

THE OZARK HOLLER

OZARK REGIONAL LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2016

Third generation landowners protect James River tree farm from development

Connie and John Johnson's farm near Galena, MO, has been in John's family since 1919. On this gorgeous land, with bluffs, caves, hills and 1.5 miles of James River frontage, "you can float by and still feel like the first person ever there," Connie said.

The Johnsons initiated tree farm certification when they took over its care in the 1980s. They have planted about 15 acres as a walnut plantation, but more than 90 percent of the farm is covered with naturally-seeded oak-hickory forest and native shortleaf pine. They have twice been named Missouri Tree Farmer of the Year.

With booming Branson 20 miles away, these third-generation owners recognized their tree farm could become prime development acres. The Johnsons learned about ORLT and conservation easements

while researching estate planning options.

In 2009, the Johnsons completed their conservation easement with ORLT, protecting 530 acres adjacent to the river. Tree farming and forestry will continue, but housing construction will not be permitted.

"Development would ruin it," said Connie. Because of the conservation easement, "everything will stay natural from now on." Except for a picnic area that is shielded from floaters' views, "we won't do anything along the river," she said.

Connie wants to conserve as much land as possible within the James River valley. "My dream is to find ways to put more conservation easements along the river," she said. If so, maybe someday future floaters can also feel like they're the first ones to ever see the wild, natural river.

"You can float by and still feel like the first person ever there."

— Connie Johnson



Your membership helps ORLT fulfill dreams like Connie's, conserving the James and other Ozark rivers.



Above: Deer nibble on acorns at the Johnson's farm. **Left:** The tree farm viewed from the bluff above the James River. **Banner photo:** Pastoral panorama at the Johnson's.

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**OZARK REGIONAL
LAND TRUST**

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To help people protect and conserve the natural resources and beauty of the Ozarks and to advocate for land conservation.

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Volunteer steward finds reverence in Hogscald Hollow

Hogscald Hollow, ORLT's longest-owned property, has inspired a volunteer steward, who discovered it while investigating his family roots.

Located south of Eureka Springs in Carroll County, AR, Hogscald Hollow's natural features have attracted many. Local stories say the land was considered sacred campgrounds by several tribes.

Later, Europeans held worship services there.

In 2010, Lance Estep, of Marionville, MO, inherited an army journal and scrapbook kept by his "kind-of famous" great-great-

grandfather, a Civil War veteran and circuit-riding preacher. It contained intriguing records of baptisms

performed at a place called Bluff Church.

Lance was looking for this church when he stumbled upon the Hogscald area. He contacted ORLT and took on a stewardship role, picking up trash and documenting wildlife.

Experiences at Hogscald inspired Lance to return to college after a 20-year absence. He is now near completion of an archaeology degree at MSU in Springfield, which included a study of Hogscald's history and archaeology.

"Upon witnessing its other-worldly beauty and serenity, I vowed to do whatever it took to protect this place."

—Lance Estep



Natural features grace Hogscald Hollow

Hogscald Hollow, a square-mile region, is crammed with breathtaking features. Only ORLT's 10 acres, in the center, is protected from development; the rest is privately owned. Among the treasures:

- **Slippery Falls:** a creek abruptly drops 15 feet into a narrow, hidden rocky canyon, cool and shady.
- **The hogscalds:** small waterfalls have carved a series of large potholes into the solid bedrock. Here, it is said, Native Americans, settlers, and Civil

War soldiers would bring wild hogs to be scalded in preparation for butchering.

- **Peek-a-Boo Falls and Cork Screw Fall:** a charming waterfall and tight rock formation through which water flows, toward Beaver Lake.
- **Preacher's Rock and Bluff Church:** In the old days the faithful gathered at Bluff Church, which has a seating area, a choir spot, a baptizing hole, and an outcropping from which the preacher spoke.

