

THE OZARK HOLLER

OZARK LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER • FALL 2019

Protecting land and views on the Katy Trail

Skirting the northern edge of the Ozark bioregion, the 240-mile Katy Trail (once the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroad line) allows hikers and cyclists to enjoy views of farmlands, bluffs and woodlands along the Missouri River. With development and incompatible land management as threats to the

Katy corridor, Edward "Ted" and Pat Jones, with significant help from their friend Dan Burkhardt, enlisted Ozark Land Trust to hold conservation easements along the Katy Trail that permanently protect the farming heritage and scenery of the area.



Above: Mayer Conservation Easement: Tree farmer Franz Mayer understands the importance of trees and woodlands. In 2012, Franz donated a 50-acre conservation easement near Dutzow, MO. The easement protects an impressive limestone bluff and contiguous hardwoods that serve as a wildlife corridor. The towering bluff can be seen from the trail, from nearby Highway 47 and by boat from the Missouri River; its permanent protection assures that it will be viewed and appreciated for generations to come.

Ozark Land Trust currently holds conservation easements on more than 370 acres of privately owned forests, fields, and bluffs along the Katy Trail.

In 2010, the Katy Land Trust was founded to work in conjunction with OLT to further promote the importance of conservation and preservation in the area. OLT continues to protect open space and natural resources along the Katy with conservation easements. Another project has just been completed in Howard County, MO, on Triple D Farms, protecting farmlands and scenic bluffs for passersby to enjoy.

Katy Land Trust and its sister organization, Magnificent Missouri, work today to build knowledge, education, public awareness and community resources for the trail and the broader area from Hermann to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

Continued inside

Banner photo: Spring Bend (Knowles) Conservation Easement: This 100 acres of woodland, wildflowers and native grasslands along the Katy Trail was protected with a conservation easement in 2007. The property, located in ever-expanding St. Charles, MO, also includes an active spring and two streams that flow directly into the Missouri River. Over 2000 feet of the trail and Missouri River frontage border the property, giving river and trail users an uninterrupted view of riverfront woodland and grassland. See Katy Trail map and more photos on inside page.

Your contributions help to protect land along the Katy Trail

MISSION

To help people protect and conserve the natural resources and beauty of the Ozarks and to advocate for land conservation.

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Introducing two new OLT board members

Ozark Land Trust is pleased to have elected two new members to its Board of Directors in 2019. Please join us in welcoming them!



Karen Massey

Karen Massey brings a lengthy career of wide expertise to OLT. Until recently she was the Director of the State Environmental Improvement and Energy Resources Authority (EIERA), which offers opportunities for bond financing, brownfield cleanup, weatherization, and projects involving water, wastewater, and solid and hazardous waste. She has previous experience with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and Missouri Public Service Commission. She holds a J.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law. Karen grew up in Ozark, MO, and loves gardening, needlework, fly tying, hiking and hanging out with her husband and Australian Shepherd, Niko.



Mark Curtis

Mark Curtis has a substantial professional history. He has served as a Vice President of the Bank of LaGrange Park, and as a VP of Plansmith Securities, both in suburban Chicago. A retired financial advisor, Mark was a Partner in Asia Pacific Investors Services in Hagatma, Guam, for a decade. Mark served on the Benton County, AR, Planning Advisory Committee in 2005, was a member of the Benton County Planning Board from 2008-2016, and currently serves on the Benton County Board of Appeals. Mark received his B.A. in Urban Geography from the University of Minnesota. He lives

in Rogers, AR, owns a tree farm near Wisconsin Dells, and is the director of the Northwest Arkansas Curling Club. He likes to fish, canoe, and hike in the Ozarks.

WAYS TO INTERACT WITH US!

Call us: You can call our main number at 573-817-2020 and a menu will connect you to our staff members' phones. Leave us a message and we can have a personal chat. Or if you want to reach Director Larry Levin directly, feel free to call 314-420-0460.

Drop us a line: You can mail any of us at PO Box 1512, Columbia, MO, 65205.

By email: Write us at info@ozarklandtrust.org and we'll get it to the right staff or board member.

Visit our website: www.ozarklandtrust.org

Visit us on social media:

Twitter: @OzarkLandTrust

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OzarkRegionalLandTrust/

Visit us in person: Whether at our annual meeting or our various events during the year, come mingle with our board, staff, volunteers and other supporters.

