



www.ortl.org

Preserve the Ozarks Forever


Empowering people to protect land in the Ozarks

Scott Conservation Easement, Lawrence Co., MO.



“The options Ozark Regional Land Trust offers to landowners are vital if we are to develop ecologically and economically viable communities.”

Wood's Prairie Preserve, Lawrence Co., MO



– Peter Raven, President-Emeritus, Missouri Botanical Garden

Ozark Regional Land Trust (ORLT) is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the land, water, and unique character of the Ozarks. We assist private landowners in identifying, evaluating, and implementing voluntary land protection options — choices that balance the benefits of human development with preserving our natural heritage.

Ozark Regional Land Trust
P.O. Box 440007
St. Louis MO 63144
(573) 817-2020
orlt@orlt.org

KANSAS

ILLINOIS


The Ozarks extend across five states and contain urban areas, farms, forests, glades, prairies and savannahs. Known for their clear streams, rugged hills, diverse and unique plant and animal life, and excellent fishing, the Ozarks are considered by many scientists to be one of the most significant centers of biodiversity in North America. An ancient plateau, the Ozarks provided a refuge to living organisms for more than 230 million years.

MISSOURI

ARKANSAS

OKLAHOMA

TENNESSEE



*We must act now to protect the Ozarks. We owe
it to our grandchildren,
and their children.*

The Ozarks are a biologically rich and diverse region, comprised of unique terrain.

This land is packed with caves and springs producing hundreds of millions of gallons of water daily and supporting a wide variety of wildlife habitats, from oak woodlands and savannahs to pine forests and glades. These habitats support more than 400 species of global conservation significance, including 160 species that occur no other place on Earth.

But the Ozarks are threatened by development and exploitation of its natural resources:

In the last decade alone, the Ozarks Region has lost 176 square miles (over 110,000 acres) of forest, pasture, wetlands and other natural lands to development. Low land values combined with rising timber values have caused an increase in “cut and run” timber harvesting. Forests serving as wildlife habitat are subdivided and sold in small parcels, which weakens the integrity of this important natural resource.

The Ozarks boast:

- Some of the largest freshwater springs in the world;
- More than 9,000 caves;
- Rivers and streams ranked among the most pristine in the nation;
- The largest remaining unfragmented forest in the south-central United States, which is an important breeding area for neo-tropical songbirds.

About Ozark Regional Land Trust

In 1984, local residents established **Ozark Regional Land Trust** to permanently protect the Ozarks' natural resources by offering protection options to private landowners.

ORLT is the foremost land conservation organization in the Ozarks that offers conservation easements.

Ozark Regional Land Trust is a member of the Land Trust Alliance (www.lta.org) – a national, nonprofit membership organization that promotes standards and practices for its member land trusts. The Land Trust Standards and Practices are guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust, which is run legally, ethically, and in the public interest, conducting a sound program of land transactions and stewardship.

Since 1984, Ozark Regional Land Trust has:

- Protected over 25,000 acres of land;
- Established 14 Nature Preserves protecting more than 4,000 acres of forests, native prairies, glades, caves, springs, and river buffers;
- Created four Community Land Trusts, which protect nearly 1,500 acres of land.



Bryant Creek, Burkhardt Conservation Easement, Ozark Co., MO



Miller Conservation Easement, Crawford Co., MO



Bille's Creek, Scott Conservation Easement, Lawrence Co., MO

“ORLT has been influential in helping to preserve the integrity of the Ozark bioregion. I am proud to be a financial supporter of this organization.”

– Rosemary Wakeham, ORLT member and annual supporter





AmeriCorps volunteers

“Over the years many of us have watched as ORLT grew to significantly influence not only land preservation but also how people and agencies view the whole of this work.”

– Leo Drey, Founder, Pioneer Forest



Working to restore Woods Prairie



Adams Conservation Easement, Scott Co., MO

Partnerships

We work with a variety of groups to achieve land protection goals.

