders and partners.

The field specialist duties will remain delivering educational programming within their discipline.

Secondly, extension has become a line item on the state budget with professional schools and research. This will provide the opportunity for extension to grow the budget independent from the UM system.

And finally, this allowed, as of September 1, 2022, the ability to reinstate extension field faculty back to 1.0 FTE. As well as the addition of 40 new hires. By filling these vacant positions we in extension will be better able to serve our clientele.



A big shout-out to Theresa Casey for developing educational materials and topic boards for our booths at the many events we attend. They are beautiful in addition to educational. Check them out when you get a chance.



GETTING  
TO  
KNOW  
YOU



## MEET Gale Rublee

By Bella Erakko

***Idyllic childhood comes to mind when listening to Gale Rublee recount her early years.***

**Who wouldn't want to live immersed in nature in Newport, Vermont, on Lake Memphremagog—a lake claimed by both Canada and Vermont, with internationally indifferent fish swimming both ways? Who wouldn't want parents who suggest—frequently—a walk in the woods?**

Her mother, a portrait artist and Christian Scientist, her father, who grew up in Newport, two brothers and one sister may have lacked financial wealth but had over-abundant nature wealth. Gale has often said, "If my father could have made money watching sunsets, he'd have been a millionaire." Both parents took time to appreciate the beauty in nature which they passed on to their children. Even today, at family gatherings, someone inevitably says, "Let's go for a walk." Swimming in the summer, skiing in the winter, and lots of outdoor play from dawn-to-dusk created an indelible link for Gale between her future life and nature.

When her parents divorced, she, her mother, and her youngest brother moved to San Antonio to be close to her mother's family. It sure wasn't Vermont! It lacked that verdant seasonal beauty. But Gale soon left Texas to attend a private school for Christian Scientists, Principia, in St. Louis—thus reuniting her with her joy of seasonal weather patterns and woods to walk in with familiar trees. She admits, "I love exploring in the woods and even getting lost. I have a good sense of direction, so I usually find my way back. It's always an adventure." Inspired by the J. R. R. Tolkein quote

**"Not all who wander are lost", Gale says  
"I wander to wonder at the  
beauty and mysteries of Nature."**

With a B.F.A. in theater from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, Gale and her first husband eventually headed to Los Angeles where he grew up and had family. Gale's first job in L.A. was working at Krohn Chocolatier in Beverly Hills. Ironically, her first job in Hannibal was also in chocolate at Chocolaterie Stam. She did the "acting thing" without much success and after about 5 years she left her husband and Hollywood. Back in St. Louis Gale married a friend from high school, and they had a son, Gavin.

Gale was one of those moms who volunteered at school, became a girl scout leader, and took her son and various friends on nature adventures. She became a professional storyteller and taught creative drama. One of her most rewarding activities was as a volunteer Teacher-Naturalist at the Shaw Nature Reserve, part of the Missouri Botanical Gardens, which she did for 13 years.

She enthuses, "Thanks to learning so much at the Nature Reserve and the various habitats there, I have a real appreciation for the diversity here in Missouri: prairie, wetlands, glades, forests, rivers." Kids really get her juices going. "One of my favorite programs we did at SNR was called an 'Earth Walk'. I incorporate many of those activities into the nature programs I do for Hannibal Parks and Recreation. I want to give kids and adults the experience of connecting to nature especially through their senses."

Now, here in Hannibal since 2015, Gale feels like many of her talents and gifts have come together.



## MEET Gale Rublee, Continued

Today she leads 3-4 nature programs a month as Hannibal Parks and Recreation's Interpreter Guide including night hikes at the Sodalis Nature Preserve. For 5 years, Gale was the director for Bluff City Theater's Youth Education in Theater Initiative. Currently, she does after school care at the Hannibal Children's Center; is a tour guide on the coaches for the river boats along with forming a guide service called Destination Hannibal MO Tours with close friend, Monti Cline, whose husband Keith and daughter Shyenne are Master Naturalists. Gale also does some nature education at Gardner Camp across the river in Hull. As a certified ski instructor for 13 years at Hidden Valley in St. Louis, Gale loves hanging out with others who enjoy the winter. One of Gale's greatest accomplishments in Hannibal has been as a founding member of the Mississippi Hills Master Naturalist chapter!

