



Confluence Chapter
St. Charles County, MO

Our mission is to engage Missourians in the stewardship of our state's natural resources through science-based education and volunteer community service.

2009: Outstanding Year for Confluence

By Jerry Lindhorst

Without a doubt, 2009 was an outstanding year for Confluence. I wish to personally thank each chapter member for their contribution. Without each of you participating in the Missouri Master Naturalist program, Confluence would not have been able to provide such impressive assistance to Mother Nature and the communities we serve.

We should take great pride in the fact that our chapter today has grown to 50 paid members, and that we volunteered **3,663 hours of volunteer service**, an outstanding growth of **67% more than 2008**. A significant number of chapter members also spent **810 hours** improving their knowledge of nature through **Advanced Training**.

Confluence's volunteer service projects include:

2009 Capstone Project

The Confluence Chapter selected and completed a project to initiate the new 2009 graduates with the assistance of chapter members to upgrade a pond at Rockwoods Reservation which is used for amphibian education. The project consisted of brush and honeysuckle removal from around the outdoor classroom area and the planting of approximately 16 Missouri native species. Our thanks to **Holly Currier** heading this project with assistance from **Cliff Parmer**.

Rain Garden

Members designed, developed, and completed a native rain garden at Indian Camp Creek Park in St. Charles County. The rain garden serves to slow and filter water runoff from a large adjoining parking lot. The rain garden includes a variety of native Missouri species with no fewer than 300 trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. Several bat houses were also constructed near the rain garden. Our thanks to **Connie McCormack** for leading this effort and to **Gary Schneider** for construction of the bat houses.

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Green Book Club:

We will meet on Wed., 3/10 from 1-3 pm. at the home of Karen Staloch, kstaloch01@sbcglobal.net

We will discuss Beast in the Garden by Baron. April date TBD, but we will read Desert Solitaire by Abbey



Lewis and Clark Boathouse Native Garden

Developed as Confluence's first Capstone project, the Lewis and Clark Boathouse Native Garden won the 2009 St Charles Bicentennial Native Garden Contest and was presented the award by the St. Charles City Council.

Outdoor Nature Classrooms on Missouri River

Under the leadership of **Kay LaBlanca, Joe Walker, Leslie Limberg, and Jeff Hornung**, a project to create several contiguous river ecology outdoor nature classrooms with logs from a previous flood and the planting native river plant species, was begun with an expansion of a nature walkway along the river also in the planning stage . The classrooms are located near the Lewis and Clark Boathouse and Confluence's native garden.

Native Plant Gardening

Our thanks to **Carmen Santos** for agreeing to chair this effort to maintain Confluence's three other gardens in St Charles County and for her hard work on the gardens.

Weldon Springs - Prairie Garden

Busch Conservation Area - Jim Zeibol Butterfly Garden

St Charles - Walk of Discovery which won the 2009 St Charles Bicentennial Native Garden Contest

Ecological Restoration

New Projects - Honeysuckle & Lespedeza eradication
Rockwoods Park Reservation - Aquatic Studies Area (see note under capstone project)
Rockwoods Park Reservation – Cave Restoration and Cleanup
Spring Bend Park--Thanks to **Jim Phillips** for heading this project

Prescribed Burns: Indian Camp Creek, Broemmelsiek Park, Quail Ridge Park, Matson Hill Park

Trail Building: Matson Hill Park

Seed Collection - Quail Ridge

Tree Planting - Broemmelsiek Park, Quail Ridge, Graham Cave State Park

Wildlife Monitoring:

Purple Martins in St. Charles County Parks
Bird Banding at World Bird Sanctuary

Quail Counts in St. Charles County Parks
Wild Bird Counts with Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Snail Surveys at LaBarque Creek Conservation Area
Butterfly Counts with the North American Butterfly Association

Water Quality Testing - Stream Team #3612

Femme Osage Creek
Peruque Creek
Dardenne Creek

Teacher Naturalist Activity - Outdoor Education

Shaw Nature Reserve
Wentzville Public School & MDC
Lindenwood College & MDC
Litzinger Ecology Center
Rockwoods Reservation & MDC
St Charles County Earth Day
Eagle Days at CoR Bridge & MDC

