

THE OZARK HOLLER

OZARK REGIONAL LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2015

Woods Prairie restoration complete & open to the public

Indian paintbrush was blooming during ORLT's grand opening at the Woods Prairie Nature Preserve. This event marked completion of a 15-year restoration effort, culminated by three recent big improvements.

These three upgrades were funded by a grant from the Mo. Dept. of Conservation, which paid for construction of a small parking area and a pedestrian entryway. It enabled repair and stabilization of an eroding area. Importantly, it also funded improved prairie habitat by eradicating fescue, which was conducted by staff with the Missouri Prairie Foundation.

"We're grateful to both organizations," said Andy Thomas, who oversees the preserve on behalf of ORLT. The Prairie Foundation has partnered with ORLT to restore and manage Woods Prairie since its purchase in 1999.

This historically important remnant prairie is home to 228 plant species.

Woods Prairie Nature Preserve near Mount Vernon in Lawrence County, Mo., is a 40-acre tallgrass prairie that has never been plowed. ORLT bought the land from the great-granddaughter of the land's first European owner, John Blackburn Woods. The family had owned the property since 1836.

Now you can visit and enjoy this flower-fragrant prairie! Directions are posted at orlt.org.

Photos by Andy Thomas. Above, Indian Paintbrush in full bloom at Woods Prairie in May 2014.



Connie Johnson and Mo. Sen. Roy Blunt

Sen. Roy Blunt supports important conservation bill

Newly-elected ORLT board member Connie Johnson is thrilled that her lobbying efforts have paid off. Shortly after visiting Mo. Sen. Roy Blunt, she received

a call from his office announcing that the senator is co-sponsoring a key land trust bill.

Connie, a tree farmer whose property is protected by an ORLT conservation easement, recently talked with Sen. Blunt during Land Trust Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. She encouraged him to support Senate Bill 330. If passed, it would give tax breaks to landowners who donate conservation easements, which permanently protect forests, family farms, and other natural lands. The tax incentive expired at the end of 2013. S.330 would make it permanent.

You can TAKE ACTION by contacting your senators to voice support for S.330, the Conservation Easement Incentive Act.

Grand Opening, April 19, 2015



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Through carefully designed programs of conservation and appropriate land management, ORLT empowers people to protect the natural resources of the Ozarks forever.

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Eroded Little Horse Creek gets a facelift

Highway construction has—in a roundabout way—led to improved water quality in Little Horse Creek, which flows through an overgrazed 200-acre former cattle farm in north-west Benton County, Arkansas.

Here, trees have been replanted along the stream. More than a mile of stream has been restored to its former width, depth, and its original meandering path.

This land is now the Little Horse Creek Mitigation Bank. The 'bank' is a new type of protected property, and it's a recently completed ORLT project.

"The mitigation bank concept was established to help compensate for adverse environmental

impacts, such as those occurring in the rapidly-developing Fayetteville-Springdale-Bentonville-Rogers metropolitan area," said Matt Lindsey, Little Horse

Creek Mitigation Bank's owner and project director.

Sometimes new construction unavoidably destroys wetlands and streams. This was the case when a new highway was built around Bentonville, and the work at Little Horse Creek

Mitigation Bank represents an offset for these impacts.

To safeguard the restoration efforts and the land itself, ORLT will act as overseer for a conservation easement that will permanently protect Little Horse Creek.

Little Horse Creek will remain a home to wildlife and diverse plant species even if other nearby areas are developed.



Little Horse Creek Mitigation Bank before restoration, left, and after restoration, right.

We're preparing for the future

Missouri landowners and citizens are committed to land conservation. To meet this commitment, ORLT has a new Strategic Plan that outlines and maximizes our growth potential. In the next 5 years, our goal is to conserve 5,000 acres along rivers and streams, 2,000 acres of working

farms and forests, and 3 to 5 properties with special or unique conservation features. We will also increase our staff and financial capacity to ensure we will be exemplary stewards of the lands we protect. Download the plan at www.orlt.org/publications, or call us to request a copy.

Member profile: Fred Berry wants his land to spark imagination

Longtime educator and ORLT member Fred Berry has found a way to combine his love of teaching with his passion for his Ozark homeland, and to share both with new generations.

Fred, retired after a lifetime of teaching, continues to make major contributions to education. In 1999, his donation launched the Fred Berry Conservation Education Center, a wildlife-rich 421-acre nature facility run by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

"I feel like environmental issues will pretty much be THE big issues of the 21st century," Fred said. "Education does not answer everything, but it's going to help."

