

# THE OZARK HOLLER

OZARK REGIONAL LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2017

## Ella Alford's vision led to protection of Bryant Creek land

A visionary philanthropist, Ella Langdon Alford has been a primary force enabling ORLT to conserve land within the Bryant Creek watershed for decades, long before Missouri's recent announcement of a new state park along this river.

Scenic for its entire 60-mile run through Douglas and Ozark counties, this relatively undeveloped river features spectacular headwaters, tall bluffs, and clear springs.

Starting more than 30 years ago with Ella's donation of 240 acres, ORLT's protected areas in that watershed have grown to just over 5,000 acres today. Much of it is located only a few miles from the new 2,917-acre Bryant Creek State Park.



Ella Alford

### Connecting to the Land

**"Mom used to say, 'Just remember – you can't grow any more land.'"**

**— Margaret Newton,  
Ella's daughter**

ORLT's land boasts similar features to the park, which park officials describe as "remote, rugged wildness" with "mature oak and pine forests ... sheer dolomite cliffs and deep shady hollows."

One of ORLT's first-ever protected properties, Hawk Hill Community Land Trust, which borders a major Bryant Creek tributary, was Ella's first donation to ORLT in the mid-1980s.

Just prior to Ella's death in 2005, she sealed her legacy by permanently protecting land that had been in her family since the 1950s: the 3200-acre Alford Forest and an additional 1150 acres nearby. Ella also had close ties with nearby Elixir Farm, where 300 acres are protected through ORLT.

Ella, who was known for planting wildflowers, instilled a love for the Ozarks' beauty within her daughters, Margaret Newton and Susan McDonald. That love took hold, they say, during times spent at their family's cabin along Bryant Creek while they were growing up. Now, thanks to Ella's generosity and foresight, their family's beloved land is protected forever by ORLT.



Photo: Peggy Horner

**Above:** Bryant Creek near ORLT land. **Right:** Alford Forest's towering shortleaf pine and oak. **Banner photo:** Meadow at Elixir Farm along Bryant Creek.



Photo: David Haenke

*Donations from members like you help ORLT to protect Bryant Creek!*

Published by  
**OZARK REGIONAL  
LAND TRUST**

## MISSION

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

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeff Winzerling  
*President*  
Brian Weaver  
*Vice President*  
Steve Schueppert  
*Treasurer*  
Laura Kinsell-Baer  
*Secretary*  
Nicole Blumner  
Traycee Verdun-Chapman  
Al Eckert  
Gregg Galbraith  
David Haenke  
Craig Ingraham  
Connie Johnson  
Ann Korschgen  
Mike Kressig  
Bob Morgan  
Jake Reby  
Jim Reeves  
Jeffrey Rosenblum  
David Taylor  
Andy Thomas  
Nick Thurwanger  
Duane Woltjen  
John Yarbrough

## STAFF

Peggy Horner  
*Executive Director*  
Abigail Lambert  
*River Stewardship Program  
Coordinator*  
Kelly O'Mara  
*Conservation Projects Manager*  
Nic Rogers  
*Stewardship Specialist*  
Kathy Lee  
*Administrative Assistant*



## Meet 2 new ORLT staff members Conservation Projects Manager Kelly O'Mara ...

As Conservation Projects Manager for ORLT, Kelly O'Mara meets with landowners interested in protecting their property and guides them through the conservation easement process from beginning to end. She expects to complete eight projects in 2017, protecting an additional 2,000 acres or more.

A St. Louis native, Kelly earned a B.S. in Animal and Dairy Sciences from Auburn University. Later, she received her M.S. in Biology and a graduate certificate in Ecology and Conservation from the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Through UMSL's graduate program, Kelly was introduced to the community of land trusts and landowners using conservation easements to protect private property.

Since then, Kelly has worked with numerous non-profit and government agencies to protect private land with conservation value. Prior to joining ORLT in late 2016, she worked in the Biology Department at UMSL for 16 years.

In her free time Kelly keeps honeybees, gardens, and explores the Ozarks.

**"My goal is to protect the natural character of the Ozarks for future generations."**



—Kelly O'Mara

## ... and Stewardship Specialist Nic Rogers

Nic Rogers is responsible for stewarding ORLT's conservation easements, and he manages and preserves the land we own. Once a year he visits each property that has a conservation easement, and he corresponds with landowners, assisting them with questions about their conservation easements.