And what would be a perfect "nature" day for Gale? "I'd go to Steyermark for a long walk in the woods or

maybe Fall Creek on the Illinois side and get my feet in water. And I do like camping." Lisa Wiese, her partner, fellow master naturalist, ceramics teacher and kayak builder, likes to kayak on the Mississippi. They even paddled to Turtle Island and camped out once in the first year they lived here. "Saw one of the most beautiful sunsets that evening that seemed to linger forever!"

A parent never knows what influence they will have on their children. When growing up, role playing computer games were more attractive than running around in the woods for son Gavin. But now as an adult, he chooses to spend time in nature to de-stress and connect to himself. He takes time to watch a good sunset. After a camping trip in college, he called her and said, "You know, Mom, being in nature is where I really feel a relationship with something greater than myself." The love of nature so important to Gale passes on.



## Fall Migration

Whether you like to follow the migratory paths of Monarch butterflies, hummingbirds or other birds and migratory species, there are organizations that collect that data and present it on their websites via visualization maps. These are interesting and fun to view. Here are a few websites to check out!

**Birds:** There are several tools to track bird migrations in your local area, in Missouri and across the globe.

**Cornell Labs: All About Birds--*BirdCast Dashboard*** provides detailed 3-day Migration Forecasts and real-time nightly migration activity. (*Link provided by Dennis Foss*)

[Birdcast Dashboard](#)



White Pelicans gathered at Mark Twain Lake  
Photo by Anne Coleman

**Audubon--*Bird Migration Explorer*** is a free, interactive, digital platform that visualizes the annual journeys of 458 North American migratory species.

[Bird Migration Explorer](#)

## Monarch Butterflies:

**Journey North--*Fall Migration Map*** is another free resource for tracking migration. The following link is to track sightings of Monarch butterflies—be sure to add your sightings!

[Monarch Fall Migration Map](#)

It is also worth noting that **Journey North** has many other projects including hummingbirds, eagles, song birds, frogs and dragonflies. Check out their website for more. Who knew frogs & dragonflies migrated!



Monarch caterpillar on Butterfly Weed.  
Photo by Phil Whelan's niece, Rhonda Arens of  
Martinsburg, MO



## Forestkeepers Summit: Celebration of the White Oak

By Dennis Honkomp

On August 27, I got to spend a wonderful day at the 2022 Forestkeepers Conference. The topic for this year was “Wonders of White Oak” and the location was central Missouri. I was one of 13 attendees who met at Finger Lakes State Park.

Dan Billman, Forest ReLeaf’s Nursery Specialist, gave an ID lesson on oaks (difference between red & white oak leaves) and passed around a Burr Oak leaf. Dan, adorned in his “White Oak Society” t-shirt, stated that while oaks can be found worldwide, white oak (*quercus alba*) is unique to the U.S. He said there are many species of white oak and a lesser number of red oak species.

**The reason we focused on *quercus alba* is that it is the most important hardwood lumber tree in the U.S. and Missouri, and it sets the standard for all other oaks.**

Dan also showed us a vine, Oriental Bittersweet, which is extremely invasive and deadly to white oaks. If you see it, pull it, and treat the roots with herbicide.

Our next stop was Rudolf Bennett Conservation Area where Billy Haag, Forest ReLeaf Forestry Manager, spoke about forest health and forest recreation techniques. Standing next to a majestic white oak, Billy mentioned that it could be home to over 500 species of insects and butterflies making it a key component of native biodiversity. Billy also talked about the white oak’s function in the forest canopy. In the crowded woodland where we stood, smaller understory trees such as silver maple and invasive species such as bush honeysuckle shade out white oak seedlings, not allowing them to regenerate. Prescribed fire, when possible, can help restore the woodland. If fire is not practical, mechanical thinning may be necessary.

Dan talked about oak wilt and the importance of avoiding pruning between March-July to keep the beetles out. He also said that it is not unusual to have some of your white oak leaves turn pale. Hank Stelter of MU Extension explained the steps a white oak takes to heal wounds.

