

Volunteer Opportunities 2009

Below are the volunteer opportunities for this and coming months and ongoing projects, as well as announcements of other events. Please contact the person indicated for more detailed information on any of the projects. Note that if a project is listed as “not yet approved,” you will need to fill out a Service Project Form (available at <http://extension.missouri.edu/masternaturalist/columbia/Projectapproval.htm>). You will be notified via e-mail of the project’s approval or if there are any questions. Once approval is granted for any person, it is approved for everyone, so it is only necessary to submit one form per project.

October Volunteer Opportunities



Fall Quail Covey Whistle Counts

Assist MDC biologists to count and locate quail coveys on state land to determine the effectiveness of past habitat work. Department biologists will be conducting predawn whistle counts during the month of October on the Department’s 19 QEAs to determine preseason population densities and the effectiveness of past management practices. After the calling period, biologists attempt to flush the birds to determine the size of the covey. Assisting with the survey is an excellent way to learn more about quail habitat management and a great way to get your dogs into birds before the season. Volunteers will need to arrive at the conservation area at least one hour before sunrise and additional training may be required if you plan to assist with the actual surveys. Held weekdays with favorable weather in Oct. please contact Aaron Jeffries at 573-522-4115 x3146 or Aaron.Jeffries@mdc.mo.gov to sign up and for more information.

Hinkson Clean Sweep

Hinkson Clean Sweep is a city-wide stream cleanup event where volunteers work together to clean area streams. The result is a healthier watershed and attractive community. Volunteers will be provided mesh and trash bags. Sites will be led with trained volunteers and supporting staff. Select the location appropriate for you, your family, organization or group. Everyone can participate! Handicapped accessible locations are available. This event is appropriate for individuals, and groups of all sizes and people of all ages and abilities. Deadline to register is Friday, October 9. Register at <http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Volunteer/Forms/hinkson-cleansweep-form.php>

Outdoor Classroom Workdays

Thurs, Oct 1: 3:30-6 Rock Bridge High School rain garden

Mon, Oct 5: 12-3:00 Rock Bridge Elementary outdoor classroom

Thurs, Oct 15: 4-6 West Blvd Elementary rain garden & outdoor classroom

Please bring your workgloves and handtools.

Note: if interested, Lea can put you on the email list for Work Day updates, reminders, and weather-related schedule changes. langtrea@gmail.com

Raingarden Workdays, Missouri River Communities Network (MRCN)

Tues, Oct 6: 12-2 Capen Park Compost Demo Site rain garden

Wed, Oct 14: 12-2 Bethell Park rain garden

Please bring your workgloves and tools. For more information, contact Lea Langdon at langtrea@gmail.com or 864-7647 to sign up.

These ending times are flexible...if you can only come for part of the time, come anyway. If you want any more info, email or call Lea at langtrea@gmail.com or 864-7647.

Native Seed Collecting Trip

October 7 – Wednesday evening – Green Area or Tucker Prairie

This is part of the ongoing Native Plant Seed Collection for Natural Community Restoration project.

Email John at: JohnGeorge@mdc.mo.gov

Note: John will be away for the first part of the month. Please email him to participate/get on his email list. He expects to send out an email with details the weekend prior to the trip.

Outdoor Education at Prairie Fork Conservation Area

Please contact Jody (Coats) Frank, Outreach and Education Coordinator, Prairie Fork Conservation Area, 573 356-8898 or jlc7t4@mizzou.edu to get on her email contact list for school projects at Prairie Fork.

Oct 13, 9-2: The first group is coming from Lee Expressive Arts School in Columbia. This group will be the entire 4th grade from Lee. This is the group that I will really need volunteers for.

Oct 23, 9-2: The second group has also scheduled 10/28/09 as a rain date. This will be a small group of about 15 students, ages 6th through 8th grade. They are in a home school science club and they wanted one station dedicated to soil science. If you have anyone in your Master Naturalist group that has a soil background, let them know that their knowledge would be helpful.

Volunteers are needed to staff stations with environmental education activities. For the groups this fall we will be using the stream table to learn about the water cycle and water erosion, also we will be doing a pond life exploration activity where students use dip nets, field guides and observation containers to learn about what is living in the pond on the area. There will be a few other stations, but they will involve learning about ecosystems-prairie and other as well as food webs and food chains. Please pack a lunch. Contact Jody to sign up and get further details.

Ongoing Volunteer Opportunities

Bee Inventory at Overton Bottoms North- Specimen Identification and Mounting

Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge-Overton Bottoms North Unit.

Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (Overton Bottoms North)

Data from the inventory will also be used to begin a bee list for the refuge unit. Participants will learn collection and trapping techniques, pinning skills required for mounting the specimens, and identification skills to differentiate between bee species with visits to the MU Entomology Lab. The Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and/or Friends of the Big Muddy will provide all necessary identification books, and bee capture, preservation and mounting equipment. Volunteers will want to dress appropriately for field work (sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, and head covering are recommended). Volunteers will be encouraged to bring their own gloves, insect repellent, sun block, and water.

The dates listed below are tentative. They will be subject to change depending on weather/flooding and other factors beyond my control. I will contact you if an event is cancelled. In addition to these dates, we will schedule 2-3 dates for identification at the MU Entomology Museum (late June-August).

