



Confluence Chapter
St. Charles County, MO

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

ONLY.....3.....MORE.....MONTHS!
 Missouri Master Naturalists'
 State Conference!
 October 15-17, 2010



Where? Cuivre River State Park, Troy, Missouri
Various ecosystems including clear streams, glades, woodlands, and tall-grass prairies

Sleeping: Cabins or camping on-site or motels (at discounted rates) just 4 miles away in Troy

Why come? For Fun. To meet new friends from across Missouri. To learn new subjects, or new skills

How do I sign up? Watch your mailbox in early August, and send back your registration ASAP so you have your choice of classes

What's Inside:

Page 1: State Conference

Page 2: Bryophyte Study, Water Quality

Page 3: Learning Conference

Page 4: Legislation effects ecology in Missouri

Page 5: Trip to Litzsinger Road Ecology Center

Page 6: News from Ben, original poetry

Page 7: Asian Carp found near Lake Michigan!



Confluence Members Make History!

To date, 241 samples of mosses, liverworts and hornworts have been collected at Weldon Springs Conservation area by several of our members: **Kay LaBanca, Bob Lee, Barb Lomker, Claire Meyners, Cliff Parmer, Lee Phillion, Carmen Santos and Cathy Stockglauer**. Eighteen of these specimens have been saved for permanent file by the Garden. If you want to see how the discoveries of **Kay, Cliff, Lee or Claire** have been recorded for posterity, go to: www.tropicos.org/SpecimentSearch.aspx and type in their last name!

We will continue the survey for a few more months, and Lee will announce the next collection day shortly.



Kay LaBanca perches on a cliff to collect specimens....what devotion!

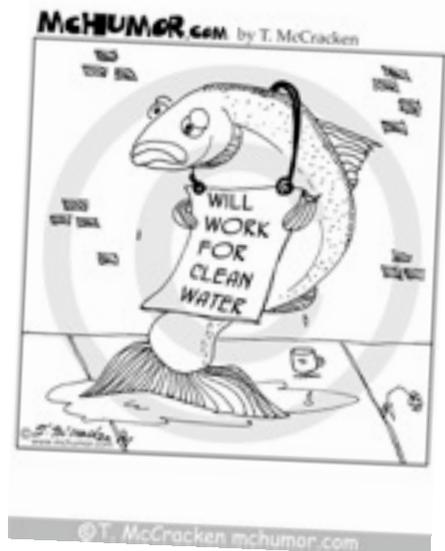
Water Quality Monitoring for June by Cliff Parmer

On the morning of June 5th **Leslie Limberg, Bob Coffing, Larry Berglund** and I met to carry out the second monitoring session of the year on Femme Osage Creek. Due to the rain that cut short our earlier session of the year, macroinvertebrates were on the task list as well as chemistry. By the time this session occurred the bugs had hatched, laid their eggs and the next generation young were developing – but they were incredibly tiny.

Femme Osage Creek water quality usually scores “Good” on the macroinvertebrate score sheet, and had the same score this time. Nitrate levels were on the high side of average, however. Nitrate is a form of nitrogen which supports plant growth, hence its presence in fertilizer. High nitrate levels can encourage aquatic plant growth which can lead to a reduction in dissolved oxygen affecting the diversity of aquatic life-forms. We did see an increase in algae on the stream bottom over previous years and suspect that the high nitrate levels are related to a pasture about a mile upstream where cattle have access to the creek.

All are welcome for our August 14th outing. Experience is not necessary, as you will be paired with experienced water quality fellow Confluence members.

Call or contact Cliff Parmer, clfhance@aol.com



Caddisfly larvae



**“All Things Missouri” Learning
Conference**
Green Pines Elementary
April 27-28
by Valerie Geile

Presenting the class “MO Tree I.D.”, the lovely and talented **Leslie Limberg** and her sidekick **Valerie Geile** shared the honor of working with awesome students from Kindergarten to 5th grade. With Leslie teaching in the a.m. and Valerie showing up for the afternoon shift, over the two-day conference 18 groups were reached. (With approximately 20-24 students per class, that is a total of, well, you do the math!)

All students heard the same message...MO Native Trees are AMAZING in their beauty, their resilience, their support of native wildlife, and in their incredible ability to make us happy and content by their mere existence.

We studied White and Red Oaks and Hickory Trees, and their dominant presence in our forests; Evergreens surviving the coldest winters with needle- and scale-like leaves, disbursing seeds via the quirky pinecone; Spring-flowering wonders such as Dogwood, Redbuds, Serviceberry, and Black Locust, who beautify our forests and roadsides across the state as we shake off the chill of winter; Host Species supporting our native butterfly population -- Pawpaw for the Zebra Swallowtail and Spicebush for the Spicebush Swallowtail -- two of our most outstanding specimens; and with a couple of the older classes, even the topic of Invasives (and the not evil but certainly out-of-place Bush Honeysuckle) was touched upon.

It was an incredible two days; fun and informative for the students, and truly rewarding and renewing for me. If any of you have an opportunity to become involved with our youth, I encourage you to do so -- you will not regret it!

“Oh, I wish I could remember his/her name.....”

Please remember to wear your name badge to ALL meetings, functions, classes, and volunteer activities.

Declining Revenue Effects Ecological Issues in Missouri

The 2010 Missouri Legislative session, which ended May 14, was mostly all about GREEN. However, it was the declining green our state was not collecting to pay MO's bills that concerned legislators almost all of the session—not our state's green environmental future. This is a struggle faced by most states.