Our next stop was Barrel 53 Cooperage in Higbee, MO where we were treated to a tour conducted by owner Robert Berendzen. They do everything from milling their own logs into staves, constructing their own Missouri white oak barrels, growing their own grain, and distilling their own whiskey. Robert ships barrels to all 50 states and all over the world. Missouri white oak barrels are considered the best in the world because they don’t leak. Robert was brimming with pride the entire tour (and rightfully so). The tour was followed by lunch provided by the Missouri Forestkeepers network and a presentation by Hank, featuring a video of the barrel making process that included interviews with Missouri distillers and French vintners extolling the value of Missouri white oak barrels.

Hank also presented an overview of the White Oak Initiative. Without a major intervention the white oak population will begin to significantly decline in the next 10-15 years. To ensure the sustainability of our white oak forests, it is imperative that there is active support from industry, policy makers, resource professionals and landowners. About 90% of Missouri’s land is privately owned, making landowner support especially critical. You can earn more about the White Oak Initiative at

<https://www.whiteoakinitiative.org/>

Following lunch, Robert’s wife and co-owner of the operation, April, hosted a tasting at the Woodsmen Distilling tasting room. I don’t think anyone was disappointed. The combination of the spirits and hospitality made the whiskey tasting a great way to end the day.

A big “thank you” goes out to Ellen Sulser, who coordinated the event, as well as Dan, Billy, Robert, April, and Hank (who also provided transportation).



# Spotlight on Species

## *The Salamander*

BY CAROLYN TROWER

Hundreds of years ago European folklore believed the salamander was a symbol of immortality and rebirth. The sudden escape from a fire seemed to imply the animal could not be burned. Today we know that salamanders like to hide in cool damp logs and when that log is tossed on the fire their sudden dart from the flames is simple survival and not magic.



Ringed Salamander from Missouri

An interesting fact about the salamander is they are voiceless. Salamanders are short-bodied and four-legged and most are between 4 and 6 inches long. Their skin is usually camouflaged, often patterned, and some are brightly colored. Most species have small teeth in upper and lower jaws,

Although they look like lizards, salamanders are amphibians. Like frogs their skin is moist, and while some species are totally aquatic, most undergo a metamorphosis from living in water to living on land. They require fresh water and a damp environment to thrive and must return to the water to lay their eggs. Their soft gelatinous eggs and gilled larvae live in the water, but as adults the salamander moves to the land and breathes air. In regions with freezing temperatures, they hibernate in the winter.

While they are not a threat to fisheries, they are opportunistic predators and not restricted to specific foods. Salamanders generally eat insects, worms, snails and on occasion, smaller members of their own species.

There are over 50 species of salamanders in Missouri and their populations are declining. Ten salamanders have been placed on the list of Species of Conservation Concern in Missouri. Hellbenders are an endangered species and the Ozark hellbender subspecies has recently been placed on the federal endangered list.

The hellbender species of salamander is found in the larger swift-flowing streams of the Ohio River system and other such streams in the central and eastern parts of the United States. Adults can grow to be between 12-29 inches long and are long, stout-bodied, and flat-headed. The typical hellbender is brownish gray with black spots. The wrinkly folds on its body and legs allow increased surface skin area for respiration. Hellbenders spend the day resting under stones and their nights hunting for crayfish, small fishes and worms. They mate in the late summer. The female lays a string of 150-900 eggs in a nest scooped out by the male on the stream bottom. Fertilization is external and the male guards the eggs for 10-12 weeks before they hatch.

The Ozark hellbender is smaller and is found in the Black River systems of Arkansas and Missouri. If you should snare any salamander while fishing, please release it back into its habitat.

# OUR ENVIRONMENTAL HEROS

By Tracy Fuller



However, I would like to introduce you to a conservation hero that I recently learned about.

In July 2021, I was able to attend an educators camp at the National Audubon Camp in Bremen, Maine, at Hog Island. While I was there, I met and learned of the work done by Stephen Kress.

I think he is a hero of conservation because he saw something missing from our biosphere that used to be there and worked hard to bring back a missing piece even though it took several years for success.

He realized that several kinds of seabirds once nested on islands off the coast of Maine but were no longer there. One particular bird was the puffin. They used to nest on a small island called Eastern Egg Rock. Their population in the area was depleted due to hunting for meat and for feathers. Over the years, the population never rebounded even though the birds were protected from hunters.