Nic's appreciation for nature began at an early age while accompanying his family on hikes, fishing trips, and archery shoots. A native of the Black Hills of South Dakota and a natural

outdoorsman, Nic followed his passion and received his B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology from the University of Wyoming in 2012. He has worked in rangeland management for the U.S. Forest Service and for the Wyoming Wildlife Foundation, assisting landowners to improve wildlife habitat.

After moving to Missouri in the fall of 2015, Nic immediately started putting his non-profit experience to work with a few organizations and is happy to have found his perfect fit at ORLT.

**"I'm excited to connect with all of ORLT's supporters who share my passion for land conservation."**



—Nic Rogers

## We're all about CONNECTIONS!

**Throughout this issue you will see versions of the verb "connect." That's because our theme this season is connections — connecting with people, land, resources, and wildlife. We want to connect with YOU! Please tell us your story of how you connect with the Ozarks.**

## Sarcoxie Park: ORLT volunteers oust invasive plants and clear trail



**Top left:** Andy Hartigan clears brush for a trail.

**Center:** Stream Team member Diann Thomas monitors water quality in the spring branch emerging from the cave.



**Lower right:** Larry Carnagey digs roots to eradicate invasive honeysuckle. Photos: Donovan Thomas



Clean up, restoration, and reviving a Stream Team topped the agenda for ORLT volunteers and staff March 4 and 18 at Sarcoxie Cave and Spring.

The endangered Ozark cavefish and the rare Arkansas darter fish call this site home. With the help of a Community Conservation Grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation, ORLT and the City of Sarcoxie have teamed up to transform this ecologically important 3-acre ORLT property into a low-impact public park.

To restore this historic site to a natural Ozark habitat, workers removed weeds and brush, planted native trees, shrubs and wildflowers, and cleaned up trash. Volunteers also began to repair the picturesque footbridge over the spring branch and worked to clear a trail around the existing pond.

These efforts ensure that the scenic bluff, historic cave, springs, and spring branch system will be protected and enhanced for all to enjoy.

## You did it! You met David's challenge!

In 2014, long-time ORLT member David Hartig presented ORLT with a challenge. He offered \$10,000 per year over three years if ORLT could find matches for his gift each year. So began a special end-of-year fundraiser, the **Grow for the Future Campaign**. Members and supporters like you rose to that challenge!

In the first year of the challenge, you helped raise over \$13,000. Supporters increased that effort in 2015 to more than \$20,000, and last year, the final year, almost \$24,000 was raised!

Each year, the match challenge was not only reached, but surpassed, with the final donations and match money totaling more than \$87,000!

And ORLT did grow! More than 2,100 acres were preserved, the ORLT website was revamped, and a conservation projects manager was hired. As more landowners are contacting ORLT, Kelly O'Mara (see page 2) is working with them with the goal of helping protect and conserve their properties.

Because of your support, more of the Ozarks will be conserved for the future!

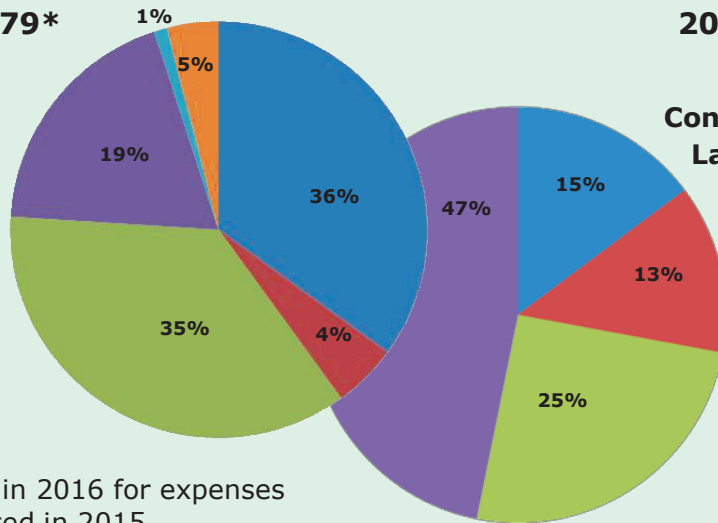


David Hartig with Abigail Lambert, ORLT's River Stewardship Program Coordinator.

