

The Ozark Holler

Winter/Spring 2013-2014

KATY LAND TRUST PROTECTS TRAILFRONT PROPERTY

The Katy Land Trust, a priority project of ORLT, is working to protect land in the viewshed of the Katy Trail State Park. The Mayer conservation easement preserves a 50-acre forest and tree nursery overlooking the trail and Missouri River bottom. This property, located near Dutzow, includes a scenic forested bluff.

Landowners Franz and Rebecca Mayer have a strong passion for land conservation and wanted to ensure this beautiful property was forever protected for wildlife habitat. With its woodlands and tree nursery, this property continues to illustrate the flexibility of conservation easements for landowners with a variety of agricultural operations.

Contributions from the Edward Jones Foundation and Novus International helped make this conservation easement a reality. The Edward Jones Foundation provided the Stewardship Fund contribution that enables us to meet significant, long-term stewardship costs and responsibilities on the easements we hold. The contribution made by Novus International provided an offset to their two acre renovation of an historic home on their Montgomery County farm and helped meet certification requirements for green building design.

Through continued support of the Edward Jones Foundation and corporations in partnerships with landowners and ORLT, our goal is to protect more family farms along the Katy Trail.



Chickens enjoy their home at New Pear Farm.

ORLT CONSERVES LAND, ASSISTS A LOCAL FARMER, HELPS VETERANS

Military veteran Terrell Spencer (“Spence”) is on a mission—a farming mission. He started farming after serving as a machine gunner in Iraq from 2004–2005, where he suffered from a misdiagnosed injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. When he returned home, he found peace in farming.

On his farm in West Fork, Arkansas, (“Across the Creek Farm”) Spence started a workshop for veterans interested in starting their own farm. But his soil was too poor and the land too steep, so when Spence heard about the flat lands of New Pear Farm, owned by ORLT, he had an idea for a partnership.

Spence now leases 20 acres from ORLT on New Pear Farm just south of Fayetteville, Arkansas. This past year, he raised 10,000 chickens there. The chickens were housed in pens of 70 birds each and moved daily. The nutrients improved poor soil that had been hayed by a neighbor for many years and now native plants are thriving.

Just as the soil is healing, so are the veterans who visit. More than 50 veterans, most of them recently discharged from the military or still on active duty, are learning how to farm. Veterans visit from as far away as Washington, Michigan and Oregon. In October, a news crew from New York filmed a segment about the project.

“We’re paying it forward,” said Spence. “Good folks were there for me and now we’re doing the same for others with help from ORLT.”



The sunsets will always be beautiful seen from the protected Mayer property, overlooking the Missouri River floodplain.

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The Ozark Regional Land Trust

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Mission

Through carefully designed programs of conservation and appropriate land management, ORLT empowers people to protect the natural resources of the Ozarks forever.

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Missouri River Country: Available Now!

Magnificent Missouri is thrilled to share its first book, Missouri River Country, celebrating the river valley's lush scenery and rich history from the perspective of more than 60 contributors. The book is available for order now at magnificentmissouri.org/missouri-river-country.



Awards for Service, Dedication

As the first full-time executive director, Ted Heisel was instrumental in building the core strength of ORLT. He developed policies and procedures that prepared the organization to meet national accreditation standards, raised funds for an Operating Endowment Fund that helps sustain ORLT's operations for the long term and helped to permanently protect more than 10,000 acres of land. Preston Lacy served as our first full-time Stewardship Director. He strengthened ORLT's mapping and stewardship program, ensured all of our conservation easements and preserves are monitored annually, completed and



Preston Lacy and Ted Heisel each receive an award at our annual meeting in Arkansas for their dedication and service to ORLT.

updated every management plan for our preserves (owned land), and wrote several successful grants. Ted and Preston have joined ORLT's Board of Directors.

Facebook Famous: Our "Amazing Mary Jane"

"Mary Jane has cultivated an intimate understanding of the land she has lived on for a life time."

