



The Ozark Holler

Winter 2006

Help Us Help The Upper Gasconade Hills

"The greatest use of a life is to spend it for something that will outlast it."
--William James

Ozark Regional Land Trust is securing the future – acre by acre, day by day, year by year — preserving the scenic beauty, rural character and ecological integrity of the Ozarks. Today we are making a special appeal to you, our members, to help us secure the future of the Upper Gasconade Hills, located between Fort Leonard Wood and Lebanon, Missouri.

The Upper Gasconade River has a diverse aquatic natural community and remains one of the few Ozark rivers unaffected by dams. Thirty-five kinds of mussels have been observed in the Gasconade River basin, including seven species of conservation concern. Since mussels are filter-feeders, they are important indicators of clean water. Freshwater mussels are also important for healthy rivers and streams. They provide food for muskrats, raccoons, river otters and birds, and they maintain high water quality required for many fish and other aquatic species.

Ozark Regional Land Trust has conservation easements on more than 2,000 acres in collaboration with a landowner in this special area, including land along both sides of the Gasconade River.



Virginia Bluebells in a wildflower grove along the Gasconade.

This winter we have the opportunity to place an additional 2,000 acres under easement! By placing conservation easements on this land, Ozark Regional Land Trust and the landowner are working together to conserve unique resources forever.



Stone arch on the Gasconade.

A generous stewardship donation will help us cover the expenses of completing this project. Expenses for every project include, staff and transaction costs, baseline surveys and mapping, annual monitoring and landowner communication in perpetuity, and reserves for future enforcement if necessary. We are making a special appeal to you, our loyal members, to raise the additional \$20,000 needed to complete this easement project. You can help us secure the future of the Upper Gasconade River Hills today with your generous, tax-deductible donation. Your financial support makes our success possible. Our success, in turn, enhances your quality of life and ensures the same for our children.

Please make check out to Ozark Regional Land Trust and mail to Ozark Regional Land Trust, Upper Gasconade Hills Special Appeal, 427 S Main St., Carthage, MO 64836. Thank you so much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gregg Galbraith
Executive Director

Volunteer Stewardship Day at Woods Prairie, Saturday, December 9

Ozark Regional Land Trust's Woods Prairie project, near Mt. Vernon, MO, is in the final exciting stages of its complete restoration, with the end literally in sight! Please join us out on the prairie this Saturday, December 9, from 10:00 until 3:00 for a fun early winter volunteer stewardship day. We need to cut and stack (and possibly burn – depending on weather) the last stretch of weedy brush and trees that had encroached on the prairie. If we have enough help, we should be able to completely finish our slow but steady march around the prairie that began way back in 1999. Bring chainsaws (with proper safety equipment), hand saws, loppers, workgloves, water, lunch, and a friend. Call Andy Thomas at 417-236-0223 for more info, or send a message to orlt@jpa.net to get on our email alert mailing list.

Directions to Woods Prairie, near Mt. Vernon, Missouri:

From east or west: On Interstate Highway 44, take the Chesapeake exit (# 49) and go east (which may seem south) toward Chesapeake on Highway 174. At about 3 miles, turn south (right) onto Highway K. Proceed 1.5 miles and turn right onto Farm Road 2125. The prairie is 3/4 mile down this road on the left. You will see a dead area (6.5 acres under restoration) next to the road with the green prairie just beyond and up the hill.



From the south: At Aurora, MO, take Highway 39 going north through town, well past all the fast food, etc. to the edge of town. There is a stop sign and railroad tracks. At that point 39 goes left, but you want to continue straight ahead onto Highway K. The road may not be well-marked there, but essentially you never turn going through Aurora and continue straight north out of town. From there, continue north on Highway K roughly 8 miles and turn left on Farm Road 2125. This turn (FR 2125) is exactly 2.0 miles north of where Highway FF intersects on the left. The numbered farm roads will let you know when you are getting close. The prairie is 3/4 mile down FR 2125 on the left. You will see a dead area (6.5 acres under restoration) next to the road with the green prairie just beyond and up the hill.

Tax Law Changes Encourage Charitable Giving From IRA's

On August 17, 2006, President Bush signed into law new tax incentives for charitable gifts from donors who are 70 ½ or older. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 encourages financial support of the good work done by charitable organizations in the United States.

Under the new law, you can use funds from your IRA to make a lifetime charitable gift free of tax obligations. Prior to the law, you would have to report any amount taken from your IRA as taxable income, then take a charitable deduction for the gift, but only up to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income. In effect, this caused some donors to pay more in income taxes than if they didn't make a gift at all.

Fortunately, now these IRA gifts can be accomplished simply and without tax complication. Plus, you can make the gift now-while you are living and able to witness the benefits of your generosity.

You May Contribute Funds This Way If:

- You are 70 ½ or older
- The gifts do not total more than \$100,000 per year
- You make the gift on or before Dec. 31, 2007
- You transfer funds directly from an IRA or Rollover IRA
- You make the gift to a public charity (This includes our organization but excludes gifts made to charitable trusts, donor advised funds and supporting organizations.)



How the Pension Protection Act Works

Rose, aged 75, has \$190,000 in two separate IRA's. If she pledges to donate \$20,000 to us this year, she has the choice of giving cash, appreciated securities or other assets to fulfill the pledge. Rose checks with her tax advisor who explains that under the new law, she has yet another option to fund her pledge.

If Rose transfers \$20,000 from one of the IRA's directly to us before Dec. 31, 2007 she will avoid paying income tax on the \$20,000 withdrawal. She will not, however, be able to use it as a charitable deduction-it is a pure "wash." This is an easy and convenient way for Rose to benefit us.

If you are interested in making an IRA contribution to Ozark Regional Land Trust, please contact Karla Wilson, 314-471-1323.