Partner Activity: Greenway Network, Race for the Rivers

Chapter Training and Education: 16 Advanced/Continuing Training opportunities, Level 1 Class

Chapter Administration

Six new committee members on three committees (Advanced Training, Volunteer Services, and Fun):

New Secretary, **Judy Huck**
New Vice President, **Larry Berglund**
New SAC Rep, **Holly Currier**
Two Members on 2010 Conference Committee, **Connie McCormack, Ann Finklang**
New Chapter Slide Show (Applause to **Rendan Minshall** for her outstanding creativity)
New Chapter (official) photographer (Thanks **Lee Phillion**)
New Chapter Newsletter Editor (Thanks **Sarah Berglund**)

THANKS TO ANN FIKLANG

For editing, writing and graphically designing Confluence's member newsletter for the past three years. With her many obvious talents, the accomplishments and history of our Chapter has been enjoyed and recorded. All of us in Confluence thank you, Ann.

A truly spectacular mid-November day made a hike through an upper area of LaBarque Creek Watershed a memorable adventure for Confluence Chapter members.

by Lee Phillion

Master Naturalist **Bob Coffing**, who led the effort to conserve the watershed, along with bryophyte expert **Nels Holmberg**, led the trek through private property owned by Don Robinson. Mr. Robinson has bequeathed his large tract located within the pristine watershed to the Department of Natural Resources, along with funds for its maintenance.



LaBarque Creek, is a beautiful intact landscape consisting of 8,365 acres located in northwest Jefferson County. LaBarque's 6.4 mile-long stream enters the Meramec River approximately 42 miles upstream from its mouth at the Mississippi. The topography is rugged with nearly two-thirds of the land area having 15% or greater slopes. Over 86% of the watershed is forested.

Fortunately, over half of the watershed is either public open space or large undeveloped tracts. This low level of disturbance has allowed the continuation of a high quality aquatic system. The area has a rich aquatic biodiversity and a variety of natural communities rarely found so close to a major metropolitan area. Nels and Bob made the hike fascinating by sharing their vast knowledge of the area and its flora and fauna. Nels, one of the area's foremost experts in mosses, provided interesting "up close" looks at some of the species of mosses, hornworts and liverworts within the watershed.

Opportunities for Confluence Chapter members to volunteer at LaBarque include the annual Terrestrial Snail Survey. **Larry Berglund** lberglund14@yahoo.com is the Confluence Chapter lead working with other area groups to accomplish this effort. The next survey will be held April 14, 2010. The session will begin at 9:00 a.m., and run through lunch. No equipment or training is required, but volunteers should come dressed to spend time in the leaf litter. Contact Larry for more information about that.

Within the LaBarque Creek Watershed, you can traverse rugged hills, steep slopes, and narrow valleys carved into late Ordovician sandstones and dolomites. LaBarque's valleys are fairly steep, but great fun to hike (down) and you can see bedrock outcroppings, glades, fens, savannas, open woodlands, oak forests, thin soils, Ozark border streams, and unique sandstone communities.

More spectacular sites at LaBarque Creek

Photos courtesy of Lee Phillion



Master Naturalist's Know How to Party!

by Valerie Geile

The MO Master Naturalists Confluence Chapter outdid themselves in the partying department! Wine Country Gardens graciously provided good service and good food to 52 people (35 members – which included 9 new members - and 17 guests).

Our own, **Jeff Hornung**, was an awesome DJ. **Renden** shared her Power Point presentation of the Chapter's activities. Special awards gifts were given to **Ben Grossman**, **Kevin McCarthy** and **Scott Killpack** as an



acknowledgement of their commitment and service. Ben was also made an honorary member of the Chapter! Many members were recognized for their numerous hours of service and accomplishments.

Deep thanks for the generous donation of items for the silent auction. And we so appreciate those who purchased the items -- which yielded \$675!