We're growing, thanks to you

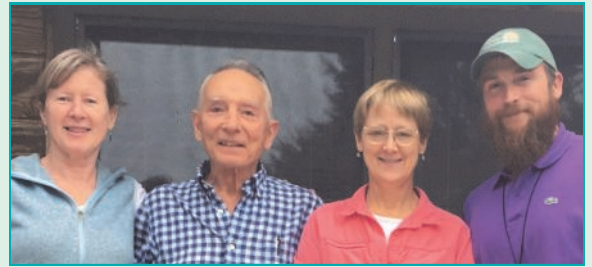
Thank you for your wonderful support! You doubled David Hartig's year-end challenge for our "Grow for the Future Campaign." More than 150 individuals contributed \$27,278 to match Mr. Hartig's \$10,000 challenge, for a grand total of \$37,278. Members and friends gave through traditional mailings plus two new social media opportunities:

#GivingTuesday and Crowdrise.

Your gifts will increase ORLT's capacity to conserve land.

Because of your help, we expect to complete all five of our new land conservation projects this year, and maybe more!

Big thanks to Mr. Hartig and all the contributors listed below ...



Thanking David Hartig (second from left) are ORLT staff members Abigail Lambert, Peggy Horner, and Paul Tidwell.

Nick Kyle & Rose Allison
Ray Amyx
Christi Angelo
Richard Armstrong
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Jim & Lois Wyman
Susan Fitzpatrick & Thomas P. Wyman
Zuleyma Tang-Martinez & Arlene Zarembka

We've made every effort to produce a correct, comprehensive contributor list. We apologize for any errors or omissions. Questions? Please call us at 573-817-2020.

It's time to re-commit to ORLT's work

Memberships expire May 31, so it's time to renew your commitment to the Ozark Regional Land Trust and its important work. Please be generous and once again help us to continue the legacy of conservation in the Ozarks.

Membership dollars support staff time in the fields, hills and streams. Your membership matters – things get done and land is protected because of you.

Membership renewal can be completed online at <https://orlt.org/membership-account/membership-levels>. Monthly giving is a new option.

You gotta have native plants!

- ✓ To see native birds nesting and rearing young at your place
- ✓ To raise butterflies, particularly monarchs at your place
- ✓ To stem the decline of native pollinators

Missouri Wildflowers Nursery
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 9814 Pleasant Hill Rd, Jefferson City MO 65109
 573-496-3492, fax: 573-496-3003
 You need our excellent catalog - by mail or online.

ORLT manages money and land for the long term

2015 Income Sources

Total Income:

\$554,507

Memberships & Gifts

Memberships, memorials, honoraria & events.

Year-end Giving

Gifts to our "Grow for the Future Campaign" provide funds for extra 2016 conservation projects.

Bequeaths

From the Bruce Cornish estate.

Grants

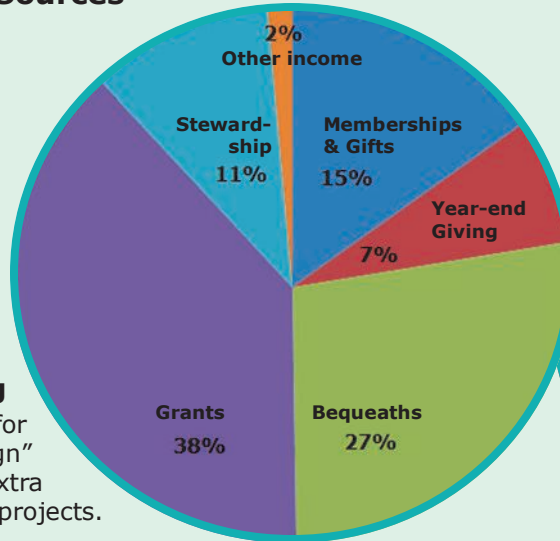
From Mo. Dept. of Conservation, Anne Perkins Foundation, Trulaske Foundation, Sanders Foundation & an anonymous donor.

Stewardship

Contributions exclusively to protect properties secured with conservation easements.

