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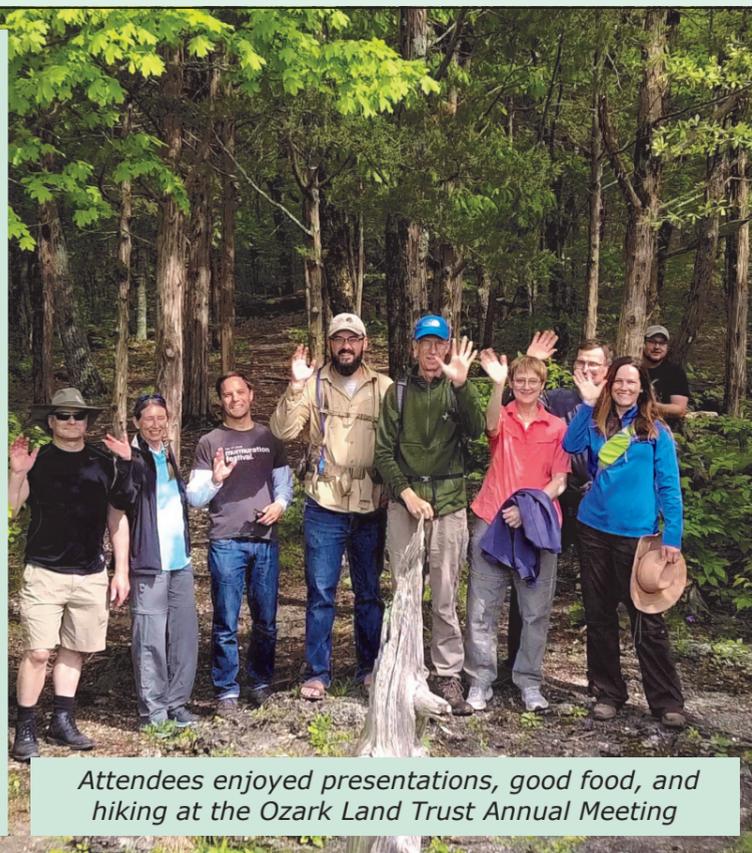
- Jack Cooper teaches youngsters outdoor values
- OLT marks 35 years, receives accreditation
- Meet Larry Levin, new executive director
- Murphy land protects bats
- Action needed: Please call your legislators

**New name, same dedicated protection to Ozark lands. We're proud to announce this change, which has been in the making for a year.**

On Saturday May 4, Ozark Land Trust held its annual meeting at the Huzzah Valley Resort outside Steelville, MO. Members, staff, volunteers and board celebrated land trust accreditation, learned about stream bank restoration from speaker Steve Herrington from the Nature Conservancy, heard staff updates about projects, and enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by Scott Woodbury.

A planned float trip had to be cancelled due to flooding. While the river raged, the Ozark Trail proved to be a peaceful place, and many hiked to a scenic overlook.

On Sunday, the board was treated to a field trip to the Yocom farm and cattle ranch (land protected by an OLT conservation easement), to learn about the many conservation practices implemented there. Tour leaders Rob Pullium, a fisheries biologist, and OLT River Stewardship Coordinator Abigail Lambert explained using landowner partnerships and incentives to implement practices that protect resources, such as fencing livestock out of streams, planting to widen riparian buffers, and installing alternative watering systems for cattle.



Attendees enjoyed presentations, good food, and hiking at the Ozark Land Trust Annual Meeting

# THE OZARK HOLLER

OZARK LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2019

## Young people learn on Jack Cooper's land

Helping youngsters get outside to learn about the land and wildlife is a priority in Jack Cooper's life. With that goal in mind, Jack found 80 acres in Ozark County, MO, under an OLT conservation easement, and he rounded out the plan by leasing an additional 67 contiguous acres already owned by OLT. An Army veteran, Jack was now ready to take on another mission, helping youth learn about conservation and how to care for the land.