After doing research on puffins and devising a plan with Canadian Wildlife Services, Stephen Kress traveled to the Great Island of Newfoundland in July 1973 to bring back some puffin chicks to Egg Rock near Maine to start a new colony.

Stephen and some other colleagues would have to stick their arm down long tunnels to see if there were puffin chicks in the hole. If the chick was around 10-14 days old, it was selected. The first year 6 chicks were taken to Egg Rock. Over the next 8 years, a total of 950 chicks were transported.

A hero is someone who is looked up to or held to a high degree for their courage, achievements or qualities. When it comes to conservation heroes, there are several who come to mind like: Theodore Roosevelt, Carl Linnaeus, Jacques Cousteau, and Jane Goodall.



Mr. Kress spent hours placing the chicks in their burrows, feeding them by hand and placing bands on their legs.

It only takes a few weeks before the chicks are ready to leave the nest and go to sea. Open ocean is where puffins love to be. However, they need good nesting grounds when they return 2 to 3 years later.

Stephen and his students had to make sure Egg Rock was predator free from gulls and welcoming to those puffins when they returned. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service and some puffin decoys helped to make Egg Rock a safe place to nest.

Four years after Mr. Kress started the project, a puffin returned to Egg Rock and another four years later the first puffin chick was born on the island after a 100 year lapse. Today there are close to 150 pairs of breeding puffins on the island.

What inspired me about Mr. Kress was his curiosity and his desire to find out why and how. He did not let the length of the project deter him but kept seeking knowledge on how to bring back the puffins. Just like any project or dream, a person runs into roadblocks and frustrations. Mr. Kress was no different; but he never gave up and worked tirelessly to bring back a piece of the biosphere puzzle.

People like Stephen Kress encourage me to do my part in conservation. I may never bring a species back into an area but I can always do my part to help keep a native species in the area or help keep an ecosystem healthy and thriving by following advice from the conservation department, planting trees and flowers, or picking up trash in an area. Maintaining our resources is everyone's job--we can all be heroes.





# WORDS OF WISDOM

From our MHMN President, George Wisdom

When I was young, I discovered archery and fell in love with it. I purchased my first bow with the money which I earned from mowing yards.

The art of shooting a bow can be extremely easy to very difficult, but does take some practice to become proficient with it. I found that hunting with a bow put me in the woods a lot and brought me much closer to nature. At first all I could think about was taking a deer with a bow. I soon learned that there is great value to just walking slowly or sitting in the woods which helped mold me into a naturalist. Having a fox walk by you unaware of your presence or have a squirrel about to jump on your leg or a covey of quail walk under you helps put you very close in touch with nature.

Fred Bear, one of the fathers of modern archery, was my hero. Some of our most famous conservationists were hunters. Such as Theodore Roosevelt, our country's 26<sup>th</sup> president, who established 150 national forests, 51 federal bird reserves, four national game preserves, five national parks, and 18 national monuments on over 230 million acres of public land.

***It is a known fact that through great men like these and other hunters have done great things in maintaining and preserving our wildlife.***

In 1937 a citizen led effort created the Missouri Depart-

ment of Conservation (MDC) with the purpose to restore, conserve and regulate Missouri's over stressed fisheries, forests, and wildlife populations. Today MDC is one of the most highly recognized wildlife agencies in the country. We are so blessed to live in Missouri and to be part of this great work. Today a big portion of support for our fish and wildlife also comes from fisherman and hunters through the purchasing of hunting and fishing licenses. As we look toward 2023, our mission as master naturalists is to engage Missourians in the stewardship of our state's natural resources through science-based education and volunteer service. Our chapter, since it was started in 2018, has made a difference in conservation and helping to educate our community on how valuable our trees, streams and rivers are, and on how important it is to be good stewards of our environment.

However, we have much work yet to do. I want to take this opportunity to encourage you to continue to learn more about the world of nature around us and to stay engaged with the Mississippi Hills Master Naturalist Chapter. Let's endeavor to persevere and together we can accomplish great things.

