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VOLUME 18



MISSOURI

ACTION AND IMPACT

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Transformation has been on my mind a lot lately.

Most recently, it was brought on by monarch butterflies. We had a bumper crop of larvae to watch transform outside our home this year. It was little by little at first, but then...pure awe.

The transforming of seasons seems to mirror these stages—little by little, then, almost instantly—fall colors, spring wildflowers, or a showy heavy frost signaling the change.

I find comfort, hope, and joy in that pattern. Our work in Missouri and beyond is guided by three strategies: **Protection, Transformation, Inspiration.** This update highlights these strategies taking place throughout our conservation priorities. Our transformation strategy often seems daunting—as we seek change in the way we make decisions related to our natural resources and how we utilize its power in serving the needs of people and nature. The following updates represent all stages, from little by little to the wow. I'll let you decide which is which.

I invite you to keep an eye on our theme of partnership and collaboration that is also threaded throughout. We couldn't achieve our mission without both. I hope you enjoy the update and, as always, thank you for your dedicated support and inspiration!

With warm regards,



Adam McLane, Missouri State Director

It has been an honor serving as Board Chair of The Nature Conservancy in Missouri for the last three years—working alongside the best and brightest in science and conservation.

Our work has significantly improved the quality of life in Missouri by protecting environmentally important land, restoring waterways, keeping forests and soil healthy, and initiating a new cities program. My fellow trustees and I are proud of these successes and we believe the best is yet to come.

The strong partnerships that TNC has established have set us apart and made our mission even more scalable and effective. By coordinating efforts, we are able to work more effectively within our state, our region and well beyond—and as a result, the investments you and I make in TNC will now go further than ever before.

I hope you will join me in continuing to support our remarkable work and ensure a healthy and sustainable Missouri for generations to come.



Beth Alm, Missouri Board Chair



A Voice for Nature

The challenges facing our planet today require solutions that both address our current issues and lay the foundation to effectively and efficiently address tomorrow's concerns. The Nature Conservancy is helping to shape governmental policies by which critical conservation and investment decisions are made so that it will be possible to achieve the transformative conservation outcomes our world requires.

In Missouri, we engage our staff and trustees with state and federal legislators to open dialogue about conservation challenges and opportunities. We build and nurture relationships that span the political aisle and we strive to be a trusted resource for science-based information used to shape policy.

During the Missouri legislative session, we track bills and policies that impact natural resources and conservation efforts, delivering engagement and action when needed. Federally, we provide input and advocate for critical federal legislation that affects us locally

here in Missouri such as the Farm Bill, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the Water Resources Development Act.

Over the past year, we've enjoyed hosting legislators at places like TNC's Dunn Ranch Prairie and paddling the Current River to provide opportunities to see, first-hand, how our work is benefiting Missouri's communities and our natural resources. We've showcased the power of prescribed fire, native grasslands, high-quality rivers, and the importance of conservation programs that support private landowners. Connecting our leaders with the landscape provides opportunities to enhance the understanding of Missouri's conservation challenges and solutions that benefit both people and nature.

The Nature Conservancy is a voice for nature. Together with our state and federal leaders and our supporters, we can protect Missouri's great places and valuable natural resources that we all depend on.

Connecting with Leadership

In 2018, TNC staff and trustees participated in both state and federal advocacy days to personally meet with legislators to discuss our conservation priorities in Missouri.

More than advocating for conservation policy, these important meetings and conversations demonstrate the passion and dedication that our staff and trustees have for our mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

During State Advocacy Day in Jefferson City, 18 meetings were held with state Senators and members of the House of Representatives. Additionally, meetings with leadership from the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Department of Natural Resources provided opportunities to discuss common goals, strategies, and partnerships.

While on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., staff and trustees met with 7 congressional offices to discuss federal policy including the Farm Bill, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the Water Resources Development Act.

We appreciate the dedication of our trustees and the legislators who participate in these conversations to help us achieve our vision of a more sustainable Missouri.



LEARN MORE about our work
at [nature.org/mopolicy](https://www.nature.org/mopolicy)





Bringing Back the Birds

One of the biggest threats to birds today is habitat loss due to incompatible development and fragmentation. For nearly 20 years, TNC has incorporated specific and intentional conservation practices on Dunn Ranch Prairie to restore and increase habitat for resident and migratory birds.

