



# The Ozark Holler

Spring 2007

## 2007 Annual Meeting — Mark Your Calendars



Ozark Regional Land Trust's Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, June 23, 2007, at one of its largest and most exciting conservation projects, the Ozark Regional Land Trust Gasconade River Project east of Lebanon, Missouri. Working together with a landowner in the region, ORLT has placed a conservation easement on 4000+ acres of land on both sides of the Gasconade River. The Gasconade River has a diverse aquatic natural community; thirty-five kinds of mussels have been observed in the Gasconade River basin, including seven species of conservation concern.

In addition to our brief formal meeting, we will have a short program, followed by a hike or canoe trip on the Gasconade. Details will be provided soon.

## Sarcoxie Cave and Spring

Adapted from an article by Jonathon Beard

Over 100 years ago, an amateur biologist named Ruth Hoppin found blind fish (Missouri Department of Conservation file photo, right) and blind crayfish in the entrance passage of a small cave. Despite this, very little was known about Sarcoxie Cave until the past few years. In April of 1997, Ozark Regional Land Trust purchased Sarcoxie Cave. With assistance from Missouri Caves & Karst Conservancy and Missouri Department of Conservation, ORLT has been protecting, managing and studying this habitat to threatened species ever since. This special cave is home to not one, but two threatened species, both of them a species of fish.



Sarcoxie Cave lies just west of the Sarcoxie city square in eastern Jasper County in southwest Missouri. The 3 acre tract of property includes not only the cave but also a beautiful spring pond and the oldest building in the county. The private residence was originally built in the 1880's as sleeping quarters for railroad workers.

Prior to the gating of the cave, the entrance remained nearly sealed due to mud and cobble falling from the bluff above the cave. In the spring of 1998, independent caver Richard Thompson was commissioned to install a one-of-a-kind stainless steel gate at the entrance to the cave to keep unauthorized human traffic out of the cave. The gate uses a unique swiveling bar connected to a "boot" in a concrete "foot." Because it consists of stainless steel, the gate requires little or no maintenance.



The cave entrance was quite a different story. In the winter of 2001, a large ledge at the entrance area collapsed due to frost wedging, effectively sealing the entrance again. The Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy, along with local caving volunteers, removed the fallen rock the following summer so that authorized access to the cave could again be made. Since the completion of the survey of the cave in 2003, the only visits into the cave have

been made by the Missouri Department of Conservation, in an effort to monitor the water quality.

In the first 900 feet there are only two places that the average person can stand up in this torturous cave that only its inhabitants could love. In what most people would consider a very unforgiving, inhospitable environment, Ozark cavefish (*Amblyopsis rosae*) finds suitable living quarters. The Arkansas darter (*Ethostome cragini*) resides in spring waters flowing from the cave. Both these threatened fish species that are found in very few places are only 1.5 to 2 inches long when fully grown. Add to this the bristly cave crayfish (*Cambarus setosus*) and the grotto salamander (*Eurycea spelaeus*), and you have a very special cave in a small urban environment. The bristly is a white crayfish with very primitive eyes whose known numbers in most caves continues to decline. The grotto salamander is rare, but yet the most common of the Ozarks' cave-adapted salamanders.



The cave is being managed as a protected environment for these threatened and cave-adapted species that are unique to small portions of the Ozarks. The Ozark Regional Land Trust, Missouri Cave and Karst Conservancy, and Missouri Department of Conservation share in the management duties of watching over this very special little cave and its picturesque spring branch.

## Now Hiring Easement Manager

The Ozark Regional Land Trust (ORLT) seeks an Easement Manager with good communication and human relations skills to oversee ORLT's easement stewardship program encompassing 37 easements on over 11,500 acres (and growing).

Manager will help develop monitoring procedures, forms, and reports; will be responsible for preparing monitoring reports, record keeping; will participate in outreach and landowner education to promote easement understanding and compliance. Manager must be a team player; possess effective written and oral communication skills; must be energetic and have a positive attitude. A full job description is available on the ORLT web site at [http://www.orlt.org/job\\_opportunities.htm](http://www.orlt.org/job_opportunities.htm). Salary range: \$25-30K, depending on experience.

To apply, please send resume, contact information, salary history, and a cover letter describing your interest in this position, to: John Cutler at [jcutler@getgo.in.net](mailto:jcutler@getgo.in.net). Resumes will be accepted until the position is filled.

## Get the Ozark Holler By E-Mail And Invite Your Friends

Tell your friends about Ozark Regional Land Trust by forwarding this newsletter to them. They can receive their own email version of our quarterly newsletter by clicking on the link below. In addition, you can click on this link if you would like to change your e-mail address information, or remove your name from the list.

### [Ozark Regional Land Trust Enewsletter Sign Up](#)

We can also be reached at the main office at 417-358-0852, 427 S Main St., Carthage, MO 64836, [orlt@ipa.net](mailto:orlt@ipa.net) or at the St. Louis Regional field office at 636-451-0404, P. O. Box 300 Gray Summit, MO 63039, [aflambert@earthlink.net](mailto:aflambert@earthlink.net). Thank you for your support of Ozark Regional Land Trust!