Friends, family and community members came together to honor Mary Jane Fritsch, in celebration of her 100th birthday. ORLT presented Mary Jane with a Certificate of Honor for her work in the community and for the future of the Ozarks. Especially notable to us is Mary Jane's leadership in land protection. Through gifts of land and conservation easements to ORLT, she has permanently protected the majority of her land and ensured it will remain a nature preserve.

Mary Jane has cultivated an intimate understanding of the land she has hiked, foraged and lived on for a life time. Earlier this year, she testified in a public hearing against a proposed plan sought by an electric company for a major high powered transmission line. The line threatens scenic and environmental destruction in the Ozarks. Her admirers designed a Facebook page called "Amazing Mary Jane." View the site to learn more about Mary Jane and share your appreciation for her remarkable contributions and support of the Ozarks.



Mary Jane Fritsch receives a Certificate of Honor from former ORLT board member Andrea Radwell.



Peggy Horner

ORLT welcomes Peggy Horner as its new Executive Director. Peggy began working for ORLT in May as Stewardship Director, replacing Preston Lacy. Dave Coonrod, former Executive Director, resigned in August to pursue new interests but remains a good friend of ORLT. Upon Dave's resignation, Peggy was promoted.

"Land trusts play a vital role in connecting people to the importance of conservation," Peggy said. "I'm honored to join this dedicated team."

Peggy has a Master's Degree in Wildlife Biology and worked for the Missouri Department of Conservation for 13 years focusing on endangered species recovery. For the last six years, Peggy also worked with the Missouri land trust community to facilitate habitat and land protection options, assisting in permanently protecting 1,100 acres. To contact Peggy call (573) 817-2020 or email pahorner@orlt.org.



Margo Heekin

We also welcome Margo Heekin as ORLT's new Stewardship and Project Director. A former Missouri resident, she is returning bringing six years of land trust experience helping

farmers, ranchers and landowners voluntarily conserve their working lands, wildlife habitat and scenic vistas.

Margo also has experience working on ranches in Kansas and California and a business background as a financial advisor to landowners. Her family is from Missouri and Arkansas, and she loves the Ozarks and the Katy Trail. Contact Margo at mdheekin@orlt.org.

New Staff

New Faces at ORLT

New Board Members



Ginger Allington is a restoration ecologist and the Seed Bank Manager with the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis. She was the Stewardship and Educational Program Manager for the Dutchess Land Conservancy in New York and Stewardship Assistant for the Nature Conservancy in Maine.

Laura Kinsell-Baer is an ecologist and urban planner in St. Louis. Her experience in grant-writing, consensus-building, mapping, event planning, marketing and communications, community outreach and fundraising will be a tremendous asset.



Mike Chiles is the past president of a consulting and product development company. He is from Springfield, Missouri and has extensive business and strategic planning experience. Mike is a former Ozark New Energy Association board member and currently serves on the Ozark Greenways board.



Preston Lacy is the past Stewardship Director of ORLT. During his three-year tenure, he visited and monitored every property and assisted in completing easements. Preston now works for the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust.

Jeff Rosenblum is a business attorney in St. Louis. He was involved with the Crown Center for Senior Living for more than 30 years, Big Brothers and Big Sisters for 10 years and served on the board of United Way.



Ted Heisel is the past Executive Director of ORLT. He has extensive experience in the legal aspects of land conservation and building the capacity of nonprofits. Ted works in his family's business and as a consultant on legal issues, but continues to assist in fulfilling our land conservation mission.



Steve Schueppert is a CPA in St. Louis and the new Treasurer. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame and his experience with audits, tax planning and accounting will be crucial to ORLT as we prepare for Land Trust Accreditation.

ORLT Receives Grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

ORLT received a Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for habitat restoration and enhancement on private lands in the Missouri Ozarks. This area is important due to the numerous state and federally listed endangered species located here. The first project under this grant was completed in November. A cattle rancher in the Huzzah watershed (a major tributary of the Upper Meramec, an ORLT focus area) installed fencing around his woodlands and along the riparian buffer of the creek, to exclude cattle.



Huzzah Creek running through the Yocom Property