For the past 10 years, in partnership with the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative and the Missouri Department of Conservation, TNC has been granted funds designated to do just that. “The funds from this partnership have supported projects from invasive tree removal and tractor rentals to grassland bird monitoring and prairie chicken translocation,” said Randy Arndt, TNC’s Grand River Grasslands Manager.

One focus project of this partnership was on the reestablishment of the

state-endangered greater prairie chicken. In the spring of 2013, an initiative to translocate prairie chickens from Nebraska to Missouri began. Over the next 5 years, the number of leks (breeding areas) and booming males at Dunn Ranch Prairie increased from one lek with two males in 2012 to six leks with more than 50 males by 2016.

“While this funding has had direct and successful impacts on Dunn Ranch Prairie, having a sequential prairie restoration program, continuous bird monitoring data, and a population of endangered prairie chickens also makes Dunn Ranch Prairie a place that researchers seek out for various projects,” said Arndt. “And that data is then exported out and can inform conservation practices and habitat restoration around the world.”

Partnering to Help the Endangered Topeka Shiner

In December 1998, the Topeka Shiner was designated a federally endangered species. Although the small minnow was once common throughout the prairie states, their numbers have continued to decline due to loss of habitat, increased sediment in rivers and streams, and poor water quality. In fact, at its lowest point, the Topeka Shiner could only be found in two streams in Missouri.

In 2013, in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, over 3,330 hatchery-reared Topeka Shiners were released into the headwaters of Little Creek on the Conservancy’s Dunn Ranch Prairie. This was a milestone in the decades-long effort to protect and restore the species that evolved in and relies on healthy prairie streams to survive.

In the Spring of 2018, an additional 1,000 minnows were released into Little Creek and research shows their population continues to thrive on Dunn Ranch Prairie.

With our restoration downstream of the headwaters on a recently acquired Conservancy property, we hope to expand their habitat and allow their population to continue to grow.



LEARN MORE about Little Creek on page 7

Teaming Up for Sustainable Forest Management

The Nature Conservancy is committed to supporting private land conservation in the Current River Basin. Over the past 5 years with the help of grant funding provided by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), TNC has been able to reach private landowners through a program with three primary components—encouraging better management through planning, outreach and education, and permanent land protection with conservation easements.

The USFS grant funding enabled TNC to provide forest management plans on over 5,000 acres of private land. Helping landowners establish a forest management plan enables them to connect with cost-share programs to implement the plan. It also supported more than a dozen workshops and farm tours, introducing landowners to management tools important for protecting the diverse rivers, streams, glades and woodlands in the Ozarks.

We convened partners including the Missouri Department of Conservation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and others to share technical expertise and guide landowners through the various cost-share programs available for conservation practices. Currently, work is ongoing to permanently protect an additional 774 acres in the Current River area, including one critically important piece of riverfront property on the Jacks Fork River.

Working with our public and private landowner partners, our goal is to ensure family farmers have the tools to grow healthy timber and manage their land in a way that preserves the diversity of the Current River area and keeps the water clean for the next generation.



Investing in the Ozarks

For nearly 10 years, The Nature Conservancy has leveraged a generous donation to create the Ozarks Conservation Buyer Fund. This fund started with \$4 million and has protected 12 properties—totaling 12,300 acres—with more to come.

When a property of conservation concern becomes available, we can take advantage of these readily available funds to purchase it. We then put it back on the market with a conservation easement, which is a legal land protection agreement that will transfer with all future sales of the property.

This easement protects the land and water by restricting incompatible development and requires TNC oversight and approval of activities. Protecting these Ozark properties provides critical habitat to ensure the region's rich biodiversity continues to thrive for generations to come.

30—Organizations aligned under the Missouri Land Trust Coalition. The Nature Conservancy plays a role in building organizational structure to increase biodiversity protection capacity in Missouri.

New Program Launched in Missouri

Increasing crop production and limiting harmful fertilizer and chemical runoff into streams and groundwater is more important than ever as farmers try to meet the needs of a growing population, while maintaining soil and water quality and improving their farm's sustainability.

Recently, stakeholders within the state's agricultural industry, along with The Nature Conservancy and other organizations collaborated to launch a 4R program in Missouri. 4R focuses on nutrient (fertilizer) management and conservation practices to improve soil health and limit the amount of harmful runoff into our rivers and streams. The 4Rs refer to the right fertilizer source, at the right rate, at the right time, and in the right place.

