



# The Ozark Holler

Spring 2005

## A Word From The Executive Director

You won't see any photos of ORLT Board members sitting around tables in this newsletter. Beautiful landscapes are just more moving. However, if you support ORLT, I hope you will be just as excited to hear that the Board of Directors recently gathered for two days in a small room in Harrison, Arkansas because, like increased acres of protection, this is a sign that ORLT is growing and getting even better!

In February, ORLT staff, Board of Directors and volunteers met in Harrison for a Board Retreat. The primary focus for this meeting was to do strategic planning for the next five years. Two main themes came out of this meeting: ORLT has done such good work that it needs more staff to handle its increasing commitments and we need to do some focused fundraising to hire that staff.

Anyone who has been involved with a strategic planning effort knows that it can have its difficult moments. But, I'd rather focus on the reason we are at this stage and need to do this kind of planning: ORLT has been successful!! ORLT Board, staff and volunteers have worked very hard for more than twenty years and have permanently protected 14,700 acres of land in the Ozarks Bioregion!

With this level of land protection, ORLT needs to increase its stewardship staff to ensure that the lands are properly protected in perpetuity. For example, in the next decade or so, many properties that have been protected by conservation easements may be transferred to new landowners. In these situations, our stewardship staff must meet with the new landowners and educate them about ORLT and the benefits of owning conserved land.

Several members of the staff and Board, along with



*Photo by Catherine Hopkins*

some volunteers, have already begun the process of meeting the goals set out in the strategic planning session. They are developing fundraising materials that tell the remarkable story of ORLT's land protection program. This story will then be shared far and wide with friends of ORLT so we might gain additional support to strengthen ORLT's land protection efforts.

I want to thank our Board members for their commitment and resolve in continuing to build our organization. Renee Kivviko of Land Trust Alliance deserves our gratitude for facilitating the two-day session and doing a tremendous job. And I want to thank our members who have helped us get this far and whose full support we need on the trail ahead.

Sincerely,  
*Gregg Galbraith*  
ORLT Executive Director

## Land Protection Spotlight

In 2004, ORLT protected a total of 1,512 acres of land through three donated conservation easements. In 2005 to date, ORLT has protected 3,859 acres - 2,910 acres through donated conservation easements and 949 acres through outright land donations. This brings the total of land protected by ORLT to 14,750 acres! We thank our members for helping to make this possible! Inside are highlights from one of the projects.

## Alford Forest, Ozark County, Missouri

Alford Forest is ORLT's largest single project to date and perhaps one of the organization's most important contributions to forestry in the Ozarks. Alford Forest lies within the Bryant Creek watershed in Ozark County, Missouri. The Bryant Creek watershed is largely undeveloped and due to its remoteness, remains relatively undisturbed today. In fact, there are fewer people living in Ozark County today than 50 years ago.

Those who live near Bryant Creek today are often well rooted in those Ozark hills and many are carrying on a multi-generational family legacy. Most see the land as a treasure, which they will not part with. It's a pleasure to roam around Ozark County where things stay the same more than they change. Many locals express concern about losing a way of life when development does come and while new ideas such as conservation easements are unfamiliar to many people, some of these residents are asking about ways to protect the watershed from development and other changes harmful to the natural resources they so value.

Alford Forest is one example of a treasured family asset that has been protected for future generations. The Alford Forest protection story is also about David Haenke, a transplant to the Ozarks from Michigan more than 30 years ago. David manages the forest and is a passionate advocate for the sustainable use of our natural resources - so that the biological integrity is protected while also realizing the economic revenue needed to support good stewardship of the land.

Among the causes which David has championed is the sustainable single tree selection method of hardwood forest management, designed to improve tree health over time. David schooled under his respected mentor, Clint Trammel, Chief Forester of Pioneer Forest, the largest (at 160,000 acres) sustainably managed forest in the Midwest. David applied his knowledge by working with the owners of Alford Forest to restore the forests and identify the sensitive areas needing protection on the land. His dedication to restoring the forests and demonstrating the economic benefits of a long-term management plan of sustainable harvests have inspired many in his area. It also inspired the Alford Forest owner to design a plan for permanently protecting the forest so that this long-term restoration and protection will not be interrupted by future changes in ownership.



*Photo by Catherine Hopkins.*

David brought ORLT to the table to design such a plan. The plan which began seven years ago and was completed earlier this year involved the transfer of 3,200 acres into ORLT ownership and the placement of conservation easements over another 1,013 acres. The result amounts to a sustainably managed forest sanctuary of 4,300 acres in the Bryant Creek watershed.

David continues to guide the project through a land management contract with ORLT. David continually learns about the forest, whose secrets are given up slowly and only to those willing to pay acute attention to natural cycles and the forest's subtle responses to climate over many years. This information, so important to the future of our Ozark forests, is something that David shares with other landowners whenever he can. He has become a consultant to more owners of forestland in the watershed because they are beginning to see the immediate and long-term value of his management concepts. David also understands the importance of conservation easements on private forest land as a means of protecting the continuity of a sustainable management plan. He is not alone. Other forest consultants, such as John Kelsey and Clint Trammel, encourage dedicated forest landowners to consider conservation easements as a way to protect the investments they make in sustainable forestry. ORLT has found that landowners who practice sustainable forestry often wish to protect their land and style of forest management beyond their lifetime. Alford Forest is now a legacy that will endure forever.

The photo above shows David Haenke using a clinometer to measure the height of selected trees so he can track changes in the forest over time.

