

# THE OZARK HOLLER

## OZARK RIVERS PROTECTED

The Ozark Regional Land Trust has long placed a high priority on protecting rivers. Thanks to landowners who share this interest, and to generous financial support from many sources, several new conservation easements provide lasting protection to Ozark rivers.

### THE MERAMEC RIVER

The Meramec is Missouri's second longest free-flowing stream and is home to impressive numbers of fish and mussels, including some that are endangered. It is also a popular float stream, and is the source of drinking water for more than 200,000 people in the St. Louis region.

Over the past year, ORLT has worked with three landowners to protect land in the Meramec watershed.

In late 2010, Debbie Fordyce donated a conservation easement on a 267-acre tract of forested land along the middle-Meramec in Franklin County. The easement protects about two-thirds of a mile of scenic bluffs and forested hills.

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View of the Meramec River from the Fordyce Conservation Easement.

## A RARE FISH GUIDES CONSERVATION EFFORTS



*The Scott Conservation Easement protects the habitat of the Ozark cavefish.*

Mary Scott and her daughter, Anne Lewallen, have deep roots in Lawrence County, Missouri. Their family has lived on and farmed the same land for over a century.

Mary and Anne sought a way to ensure that their family's heritage would remain intact through future generations. In late 2010, they signed a conservation easement that accomplished their objective.

ORLT acquired this 295-acre easement through a program designed to protect the endangered Ozark cavefish. The fish, a blind and colorless resident of nearby caves, has been declining in many areas due to pollution of groundwater.

Protection of this farm ensures that its water-purifying forests and hayfields will exist in perpetuity. ORLT is working with other landowners in the area to expand protections of the cavefish's habitat.

*ORLT thanks the Missouri Department of Conservation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Wildlife Conservation Society for supporting the Scott Conservation Easement.*

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The Ozark Regional Land Trust

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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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*Stewardship Director/ Katy Land  
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## Rivers (cont.)

In September of this year, ORLT worked with landowners Steve and Heidi Yocom on the Huzzah Creek in Crawford County to protect a 274-acre farm. ORLT was able to purchase a conservation easement from the Yocoms shortly after they bought this farm that adjoins their existing land. Several thousand feet of frontage on both sides of the Huzzah were protected.

Earlier in 2011 ORLT also received a donated conservation easement from landowner Edith Miller that protected her 120-acre farm within the Meramec River watershed,



Huzzah Creek on the Yocom Property

## THE BRYANT CREEK

The Bryant Creek is one of the Ozarks' undiscovered gems. It flows through Wright, Douglas, and Ozark counties before dumping in to the North Fork near the town of Tecumseh. The Bryant is one of a few streams known to still harbor the Ozark Hellbender, a species that was recently listed as endangered. ORLT's largest single project - Alford Forest - is also located along the Bryant Creek in Ozark County.



Bryant Creek on the Burkhardt Property

In May 2011, Jim and Donna Burkhardt donated a conservation easement on their 183-acre farm that has more than 4,500 feet of frontage on the Bryant. The Burkhardts' generous gift helps expand protection of this high quality stream.

ORLT thanks the Headwaters Conservancy, L-A-D Foundation, Missouri Department of Conservation, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, PMJ Foundation, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for their primary support of these River Stewardship projects.



## KATY LAND TRUST GAINS STEAM

The Katy Land Trust program is now a year and a half old and continues to gain steam.

Program staff have provided information to hundreds of landowners, community leaders, and businesses about the benefits of protecting rural scenery and agricultural lands. Outreach efforts have included distribution of beautiful postcards designed by local artist Bryan Haynes. Mailers and newsletters have also been sent to our growing mailing list of supporters and landowners.

The Katy Land Trust has also hosted numerous events to get the word out and to raise funds, including:

- An open house at a conserved farm in Warren County.
- An art exhibition for one of Missouri's premier landscape painters, Bryan Haynes, co-hosted by Novus International.
- The first Run for the Farms 5k fundraiser on the Katy Trail, co-hosted by Edward Jones and Novus International.
- A picnic at the historic Treloar grain elevator to celebrate the unveiling of two banners designed by Bryan Haynes and installed on the elevator by local business Ziglin Signs. Thanks to the Missouri State Parks and Marthasville Volunteer Fire Department for co-hosting the event.

*To learn more about the Katy Land Trust, including a map of protected properties and the Katy Region, visit [www.katylandtrust.org](http://www.katylandtrust.org).*

## NEW STAFF AT ORLT

Preston Lacy joined ORLT in May and has two roles with the organization. He is ORLT's Stewardship Director and the Program Coordinator for the Katy Land Trust.

Two-thirds of Preston's time is spent monitoring existing conservation easements and tending to ORLT's conservation lands. The remaining one-third of his work is focused on protecting the rural heritage of the lower Missouri River Valley through the Katy Land Trust program.

Prior to joining ORLT, Preston worked at The Land Conservancy in southwestern Illinois.



## NEW ORLT BOARD MEMBER

At the annual meeting in June, ORLT's members elected Hilary Murphy to the board of directors. Hilary owns her own land use planning firm that serves the St. Louis region.

Board members Gregg Galbraith, Kurt Homeyer, and Jake Reby were also re-elected to the board.

ORLT thanks Allan and Jocie Appell for hosting a large part of the meeting at their farm near Calhoun, Missouri.



L to R: Preston Lacy, Hilary Murphy and family, Allan Appell

## CONSERVATION LEGISLATION UPDATE

There have been important developments at both the state and federal level that directly impact land conservation.

On July 8th, 2011, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon signed the *Private Landowner Protection Act* in to law. This bipartisan legislation updated Missouri's conservation easement law to follow that of most other states, including Arkansas, Kansas, and Kentucky.

The new law provides a clearer legal backdrop for conservation easements that will benefit both landowners and land trusts. The Nature Conservancy led a broad coalition of individuals and organizations, including ORLT, that worked to pass this bill.

The news at the federal level is less rosy. Over the past five years, Congress has been offering up temporary extensions of tax incentives for landowners who donate conservation easements. In light of the outsized federal

budget deficit, it is anything but clear that these incentives will be extended or made permanent.

This probably does not mean that such incentives will go away entirely, but possibly that they will become less supportive of conservation easement donations by landowners.

On top of this threat, various proposals exist to slash conservation programs run by federal agencies. Depending on the outcome of this debate and where cuts are ultimately made, it could result in a substantial reduction in conservation funding.

Now is a good time to contact your senators and representatives at the federal level to ensure that conservation does not bear more than its fair-share of the budget cutbacks.

# OZARK REGIONAL LAND TRUST

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**Empowering People to  
Protect Land in the Ozarks**

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