"The agriculture industry is challenged with the task of producing more food than ever before with continuous improvement of soil stewardship. Farmers are the decision-makers when it comes to

nutrient management, and the 4R program is designed to empower our farmers through educational resources," said Andrea Rice, Missouri's 4R Coordinator.

The 4R program provides information and resources for farmers and their advisors as they strive to achieve productive, economic, and environmental goals using an approach focused on sustainability.

"Farmers want to do what is best for maintaining proper soil health and the 4R program has been developed to help them do exactly that," said Rice. "By focusing on the four 'rights,' farmers can identify improvements in fertilizing each specific crop in each specific field and continue to be good stewards for the soil."



RIGHT SOURCE
Matches fertilizer type to crop needs.



RIGHT RATE
Matches amount of fertilizer type to crop needs.



RIGHT TIME
Makes nutrients available when crops need them.



RIGHT PLACE
Keeps nutrients where crops can use them.



SPORTING
SUSTAINABILITY

Upping the Game

Every year over 40% of food is wasted in the U.S.—that's 72 billion pounds of food that never reaches the kitchen table. In the spring of 2018, The Nature Conservancy partnered with Major League Soccer Club Sporting Kansas City, to spotlight this economic and environmental issue through their new initiative, Sporting Sustainability.

Sporting Sustainability aims to raise awareness around the impact of food waste prevention, including greenhouse gas emissions reduction, responsible agricultural land use and fresh water conservation, while utilizing educational tools to encourage the adoption of sustainable practices amongst consumers.

"The Nature Conservancy has a long history of working with partners and collaborating on projects that are rooted in science and advance our mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends," said Adam McLane, State Director for The Nature Conservancy in Missouri. "Through this partnership we hope to advance the understanding that individual choices are made every day around food and food waste and how those choices impact our natural resources. We commend Sporting Kansas City on taking this step to recognize the impacts of food waste and how they can use their platform to make a difference for people and nature."



LEARN MORE and take the pledge at www.sportingkc.com/sustainability

Bringing Life Back to Little Creek

Little Creek is a valuable resource to communities in northwest Missouri. Its headwaters are on The Nature Conservancy's Dunn Ranch Prairie, where it begins its journey, eventually flowing into Harrison County Lake, which is a water supply and recreational reservoir for the surrounding communities.

Years of TNC's restoration work of Little Creek on Dunn Ranch Prairie has resulted in a highly biodiverse creek with lush riparian vegetation—the plant habitat and communities that run along a streambank. This has provided favorable habitat for important fish species, including the federally endangered Topeka Shiner.

However, just across the road from Dunn Ranch Prairie, the waters of Little Creek are in trouble. In the fall of 2017, TNC purchased Little Creek Farm, a 217-acre farm immediately south of Dunn Ranch Prairie. The land had been used as a grazing operation for decades, with no restrictions on cattle access to the creek. This, combined with little vegetation along the streambanks, led to heavy erosion, a highly degraded streambed, and overall poor water quality. Additionally, two culverts separating Dunn Ranch Prairie and Little Creek Farm with 8-foot drops pose a major obstacle for fish passage and habitat.

TNC recently completed a comprehensive assessment of Little Creek and will work with partners to implement nature-based techniques to stabilize the streambank, reestablish a healthy riparian buffer, and evaluate options for the culvert. Our goal is to use Little Creek as a demonstration for partners and landowners to learn how they can implement nature-based solutions on their property to benefit both people and nature.



THIS PAGE TOP RIGHT Grazing in a burned patch. © Chris Helzer/TNC;
BOTTOM Little Creek. © Steve Herrington/TNC.



Building a Sustainable Farm

Standing on the deck of the Little Creek Farmhouse you can see the rolling hills of Dunn Ranch Prairie, but it's more than a farm with a view. This recently purchased land will serve as TNC's first sustainable grazing demonstration farm in Missouri.

The 217-acre farm is being leased to a local farmer and is currently home to nearly 70 head of cattle. As part the lease agreement, data—including weight gain—will be recorded during the cattle's time on the farm. "The cattle's weight was recorded when they arrived on Little Creek Farm and it will be recorded when they leave," said James Cole, Director of Conservation Programs for The Nature Conservancy in Missouri. "We're particularly interested in their weight gain over the summer to get some baseline data before we start incorporating any new conservation programs on the land."