The highlight for most of us was the amazing entertainment headed up by **Lee Phillion** and her incredible choir doing the antics of the Twelve Days of Master Naturalist Christmas – including “5 creepy crawlies.” **Amy Ludwig**, dressed in her lovely Mother Nature gown, proceeded to pull out every known creepy crawly, including snakes, from her, hmmm, bosom!! And there were a LOT of creepy crawlies!! So funny!!!!

A good time was had by all. Thanks to everyone who came to the party ready to have fun, helped with set-up, provided entertainment, shared items for the silent auction, and made this a successful party!



Confluence campers include: **Kay LaBlanca, Valerie Geile, Joan Twillman, Scott Barnes,** and Great Rivers members **Cheri Chaleville, Mike Wohlstadter** led by **Kevin McCarthy**

Backpacking at Hawn State Park by Scott Barnes

This adventure was different than all the others I've had with Master Naturalists. I had second thoughts about backpacking since I was concerned my breathing would slow everyone down. The other concern was sleeping on the ground since I had not done that since I was 43. After attending the pre-pack party, I realized I wasn't the only one who had second thoughts. But, it all seemed trivial after hearing Kevin's instructions and reminding us we were doing this to have a learning experience and to have fun. All those second thoughts disappeared (except sleeping on the ground).

We started our hike from the parking lot and 5 miles did not sound bad. You could tell some found this effortless and some found it a little more difficult. Getting used to a 40-50 pound dead weight strapped to your was was let's say interesting. Within 15 minutes all that seemed to be forgotten with the beauty, fresh air and crystal clear stream nearby.

Then we came to a part in the trail that runs through the creek. We had to take off our shoes and socks to wade across. Who would have thought that would feel good on the feet in November? Ok, Kevin, yes, it was smart that you forgot to mention this.

On the trail Kevin pointed out many things of interest and answered our questions. When he couldn't, someone else in the group could. They were a wealth of information and we had a wonderful learning experience. Our first official rest stop was on top of our first big uphill climb. It's hard to describe the feeling of looking out over the side knowing you've just hiked up to the top with a safe strapped on your back! I was happy to bring up the rear on the trail.

We crossed the creek again a few more times and it seemed to grow wider and quicker each time. I don't remember if the water felt good on my feet anymore.

My fellow campers let me watch as they set up camp (smart since I was not sure I could feel my arms yet). After looking at the tent Kevin and his brother set up for the three of us, I told them I'd sleep outside. They didn't think that was such a good idea, so they built a lean-to for us with my tarp. I did a lot of star-gazing that night.

Thank you all for sharing this great experience with me.

Confluence Stream Team Water Quality Monitoring Schedule



For those Master Naturalists who like to play in the creek, here's the planned Femme Osage monitoring schedule for 2010:

Saturday	3/20/10
Saturday	6/5/10
Saturday	8/14/10
Saturday	10/30/10

We meet at the Lost Valley Trail parking lot at Weldon Spring at 9:00 am and generally finish up around noon. We encourage anyone with an interest in water quality monitoring to come along – no training is needed as we have several trained monitors on the team. If you're interested in aquatic entomology, two of our sessions include macroinvertebrate monitoring which involves taking net samples and identifying the insects we find. Well-behaved children are welcomed also.

If you would like to participate, please email **Cliff Parmer** at either cparmer@kai-db.com or CliffHanc@aol.com or at the Chapter meetings.

Become a Researcher of Bryophytes!

Advanced Training and **Volunteer opportunities** are starting soon to become skilled identifiers, collectors and plant list developers for the bryophyte plant populations in our local Weldon Spring Conservation Area. **Nels Holmberg**, a local Naturalist and experienced collector, will lead our training. We will visit the Missouri Botanical Garden Bryophyte Herbarium March 2. Lee Phillion, leephillion@sbcglogal.net, will be the chapter's point of contact. After training we will take group hikes and also be qualified to collect and identify as individuals the bryophyte plants in designated areas of Weldon Spring.

So, what are bryophytes? Mosses, liverworts and hornworts make up the non-vascular plant phyla called bryophytes. Mosses are most prevalent and liverworts are believed to be the oldest (500,000 million years) of all plant species. They cover the ground as mats of green plants on soil, rocks, trees and leaves in moist habitats of woodlands. Bryophytes serve as pioneer plants starting new soil habitats from bare rock eventually creating our forests.