# 2016 Financial Report

**2016 Income: \$601,179\***

**Foundations—36%**  
**Individuals—35%**  
**Government—19%**  
**Bequests—5%**  
**Earned Income—4%**  
**Corporations & Organizations—1%**



**2016 Expenses: \$480,482**

**Conservation Stewardship & Land Management—47%**  
**New Conservation Projects—25%**  
**Administration—15%**  
**Public Education—13%**

\* Reflects funds received in 2016 for expenses incurred/projects completed in 2015.

Note: Financial report unaudited.

## Give a gift that endures

Be a part of protecting the Ozarks for future generations by including ORLT in your will, estate, or retirement planning.

Your support of ORLT reflects what you cherish – the Ozark mountains and streams that bring joy to your life, and the vibrant, healthy landscape that we all love.

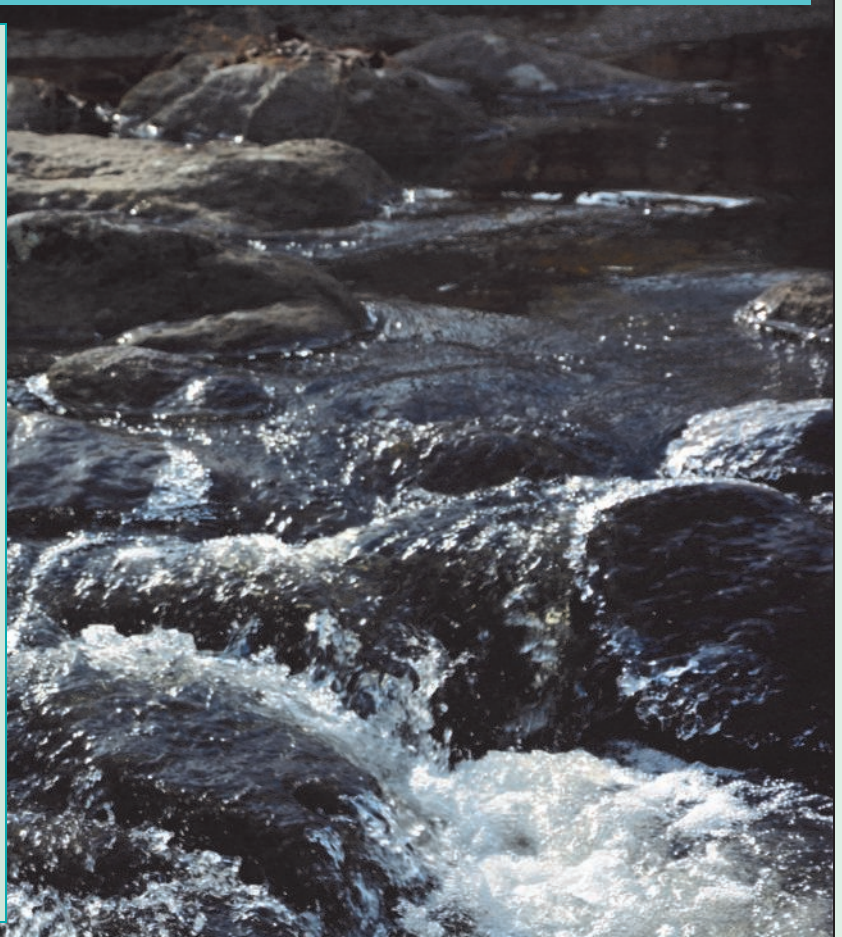
Leaving a gift to ORLT – by bequest in your will or trust, through an IRA or other financial account – is a way to ensure that your values endure. It's a way of extending your reach beyond the bounds of time to enrich the lives of future generations. It's a way of honoring your commitment to the Ozarks with a legacy that will help protect it.

### **It's an exceptional kind of stewardship.**

Legacy gifts can make a lasting impact and ensure that Ozark lands continue to be conserved, forever. Legacy gifts are flexible, most cost you nothing now, and there is no minimum contribution.

### **Make plans today to protect our conservation future.**

*For more information, contact Peggy Horner, 573-817-2020, pahorner@orlt.org*



***Thanks to Charlotte M. Vollrath's planning, ORLT received a \$30,000 bequest in 2016. Her thoughtful gift is a wonderful legacy and ensures the Ozarks that she loved will be protected – forever.***

## Connections at work: Volunteers blaze trail at Schulze Nature Preserve



Photo: Peggy Horner

On February 18, fifteen volunteers devoted their Saturday to building a new trail on the Schulze Nature Preserve, an ORLT property on the western edge of Washington, MO.