**See you on the trail.**

George W. Wisdom, President

*"Nothing clears a troubled mind better than shooting a bow."*  
-- Fred Bear

## BY THE NUMBERS



(rounded to nearest whole hour as of September 30, 2022)

**2022**

### **SERVICE PROJECTS**

Volunteer Service Projects Total Hours = 2511

### **ADVANCED TRAINING**

Advanced Training Total Hours = 658

### **Recognition for achieving Initial Certifications!**

- \* Abigail Tumbleson
- \* Richard Tumbleson
- \* Carolyn Trower
- \* Ann Humphreys

### **Congratulations on 2022 Recertifications!**

- \* Barry Casey
- \* Dennis Honkomp
- \* Deborah Daniels
- \* Janet Golian

### **Special Congratulations to—**

◊ Dennis Honkomp

For achieving his *Gold Milestone* pin  
for 1000 volunteer hours

# Missouri Master Naturalists at Work

*Thank you to everyone who participated in these and other public events! A special thanks to those who contributed pictures.*



Mississippi Hills Chapter members helping out at the Wild and Wacky event held at Central Park, Hannibal, MO.

Over 250 children attended. Children and parents participated in making crafts and learning about native plants.



MHMN Chapter participated in the Pike County Farm Safety Day Event. Over 200 children attended. The chapter talked about being safe in the sun, venomous snakes, poison ivy, ticks, chiggers, and mosquitos.



Pictures from the YESA (Youth Empowerment Sports Activities) fishing activity held at Huckleberry Park Thursday July 28. Activity was lead by MDC Oliva Pinkowski.

Catching fish makes wonderful memories!



MHMNs helping to build Blue Bird houses at Fall Pickers Market – Bethel, MO.

Happy smiles leads to happy Blue Birds!



Many members participated in the Heartland Seed of MO field day. When not staffing the information table, MNs were attending educational sessions.



# Missouri Master Naturalists at Work, cont.

On September 24th, Master Naturalists joined other volunteers to assist with the building of fish habitat structures to be installed at Mark Twain Lake near Spalding boat ramp on October 1st. This work is being done as part of a five-year-plan that the Army Corps of Engineers has prepared. A recent grant from BassPro Shops (\$50,000) has provided a portion of the funding with some funding coming from private individuals who have donated with the hopes of improving fish habitat in the lake.



## Reader's Review

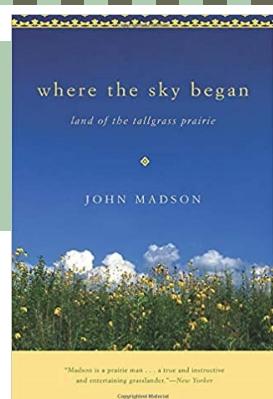
By Bob Kendrick

### *Where The Sky Began*

by John Madson

A fellow Master Naturalist gave me a book he'd purchased used from the internet.

I like used books knowing someone else had enjoyed it before,  
and I like the smell of book dust.



*Where The Sky Began* was written by John Madson, copyright 1982. Originally this book was in the Alumni Library at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, and had been checked out a good dozen times. That is a good sign. The subject matter is Land of the Tallgrass Prairie.

Madson writes about the formation of the three prairie systems: Tallgrass here, Mixed-Grass slightly west of us, and the Shortgrass plains out west. His home is Iowa so most of his subject is about our prairie which is Tallgrass. After formation, he directs us into early settler's discovery quoting several French passages. Here the prose is so wonderful that it is nearly lyrical and evolves into a song of our prairie. He describes several of the plants in wonderful detail with story as accompaniment. About the time that your head is swimming with too much detail, then he pulls up another story like picking and eating wild strawberries. It is obvious that his life has been in this prairie. His stories remind me of a lot of my early childhood adventures of wonder and discovery.

He writes not only of the flora but the fauna, elk, bear, bison, Indians, birds, butterflies, small creatures and more. I like the term the Native Americans used for fire: *the red buffalo*. He ends up writing about the peoples that the prairie produced. He helped me to realize that I am one of them, and that my value system is deeply rooted in the Tallgrass prairie.