Learn a new botanical field and help produce a collection of Weldon Spring bryophyte plants that will be made available to the public. As a bonus, get out in nature on your own and enjoy the beauty of one of our St. Charles Conservation Areas.

Missouri Legislators Introduce Bills Impacting State's Environment/Resources

By Jerry Lindhorst

As volunteers who are committed to helping Mother Nature and protecting the state's resources, it is good to keep informed on what our state legislators are proposing to pass in the 2010 General Assembly.

The following are the bills that have been introduced:

ENERGY

SB 677 (Sen. Joan Bray) -- Repeals a portion of the law (§ 386.866, RSMo) that provides certain utilities the opportunity to apply for alternate rate schedules in certain circumstances including weather and increased environmental regulations.

SCR 42 (Sen. Joan Bray) -- Urges state agencies to address light pollution at state facilities, calls for a study on impacts of light pollution, and encourages the creation of starlight preserves.

HB 1243 (Rep. David Sater) -- Authorizes an income tax deduction for taxpayers who purchase qualifying fuel cell or solar energy property to generate electricity for their residences.

HB 1273 (Rep. Jason Holsman) -- Establishes the Night Sky Protection Act to reduce the amount of light into the night sky to near natural levels for specified protected places.

GREEN BUILDING

SB 634 (Sen. David Pearce) -- Creates a tax credit for homes built under green standards.

HB 1667 (Rep. Margo McNeil) -- Creates provisions pertaining to environmentally sustainable, state-funded construction over 5,000 sq. ft. Such projects shall be certified LEED Silver or with 2 Green Globes.

TRANSPORTATION

SB 640 (Sen. Robin Wright-Jones) -- This act amends the Missouri Transportation Development District Act to explicitly include public mass transportation systems as transportation development district projects.

SB 720 (Sen. Joan Bray) -- Requires the Department of Transportation to provide full consideration for bicyclists, pedestrians, disabled persons, and transit users in its plans, programs and projects.

HB 1691 (Rep. Will Kraus) -- Requires the Governor to issue annual proclamations for "Walk & Bike to School" month and day in October, and "Bike to Work" month, day, and week in May.

AGRICULTURE

SB 658 (Sen. Bill Stouffer) -- This bill creates a state and local sales tax exemption for sales of farm products made at farmers' markets.

HB 1345 (Rep. Belinda Harris) -- Exempts any person selling or delivering raw milk or cream to another person for the individual's own use from the permit and inspection requirements of the State Milk Board.

HB 1496 (Rep. Rob Schaaf) -- Creates the Agriculture Promotion and Marketing Fund using fees and fines assessed by the Department of Agriculture to be used to promote and market Missouri agricultural products.

PUBLIC LANDS

HJR 77 (Rep. Chris Kelly) -- Proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the General Assembly to issue bonds to fund higher education improvements, construction, landscaping and land purchases.

HB 1412 (Rep. Mike McGhee) -- Establishes in statute the Missouri State Park Board which is responsible for managing the Historical Marker Program.

HB 1624 (Rep. Mike Sutherland) -- Authorizes the state treasurer to deposit all monies in the State Park Earnings Fund in any qualified depositories of the state, and requires all such deposits be secured in a manner provided by law.

OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST

SB 678(Sen. Joan Bray) -- Prohibits tri-vision, projection, digital or other changeable copy technologies from being used on billboards.

SB 680 (Sen. Jason Crowell) -- Modifies provisions pertaining to hazardous substance spills and emergencies.

SB 723 (Sen. Joan Bray) -- Requires the state Highways and Transportation Commission to collect certain billboard fees to pay for the removal of billboards.

SB 746 (Sen. John Griesheimer) -- Imposes various billboard standards to billboards adjacent to Interstate 70 and Interstate 44 during periods of interstate construction.

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TEACH

VOLUNTEER

Sarah.Berglund@yahoo.com, editor