Over 66% of Missouri is farmland—with cattle being the third largest agriculture commodity in the state. "The pressures of a growing population demand more food, using less water and without expanding agriculture's footprint," said Cole. "We will test sustainable techniques that will look to increase cattle production and the farmer's bottom line, while also providing benefits to nature."

Tackling Challenges of the Meramec River

The Meramec River is one of the longest free-flowing waterways in Missouri. It provides a variety of recreational opportunities and supplies drinking water to over 70,000 households in the St. Louis area. However, in recent years it has seen multiple record floods, with devastating impacts on many communities in Jefferson, Franklin, and St. Louis counties.

The Nature Conservancy is working with and providing expertise to state and federal partners including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to identify opportunities within the Meramec River Basin where nature-based solutions will lessen the impacts of flooding, increase water quality, and restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat.

“Nature-based solutions are techniques that use nature itself to address big

challenges such as flooding and erosion in ways that provide benefits to both people and nature,” said Barbara Charry, TNC’s Meramec River Project Coordinator. “By using nature-based solutions in this flood-prone system, we can reduce the devastation of future floods on our communities.”

Solutions such as increasing vegetation along the river, restoring floodplains, and using nature-based engineering techniques to stabilize eroding streambanks can work together with traditional approaches to address these challenges.

“We need to incorporate nature into how our rivers and the lands around them are managed,” said Charry. “Doing so will provide benefits for the natural resources that we depend on today as well as for future generations.”

Stabilizing Kiefer Creek

Running through the heart of Castlewood State Park in St. Louis County is Kiefer Creek—a small but mighty tributary to the Meramec River. The Conservancy, in partnership with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and State Parks, is working together to stabilize nearly 3,500 feet of severely eroding streambank along the creek.

Together, we will implement sophisticated engineering and nature-based approaches to stop the erosion, enhance habitat for fish and wildlife, and improve downstream recreational benefits.

Due to its size, this project will be broken into three phases that are planned to be completed by 2021. This site will also serve as a demonstration area to promote the use of nature-based techniques and allow outside agencies and contractors to experience firsthand the benefits these techniques provide to nature and people.



Inspiring Change Throughout Missouri

In early 2018, in partnership with several local landowners and through support by Tyson Foods, Inc. and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, we stabilized over 1,650 feet of severely eroding streambank along the Elk River near Noel, Missouri.

Since completion in February 2018, the new streambank has withstood the impacts of four floods and is thriving with vegetation and new life.

Not only is the newly constructed streambank benefitting nature and communities in southern Missouri, it's changing the way streambank stabilization is being addressed across the state and beyond. Over 90 individuals have already participated in field days at the site to better understand nature-based techniques and how they can be replicated statewide. Numerous state and federal agencies along with others have visited the site, including farm associations and private landowners, who are interested in the benefits to agricultural production.

We are just starting to see the ripple effects of this one streambank restoration project and how it's impacting decisions being made on rivers throughout the state—and bringing with it the benefits to people and nature.



LEARN MORE about this project at nature.org/elkriverno



The Impacts of Floods: A Statewide Strategy

As climate changes and storms intensify, some Missouri communities are repeatedly experiencing devastating floods that put people's lives at risk and cost the state and citizens millions of dollars in damaged infrastructure. The Nature Conservancy has joined a team of partners including the Army Corps of Engineers and the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency to create a statewide flood buyout strategy.

Following a flood, voluntary buyouts enable communities to acquire flood-damaged properties to prevent further development in these flood-prone areas. The multidisciplinary team is developing a prioritization tool to guide decision-making for how federal and state funds are spent on voluntary buyout projects following a disaster. This tool will consider multiple factors for evaluating properties included in a proposed buyout area, such as flood risk, benefit to wildlife, connection to existing natural areas, risk to human life, impacts on housing, and others. By incorporating nature into their voluntary buyout projects and restoration plans, communities may be able to reduce the risks associated with floods and increase their community's natural ability to withstand future floods.

As the only conservation organization involved, TNC's role is to identify priorities across the state that would have the biggest conservation benefits while also protecting the surrounding communities from future floods. We are advising on how nature can decrease flood risk, reduce harmful nutrients, improve fish habitat and provide numerous additional benefits for people's health and well-being. The project team will complete the strategy by the spring of 2019.

