



# The Ozark Holler

Spring 2006

**Ozark Regional Land Trust Annual Meeting at Eureka Springs, June 17**

All Ozark Regional Land Trust members are invited to attend our Annual Meeting, which will be held at Eureka Springs, AR on Saturday, June 17. This meeting is a chance for members to meet and interact with ORLT board and staff members, to learn more about what ORLT is doing to protect the Ozarks, and to elect board members.

Before the formal meeting, we are inviting members and friends to explore one of ORLT's oldest and most scenic projects, Oak Hill Wildlife Area, located just north of Eureka Springs. From 10:00 to 12:00, we will partially explore the rugged 157 acres of this permanently-protected area, including a hike to the large Pivot Rock. Mary Jane Fritch will be joining us on the hike as a tour guide (see next article). Parking is limited so we ask folks to meet at Sun-Fest Market (directions below) and carpool from there to the trail-head.

ORLT's formal Annual Meeting will then be held from 1:00 - 2:30 pm at the Sun-Fest Market (which also serves a very nice lunch). ORLT Executive Director Gregg Galbraith will present a brief update on ORLT's activities and organizational status. We may also have another speaker, time for questions, and will conclude with election of Board members. The Sun-Fest Market is located 6 miles north of Eureka Springs on Highway 23, in the Holiday Island Shopping



Complex, just past the Citgo station on the right side of the road (phone 479-253-5028). ORLT's Board and Staff look forward to hiking and meeting with you in June!

Sincerely,  
Andy Thomas  
ORLT Board Chairman

## Oak Hill Wildlife Area: Preserving the Land—Preserving a Community

Roots in the land do not run much deeper than 92 year old Mary Jane Fritsch's. Her family settled in the Oak Hill area north of Eureka Springs in the 1880's. Mary Jane (shown at right) grew up on the farm in an era when living on the land meant you grew it, made it, picked it, hunted it and butchered it. If you were going to survive and prosper you had to know the land, the trees, the critters, the plant medicines, and the nature of things.

It was not an easy life but it was honorable. Mary Jane's family was spread around the hills and owned hundreds of acres. Mary Jane had a vision of preserving a portion of this land, in addition to a local historic building. Over the years, three parcels have been donated to ORLT encompassing a total of 157 acres as well as the Oak Hill Grange historic building. Fourteen of these acres are protected by conservation easement. The Oak Hill Grange building has been converted to a museum, with a "Franklin Township Then and Now", picture exhibit intended to preserve the rich cultural history of the region.



Mary Jane's vivid stories about a long and full life in the hills remind us of where we came from. Mary Jane still has dreams for the future as well, including the establishment of a trail that will allow visitors to make a full 4 hour circle around the perimeter of the Oak Hill Wildlife Area. She and others are working with the residents of the adjacent Holiday Island retirement community to

help make that dream a reality.

Join us at the Ozark Regional Land Trust annual meeting day on a two hour walk with 92 year old Mary Jane out to Pivot Rock and other points of interest in the Oak Hill Wildlife Area as she shares her extensive wisdom on the flora, fauna, and culture of the region.