We couldn't do anything without you, and being able to both share with you and hear from you is crucial to our future. Please stay connected and we look forward to protecting Ozark lands together!

Founder Gregg Galbraith recounts OLT's growth and milestones

By Denise Henderson Vaughn

This year, as Ozark Land Trust celebrates twin milestones of its 35th anniversary and receiving accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance, we look back to our roots and the growth that has culminated in currently protecting almost 30,000 acres.

Founder Gregg Galbraith leads us on that journey through time, telling about the philosophies and influences that motivated him to initiate OLT, the early milestones, how new laws helped advance land conservation, and the organization coming to maturity.

In the late 1970s, new ideas emerged that focused on living in rural, self-sufficient communities and protecting land from exploitation. Living on the East Coast at that time, Galbraith, an Ozark native, came into contact with influential thinkers including Ralph Borsodi with the School of Living, and Bob Swann, founder of

the EF Schumaker Society. Swann promoted community land trusts (CLTs) and had been inspired by Schumaker's book, *Small is Beautiful*.

"Our role is primarily to see that land stays protected and it passes on to other generations in the same condition."

– Gregg Galbraith

Galbraith embraces the native American philosophy that land is sacred, to be respected and honored. In his view, we don't really own land; we're just passing through and it will belong to future generations. "So we need to not exploit it, consume, discard, or divide it," he said.

After returning to the Ozarks, Galbraith encountered Bob Swann again in 1983, when the latter was a guest speaker at the Ozark Area Community Congress, where activists gather annually to discuss ecological and economic issues in the Ozark bioregion.

There, Swann laid out his yet-untried plan, which involved creating an umbrella conservation land trust organization that would serve any number of individual local community land trusts. This made sense, Galbraith thought, because he understood the challenge of setting up and maintaining a separate non-profit for each unique land situation.

Galbraith was inspired. He took Swann's idea and ran with it, and the not-for-profit Ozark Regional Land Trust was born (this year renamed Ozark Land Trust). He was a driving force behind an all-volunteer effort that within a few years yielded legal community land trust status for Sweetwater CLT, on the

upper Gasconade River near Mansfield, MO, and Hawk Hill CLT in Douglas County, MO, both of which are still functioning communities.

In the early years, some landowners donated land outright, including Hogscald Hollow, 10 acres south of Eureka Springs, AR, and Amy's Woods, seven acres in Eureka Springs. Ozark

County, MO, landowner and benefactress Ella Alford played an important role, as she financed the birth of Hawk Hill CLT, and later donated the 3,200 acre Alford Forest, then and now OLT's largest single ownership.

Another early project was the purchase of three acres right in the middle of Sarcoxie, MO, with a cave and stream that is habitat for the endangered Ozark cavefish.

But Galbraith's focus was not to work strictly for the conservation of nature or to save rare species. Instead, his priority was the importance of "making land available to people, about the ecological intersection of people and land," he said. He wanted to preserve working forests and farms, to find "the best way to work the land, where you could use it but not exploit it."

"We looked at a lot of possibilities in those early years," he said. The number of potential projects was "unbelievable." But at that time, putting land into trust was challenging because the legal tools in use today were just beginning to be crafted.

"Community land trusts are limited to finding a group of people who want to accept that model as a way to hold land," he said. As for owning preserves, "you can't buy them all, you have to find donors, and you have to be able to manage and support the ownership."

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Ozark Land Trust founder Gregg Galbraith at the fourth Ozark Area Community Congress in 1983. (Photo courtesy of OACC)

Your gifts help OLT to continue its 35-year legacy of protecting 'the ecological intersection between people and land.'

Gregg Galbraith interview, continued

Huge steps in the emerging land trust movement started in 1981 with the Uniform Conservation Easement Act, which created a consistent statute adopted by nearly all states, and which allowed nonprofits and government agencies to hold such easements.

Then came federal tax reform in 1986, which included lengthy guidelines for tax deductions for gifts of conservation easements. This finally clarified rules for an earlier tax law (1976) that had initially sanctioned such gifts.

About that time, an informal network evolved into the Land Trust Alliance, which developed an accreditation process to ensure that land trust organizations meet and maintain the highest standards.