Partners seek out Ozark Regional Land Trust because of our expertise and ability to help landowners find and tailor the right conservation tools and programs for their land. ORLT has partnered with the Missouri Cave and Karst Conservancy, Audubon Missouri and Audubon Arkansas, Open Space Council, The Nature Conservancy of Missouri and Arkansas, Trailnet, Missouri Department of Conservation, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Conservation Easement Warren Co., MO

Ozark Regional Land Trust Board of Directors

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Retired mechanical engineer


Lois J. Wyman – Union, MO
Retired realtor, nurse

Ozark Regional Land Trust Staff

Executive Director:
Peggy Horner

Stewardship Director:
Margo Heekin

River Stewardship Program Coordinator:
Abigail Lambert



“Working with landowners one on one, and tailoring conservation solutions in a quick and flexible way has become Ozark Regional Land Trust’s signature.”

– Roger Still, Former Vice-President of Mississippi River Programs, National Audubon Society

Yocom Conservation Easement, Crawford Co, MO

Strategic Planning

As the current five-year strategic plan comes to fruition, ORLT is growing to meet the increasing demand for land conservation while continuing to manage and protect its owned properties (“nature preserves”). ORLT is also in the process of planning for the next 10 years.

Protecting & Managing Land

ORLT protects approximately 2,500 new acres per year. Most are protected through donated conservation easements, but we must be prepared to make occasional land and easement purchases, and be responsible for the cost of every transaction, including real estate and attorney fees, closing costs, staff time, and more.

Outreach & Education

Due to increased demand for land conservation and landowner assistance, ORLT continues to offer unique land protection tools, specialized information, and the most up to date technical resources. ORLT is also participating in more events. ORLT still needs additional field staff to meet the growing demand for land conservation.

Mapping and Monitoring Program

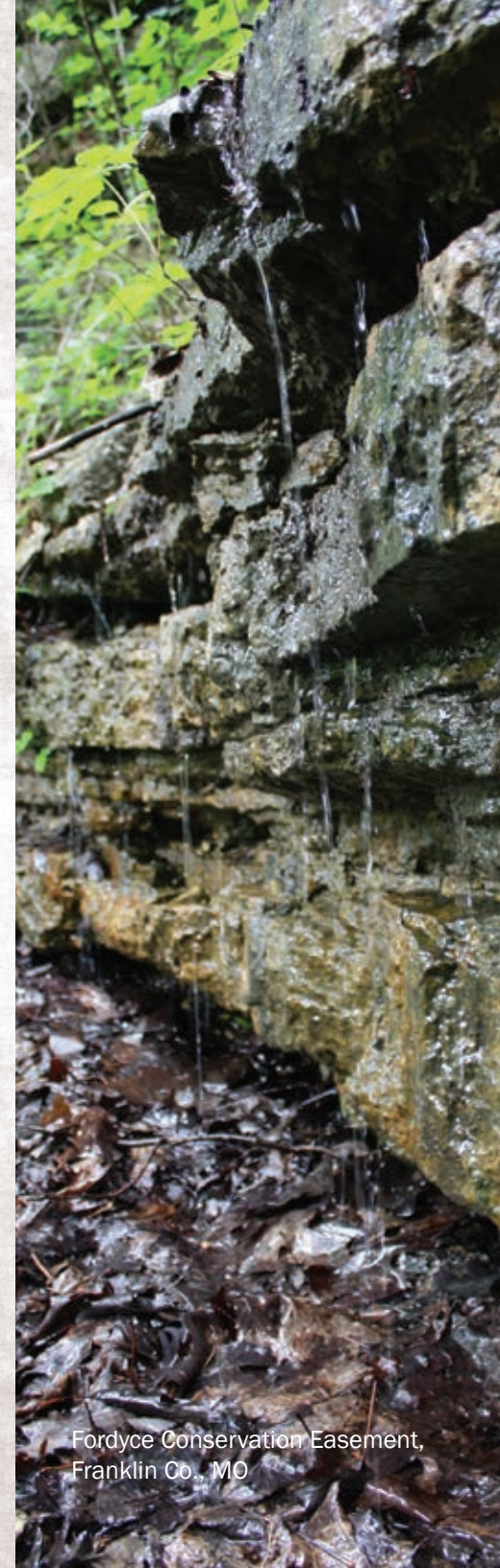
Our mapping and monitoring program is being updated and expanded to meet the demands of the ever-evolving and technologically dependent work of land conservation. We use computer-based mapping tools to manage our protected properties, and support planning on new projects and program initiatives.

