



Confluence and Great Rivers Chapters Newsletter

Volume No. 01 Issue No. 04 Date: November, 2007

From the desk of our Confluence Chapter President, Connie McCormack

Fellow Master Naturalists:

As I wondered what to write for our newsletter I sat down and made up a new list of reasons why I'm a Master Naturalist - it has changed some since that first class but is still basically the same - getting out of my safe zone and meeting people, learning new things and leaving something that will grow and benefit others.

In a few weeks we will have new officers who will point us in different directions - I personally am excited about this because if you are like me I tend to get stuck in ruts and it usually feels good to do something different. I will have the privilege of heading up the Rain Garden at Indian Camp Creek (ICC) in western St. Charles County (if the grant is approved) and expect the job to be equal to the Boathouse project. I would encourage each of you to think of some way - be it large or small - to make your mark.

The third class graduated October 23, 2007. - I don't remember even thinking about how many classes there could be - I wonder just how big the Master Naturalist Group will grow through the years? I believe that our children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren will be better because of programs like ours - lets keep making a difference.

I never in my wildest dreams expected to be president of the Confluence Chapter and I again thank you for the honor and privilege of serving you. This group is full of generous and talented people with a vision that will indeed impact our area. I am proud to be a part of you.

2007 Graduating Class Great Rivers and Confluence Chapters



Welcome new members!

From the desk of our Great Rivers Chapter President, John Vandover

Our chapter had last month's meeting at Powder Valley and will continue to use Powder Valley as meeting site for the balance of 2007. We will return in January to the Dennis and Judith Jones Center in Forest Park. Some form of alternating meetings in 2008 between Powder Valley and the Jones Center will certainly be part of our chapter's game plan. Having the option to change our meeting locations not only adds site variety, it also accommodates our members by splitting driving distances between city and county locations. While you can't please all of the people all of the time.....at least you can give it a try.

We agreed at our September meeting that we will join Confluence and con-celebrate a common Missouri Master Naturalist Christmas party on 11 December at Amy Ludwig's historic home/ museum in St. Charles. Specific details are still required and will be sent out via email to all members.

We also established a committee at the September Meeting to identify and make recommendations for possible joint Advanced Training and projects we could undertake with Confluence. I hope to get some preliminary input from the committee members at our next meeting.

Well that's all from here.
Best regards

State Advisory Committee Update By Connie McCormack

The purpose of this committee is to advise the state coordinators in matters impacting chapter operations and to participate in program growth. Ten volunteers (two from each region); two staffers from Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC); two staffers from University Extension, serve a two year term. Two state coordinators are permanent members of committee.

Duties of the State Advisory Committee (SAC) includes by-laws, policies, state conference planning, advanced training, developing standard operating procedures and resources, assisting in new chapter applications, inter-chapter communications, marketing Master Naturalist program and advising coordinators on aspects of program operation: such as web sites, communication, volunteer retention, volunteer leadership development, training, etc.

A good portion of this is already implemented however it still leaves plenty to do with the annual conferences. One of the top priorities is the annual conferences. This event brings together the members of each the ten regions of Missouri Master Naturalists. It gives everyone in attendance a chance to share ideas and create new friends while learning more about nature.



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Capstone projects have been the latest topic of discussion - some chapters have individual projects that go on while the class is happening. This is to give new members a chance to start getting their hours in and for older members to work with the new members and start forming relationships.

Discussions on reporting volunteer hours and what to do about 'double dipping' has lead to following:

- Counting service hours (page 44 – 3rd bullet).
Revision
when reporting service hours for individual certification or individual volunteer incentives or when meeting the required hours to stay in a program the hours should only be reported to one program.
- Recording service hours for monthly meetings (page 45 last paragraph) – record hours for what happened e.g.: 1 hour of training (for a 1 hr program) and 1 hour for meeting.

Mark your Calendars:

2008 Conference - May 16, 17 and 18th in Springfield Mo. staying at the Clarion Hotel with meetings at the Nature Center.

2009 Conference - date not yet decided but the Ozark Chapter in West Plains are very excited to be hosting.

A side note: There will come a year when the Confluence and Great Rivers Chapters will be host a conference - a seed planted will grow.