Fred's 100-plus acre farm has been in his family's possession for almost 100 years, and it's located right next to his namesake education center. He is developing a trail system, and he envisions future youngsters exploring beyond the borders of the adjoining educa-



Fred Berry, right, walks down an old wagon trail on his place with Aaron and Evelyn Murray and their son Connor, 3.

"You can have all the intellectual knowledge in the world but if there is no emotional connection with nature, that knowledge is not going to go anywhere." — Fred Berry

tional facility and strolling around on his trails.

Perhaps his land might become "a place for kids to use their imaginations," Fred said. Such activities can foster a lifelong love of nature.

In the children's book "Bridge to Terebithia," two misfit children create a magical forest kingdom. "I would like for this place to be some kid's Terebithia," he said.

Time to renew your membership

Your annual membership contribution is very important to ORLT's mission to permanently conserve the Ozarks. In the past, membership renewal letters were sent in the month of the member's first anniversary. This year all members received renewal notices by May 1.

Please mail your contribution or renew your membership online at www.orlt.org.

Your support IS making a difference - and we THANK YOU!

Give a lasting gift

If you are interested in making a lasting commitment to conservation in the Ozarks, consider naming the Ozark Regional Land Trust as a beneficiary in your estate plans. For more information, contact Executive Director Peggy Horner, pahorner@orlt.org or 573-817-2020.



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Stream protection along Huzzah Creek is an ORLT focus

Some 3,700 feet of Huzzah Creek and a perennial spring have been protected with ORLT's newest conservation easement.

This summer the Yocom family will complete their second conservation easement, which will protect 162 acres from development. The Yocom family has lived in that watershed for more than 80 years. Steve and daughter



Rachel operate S&R Cattle Farms; over the last seven years they have implemented numerous conservation practices to protect the health of the Huzzah, some with ORLT assistance.

The conservation easement will prevent subdivision and will protect wide buffers along the waterways. This new agreement is next to a 273-acre parcel that the Yocoms placed under conservation easement in 2011. Now 1.5 miles of stream frontage are protected.

Huzzah Creek in Crawford County, Mo., is a major tributary of the Upper Meramec River and an ORLT focus area. Its watershed is considered important habitat for several state- and federally-listed endangered species.

Contributions have enabled ORLT's actions to protect Huzzah Creek. Every membership makes a difference.

Photo by Abigail Lambert. The clear water of Huzzah Creek supports an abundance of aquatic creatures and diverse wildlife along its banks.

Kress Farm preserves dentist's "piece of heaven"

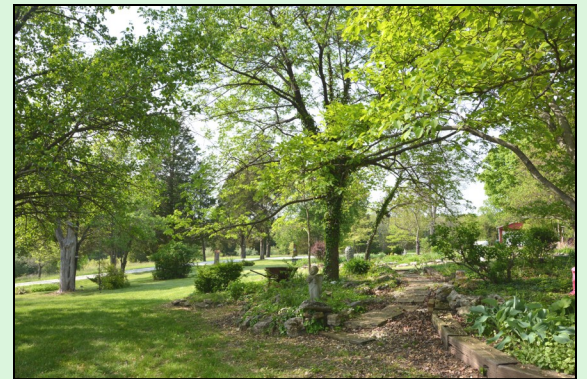
Dr. Jacob Kress can rest assured that the land he worked tirelessly to beautify since 1961 will be cared for from now on. "A piece of heaven" is what JoAnn Burke calls the Kress Farm Garden Preserve, which is protected by an ORLT conservation easement. JoAnn chairs the group that maintains the 139-acre property near Hillsboro in Jefferson County, Mo. The preserve has no paid staff, but is maintained by about 20 dedicated volunteers.

You can visit Kress Farm!



JoAnn Burke weeds a flower bed

"We're like family" said JoAnn, praising the volunteers who care for Dr. Jay's gardens.



Hostas and hydrangea thrive in dappled sun at Kress Farm

This land features rolling hills with woods, fields, wildlife, and two streams. A beautiful formal garden dotted with statues and fountains is among the legacies created by Dr. Jay, as he is fondly called. He practiced dentistry in south St. Louis County for 26 years; he recently celebrated his 92nd birthday. Kress Farm is open Wednesdays 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. or by appointment. Call 314-602-4414 for directions.

Because of support from members like you, we were able to protect this property.