The following is a brief summary on some environmental issues approved or defeated by our state representatives and senators:

The general assembly passed PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) and the bill awaits the governor's signature. PACE is the state enabling legislation that allows cities and counties the opportunity to join into a program that pays up to 100% of the upfront costs of renewable energy and energy efficiency renovations for homes and businesses.

A bill attempting to add nuclear energy as a "renewable energy resource" and counted towards the Prop C - renewable electricity standard approved by voters - never made it out of committee.

The Construction Works in Progress (CWIP) bill would have allowed utilities to charge ratepayers for the cost of building nuclear and coal energy projects before they have come online or provided customers with a single watt of electricity. The bill also never made it out of committee.

In regards to Factory Farming, language was removed from Agriculture Omnibus bill that would have preempted local control and stopped the General Assembly from passing state CAFO standards.

In other actions, the legislature did not agree with and ignored the National Academy of Science's re-affirmed report that climate change is real and that humans are the principal cause. Both the House and Senate passed resolutions urging the Missouri Congressional delegation to vote against federal cap-and-trade legislation (those who pollute must pay)..

For the first time in seven years, water pollution permit fees were not extended by the legislators. As a result, the current water pollution permit fees will expire at the end of this year, and the water pollution permitting, monitoring, and enforcement program is expected to experience a \$4 million hit to the program's budget. The failure to extend the fees is anticipated to hit DNR hard. To maintain the Water Pollution Permit Program, DNR will have to drain resources from other programs, causing an even further decline in the effectiveness of DNR to protect and improve Missouri's natural resources.

Volunteer Opportunities at Litzsinger Road Ecology Center

If you enjoy working with children and spending time outdoors, consider volunteering at the Litzsinger Road Ecology Center (LREC). **Volunteer Educators** are sought to guide and teach small groups of students beginning in the upcoming school year.

LREC is a 34-acre nature facility, managed by the Missouri Botanical Garden, which offers students hands-on opportunities to explore and investigate nature in a local setting, which includes a woodland, a prairie, and a creek.

Free Volunteer Educator training begins on Monday, Sept. 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday training sessions continue for ten consecutive weeks through Nov. 15. Trainees will become familiar with the site, learn inquiry-based, outdoor teaching strategies, and gain an understanding of basic ecology. There will also be many opportunities to observe school groups and practice teaching.

LREC is located in Ladue, ten miles west of downtown St. Louis. For more information on becoming a Volunteer Educator at the LREC, call Jackie Juras, manager of volunteer programs, at (314) 577-5187.



Confluence Members Take a Tour of LREC

Thanks to Larry Berglund, several of our chapter members took a two hour advanced training tour of LREC in July. We were educated on the three different ecosystems within the site, wildflower identification, the education plans that are taught there, and we had a chance to closely observe an urban stream and the effect of erosion.

We learned that over 2800 site visits happen each year by students.

Volunteer & Training Hours as of July 13, 2010

Service: 1903
Education: 373

News From St. Charles County Parks
by Ben Grossman



Bob Lee puts into practice what he learned in class

Confluence Chapter Volunteers attended a tree pruning advanced training session at Quail Ridge Park followed by a hands-on demonstration of pruning techniques. Plenty of practice followed as volunteers assisted the St. Charles County Park Department's Forestry staff in pruning nearly 2000 landscape trees at Quail Ridge, Indian Camp Creek, Klondike and the Youth Activity Park. Pruning these young trees is vital in correcting growth problems when the trees are young to ensure they develop into excellent specimen trees for future generations in our counties green space.

Recent graduates will begin their capstone project with the St. Charles County Parks and Recreation Department. Confluence Members will be developing a Nature Explore Classroom from the ground up. Members are attending a three-part design conference with Dimension Research Foundation to provide input toward the design of the classroom, attend an Educators Workshop to learn about how to best utilize the classroom for educational purposes and then be presented with design recommendations for classroom construction. Actual construction will begin following the design presentation. **Joe Walker** and **Gary Schneider** are the Confluence Members leading this capstone project.

Recognition
by Leslie Limberg

What is it about Nature...
That makes us so nutty...
Squealing with delight
At a newborn praying mantis on parade
That makes us gluttons for more
No matter the sweat of summer
Or the heat of a cloudless day
That makes us feel sooo otherworldly...
In a transcendent space
No time, no thought, no bounds
Riding the sacred stupor
Like a kite in high wind

Asian Carp Not Stopped by Jerry Lindhorst

When I presented my talk to the Chapter about the invasive Asian Carp, the hope was that these voracious eating fish that devour what native fish eat would not be able to get into our Great Lakes due to an electrical barrier constructed in the Illinois River.

If you remember I said that Big Head Asian can grow to **4 feet and 100 pounds** and eat 40 percent of their body weight daily. Silver Jumping Asian Carp, which grow to 30 pounds and can leap 10 feet out of the water when disturbed, have knocked jet skiers unconscious and make boating on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers very dangerous. Scientists have been warning of their invasion for years.

NOW—an Asian carp was found for the first time beyond the electric barriers meant to keep the invasive species out of the Great Lakes. Scientists fear that the carp will become established in the Great Lakes, starving out sports fish and killing the region's \$7 billion fishing industry.

"This is simply another sort of fishy, slimy reminder that a permanent solution needs to be right around the corner, not five or 10 years away," Joel Brammeier, president of the Alliance for the Great Lakes has warned.

"This finding is extraordinarily disturbing. The bottom line is: It makes it even more urgent for us to build a permanent solution."

The bighead Asian carp caught live was discovered by commercial fishermen in a waterway about six miles from Lake Michigan. It was about 3 feet long and weighed just under 20 pounds.

Learn

Teach

Volunteer

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editor