This is the basics of what I am part of as your representative to the SAC committee - the most enjoyable is the sharing of ideas and various experiences on projects other chapter members have undertaken and meeting people with the same vision.

Lewis and Clark Boathouse Program Update



Two years ago the Master Naturalists started the installation of the Habitat at the Lewis and Clark Boathouse. In June, 2007 the project was turned over to the Boathouse. The Master Naturalists will oversee the continuum of maintenance for the habitat and be available for any support, coordination and/or volunteering that it may need. Anyone wishing to volunteer, we offered to help with fall and spring cleanup of the Habitat.

We have worked with Mimi and she started collecting and cleaning seeds from the habitat to possibly sell at the boathouse. This reminds us that many of the projects we are involved in have many influences on our communities in many different ways. Remember to recommend to friends and family to stop by the Habitat if they are in the area it is a nice example of some of the things we do.

Project Native Plant Nursery/Gateway Greening

Saturday, September 29, 2007 marked the end of our volunteer efforts with Native Plant Nursery/Gateway Greening. On Saturday volunteers helped with building a greenhouse on the downtown site.

During our time volunteering at the downtown site, we planted numerous native plants in mulch beds we prepared. Our members have helped water the plants, and monitored the area.

However, our agreement with them is no longer in effect and until they request our help in the future following the procedures set up by the Master Naturalists our association with them is ended.

Race for the Rivers By Joan Twillman

Oddly enough, the race started with required chemical water testing. Master Naturalists, Joan Twillman worked on the nitrate kit while Mary Mierkowski titrated for the dissolved oxygen test. The levels were recorded for water quality monitoring. Once this task was completed the canoeists and kayakers were ready for the scenic 20 mile race from Weldon Springs to Frontier Park in St. Charles. They were sent on their way by volunteers that included a couple of our chapters Master Naturalists.

Master Naturalists Mary Mierkowski and Joan Twillman discovered they were both UMSL Chem Alums while kayaking down the Missouri River towards Blanchette Landing in the Race for the Rivers on August 25. Both ladies entered in the Women's Solo Division of the Clean Water Challenge.

During a short "strategy meeting" that included Mierkowski, Twillman, and the third kayaker in the division, all parties agreed that traveling together was preferable to winning. As a result, the three contestants watched birds, looked for mile markers, followed butterflies, and stopped for a lunch of chocolate chip cookies, trail mix, and chocolate covered raisins on a huge clean sandbar.

Actually, there were two races, the one entered by Mary and Joan, and the other a very competitive 2-day event. The more serious canoeists and kayakers started in Washington Missouri with a break at Frontier Park. The second day they continued on to Columbia Bottoms at the Confluence. This was a total of 65 beautiful miles along the Missouri River.



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A festival on Saturday afternoon in Frontier Park gave our fellow Master Naturalists, a chance to present information on rain gardens. Live music, awards, contests, and booths made the festival a fun and educational experience.

Racers were met at the finish line by well wishers and volunteers that included more of our chapters Master Naturalists. The race was a lot of fun, but just wait next year's race will be even better! Plans are being made for a larger and improved celebration for the second annual Race for the Rivers. For more information go to: <http://www.racefortherivers.org>

Purple Martins Project Update

Two Master Naturalists meet at Quail Ridge Park on October 16th to remove the four Purple Martin houses. The houses were then cleaned and stored. Three parks were monitored during the season Quail Ridge, Klondike and Hideaway Harbor. Hideaway Harbor was the only one to have the purple martins arrive and stay for the season.

The Master Naturalists will try again next year and in the off season research ways to attract purple martins to the areas. Anyone wishing to help with this project please contact me at: finklang@centurytel.net

Night Hiking Adventure by Holly Currier

As the sun began to set, the western sky streaked red and gold as it was chased by the darkening East, and shadows gathered under the canopy of the leafy trees. In this setting, the Confluence Chapter Master Naturalists started their night hike on the paved trail at Busch Wildlife Center beginning the journey of .75 miles into the thick woods and gathering darkness.

