



From Rain Gardens to River Bottoms

The Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation Funds Conservation in the Ozarks

Across the Ozarks, dozens of groups are working to conserve the natural landscape of this special place on earth, and to find new ways to live in harmony with the natural processes that sustain our lives. These groups share an energy and commitment as well as a constant need for funding to help get projects off the ground.

The nonprofit Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation, a partner organization of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, was created in 1997 to provide a funding stream to help bridge funding gaps for conservation projects. For example, the new Legacy Trails Habitat for Humanity community in Springfield has native plant landscaping and rain gardens to manage stormwater, thanks in part to a \$5,000 grant from the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation (a \$25,000 grant from CFO's metropolitan Springfield grantmaking program also supported the Legacy Trails development). The Nature Conservancy recently acquired 80 acres containing important riparian habitat in the watershed of the Current River, one of North America's most biologically diverse streams. The Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation contributed \$55,500 toward that purchase. Although small

in acreage, this key parcel links federal and state protected lands and provides breeding habitat for the Cerulean Warbler, whose population is declining in parts of its range.

These initiatives in the Ozarks are but two of 58 conservation projects funded by the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation in 2008. In total it provided more than \$1.2 million for conservation statewide last year, with more than \$600,000 allocated for projects south of the Missouri River.

"The biological diversity of the Ozarks is incredible," said Rick Thom, executive director of the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation. "We are pleased to provide funding to help protect the Ozarks' biodiversity, and also to support projects that help Ozarks residents enjoy, learn about and appreciate the natural world." The Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation obtains funding from several sources:

Conservation Heritage license plate sales, payments to the Stream Stewardship Trust Fund, private foundations and government grants and donations from individuals, businesses and organizations. Donors may earmark their gifts for projects that are especially important to them. "If you love



Cerulean Warbler.
Image credit: www.billhubick.com

fishing and you want to help fund fishing opportunities for kids, you can earmark your donation for that," said Thom. "The same goes for stream protection, hunting clinics, hiking trails, bird habitat protection and scores of other projects—we help donors invest in the kind of conservation legacy they want to leave for others." The Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation is also part of CFO's Stewardship Ozarks Initiative, and received \$40,000 in matching funds as part of the initiative's endowment building challenge.

From all funding sources to date, the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation has raised and contributed more than \$8 million for conservation projects. Conservation Department staff members apply for Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation funding for projects they initiate or that they endorse on behalf of partner groups. The Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation board of directors—comprised of conservation, community and business leaders—oversees funding decisions.

For more information on the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation, please visit www.mochf.org, or call 573-634-2080 or 1-800-227-1488.

Springfield Arts Organizations Unite for Sustainability

This spring, the Arts Programming Sustainability Initiative (APSI), an effort initiated by the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, launched Arts in Action: The 10 Weeks Festival, a collaborative event that highlights ten weeks of more than 100 arts events and performances throughout the city to raise money for arts in education and children in Springfield Public Schools. The 10 Weeks Festival will run from

March 14, 2009, through May 31, 2009, and will feature arts events, festivals, performances and concerts.

Funded through a two-year, \$150,000 commitment from CFO, APSI is designed to promote the sustainability efforts of arts organizations serving Springfield and the region and help implement the Springfield Cultural Plan, outlined as part of the Vision



20/20 planning process. Leah Hamilton Jenkins was hired as the Arts Sustainability Coordinator, to oversee the initiative's two main goals.

Learn more about APSI on the web at www.The10Weeks.com or at CFO's web site, www.cfozarks.org.