This collaboration will result in Missouri being one of the only states in the country to have a statewide prioritization strategy in place for federal funds to be quickly, strategically, and efficiently deployed following a flood—providing the greatest return on investment and protecting our natural resources and communities.

Building Healthy Cities: Q&A with Rebecca Weaver



Rebecca Weaver joined The Nature Conservancy in early 2018 as the Cities Program Manager. In this new role, she's working to advance strategies and projects that enhance natural systems in urban landscapes throughout Missouri, with an initial focus on St. Louis. Rebecca earned her master's degree in Conservation Biology from Miami University's Global Field Program. She is passionate about community organizing, civic engagement and grassroots strategies for sustainable community development.

TNC: The Nature Conservancy is known for protecting landscapes and biodiversity. How does a focus on urban conservation in Missouri expand upon the work we've been doing for the past 60 years?

RW: TNC's Cities Program is simultaneously similar to and very different from our traditional work of protecting land and water. Urban conservation has the potential to strengthen the bond between cities, nature and people by supporting community-centered, co-created, nature-based solutions that both conserve biodiversity and improve human quality of life. This work is increasing our organizational capacity to partner with community-based organizations to help support and advance positive socioeconomic impacts and equitable outcomes in under-resourced and frontline communities, which are often the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

TNC: What environmental challenges are our cities facing?

RW: Globally, we face enormous environmental challenges in terms of climate change, resource use and protection of the natural environment. In the St. Louis region, the health of our rivers and streams have been plagued by harmful nutrient overflows (phosphorous, nitrogen and sediment) from a combination of discharges from the combined sewer system, stormwater runoff, paved (impervious) surfaces that do not allow for the absorption of rainfall, and development in floodplains that leads to soil erosion.

Our work presents profound opportunities to utilize nature to help solve the most fundamental human well-being problems while also improving the health of our urban ecosystems. Planting trees and incorporating other green infrastructure best management practices can better manage stormwater, promote green jobs, and combat air pollution and the urban heat island effect. Creating urban farms and gardens that incorporate native prairie plants can help to both reduce food insecurity and provide pollinator habitat. Urban conservation projects that are co-created with communities can provide effective solutions to a variety of problems and improve the quality of life of city residents.

What are some cities projects that TNC is currently working on?

RW: Our Cities work takes place at multiple scales. We are working with other NGO partners, academic institutions, local government, and assisting with regional watershed planning efforts. At the same time, we're also supporting two green infrastructure projects that are located on North Grand in the City of St. Louis. These projects are expanding the vital, growing network of community-based and community-driven open space projects using green infrastructure to help address both stormwater and vacancy challenges.



LEARN MORE about these projects

Partnerships for a More Sustainable St. Louis

In this increasingly urban world, cities have become the center of society's most pressing economic, social and environmental challenges. They also offer the greatest potential to drive growth, opportunity, large-scale innovation and regenerative solutions. The Nature Conservancy in Missouri has partnered with organizations and neighborhood residents on two projects within blocks of each other in the Fairgrounds and College Hill neighborhoods in North St. Louis. These projects build on the work of local community-based organizations and residents to reclaim vacant properties in their neighborhoods to create long-term environmental, social and economic assets.

Project Oasis

What was once nearly a half-acre of vacant land behind Jubilee Community Church will soon be a thriving hub for local food production, jobs creation and native habitat—complete with a 150,000-gallon underground cistern that will utilize the rainfall captured from the church's roof to irrigate the new urban farm and orchard.

"It's an honor to partner with Jubilee Community Church on Project Oasis. The passion and collaboration behind this work is remarkable," said Rebecca Weaver, TNC's Cities Program Manager. "Project Oasis will produce fresh food for neighborhood residents, provide habitat for native pollinator species and offer a community gathering space for church members and the surrounding communities."