All trapping/netting will take place at the Overton Bottoms North unit of the Big Muddy National Wildlife Refuge. Take I-70 to the Overton/Wooldridge exit (#111), this is the first exit west of the bridge over the Missouri River. At the end of the exit ramp, turn right. At the stop sign on HWY 98, turn right. This road will cross the RR tracks and turn to gravel. We will meet at the first parking lot on the right (about ½ mile, look for the big pecan trees).

All washing/drying/pinning will take place at our office (4200 New Haven Road). From the Nifong/HWY junction travel east (Nifong becomes New Haven RD) one mile. At the USGS Columbia Environmental Research Center, turn right at the 3rd drive way, turn left through the chain link fence, our office is at the south end of the parking lot.

Summer 2009 Schedule for collecting, preparing, pinning and identification of specimens

October 6, 1:00-4:00, MU Entomology Museum. Session limited to project participants.

Contact: Wedge Watkins, 573-442-2778, or Wedge.Watkins@fws.gov if you are interested in participating. Although this is a Capstone Project, non-trainees are encouraged to volunteer.

School Natural Areas/Outdoor Classrooms

Many of our local schools have nature areas that have been neglected and could use some volunteer assistance. These areas include prairies and woodlands, small butterfly gardens or sensory gardens, and rainwater gardens. The following elementary schools are volunteer sites: Blue Ridge, Fairview, Mill Creek, New Haven, Rock Bridge, West Boulevard, plus Rock Bridge High School. Hallsville, and Harrisburg are also possible sites, and there are other schools that have Outdoor Classrooms, but we have not yet begun working with them. If you are close to another school and curious about volunteering there, I can tell you what I know about their natural areas, and we can try to get something going there. Opportunities exist to work at just one school, or to be called or emailed for work days at different schools.

Contact Lea Langdon at langtrea@gmail.com or 864-7647 to sign up.

CACHE/SPARKS Birding Trips – Wednesday mornings

Sponsored by The Columbia Audubon Society, Missouri Department of Conservation, and The Audubon Society of Missouri.

These are birding trips with Bill Clark, former president of The Columbia Audubon Society. Meet Bill at 7:30am (don't be late) at the southwest corner of the Parkade Center parking lot. The destination will be decided the day of the trip depending on who is there and where they want to go. Contact Bill Clark at 573-474-4510 to confirm you are attending.

Native Plant Seed Collection for Natural Community Restoration

Sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation

This ongoing project's aim is the restoration of MDC prairie, glade, and savanna sites in Boone, Callaway, Audrain, and Randolph counties. Volunteers will learn in a field setting about plant communities, species of native flowers and grasses, plant identification, and both seed collection and planting techniques.

MDC will provide all necessary plant identification books, collection bags, and clippers. Carpooling will be provided when possible. Volunteers will want to dress appropriately for field work (sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, and head covering are recommended), bring their own gloves, insect repellent, sun block, and water bottles.

Collection dates will begin in mid-May. Tentative dates furnished are as follows:

October 7 – Wednesday evening – Green Area or Tucker Prairie

October 17 – Saturday morning – Tucker Prairie

To express your interest and be notified of specific arrangements for field trips, contact John George at 573-882-8388 or JohnGeorge@mdc.mo.gov

Troy Gordon Memorial Hummingbird Garden

Sponsored by the Audubon Society of Missouri and Boone's Lick Chapter of the Missouri Master Naturalists

Help is needed for ongoing maintenance of the Memorial Garden. The garden has four planted areas that include a swale (that connects to the Butterfly Garden), formal garden, Buckeye Island and pond habitat. Participants will learn valuable information about native Missouri plants, grasses, shrubs and trees and become familiar with their light and water preferences, planting techniques and maintenance requirements. Volunteers will provide their own garden and hand tools, wheelbarrows and gloves as required for that day's activity. Volunteers will want to dress appropriately for field work (sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, and head covering are recommended). Insect repellent and sun block are recommended, as are water bottles.

To participate in this project, contact Suzanne Wright at 573-446-2217 or Suzwright@centurytel.net

Phenology Observation

Sponsored by the USA National Phenology Network.

Phenology is the study of recurring plant and animal life cycle events, or phenophases, such as leafing and flowering of plants, maturation of agricultural crops, emergence of insects, and migration of birds. Many of these events are sensitive to climatic variation and change, and are simple to observe and record. As an USA-NPN observer, you can help scientists identify and understand environmental trends so we can better adapt to climate change.

The USA National Phenology Network brings together citizen scientists, government agencies, non-profit groups, educators and students of all ages to monitor the impacts of climate change on plants in the United States. The USA-NPN is looking for volunteers to help monitor 200 plant species found across the United States. This effort will eventually expand to include animals and physical phenomena, such as bird migrations and ice out on ponds. You may explore their website at www.usanpn.org to learn more about USA-NPN and become an observer. Training is available on the website and reporting is done via that site.

Raptor Rehabilitation Project

Sponsored by Raptor Rehabilitation Project

The most rewarding volunteer experience ever! We have new opportunities for volunteers to begin working with birds sooner. Please contact us to set up training sessions just for you, so you can begin to feed these amazing creatures. You can then become more familiar with our education birds and all of the amazing ways you can interact with them and continue educating delighted audiences throughout mid-Missouri about the importance of wildlife conservation. This is a rare and special opportunity that is not available in most areas. We are truly lucky to have the chance to do so, so why not check it out?

Contact: Amber Edwards, Volunteer Coordinator, at 314-550-0201. Let her know you're a Master Naturalist.