River Stewardship Program

This program allows us to focus on protecting land that in turn helps protect Ozark streams, one of this region’s most valuable and threatened resource. We maximize our efforts by working with landowners in key watersheds who are interested in enhancing, restoring and protecting their land to safeguard water quality and maintain scenic beauty.

Endowment and Legal Fund

The strategic plan charts a path to expand our operating endowment and stewardship fund to ensure long term security of our conservation easements, the sustainability of our operations, and the proper management of land that we own.



Fordyce Conservation Easement,
Franklin Co., MO

You Can Help Protect the Ozarks

How can I protect my quality of life in the Ozarks and preserve the region's beauty; Save working farms and forests; Help preserve the Ozarks' unique natural areas and rivers for wildlife and people; Maintain the natural character of the Ozarks?

Just Choose the Gift Option that Matches Your Goals.

If your Goal is to:	Then Consider:
Make a quick and easy gift and receive an income tax deduction	Make a contribution online or by mail
Avoid tax on capital gains and receive a charitable deduction	Contributing appreciated stock or other securities held for more than 1 year
Give personal items and receive a charitable deduction based on the full fair market value	Donating tangible personal property
Defer a gift until after your lifetime, reduce or eliminate estate tax, and make protection of the Ozarks your legacy	Making a bequest to ORLT in your will
Secure an income for life, avoid market risks, possibly increase your rate of return, and benefit more than one charity if you wish	Establishing a Charitable Remainder Trust
Secure a fixed life income, avoid market risks and possibly increase your rate of return without creating a trust	Creating a Charitable Gift Annuity
Make a large gift with little cost to yourself and receive current (and possibly future) tax deductions	Contributing a life insurance policy you no longer need
Avoid the taxation on IRA or other employee benefit plans	Naming ORLT the beneficiary of retirement assets after your lifetime
Get involved in a way that makes a difference	Becoming an ORLT volunteer or member of our Advisory Team
Leverage additional funds for the organization	Establishing an ORLT challenge grant

You can do all of that by:

- Discussing with your financial consultant the various tax and estate planning options that would support ORLT;
- Talking to the Community Foundation of the Ozarks about creative gift options that would support our organization;
- Contacting ORLT staff at 573-817-2020, pahorner@orlt.org to create a giving plan that best fits your needs..

Featured Land Protection Projects

Oak Hill Wildlife Area: Preserving Land and Community

Roots in the land do not run much deeper than 100-year-old Mary Jane Fritsch's. Her family settled in the Oak Hill area north of Eureka Springs in the 1880s. Mary Jane 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.

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. Over the years, three properties have been donated to ORLT totaling more than 150 acres, one of which includes 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," photograph exhibit intended to preserve the region's rich cultural history.

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





Featured Land Protection Projects

Pigeon Creek: Protecting the Headwaters of the Current River

David Hartig has placed conservation easements on six properties, protecting more than 2,000 acres near Pigeon Creek. The Pigeon Creek drainage area feeds Montauk Spring and is the headwaters of the Current River, a designated Ozark National Scenic Riverway.

“It has been a real pleasure to work with the folks at ORLT these past fourteen years. They have been quick to respond and are knowledgeable concerning all aspects of land preservation. Our primary goal has been the protection of the upper Current River watershed from contaminants and the preservation of the forests from development.”