Project Oasis will serve as an innovative demonstration site for what is possible and replicable in communities around

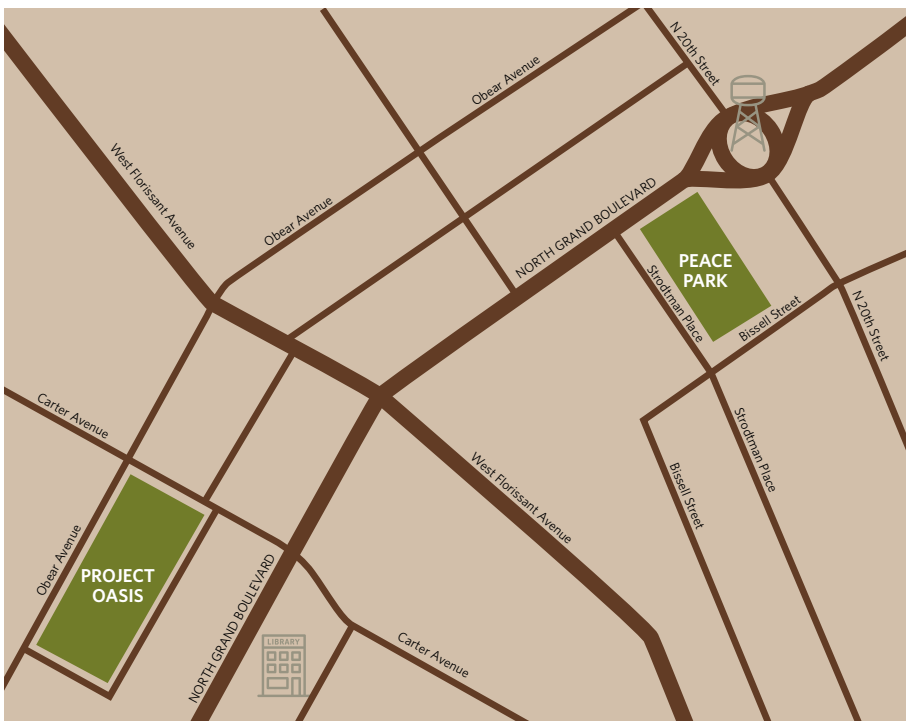
the state. "Stormwater is a big issue in St. Louis. Building on TNC's work with partners throughout the Mississippi River basin and focusing our work on projects that incorporate green infrastructure, we will be helping to reduce the amount of pollutants entering the Mississippi River, a major cause of the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico," said Weaver.

Peace Park

Just blocks from Project Oasis, a similar initiative is in the works. What began as a collaboration between scholars at Washington University and St. Louis University to explore the health issues of African Americans in St. Louis has evolved into a mission to eliminate racial inequities and improve the health of all people in our region.

Their report made recommendations for increased attention and investment in economic opportunities and quality neighborhoods—and in the spring of 2017 the College Hill Neighborhood Solutions Initiative officially began. Now, this team of neighborhood researchers, along with over 20 partner organizations including TNC, is working to acquire and repurpose 14 vacant lots that will become the future Peace Park.

"The community's vision for Peace Park is to have a place that will spark community engagement and serve as a source of inspiration and neighborhood pride," said Weaver. "They envision a community garden that will provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables, complete with native trees, pollinator habitat, and a recreational area for residents to feel safe and more connected to the natural world and to each other."



Unleashing the Power of Nature

SITE WIND RIGHT

The demand for energy is expected to rise 60% by 2050. Meeting that increased demand and simultaneously reducing our greenhouse gas emissions is critical for both people and nature.

The Nature Conservancy is working throughout the Central Plains “wind belt” to support the rapid expansion of wind energy, while making sure our iconic landscapes and wildlife are protected.

Working together across multiple states, TNC developed Site Wind Right, which is a siting decision support tool to identify low-impact lands for wind development. With mapping in Kansas, Oklahoma, and parts of Texas complete, staff in Missouri have now identified areas with low risks of conflict among wind energy development, important wildlife habitats, and sensitive species throughout the state.

The Site Wind Right tool uses the best available science and serves as an important guide for developers, power purchasers, investors and other decision-makers to help inform the accelerated development of low-impact renewable energy without the harmful effects that threaten sensitive ecosystems. The tool will also help reduce costs, delays and other potential liabilities to wind energy purchasers, while providing benefits to consumers and wildlife.

By 2025, The Nature Conservancy in Missouri has a goal to help double low-impact renewable energy production

within our state from 2016 levels—reducing dependence on foreign energy sources and driving jobs to our local communities—while avoiding impacts on conservation priorities throughout the state. This goal will not only enrich our local economy, but will also work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and their harmful effects.