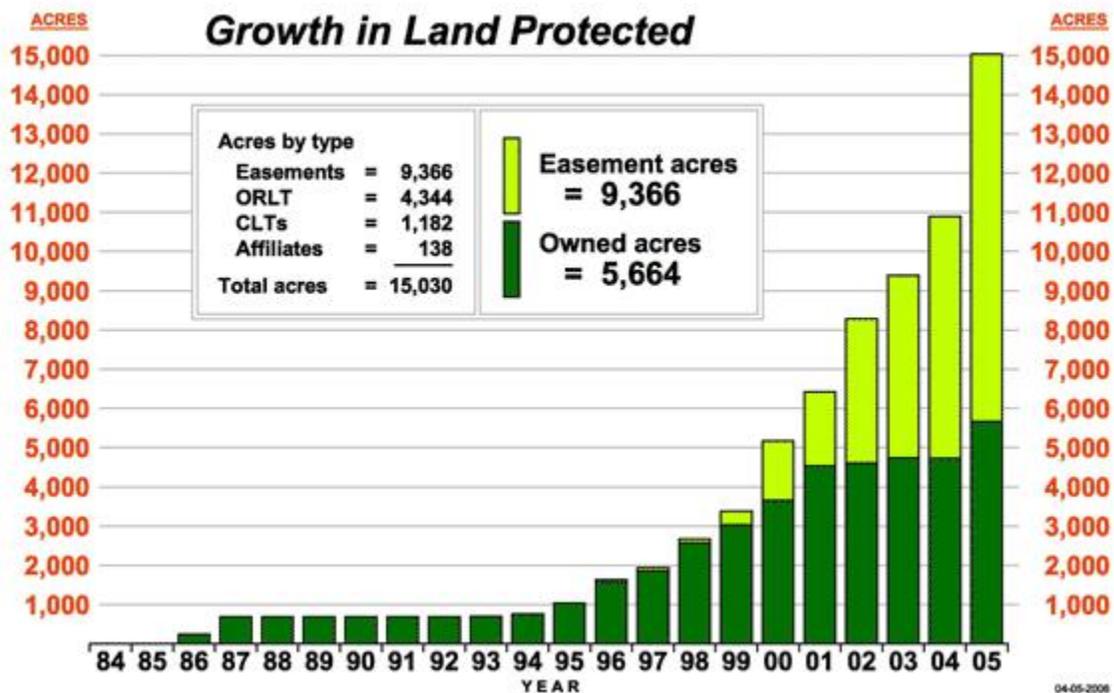
## Land Conservation Summit

On March 21, 2006, Abigail Lambert, St. Louis Regional Field Representative for Ozark Regional Land Trust, organized a Land Conservation Summit in the Greater St. Louis area in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. Representatives of twenty different organizations participated in the Summit. The purpose of the Summit was for land conservation organizations in the region to become more familiar with each other's roles and goals, so

as to better serve landowners requesting assistance. Ozark Regional Land Trust is committed to serving landowners in the way that best suits their needs. If ORLT is not equipped to provide the service requested, we will refer the landowner to other organizations that may be able to help. For more information regarding the Land Conservation Summit, you can contact Abigail at [aflamber@earthlink.net](mailto:aflamber@earthlink.net) or 314-371-4141.

## Ozark Regional Land Trust and Conservation Easements

Ozark Regional Land Trust only accepts land from interested, willing landowners. In the past few years there has been a dramatic up-tick in landowners seeking conservation easements on their properties. Ozark Regional Land Trust's Conservation Easement holdings have significantly increased as well.



A conservation easement (or conservation restriction) is a legal agreement between a landowner and a qualified land protection organization (often called a “land trust”), that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows you to continue to own and use your land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. It restricts real estate development, commercial and industrial uses, and certain other activities on a property to a mutually agreed upon level.

The decision to place a conservation easement on a property is strictly a voluntary one and the restrictions, once set in place, “run with the land” and are binding on all future landowners (in other words, the restrictions are perpetual). The restrictions are spelled out in a legal document that is recorded in the local land records and the easement becomes a part of the chain of title for the property.

The primary purpose of a conservation easement is to protect agricultural and, timber resources, and/or other valuable natural resources such as wildlife habitat, clean water, clean air, or scenic open space by separating the right to subdivide and build on the property from the other rights of ownership. The landowner who gives up these “development rights” continues to privately own and manage the land and may receive significant state and federal tax advantages for having donated the conservation easement. Perhaps more importantly, the landowner has contributed to the public good by preserving the conservation values associated with their land for future generations. In accepting the conservation easement, the easement holder has a responsibility to monitor future uses of the land to ensure compliance with the terms of the easement and to enforce the terms if a violation occurs. (Adapted from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com))

Even when land or conservation easements are donated, there are multiple costs involved, including real estate fees, attorney fees, closing costs, staff time to manage the transaction, and most importantly, the ongoing responsibility of monitoring the easement in perpetuity.

Thank you so much for your donations to Ozark Regional Land Trust. Your support will allow us to continue to play a vital role in new conservation easement acquisition in the Ozarks.

## Important Summer Events at Woods Prairie

Ozark Regional Land Trust needs your help at Woods Prairie (near Mt. Vernon , MO -just west of Springfield on I44) this summer. We are right in the middle of our ambitious restoration program and must keep the momentum and energy (and money) flowing. We need to collect LOTS of seeds from the prairie this summer, and with recent rains, the prospect for a bumper crop is very good. We have successfully paid our bills since 1999 through seed collecting, and we must continue with this effort awhile longer. But perhaps even more important this summer is collecting as many seeds as we possibly can from many different species to be used in the restoration of the final 6.5 acres, which will be planted this coming winter.

Because we can never be certain from year to year exactly when the seeds of various species will be ripe, we maintain an email list to notify folks interested in collecting seeds. If you would like to be notified about seed collecting (and other) events, please send an email message to Andy Thomas at [thomasAL@missouri.edu](mailto:thomasAL@missouri.edu). If you are unfamiliar with the seeds of certain species, please join us on a warm summer evening and we will show you how to find and collect certain seeds. If you'd like to collect seeds on your own, please feel free to do so but we ask that you contact us so that we can coordinate.

## A New Face at Ozark Regional Land Trust

Ozark Regional Land Trust is pleased to announce the hiring of a Sustainability Consultant, Karla G. Wilson. Karla comes to ORLT with a strong background in both conservation and fundraising work. She has been Director of St. Louis Earth Day for 6 years and she managed an environmental leadership program at Missouri Botanical Garden for 8 years. She also holds a B.A. in Environmental

Studies from Grinnell College. Karla's responsibilities with Ozark Regional Land Trust include managing the newsletter and public outreach, grant writing, and assisting with a major donor campaign. Karla can be reached at [karla@gtw.net](mailto:karla@gtw.net) or 314-471-1323. Welcome on board, Karla



427 South Main Street  
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