By the mid 1990s, Ozark landowners began seeking conservation easements as a means to protect their lands. Ella Alford "launched us into easements," Galbraith said, when she initiated OLT's first one on Tall Pines, a couple acres surrounded by Alford Forest. Eventually, these easements "became a dominant part of our work," he said.

After that, OLT explored different methods to protect land, with each project tailored to the

situation. For example, they collaborated with another not-for-profit for a wildlife corridor along the Katy Trail (see front page story). They partnered on

demand, he said. But it took until 2008 to restructure the organization. By then, OLT was protecting 18,000 acres. They had started a stewardship fund, an operating endowment fund, and developed a stewardship program with skilled mapping and property inventories.

"After 25 years OLT was much larger than me," Galbraith said. The restructuring transition "was perhaps the most difficult and challenging step in our history," he said. "It was a major turning point." Galbraith, the long-time volunteer director, stepped down, to be replaced by a full-time executive director and full time staff.

Between 2008 and the present, "everything we were wanting to do to strengthen the organizational structure has come full circle, and accreditation exemplifies that," Galbraith said.

"In the early years, we were volunteers rich in enthusiasm and commitment, newly operating with just a skeleton of an organization," Galbraith said. "The best times were always accepting invitations from land owners to tour their beloved property. Their enthusiasm and determination was palpable and equal to our own. In those years we were always asked if our organization would endure and grow to meet the challenge of protecting land in perpetuity. No one questioned our determination and commitment, only our capacity to carry out such an enormous mandate. It was a leap of faith by everyone involved. Today, those landowners see that OLT is a fully developed organization. Now, donors, partners and supporters ask us **what** will we do going forward and not **if** we can do it."

"The scope of change in the last 200 years eclipses the whole of human history. Despite our best intentions, human-centered culture and institutions continue to threaten the natural world, even the very planet that sustains us. Building new bioregionally based institutions like OLT is essential to rededicating ourselves to a new covenant with the Earth. While we cannot rewrite history, we can write a new future history of the world, beginning with each permanently protected land that OLT stewards." – Gregg Galbraith



mitigation projects, which involves companies that are trying to develop land, and in some cases are required by law to offset damage to the developed property by protecting an equally valuable piece elsewhere. In 2004, OLT was party to a settlement agreement that resolved a dispute between a company building a cement production plant on the Mississippi River and a group that opposed it, due to its expected impacts on endangered bats and threatened glades. The agreement included a

conservation easement to protect the endangered species.

By 2000, "we had so much work going on, it was unreal," Galbraith said. "We were pretty much maxing out" on the capacity to meet



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Katy Trail, continued

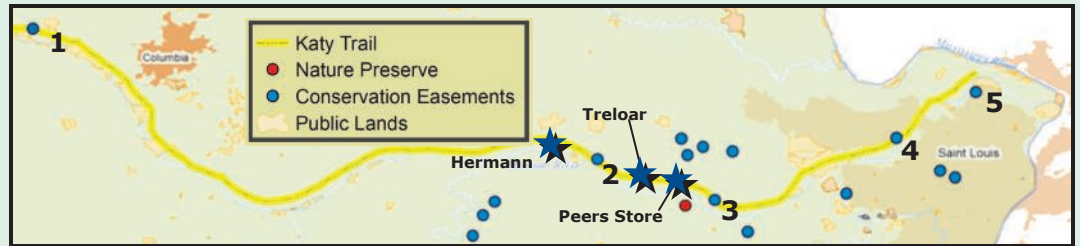


4—Bethlehem Valley Farm Conservation Easement: Founders of the Katy Land Trust, Dan and Connie Burkhardt, saved the Bethlehem Valley from becoming a large subdivision with manmade lakes and “chalets” when they purchased the property in the early 1990s. In 2010, the Burkhardts protected this shining example of the farming heritage near the Katy Trail by donating a 195-acre conservation easement.

1—Triple D Farms

Conservation Easement:

Landowner David Knight immediately recognized the scenic and ecological value of his land when he purchased it in 2018. He donated a conservation easement just this year, protecting 89 acres of fields, forests, woodlands and Missouri River bluffs. The Katy Trail borders the land for nearly one-quarter mile, providing travelers with beautiful views of farmland and bluffs that will forever be protected from development.