If properly sited, low-impact renewable energy is a win-win—reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting biodiversity conservation goals, jobs, and homegrown energy. Simply by planning and investing wisely, we can build a prosperous clean energy future where people and nature thrive.

About the Mapping Tool

Through Site Wind Right, information is now readily available to energy purchasers so they can determine, using detailed maps, if the location of a proposed wind energy facility has a high or low risk for negative ecological impacts.

The mapping tool will identify areas that have the least amount of negative impacts to endangered species, birds and bats vulnerable to collisions with wind turbines, and habitats of wildlife that are sensitive to the presence of wind turbines and associated infrastructure.



LEARN MORE about Site Wind Right at [nature.org/moclimate](https://www.nature.org/moclimate)



Fighting Fire with Fire

When thinking about what a forest needs to be healthy, you probably wouldn't think of fire, but you should. Fire is as important to a healthy forest system as water and sunlight.

It's a natural event that has been shaping our landscape for thousands of years and plays a vital role in the health of many habitats—without fire, many plant and animal species would disappear.

Since 1983, The Nature Conservancy has been conducting prescribed burns on our preserves throughout Missouri. Today, our fire crew burns 3,000 to 5,000 acres of TNC property annually, and more when combined with cooperative burns conducted with partners and state and federal agencies.

Beyond the ecological benefits of prescribed burns, they can also enhance community safety by reducing the buildup of dead wood and other debris that can contribute to and fuel intense wildfires. Removing fire from the

landscape causes forests to grow thicker and denser and when unexpected fire returns, the results can be devastating.

Every year—mostly in the western U.S.—wildfires, fueled by debris on the forest floor combined with extended droughts and higher temperatures, are burning longer, stronger, and with more consequences. In 2017, the cost of fighting U.S. wildfires topped \$2 billion, making it the most expensive year on record.

Additionally, these wildfires are releasing large amounts of carbon into the atmosphere and wiping out millions of acres of forests. Because prescribed burns are lower intensity, faster moving fires they don't tend to harm established trees, resulting in healthier forests and cleaner air.

Missouri's Fire Man

Tom Fielden, The Nature Conservancy's Stewardship and Prescribed Fire Manager has been working in

prescribed and wildland fire for over 30 years. He has served as the Chair of the Missouri Prescribed Fire Council and worked with several prescribed fire councils across the state.

As a federally certified firefighter, Tom has been deployed on numerous trips to help battle western wildfires and assisted TNC colleagues from across the country to aid in hurricane recovery in St. Croix in 2017. To say he is a dedicated "fire man" is an understatement.

Recently, Tom became TNC's Designated Fire Manager in Missouri—a title that doesn't come easily. It required additional hours of training, meeting TNC's organizational qualifications, and working as a trainee until those requirements were met.

As our Designated Fire Manager, he is responsible for ensuring the safety of staff, maintaining the highest level of fire operations, and developing burn plans that meet stringent TNC standards.

3,888—Total acres of TNC land managed with prescribed fire in Missouri in 2018, plus several thousand more acres of cooperative burns with state and federal partners.



Income for Today, a Legacy for Tomorrow



For Debra and Andrew Filla, supporting The Nature Conservancy through a charitable gift annuity (CGA) provided their family with the best of both worlds—income for them and a legacy for their children and grandchildren.

“Like many who have spent their career with one company, I had too much of one stock. Investing in the Conservancy through a CGA was an easy way to diversify and earn more than just an equivalent dividend income,” said Debra, who also serves as a trustee for The Nature Conservancy in Missouri.

A CGA is a gift that can be established with a donation of assets like cash, appreciated stock or real estate. That gift can then provide income for

yourself or up to two beneficiaries for life and may also be eligible for significant tax savings now.

“Through TNC, we are investing in the future of our daughters and granddaughter because this gift will outperform any future gift that the stock could,” said Debra. “We chose to invest in TNC because of the incredible people, the combination of science and pragmatic problem solving, and leadership that thinks big.”

Andrew and Debra’s gift to TNC was second only to their support of their spiritual community. “Nature is where we, like so many, find that sense of spirit—that which is divine. Giving to TNC was like a spiritual offering for us as well,” said Debra.