Other Income

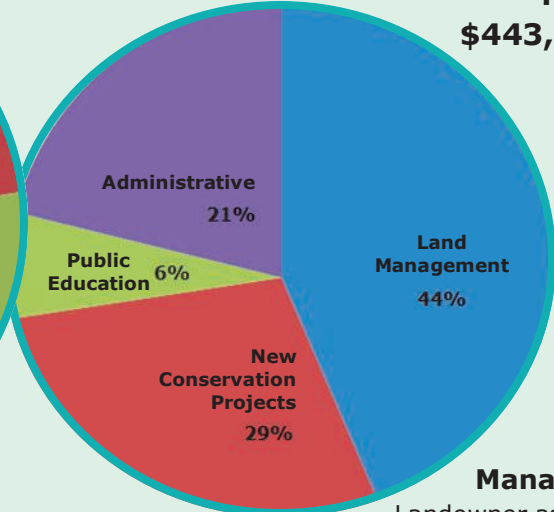
Rent, leases & native seed sales.



2015 Expense Categories

Total Expenses:

\$443,488.00



Land Management

Landowner assistance, insurance, property taxes, & stewardship expenses for ORLT properties and those protected by conservation easements.

New Conservation Projects

Negotiations & legal work.

Public Education

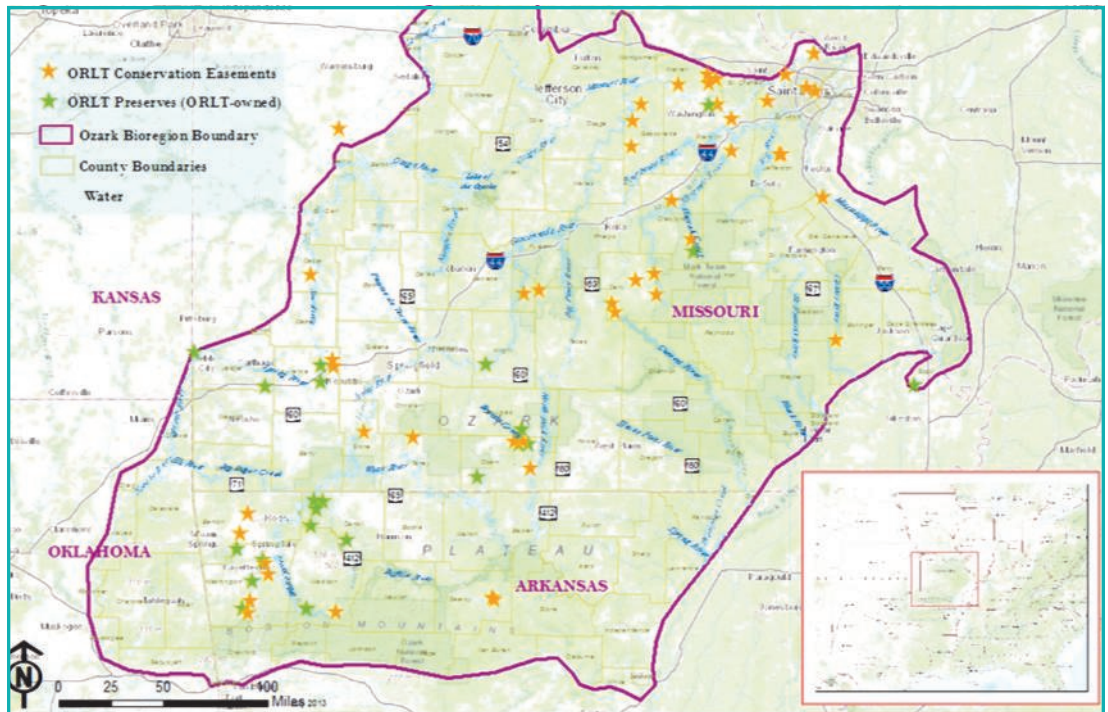
Landowner & public outreach, newsletters, social media & events.

Administrative

Salaries & benefits, utilities, office, insurance & financial management.

ORLT Land in 2015

- 96 properties - a total of 27,827 acres - are now protected in the Missouri and Arkansas Ozarks
- 57 landowners have permanently conserved their land in partnership with ORLT
- 21 properties owned and managed by ORLT
- 2 new properties (302 acres) conserved in 2015
- 2,525 trees planted in 2015 to protect stream banks on nine private landowner properties



ORLT Protected Land

Protection helped ORLT lands weather a major flood

Widespread flooding across southern Missouri during the final week of 2015 set rainfall and river level records and killed more than a dozen statewide. In the St. Louis area, flooding closed freeways, forced evacuations, inundated about a thousand homes, and swept raw sewage from two treatment plants into the **Meramec River**.