3—Mayer

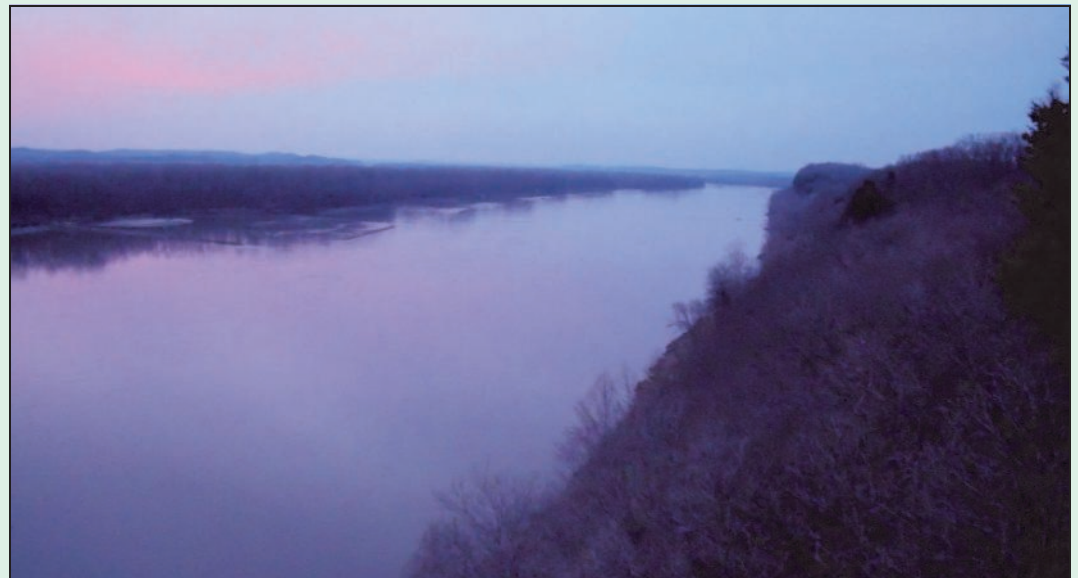
Easement
(see front page)

5—Spring Bend Easement
(see front page)



2—“Longview” Conservation

Easement: Owners of this 138 acre property have worked countless hours removing invasive species and making their property exemplary wildlife habitat. They donated a conservation easement in 2011 so that the land could forever remain a wildlife haven. The easement protects woodlands along the Katy Trail, streams that flow directly into the Missouri River, and a large limestone cliff that exemplifies the topography of the area.



OZARK LAND TRUST STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

In 1994, OLT published a "Stewardship Pledge" in our Ozark Calendar, which articulated our collective aspirations and defined our work. Twenty-five years later, our pledge is still relevant and inspirational. It motivates us to continue our fundamental land protection mission to benefit future generations of Ozarkers. The pledge is reprinted below.

Photo: Ted Heisel

STEWARDSHIP ETHICS

Our vision is to revitalize our human ecological relationship with the land.

ECOSYSTEMS

We see ourselves as being an interdependent part of natural ecosystems, not separate from and controlling of those systems. Our living practices attempt to be consistent with ecosystem balance, and do not disrupt it.

Natural ecological processes are to be maintained everywhere and our impact on those processes is considered in every decision we make.

All species native to the bioregion are protected to promote ecosystem integrity. This keeps the ecosystem and its human inhabitants in optimum health.

LAND

We see that all kinds of land and land uses are included in our ecological relationship, not just parks and nature preserves.

We look at the innate characteristics and assess the natural carrying capacity of each piece of land. We use the land in harmony with those natural capacities.

We believe that rooted landowners who embrace stewardship have the wisdom and commitment to protect the land.

LAND AND RESOURCE USE

We understand that ecological security is inseparable from economic security and that we cannot exploit the land beyond its ecological capacity for short-term economic gain.

We see that land stewards are caretakers; the current stewards inherited the land and must act for those who follow – "unto the 7th generation."

We support practices that promote clean air, soil vitality, natural diversity and pristine water.

We support ecological forestry, sustainable agriculture and appropriate technology.

We believe that homes, industries and even cities can be designed which embody the concept of environmental stewardship.

We promote observance of ecological laws through individual and community responsibility.

Through this vision, individuals and communities can revitalize spirits, cultures and economies.