Missouri Grasslands Need You Now the impact of your gift can be doubled

Getting people involved in, excited about, and aware of the vital work being done at The Nature Conservancy’s Dunn Ranch Prairie is what inspired a Missouri man to invest \$100,000 to establish the Missouri Grasslands Matching Gift Program.

The program was created by an anonymous donor to inspire new support for TNC’s work at Dunn Ranch Prairie. Your gift of \$2,500 to \$10,000 to Missouri grasslands will be eligible for match at a 1:1 ratio, doubling the impact of your support!

The generous philanthropist shared, “Birding is what first drew me to Dunn Ranch Prairie. It’s a unique place. After my first visit, I spoke with the staff and they explained what they do, how they do it, and why it’s important. I realized that TNC’s work at Dunn Ranch Prairie is something that I can invest in now and see the impacts during my lifetime. That is something that excites me.”

Your support is vital for grassland conservation success. It will enable tangible and lasting results, including a healthy, diverse prairie ecosystem that benefits both nature and people, while providing rare opportunities for research and public enjoyment.

To learn more about becoming a new champion of our grassland work through this matching opportunity, please contact Kelly Hall at 314 968-1105 ext. 1004.



Giving Back to Nature

Retired high school biology teachers from Columbia, Missouri—anonymous contributors who we'll refer to as Bob and Sue—are leaving a legacy to The Nature Conservancy's grassland work through their trust, while also supporting TNC's work today through outright gifts of appreciated stock. "We like to think of it as a down payment towards our total bequest which will help to support bigger initiatives after we're gone," said Bob. "We can help TNC grow their mission today, particularly in Missouri, with gifts of appreciated stock—which is beneficial to both TNC and us. This also allows us to see our contributions applied toward projects while we are still living."

Both Bob and Sue grew up exploring the outdoors—Sue in scouting and summer camps and Bob discovering nature in the woods and streams around Columbia, Missouri. "Growing up, we took family camping trips in the summer and I was a boy scout, so I spent a lot of time outdoors and had many opportunities to appreciate the environment," said Bob.

As avid travelers, they have journeyed throughout the US and Canada—many times visiting TNC properties along the way. "We've stayed at TNC's Zapata Ranch in Colorado on two different occasions, each time learning more about sustainable grazing and agriculture in the arid west, as well as drinking in the spectacular scenic beauty of the San Luis Valley and the Sangre De Cristo Mountains," said Bob.

Bob and Sue chose to invest in TNC because they feel our goals, initiatives, practices, and commitment to partnering with private landowners and public agencies is the best way to manage natural resources sustainably. "We both treasure the natural environment as the resource that sustains the human population on earth. We value the biodiversity, the scenic beauty, and the vital interconnections between the water, soil and living world," said Bob. "We have a high degree of trust in TNC, that they will use our gifts to support projects to protect our natural resources, with a sustainable, collaborative, and community-based approach."



THIS PAGE Wet prairie in Columbia, Missouri © Bill Duncan.

A Legacy for the Ozarks

A lifelong love of nature and birding is now a lasting legacy for the Ozarks. As 2017 was coming to an end, we were notified that we would be receiving an estate gift from a former Missouri trustee. Her gift totaled over \$1.87 million and was designated to further our conservation work in the Ozarks.

This generous donor, who preferred to keep her giving discreet, was an avid birder and spent much of her time traveling around North America—especially through TNC's preserves in Missouri—checking birds off her list. A list that grew to include over 680 birds.

Growing up, her family spent their vacations outdoors. She recalled her father giving her an Audubon book when she was very young—and she was hooked. On one occasion, she drove from her home in St. Louis to the Eleven Point River, which is a 3-hour drive, with the sole purpose of seeing a Swainson's Warbler. She was successful, got back in her car, and drove home.

This gift will allow her legacy to live on through the work that she is enabling in the Missouri Ozarks that she so loved. We thank her for her commitment to nature and her trust in TNC to carry out her legacy.

For more information on how you can leave a lasting gift to nature, contact Mona Monteleone at 314-968-1105 ext. 1118.

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ACTION AND IMPACT



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Leave a legacy for generations to come.

What better legacy is there to leave than your commitment to protecting the Earth for generations to come? Whether you are taking those first steps toward planning your estate or are in the process of updating your estate plan, The Nature Conservancy is here to help.

Don't let another day pass by.

 (314) 968-1105, ext. 1118

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 nature.org/legacy



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