Workers from the Great Rivers and Confluence Chapters of the Missouri Master Naturalists worked side by side with ORLT staff as they cleared trails, removed honeysuckle, and assessed erosion.

Alex Hayter, who coordinates the

*Left: High school teacher Steve Tomey measures a tree, gathering data to use in class. He plans to bring students here after trails are completed.*

Schulze Public Access, Education, and Engagement Project for ORLT, said that volunteers “took advantage of the great weather to shake off cabin fever, network with other outdoors-loving volunteers, and help advance an exciting endeavor.”

When work is complete, this 23-acre wooded property will be a true asset for the community, featuring 1.2 miles of trails with interpretive signs that explain the preserve’s history and ecology.

The preserve is closed during construction, but volunteer opportunities are available. Contact ORLT, 573-817-2020, about upcoming events at Schulze Nature Preserve.

## Woods Prairie up in flames!

Smoke billowed and grass sizzled as the flames of a controlled fire crept through ORLT’s Woods Prairie Nature Preserve in Lawrence County, MO. Volunteers and fire experts with ORLT and the Missouri Prairie Foundation tended the flames to make sure this early February fire stayed on site.

Until modern times, wildfires ignited by lightning and Native Americans regularly burned our prairies, charring the previous year’s growth. These repeated natural events led to whole ecosystems becoming adapted to fire.

Land disturbance and fire suppression by European settlers led to an invasion of non-native species. In many cases, non-native plants that do not support

our native wildlife took over, leading to declines in certain bird and pollinator species. Most of these non-native plants are not fire-adapted, so by burning prairie remnants we help restore the

prairies to their natural state.

Just six weeks after this burn, the flowers pictured below were blooming right where the fire had been, revived and invigorated by the natural cycle of fire.



Photos: Nic Rogers

*Above: Woods Prairie, Feb. 3, 2017. Below: Same area, March 18.*



*Support from members like you enables improvements at Schulze and Woods Prairie nature preserves.*

Ozark Regional Land Trust  
P.O. Box 1512  
Columbia, MO 65205

NON-PROFIT  
ORG.  
U. S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Columbia, MO  
Permit No. 286

### In this issue

**Ella Alford's Bryant  
Creek legacy**

**All about Connections**

**Challenge Grant MET**

**Woods Prairie up in flames**

**Trail building at Schulze  
Nature Preserve**

**Sarcoxie restoration**

**Meet 2 new staffers**



**Like ORLT on Facebook!**

## #GiveOzarks — Support ORLT on May 9. Get involved!

Mark your calendar. You can help raise \$10,000 for the ORLT permanent Operating Endowment during the #GiveOzarks 24-hour online fundraising blitz on May 9.

All donations that day, up to

\$5,000.00, will be matched dollar-for-dollar by Community Foundation of the Ozarks, Springfield, MO.

Watch the land preservation community strengthen as people

come together for the common goal of protecting our Ozarks.

Cash prizes and additional grants are awarded throughout the day. *Your support is needed to make #GiveOzarks a success!*

## Connect with us at the ORLT Annual Membership Meeting

**When:** May 20th, 2017 - Meet & Greet begins at 9:30 a.m.

**Where:** Kress Farm Garden Preserve, 5137 Glade Chapel Road, Hillsboro, MO.

**Guest Speaker:** Eric Smith, president of the Three Rivers Chapter of the Missouri Archaeological Society, will speak on "Early Native American Culture and Preservation of their Archaeological Sites."

**Lunch:** Provided by Kress Farm Garden Preserve members.

ORLT members, board members, staff, volunteers, families, and guests will gather to learn, meet, and share at the Annual Membership Meeting.

You'll hear our latest reports on completed and upcoming conservation projects and plans for the year.

To cap it off, we'll tour the lovely Kress Farm Garden property.

Everyone is welcome. See you in May.

**Please let us know you are coming and RSVP by May 5. Call ORLT at 573-817-2020 or email Kathy at [ktlee@orlt.org](mailto:ktlee@orlt.org).**



**Native Plants  
Bring Nature Home!**

**Missouri Wildflowers Nursery**

9814 Pleasant Hill Rd, Jefferson City MO 65109  
573-496-3492, fax: 573-496-3003

[mowldflrs@socket.net](mailto:mowldflrs@socket.net)

[www.mowildflowers.net](http://www.mowildflowers.net)

*You need our excellent catalog - by mail or on line.*