To our relief, folks living on ORLT-protected land along Ozark rivers felt some impact, but suffered little real harm. This lack of damage can be attributed to ORLT protection, which typically discourages development in floodplains.

Not all ORLT-affiliated properties escaped flood trouble. In early November, landowner Bob Dollard had planted close to 400 young trees along **Huzzah Creek** in Crawford County. The floodwaters laid some flat and sucked others out of their holes. With help, Dollard up-righted and replanted damaged trees.

Residents on ORLT-protected

land in south central Missouri saw some of the highest water ever. Dwellings were out of harm's way, but roads took a beating, said Denslow Brown at Hawk Hill Community Land Trust. Members there had reduced mowing to increase vegetation along the stream, so they have a good buffer along Brush Creek, a tributary of **Bryant Creek** in Douglas County.

At Sweetwater Community Land Trust in Wright County, flooding deposited "trash in the treetops," said resident Susan Minyard. "But it didn't affect us," because, as agreed upon in the ORLT conservation easement, the bottomlands that runs along a fork of the **Gasconade River** are forested.

The **James River** in Stone County was the second-highest it's been at John and Connie Johnson's tree farm since they started keeping records in the 1980s (see page 1). But the river caused no trouble at their place.

Despite intense flooding, most



Above: Workers planted trees along Courtois Creek in Crawford County in November 2015, as part of ORLT's River Stewardship Program. **Below:** The same site a few weeks later. All the trees in this location stayed in place.



ORLT lands in the Joplin area were spared due to good buffers or elevated terrain, said ORLT founder Gregg Galbraith. However, trails washed out at the Wildcat Conservation and Audubon Center along **Shoal Creek** in Joplin, formerly owned by ORLT.



Bob Dollard's newly planted trees along Huzzah Creek, shown here before the flood, are part of ORLT's River Stewardship Program. Some 2,500 trees were planted on nine properties along Huzzah and Courtois Creeks. "The timing of the flood was not

good," said coordinator Abigail Lambert. "But our new trees were well planted and most stayed in place." Tree roots stabilize stream banks and anchor soil. They slow runoff, filter contaminants that might enter creeks, and provide shade, keeping the water cool.

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Like ORLT on Facebook! View our new videos.

Give Ozarks: on May 3, help ORLT preserve two special places

ORLT will join over 200 nonprofits across southern Missouri on May 3 for *Give Ozarks*, a **one-day online fundraising event** spearheaded by the Community Foundation of the Ozarks.

Your donation will spur prizes and matching incentives from *Give Ozarks* sponsors.

We are raising money for two important ORLT projects: habitat improvement and access at **Woods Prairie** and **Sarcoxie Nature Preserve** in southwest MO. The Preserve is home to the rare Ozark cavefish and Arkansas darter. At Woods Prairie, you'll find native prairie plants, butterflies, and birds.

Give Ozarks 2016 landing site for ORLT will be online by April 15 at:

www.giveozarks.org

The event starts 12:01 a.m. May 3rd. With your help, ORLT will conserve these two unique Ozark habitats.

Congress passes permanent conservation tax deduction

The U.S. Congress has passed a permanent tax incentive for conservation easement donations, effective 2015 and beyond.

The tax incentive allows conservation easement donors to:

- Take a 50% deduction of their income in any year, versus the previous maximum deduction of 30%.
- Take up to a 100% deduction of income for qualifying farmers and ranchers.
- Carry forward the tax deductions for 15 years, versus the previous five-year maximum.

For more information, see the Land Trust Alliance website:

www.lta.org/tax-incentives

**Join us for the
ORLT annual meeting
June 11, 2016, 9:45 to noon
Bentonville, AR**

Speakers

- **Elizabeth Bowen**, Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
- **Matt Lindsey**, Little Horse Creek Mitigation Bank

Lunch will be provided. We will have a Silent Auction to raise funds to support current and future ORLT projects.

Afternoon field trip to Little Horse Creek Mitigation Project, which is protected by an ORLT conservation easement.