**"After time in the outdoors, the kids leave with their heads held higher."**

– Jack Cooper

Initially, Jack wanted to give his own sons an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and respect natural resources. Over the years, that passion grew and expanded. About five years ago, Jack began working with young men, with the hope of passing on rich traditions of outdoor living that

include fishing, camping, hunting, and other activities.

Jack has found that meeting the needs of the young people who attend a weekend or a camp comes about by just being outside in the woods and experiencing nature with them. Oftentimes, a youngster just wants someone to talk to, and being in the great outdoors fosters that opportunity. The higher goal isn't to see how many fish you can catch or if you hit a target. An outing might not end in bringing home a deer, but something far more important might have happened. Perhaps the youngster gained confidence, learned how to care for land and wildlife, and had a strong mentor to talk with in the process.

Jack and his group take weekend outings from Friday through Sunday one weekend a month, in addition to running five different five-day overnight summer camps per year. The groups, which average six young people per outing, don't just stay on Jack's property. Sometimes they take trips to Jasper, AR, and they travel and fish along the Buffalo River or on Table Rock Lake. They also learn firearm safety, archery and swimming.

"It's a time to grow," Jack says. Many of these youngsters lack

Continued inside



**Above:** Jack Cooper, second from left, poses with young members of the Cross Trails Outfitters, Youth Hunting and Fishing Club, Springfield, MO, Chapter. (Photo: CTO staff)

**Banner photo:** Clear water flows in Bryant Creek, in the neighborhood of Jack Cooper's land. (Photo: Denise Henderson Vaughn)

Your contributions help implement conservation easements in places where youngsters can enjoy wildlife.

**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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**OLT welcomes a new executive director**

Dear Ozark Land Trust Members,  
I'm truly honored and humbled to be able to serve you as Executive Director of Ozark Land Trust. The work that the membership, board and staff (under Peggy Horner's leadership) have accomplished on behalf of conserving resources in the region is truly spectacular. I look forward to serving the organization in every way that I can.

A little about me: I'm an Illinois native but have been in the St. Louis area most of my adult life. I bring a background in nonprofits, journalism, real estate and law to the position. That background includes a stint as St. Louis Director of the Trust for Public Land ([www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)), where we served as a partner in the Confluence Greenway project along the major rivers.

Personally, my wife (also Peggy) and I have four adult children in our blended family, all of whom are, as most other parents I know like to say, "gainfully employed."

We play an important role in educating the public not only about our own role, but about the importance of conserving and protecting natural resources. I hope to build on the great outreach work that all of you have accomplished in spreading the word about, and building support for, our mission and successes.

And of course, I want to learn from and assist everyone who contributes to the organization, whether by membership, volunteering or professional service. To that end, I welcome the opportunity to speak with and meet as many of you as I can, and hear about your ideas, suggestions and recommendations for our work. So don't hesitate to call me at 314-420-0460 or drop me a line, at [Larry.Levin@OzarkLandTrust.org](mailto:Larry.Levin@OzarkLandTrust.org).

Thank you for welcoming me, and I'm excited about what we can all do together for our mission and for conservation in the Ozarks!

Sincerely,  
*Larry Levin*



*Larry and Peggy Levin*

**Parting words from Peggy Horner**

Dear Friends,  
It's difficult saying farewell to all the supporters, landowners, volunteers, partners, board members, and staff of Ozark Land Trust. I have enjoyed meeting and working with such a dedicated group of conservationists from Arkansas and Missouri. Each of you has impacted not only land conservation in the Ozarks, but also confirmed my belief that saving land for future generations is a shared passion among many. Having been at the helm and part of this organization for the last 6 years has truly been my honor, and frankly, the crown jewel of my career in conservation. It's now time for me to retire and pass the torch. As I say au revoir, adieu, so-long, and good-bye, know that I will continue to support and promote the mission of OLT, and look forward to when our paths cross again.