*It is an uplifting and a wonderful read.*

# HIGHLIGHT ON UPCOMING EVENTS

**Watch for Emails and Check our Calendars for Updates and New Events**

## Advanced Training AND Volunteer Opportunity

### **October 8, 2022--Mississippi Hills Chapter- Private Land Management Field Day —Advanced Training**

MH Private Land Management Field Day Set for October 8, 2022      7:30 am - 3:00 pm

See emails dated September 27th from Vanessa for invitation with more information and directions to event.

Hosted by Vanessa Laatsch. Please RSVP @ 217-257-5391

**In addition to Advanced Training hours, members will also be able to add volunteer hours if they participate**

in—

***Natural Resource Stewardship: MH Private Land Management Field Day--Invasive Species Removal***

**Or**

**Members have prepared and are giving presentations—**

***Chapter Education & Interpretation Projects: MH Private Land Management Field Day--Skills Breakout Session***

***Preparation & Delivery***

## Volunteer Opportunities

### **Nov 1, 2022—Turkey Booth**

The Corp of Engineers at Mark Twain Lake has asked the chapter to have a booth about turkeys on Tuesday Nov 1, 2022.

### **Date TBD--Milkweeds for Monarchs project**

Gale Rublee and Kristy Trevathan are the project coordinators, and Kristy will place a chapter order for Milkweed. Current plan is to do a milkweed planting at Sodalis and we will need assistance planting. Milkweed will be delivered in early November.

### **Date TBD--Hannibal airport prairie dedication – Mack Ellis**

More information to come

### **November 19 and 20,2022-- Deer Hunt for People with Disabilities**

34th handicap deer hunt at Mark Twain Lake is scheduled for the weekend before Thanksgiving. Anyone interested in helping please contact Bob Kendrick.

### **December 13, 2022-- Holiday Party 6 pm at Hannibal Arts Council facility**

Danny Hartwig will present the Regional Partnership award to the membership. More information to come

### **December 17, 2022--Christmas Bird Count**

Meet at Frank Russell Archery Park . More information to come

## Advanced Training Opportunities—Speakers at meetings

### **October 25, 2022—Bryophytes (mosses, liverworts and lichens)**

Lorie Hetrick-Volenberg is a Natural Resource Specialist at Mark Twain State Park and will talk about mosses, liverworts and lichens.

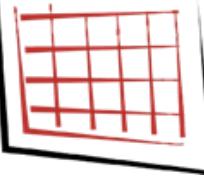
Following the presentation, she will hold a mini “workshop” by bringing in moss samples for folks to be able to view.

***Bring a magnifying glass or jewelers/gem loupe if you have one.***

### **November 22, 2022--Hannibal's “Lost boys” from MODOT perspective**

Dr. Chris Shulse, MODOT Environmental Compliance Manager, will speak on November 22nd. His topic, “Lost Boys in The Cave” from MODOT perspective.

**PUT THIS  
on YOUR  
CALENDAR!**



### Monthly Meetings

Monthly Chapter Meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month

Bi-monthly Board Meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every other month

## Volunteer Opportunity Calendar for October, November and December 2022

Event Date	Event Time	Event Title
10/7/2022	06:00 pm - 08:00 pm	Parks / Conservation Areas :: Hannibal Parks :: Hannibal Parks & Rec Interpretive Programs :: Night Hike
10/8/2022	Flex time	Chapter Education & Interpretation Projects :: Deliver Educational/ Interpretative Program :: MH Private Land Management Field Day-- Skills Breakout Session Preparation & Delivery
10/8/2022	Flex time	Natural Resource Stewardship :: Land Owner Assistance :: Laatsch Mulberry Farms :: MH Private Land Management Field Day---Invasive Species Removal
10/14/2022	06:00 pm - 08:00 pm	Parks / Conservation Areas :: Hannibal Parks :: Hannibal Parks & Rec Interpretive Programs :: Night Hike
10/21/2022	06:00 pm - 08:00 pm	Parks / Conservation Areas :: Hannibal Parks :: Hannibal Parks & Rec Interpretive Programs :: Night Hike
10/25/2022	07:30 pm - 08:30 pm	Program Support :: Chapter Meeting :: (10) October
11/1/2022	09:00 am - 03:00 pm	Parks / Conservation Areas :: Mark Twain Lake :: Boudreaux Visitor Center :: Turkey Booth--Time is TBD
11/8/2022	06:00 pm - 07:00 pm	Program Support :: Executive Board :: Board Meeting
11/19/2022	04:30 am - 07:00 pm	Conservation Group Partnership :: Army Corps of Engineers Special Hunts :: Deer Hunt for People with Disabilities
11/20/2022	04:30 am - 07:00 pm	Conservation Group Partnership :: Army Corps of Engineers Special Hunts :: Deer Hunt for People with Disabilities
11/22/2022	07:00 pm - 08:00 pm	Program Support :: Chapter Meeting :: (11) November
12/13/2022	06:00 pm - 08:00 pm	Program Support :: Chapter Meeting :: (12) December :: Holiday Party
12/17/2022	08:00 am - 03:00 pm	Citizen Science :: Christmas Bird Count