We began our adventure at Busch with some poetry and a scientific discussion of how we physiologically adapt to the darkness. Our walk continued into the moonless and deepening night made even darker by the dense woods. A solo walk awakened our senses to both the stillness and various sounds of movement present in the night woodlands. Following that, in a laughing group chat we shared how bold we felt when we were together and talked about the niggling edge of fear we felt while at the same time knowing that someone was waiting at the other end of the trail for us. A touch test helped us to feel and realize textures as a way of knowing an object rather than relying on our eyes. Scent jars brought the comforting aromas of home into the woods and the scent of the woods closer to our home. With our sense of hearing made more acute, we could hear the multitude of sounds including those common only to the night. A true challenge was writing and drawing in the dark. For that we used our sense of space and touch that was altered by the lack of light and aided only by our night vision. The "sparkle party" that followed added more levity to the outing.

After our "dark" activities we had the opportunity to see the flash of the brightest match in the world and hear about piratical activities from days long ago. We ended the tour of the woods at night by expanding our outer vision into the cosmos with a brief astronomy lesson and an enlightening look at the drawings we had made earlier.

Night hikes in the woods usually begin with the setting of the sun as an invitation to enter into the unique poetry of the coming night. These hikes can be safely conducted at any location that has a trail with no artificial ambient light. For people desiring a new and exciting personal experience, a well led night hike, without the use of any artificial light, is meant to provide a kinesthetic and emotional tour of our natural world. It is a valuable tool for those interested in learning about and making inquiries into what occurs in the natural world after dusk and how we relate to that world between sundown and sunup. Night hikes provide a different focus and both encourage and elevate participants by encouraging awareness of the vast and subtle differences between the light and dark times of our day.

For those who are interested in leading a night hike there are many educational curricula for all ages available on the internet or at the library which contain an abundance of activities and suggestions to make your night hike experience memorable. In addition, you could contact me for further information at hcurrier@sbcglobal.net.

Master Naturalists Participate in Prairie Tour By Ann Earley

On September 29, several members of the Confluence Chapter participated in a tour of Jerry Brown's planted prairie near Hawk Point in Lincoln County. Jerry, a retired English teacher, is active in the Missouri Prairie Foundation, which sponsored the tour. Since retiring in 1994, Jerry has converted about an acre of his property each year to prairie plantings, resulting in his current 12 acres of prairie garden. More information about Jerry's experiences with his prairie plantings may be found in his article on page 26 of the current issue of Missouri Prairie Journal (2007, Volume 28, Number 3).

In the article, Jerry notes that "Because of the ease and economy of working with native plants, I was able to create this rich man's garden on a Missouri public school teacher's pension. And now that it is fully planted and easy to maintain, I can afford to keep it." Jerry currently has about 200 species of prairie plants on his property and has identified nearly 120 species of birds. On the day of the tour, monarchs, buckeyes, and other butterflies were also visiting Jerry's prairie, especially the many blooming New England asters (*Aster novae-angliae*). Other botanical highlights of the tour included seeing the beautiful blue flowers of downy gentian (*Gentiana puberulenta*) and one of Missouri's fall orchids, ladies tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*), in bloom. Many thanks to Jerry and to the Missouri Prairie Foundation for the wonderful tour and for an inspiring fall afternoon on the prairie!



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Master Naturalists participate in Butterfly Outing By Leslie Limberg

On a chilly September afternoon, six Master Naturalists met in Crestwood at the home of Tom Terrific for a 2 hour tour of his butterfly garden. The temp was in the 50's, which is not especially conducive for butterflies, given that they can't fly in the cold. But as we slooowly worked our way around the house, South, East, North, and West, an occasional butterfly would sit on a shoulder or pause on a petal for our viewing. (gasp gasp)

In between gasps, Tom gave us so much down-home advice about plant propagation, choosing host and nectar plants, spotting eggs and larvae, and butterfly ID that our eyes bugged out.... (no pun intended)

Upon asking about one particular butterfly with pale green oval wings and smaller than a thumb nail, Tom promptly went to his garage, returned with a screened glass terrarium, carefully clipped off the branch and put the butterfly & branch in the 'incubator.' He didn't know what kind of butterfly it was, but said care must be taken with the rare ones to guard against predators and protect the laying of eggs.