Best to you all, *Peggy Horner*

**Jack Cooper teaches youngsters, cont.**



*A Cross Trails Outfitters youth member caught this small-mouth bass during one of the club outings. (Photos this page: CTO staff)*

*Continued from front page*

confidence. They've never caught a fish and never harvested a turkey or deer. The program offers leadership development programs in which boys can grow in responsibility and respect.

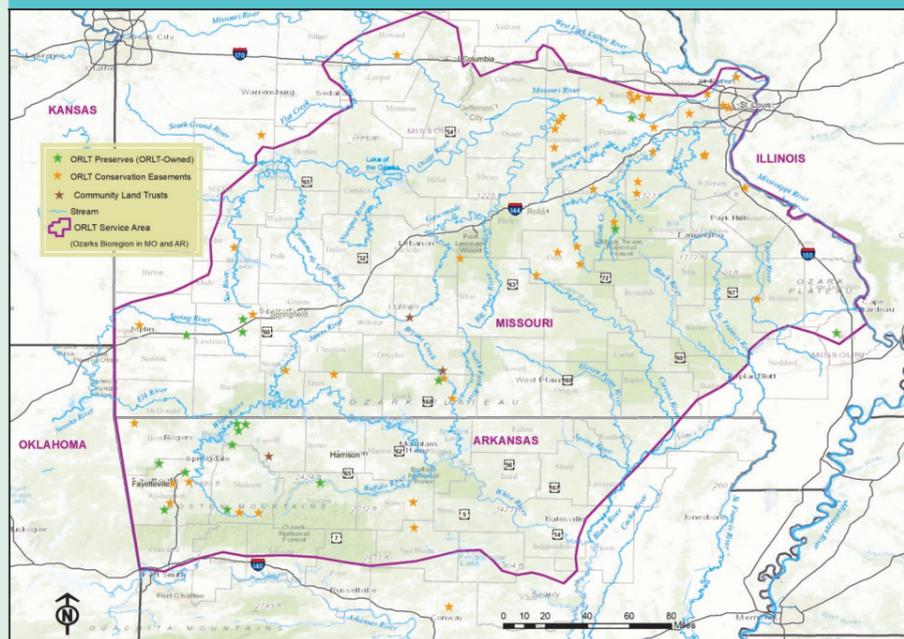
"By the time they leave us," Jack said, "they have a new attitude and new ambitions along with a new desire to be outdoors. You can see them leave with their heads held higher and their chest out. We are watching them become young men."

Jack reflects back, remembering the time he first brought his wife, Kris, to the property. They were at the top of a hill and Jack exclaimed, "Don't you see this?" Kris, laughing, said, "I see nothing but trees!" Looking over



the beautiful landscape, Jack saw, in his mind's eye, a vision of kids around a campfire, and he had a dream, now becoming reality on protected land, of passing on a rich heritage to the next generation.

**Ozark Land Trust Protected Lands**



*Ozark Land Trust, founded in 1984, has for 35 years responded to the needs of conservation-minded landowners throughout the Ozarks and beyond. OLT now protects 29,908 acres, holding full title to 4,729 acres and 684 acres in community land trusts. The remaining 24,495 acres are protected through conservation easements. We plan to protect another 1,200 acres in 2019!*

*Donations from supporters like you has enabled OLT to protect many thousand acres throughout the Ozarks.*

**RENEW TODAY!**

**Your annual membership renewal is enclosed with this newsletter. By renewing, you provide the resources to help us help landowners to save the natural beauty and history of the Ozarks.**

**Other ways you can help:**

- **A planned gift such as a bequest or an estate gift can make a big difference.**
- **If you are receiving distributions from certain types of retirement accounts, you can donate to OLT tax free.**
- **Contact your legislators to advocate for fair laws for conservation easements (see story this issue).**
- **At year's end, we ask supporters for an additional gift to help us grow our capacity.**