**Now is a great time to enter your hours!**

Please visit—<https://www.hills.missourimasternaturalist.org/>

Enter your hours for Advanced Training and Volunteer Service or send your Hours to Anne Coleman.  
Please let her know if you need assistance.

Tracking hours helps you towards Certification and credits our Chapter for your hard work and conservation efforts.

**THANK YOU!**

# Advanced Training Calendar for October, November, December 2022



**Watch for new training that is added on the website.**  
**If you find additional training not on the calendar, please send to George and Anne so that it can be added.**  
**If you aren't sure whether the new training qualifies please ask!**  
**THANKS!!**

Event Date	Event Time	Event Title
10/8/2022	07:30 am - 03:00 pm	Mississippi Hills Chapter- Private Land Management Field Day
10/11/2022	10:00 am - 11:00 am	MDC--Native Plants: Diggin' Deep: I Fall to Pieces (Virtual)
10/11/2022	06:00 pm - 07:00 pm	MDC--Wildlife: Elk Driving Tour Through Peck Ranch (VIRTUAL)
10/12/2022	02:00 pm - 02:30 pm	MDC--Wildlife: Creature Feature: Eastern Gartersnake (Virtual)
10/12/2022	04:00 pm - 05:00 pm	MPF Grow Native! Webinar: Dicamba and 2,4-D: Old Herbicides Causing New Problems (Virtual)
10/14/2022	10:00 am - 11:00 am	MDC--Discover Nature: Naturalist Notes Virtual Series: Bird Migration
10/25/2022	06:00 pm - 07:30 pm	Chapter Meeting----Lorie Hetrick-Volenberg
10/25/2022	01:00 pm - 02:00 pm	MDC--Wild Edibles: Honey Locust Pods (VIRTUAL)
10/26/2022	04:00 pm - 05:00 pm	MPF Grow Native! Master Class: The Seed Cycle: Native Seed Collection, Stratification, and Propagation (Virtual)
10/27/2022	12 noon - 12:30 pm	MDC--Insects: Ladybugs (Virtual)
11/22/2022	06:00 pm - 07:00 pm	Chapter Meeting----Dr. Chris Shulse
11/22/2022	02:00 pm - 02:30 pm	MDC--Wildlife: Creature Feature Eastern Snapping Turtle (Virtual)
11/22/2022	12 noon - 01:00 pm	MDC--Wildlife: Missouri's Venomous Animals (Virtual)
11/23/2022	04:00 pm - 05:00 pm	MPF Grow Native! Master Class: Wasps: The Astonishing Diversity of a Misunderstood Insect (Virtual)
12/28/2022	02:00 pm - 02:30 pm	MDC--Wildlife: Creature Feature: Snowy Owl (Virtual)

**Most training requires advanced registration. If you want to sign up for a training session, please use the appropriate link below.**

**FOR MDC:** <https://mdc.mo.gov/events>

**FOR MPF:** <https://moprairie.org/events/>

**For other advanced training, follow the instructions in the email sent by George or Kristy.  
 If you aren't sure, please ask! Someone will be happy to help you get signed up.**

**We're searching for articles for our next newsletter**

What nature topic would you like to learn more about?

Have you read a good book lately?  
 Would you like to share an article?

Contact Janet Golian for more information, to share your ideas or to provide feedback for our newsletter.

The deadline for contributing to the next newsletter is December 31, 2022