– David Hartig, landowner and easement donor

Featured Land Protection Projects

Sarcoxie Cave and Spring: Preserving Unique Sites

The spring was a favorite campsite for Native Americans, and later became the homestead for the founder of the present town of Sarcoxie. The cave harbors rare Ozark Cavefish and Spring Branch Creek is home to another rare fish, the Arkansas Darter. Volunteers have worked to remove invasive plant species and to restore the cave and spring. The spring's water quality is regularly monitored.

Alford Forest: Sustainable Forest Management

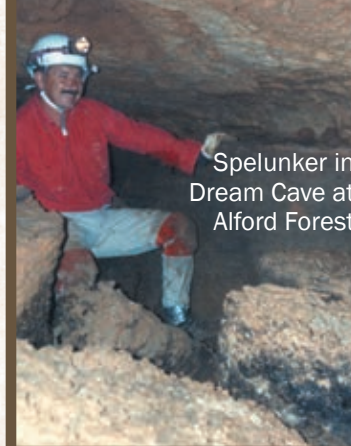
Miriam Ella Alford worked diligently with Ozark Regional Land Trust for nearly 10 years to protect her land on Bryant Creek in Ozark County, MO. In March 2005 – just six months before she passed away – Ella donated an additional 810-acre parcel of land to us, and placed more than 1,000 acres under a conservation easement.

The Alford Forest, which now encompasses 4,300 acres of permanently protected native forest near Bryant Creek, is all managed under a sustainable forest management plan, using a single-tree selection harvesting method.

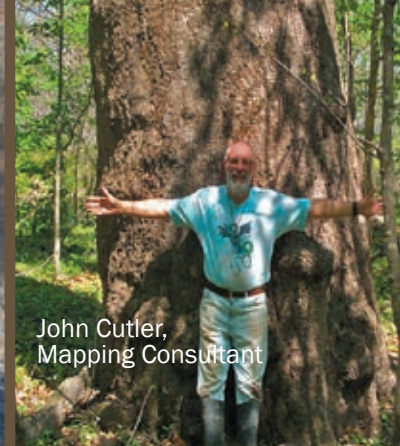
In January 2006, we initiated a long-term study to assess the health of the forest at five-year intervals. This process will help ORLT ensure that Ella's objectives of wildlife habitat protection, improved tree health, timber production, and long-term sustainability of these natural resources are achieved.

Larry Hartzog: 4,000 acres, Laclede and Texas Cos., MO

More than five miles of land along streams near the Gasconade River are protected by easements on four tracts of land, one of which is on Roubidoux Creek, a major tributary of the Gasconade. ORLT continues working with Larry and other landowners in the river watershed to increase permanent protection of this important natural resource.



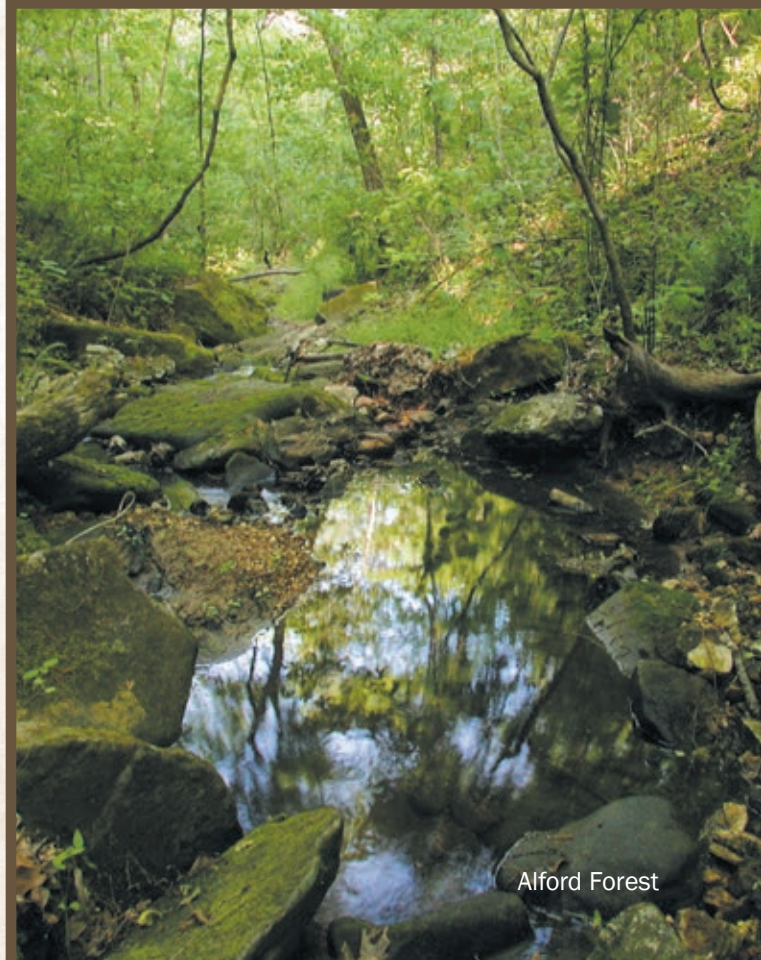
Spelunker in Dream Cave at Alford Forest



