

THE OZARK HOLLER

LAND CONSERVATION TAKES ROOT IN THE MISSOURI RIVER HILLS

Call it luck. Call it coincidence. Or, perhaps, chalk it up to great minds thinking alike. Whatever it is, there is a groundswell of land conservation happening in the Missouri River Hills region. This fall, two landowners have donated conservation easements to ORLT, bringing the total amount of land protected in the region to nearly 2,700 acres over just the past twelve months.



A giant white oak on the Mathews' land. *Ted Heisel*

THE MATHEWS: A DREAM FULFILLED

The story of the Mathews conservation easement begins in 1954, when Burrell and Ruby Pickering purchased over 450 acres of farmland and forest in Warren County, Missouri. Burrell's passion was nature and wildlife. "Sunny Ranch," as it is called, became a nature sanctuary. Together Burrell and Ruby cleared trails through the oak-hickory forest and built a nature museum for St. Louis school children to visit. Bluebird houses were put up along the fields, and small signs pointed out rare plants.

The Pickerings' daughter Gwenn and her husband Joe Mathews built a home and stables in 1983 and moved to

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BURKHARDT CONSERVATION EASEMENT: A CORNERSTONE FOR THE KATY LAND TRUST

Twenty years ago, Dan and Connie Burkhardt saw Edward "Ted" Jones give a donation to the State of Missouri to help create the Katy Trail. As two of Jones's partners, they were both struck by the financier's generosity.

Now, Dan and Connie have returned the favor.

The Burkhardts placed a conservation easement on their farm just north of the Katy Trail. This means that the property cannot be developed, but will remain a farm and forest forever. The Burkhardts currently grow grapes, cut hay, and raise cattle on the farm.

"The Katy Trail corridor from St. Charles to Rocheport is still relatively unspoiled by development. We see an opportunity to give landowners an option for their property and to promote discussion about the value of preserving land for agricultural and forestry purposes. Along Highway 94, Missouri has beautiful and diverse landscapes worth preserving for our children and grandchildren," Burkhardt said. (*See Katy Land Trust story, page 2*)



Morning fog on the Burkhardt farm. *Bryan Haynes*

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Mission

Through carefully designed programs of conservation and appropriate land management, ORLT empowers people to protect the natural resources of the Ozarks forever.

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MATHEWS (CONT.)

Sunny Ranch. Their children Greg, Jeff, and Jill and their 10 grandchildren have been able to enjoy everything the land has to offer: walking the trails, hosting hayrides and exploring the creeks and woods.

Joe and Gwenn wanted to honor Burrell and Ruby's dream to protect the land and looked to find a way to do so permanently. In September 2010, the Mathews family donated a conservation easement to ORLT, which fulfills that dream. While the Mathews farm has grown, and they continue to live on and use the property, they have also made sure that it will never be developed.

"The conservation easement is perfect for us," Joe says. "We wanted to protect this land as long as possible, and now that dream is a reality."

ORLT thanks the Missouri Department of Conservation for supporting this project.



Department of Natural Resources / Bryan Haynes

The Burkhardt conservation easement is the cornerstone project of the Katy Land Trust, a new initiative aimed at preserving land in the Katy Trail region.

The Katy Land Trust is an ORLT program, with the Katy Land Trust name providing a regionally representative identity.

Dan and Connie Burkhardt have generously provided the inspiration and support to get this new program up and running. The Edward Jones Foundation has also committed a \$150,000 grant to fund the long-term costs of caring for conservation easements in the region.

To learn more about the Katy Land Trust, including a map of protected properties in Warren County and the Katy Region, visit katylandtrust.org.

ANNUAL MEETING AT ALFORD FOREST

Alford Forest and other nearby ORLT projects protect nearly 5,000 acres in the Bryant Creek watershed in Ozark and Douglas counties, Missouri. Many ORLT members enjoyed a hike and float through this scenic and biologically diverse landscape in June during the annual meeting. If you could not join us, please come in 2011 for a look at other protected lands.



GENE DUNAWAY RETIRES FROM BOARD

ORLT's board and staff thank Gene Dunaway of Mountain View, Arkansas, for his three years of service on the board. Gene provided invaluable insights and experience during a period of growth and transition for ORLT. He will continue to focus on conservation efforts along the White River in Arkansas.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The annual meeting resulted in four new people being elected to ORLT's board of directors and the re-election of one existing director. The directors serve three-year terms.

BRIAN WEAVER is an attorney at Husch Blackwell LLP in St. Louis whose family has deep roots in the Ozarks.

JEFF WINZERLING is a real estate developer with Envoy Commercial Real Estate in St. Louis and focuses on re-developing historic and previously utilized urban sites.

DUANE WOLTJEN is a retired engineer and long-time conservationist who lives in Fayetteville.

LOIS WYMAN is a realtor with Re/Max who sells residential properties and lives in Union, Missouri.

DAVID HAENKE of Brixey, Missouri was re-elected to the board to serve a third term.



Top: ORLT members float past Alford Forest on Bryant Creek. *David Lobbig*

Left: Board member David Haenke leads a tour of Alford Forest. *Mark Patrick*

ORLT GROWS STRONGER

The following individuals recently helped ORLT meet a generous \$10,000 matching grant from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. These funds were committed to ORLT's Operating Endowment and will provide a continued source of income for protection of the Ozarks. Thank you to the Community Foundation and these supporters:

Dee Dokken
Kay and Leo Drey
Nancy Hamilton
Nels and Sandra Holmberg
Penny Holtzmann



YOU CAN HELP SECURE THE FUTURE

ORLT will be able to more reliably protect the special places of the Ozarks as it grows its Operating Endowment. This permanent fund produces income that supports work on new conservation easements and nature preserves.

Consider a gift of cash, stock, or other property to ORLT's Operating Endowment. Your gift will benefit the Ozarks year after year.

You can make this special gift by transmitting it with instructions that it is for the "Operating Endowment." Call (314) 401-6218 or email orlt@orlt.org for more information.

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