What a passionate and generous man! He offered us seeds and fresh cuttings at every turn until 185 plants later, we returned to our cars, weighted down with prolific notes, seed bags and baby plants.

At the very end, Tom showed us the butterfly garden in the school courtyard across the street. Once every spring, he goes to a new school to help kids design and plant a garden, and provides the host and nectar plants himself. As we gathered around our cars, we shared our awe, comments, and Scott's deeeelicious apple strudel.

Trivia Questions

1. What is the state tree nut of Missouri?
2. In Latin aster, as in the flower, means what?
3. In ancient Rome, the owl has flown was a slang expression for what?
4. According to Paul Nelson's book "The Terrestrial Natural Communities of Missouri" how many total natural communities have been identified in the state?

(Check your answers on last page)

??? Did you know ???

Drought & Tree care

- During a long term drought, tree watering should be given priority before lawns. Lawns take a few months to replace; a 10 year old tree takes 10 years.
- Tree roots continue to grow in Winter and require water to survive - especially evergreens.
- Drought reduces a trees' immune system and makes it more vulnerable to insect damage & disease.
- One symptom of drought stress is when deciduous leaves turn brown along the outside edges of the leaf or in between the veins (scorch). Even leaves of old oaks will show signs of drought by wilting due to loss of turgidity (moisture).
- Tree roots consist of large deep perennial roots, almost all of which are in the top 12" of soil. They also have shorter-lived absorbing roots most of which grow upwards from the large roots. They are shallow, smaller (1/4" or less) and stretch out well beyond the 'drip line' of the tree.
- As a general rule, deep watering of all roots is recommended. Experts say 10 gallons of water is needed per inch of trunk diameter. Formula: Tree diameter X 5 minutes= total watering time

For more detailed information, go to
<http://www.Missouri Forestkeepers.org>

Master Naturalist Survey Results

Remember back in April – May timeframe when we were asked to complete the Master Naturalist Satisfaction Survey. Well here are a few of the highlights from the Confluence Chapter members completing the survey.

- 100% said they are likely or very likely to recommend Master Naturalist to others
- 96% said they agree or strongly agree that they are very satisfied with the program
- 88% receive the *Missouri Conservationist*
- an average of 6.1 service hours is donated per participant per month.

Some of the reasons given as to what prevents us from volunteering more:

- 68% work
- 56% family
- 48% volunteer with other organizations

Aspects of the program we like best:

- learning while volunteering,
- hands-on activities,
- chance to interact with experts
- wide range of volunteer opportunities
- variety of projects



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Upcoming Events

December 11 – Master Naturalists Confluence and Great Rivers Christmas Party at Amy Ludwig's historic home/museum Second Street in St. Charles – Potluck dinner and Silent Auction 6:30 pm to 9-ish

The Academy of Science of St. Louis seminar series starts this evening at 7:30 p.m. The seminars are held at the Living World building at the St. Louis Zoo, and are free and open to the public. Parking is free, too!

Topics this season are:

November 14 - Advancing Research into Climate Change and Natural Hazards

December 5 - Conservation Medicine in the Galapagos Islands

January 30, 2008 - The Greenhouse Effect

February 27 -Geologic Secrets of the Danville, Illinois Fossilized Forest

April 2 - Stressors and Amphibian Biodiversity

The speakers are professors at local universities who are Academy Fellows. For more info on the topics go to www.academyofsciencestl.org

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May 16, 17 and 18th Missouri Master Naturalists annual conference in Springfield MO

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Editor's note: *A special thanks to all the Missouri Master Naturalist Confluence Chapter members' kind enough to take time to write about their experiences and volunteer efforts. They are in inspiration to all of us. Anyone wishing to help with the newsletter please contact me at the above email address. – This includes our newest chapter Great Rivers and all the new members from the 2007 class.*

Answers to trivia: 1) black walnut -7/9/1990
2) star
3) bribery
4) 86