John Cutler, Mapping Consultant



Ozark Cave Fish



Alford Forest



Downey Gentian



Burning Woods Prairie

Featured Land Protection Projects

Ninestone Community Land Trust: 414 acres, Carroll County, AR

This project protects more than 400 acres including nearly two miles of Piney Creek and the valley and bluffs surrounding the stream. Piney Creek is a tributary of the Kings River, designated a Natural and Scenic River by the state of Arkansas.

A large, picturesque, spring-fed waterfall on the property delights the residents of this Community Land Trust, who are its stewards in partnership with ORLT.

Woods Prairie: 40 acres, Lawrence County, MO

For nearly 150 years the Woods family owned and protected this land with its original species of prairie grasses and wildflowers, of which 34 acres were never plowed. ORLT purchased the land with donated funds and has restored the six plowed acres using seed collected from the unplowed portion. Seeds from the native plants are also harvested and sold for other restoration projects.

Yocom Conservation Easement: 273 acres, Crawford County, MO

Located on the Huzzah Creek, a major tributary of the Meramec River, these easements protect more than a mile of river frontage, plus small headwater streams and hardwood forests in a priority focus area. This project enabled a local rancher to buy and permanently protect the land from development while continuing to operate a productive cattle farm

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a land trust?

A land trust is a private, nonprofit organization that protects land, primarily through conservation easements.

Land trusts:

- Work with landowners who want to protect the natural, scenic historic, and productive values of their properties;
- Assist landowners to find the right conservation tool and help tailor that tool to the needs of the landowner and their land. ORLT also works with landowners to help them find the best resources to implement practices which protect, enhance, or restore their natural lands, especially on working farms and forests;
- Ensure that the terms of the conservation easements they hold are honored over time and ownership changes;
- Manage and permanently protect the land they own.

How can I protect my land?

You can protect your land by donating or selling a conservation easement—a legal contract between you and an organization, like ORLT, that forever protects your land. By donating an easement you could receive tax benefits, and by selling an easement you receive payment. Tax incentives exist for conservation easements because the government recognizes the value of preserving working farms and forests, wildlife habitat and more.