## Why Become A Member Of ORLT?

- **ORLT conserves the natural resources that make the Ozarks a wonderful place to live.**
- **ORLT works cooperatively with landowners, communities and individuals to protect natural and historic areas.**
- **ORLT has protected thousands of acres of forest, natural areas, farms, and urban open spaces.**
- **ORLT's work is funded by memberships and contributions from individuals.**
- **ORLT protects 2 acres for every \$25 membership received.**

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Support ORLT in Eureka Springs

ORLT wants to announce in advance an important volunteer event. On Saturday, October 15, 2005 friends of the Oak Hill Grange Community and Nature Reserve, near Eureka Springs, AR, will be working at the Bank of Eureka Springs parking lot, collecting parking money to raise funds for the project. If you need a good excuse to visit Eureka Springs on a gorgeous autumn day, consider helping out for an hour or two collecting parking money that day. This annual event raises several hundred dollars for the project! If you are interested in helping, please contact Barbara Harmony at 479-253-9431 or at [peace@ipa.net](mailto:peace@ipa.net).

Oak Hill Grange is an historic community building north of Eureka Springs. It is now owned by ORLT and continues to serve as a gathering place for local activities and is the focal point in the community's efforts to preserve the adjacent 116-acre wooded valley.

### Become a Volunteer Monitor

ORLT is in the process of developing a volunteer monitoring program. Trained monitors would visit protected properties and submit reports to ORLT. If you would like to be considered for one of these volunteer monitor positions let us know by contacting us and signing up. In the fall we will send out information about the training schedule.

Call 1-800-469-4438 or e-mail [orlt@ipa.net](mailto:orlt@ipa.net) to become a volunteer monitor

## Members and Friends Invited! June 18, 2005 -- Fayetteville, Arkansas

Join us on Saturday, June 18, 2005 from 4pm to 8pm at the Skillern Farm conservation easement project on the Northeast edge of Fayetteville, Arkansas for ORLT's 2005 annual meeting! Come meet the Board of directors and staff of ORLT and learn more about a project that began when a community became concerned about the imminent development of 17 acres in their neighborhood. The meeting will also include a presentation by Board member Andrea Radwell about river biodiversity and an election of new board members. Everyone is also invited to an outdoor cookout hosted by Brooks Rice who lives next to the four-acre pond that was protected by the conservation easement.

Please let us know if you will attend so that we can plan for enough food. Contact Andrea Radwell by email ([aradwell@uark.edu](mailto:aradwell@uark.edu)), by phone (479) 253-2883 and sign up.

Andrea Radwell, an ORLT board member for five years, who just completed her Ph.D. in Stream Ecology at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville will present "Biodiversity of Ozark Running Waters." For the past eight years, Andrea has been studying the environmental quality of Ozark rivers and the influence of human activity on aquatic life. She will present information about the many different critters that live in Ozark streams and explain why Ozark waters support such a rich diversity of life as well as why we need to address conservation of aquatic biodiversity from a regional perspective.

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### Join Us In Fayetteville On June 18th!!!

Just fill out the information on the form below and mail it to ORLT so we can send you an agenda and directions to the meeting.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending Meeting (4-6 p.m.) \_\_\_\_\_ Number Attending Cookout (6-8 p.m.) \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: Ozark Regional Land Trust • 428 South Main Street • Carthage, MO 64836.

Questions? Call 1-479-253-2883.



## ORLT's Good Stewards -- Woods Prairie By Andrew L. Thomas

It is difficult to believe that six years have passed since ORLT purchased Woods Prairie! Over these years, hundreds of volunteers have contributed thousands of hours either collecting seeds to raise money for the project, or performing hard physical work restoring the prairie, bit by bit, to its full glory. We are proud to tell you that the project remains financially sound and that the complete restoration of the entire prairie is imminent. With a little bit of luck, and lots more help from ORLT's many friends, we anticipate accomplishing the hard-earned restoration of this stunning 40-acre nature reserve by winter, 2007 / 8. Of course it will take several more years of diligent management to ensure that the restored areas settle back in to a stable prairie ecosystem, but by that point, the long-term year-to-year management will be greatly simplified, and the restoration considered complete.

We made so much progress this past winter that ORLT now plans to proceed full speed ahead with the last major step of the restoration - the re-establishment of prairie to the 6.5-acre fescue pasture on the north side. Early this fall, we will show the last cow out the pasture gate - for good! Very soon after, we will begin what, to me, has been one of the most long-anticipated events in Woods Prairie history - the tearing down and hauling off (to the recycling center, of course) the ¼ mile crossfence that splits the property into two sections. ORLT has applied for a \$4,800 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to assist with this last big restoration push, but even if we do not receive this grant, we intend to proceed with restoring the pasture area using other funds we have raised for this purpose. Meanwhile, the weedy trees and brush have now been cleared from more than ¾ of the 1-mile perimeter of the prairie, and the end is literally in sight.



We look forward to lying down on Woods Prairie's soft grasses or tiptoeing over delicate wildflowers in the very near future, and finally being able to sigh "mission accomplished". If you have never seen Woods Prairie, or are interested in helping ORLT with its restoration, call or e-mail us (below) and provide your name and contact information.

The photo above is from April, 2005 and shows a group of ten young Ameri-Corps Volunteers (none from Missouri) who spent several days cutting, hauling, stacking, and burning up weedy trees and brush that had encroached on Woods Prairie, making enormous strides in the complete restoration of this 40-acre gem. The group was hosted and guided by Richard Datema (in overalls), Operations Manager for the Missouri Prairie Foundation.

**Call 1-800-469-4438 or e-mail [orlt@ipa.net](mailto:orlt@ipa.net) to sign up to become a Wood's Prairie Restoration Volunteer**



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