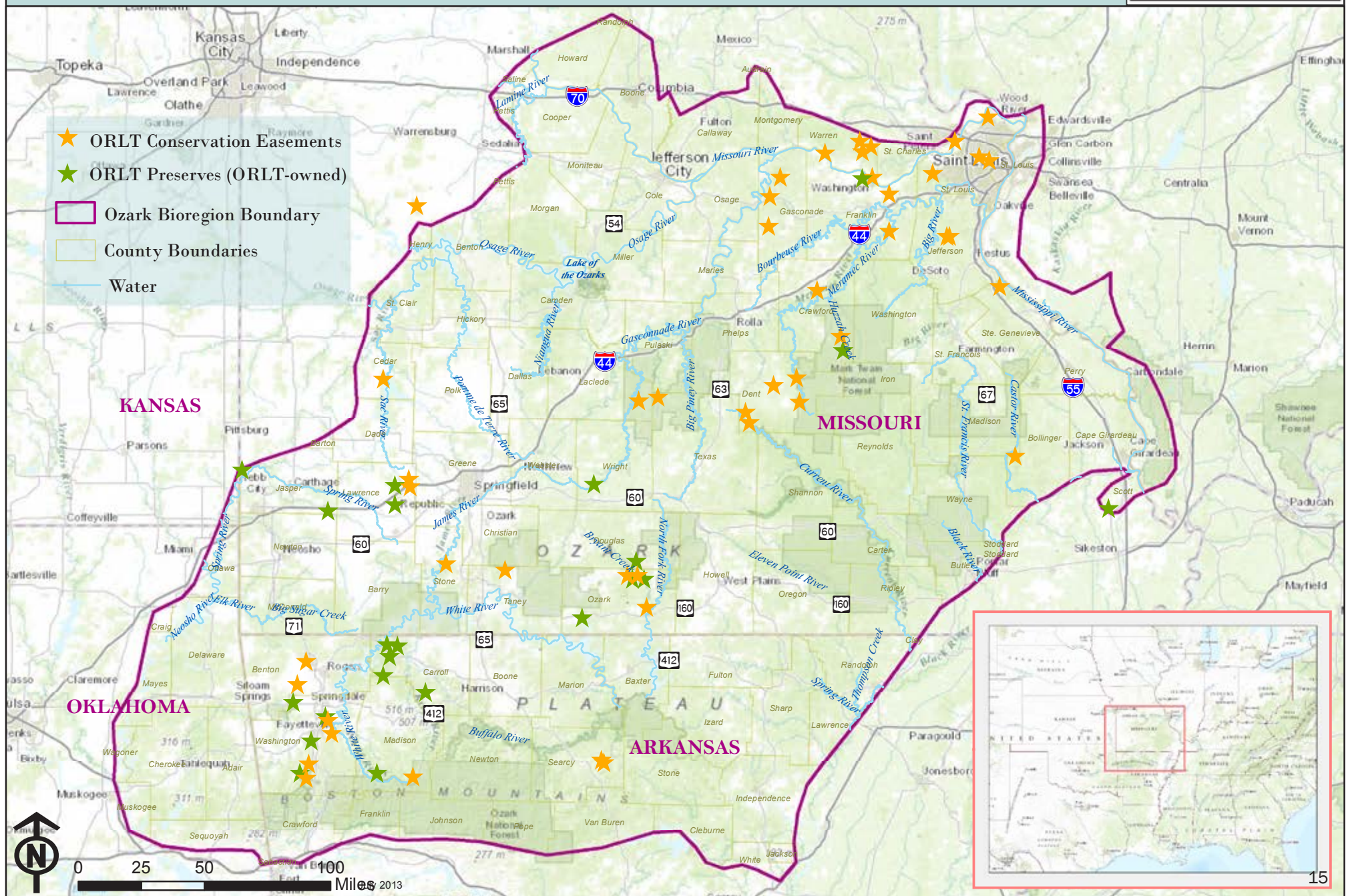
Each conservation easement is tailored to a landowner's needs and the conservation values of the property. The landowner continues to own and use the land and can sell it or pass it on to heirs, but the easement remains with the land forever, so future owners must follow its terms. ORLT has the long-term responsibility of monitoring future uses of each protected property and enforcing the terms of that conservation easement in perpetuity.

What is a Community Land Trust?

Our four Community Land Trusts are separate organizations that legally operate under Ozark Regional Land Trust, and protect nearly 1,500 acres. This land is owned by the Community Land Trust and managed under an ORLT-approved conservation plan. Residents of these Community Land Trusts serve as stewards of their land.

Ozark Regional Land Trust Protected Lands

as of December 2013



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Amanda Fisher,
Fisher Communications

Layout by
Scott Mattson, MStudio

Photos by
Lori Carter
John Cutler
Justin Early
Ted Heisel
Cath Hopkins
Kay Johnson
Stephen Matt



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