

Meramec Hills Chapter
Missouri Master Naturalists

Minutes

September 24, 2018 Meeting

The September 24, 2018 meeting of the Meramec Hills Chapter, Missouri Master Naturalists, opened at 6:00 pm with Edie Starbuck introducing the evening's speaker, Laura Conlee, Fur-bearer Biologist with MDC. Conlee spoke for about 90 minutes about the bear population in Missouri, from the 1800s when black bears were very common in Missouri through their great reduction in numbers due to overhunting and habitat loss, to their present status of perhaps 300 individuals. Missouri has not had a bear reintroduction program, so the current populations are thought to be from a very small remnant group in Missouri and bears migrating from a reintroduction program in Arkansas. She described bears as opportunistic omnivores, suggesting we might think of bears as very large raccoons in terms of human-associated foods; they will go after pet food, compost, trash, grills and smokers, bird feeders, livestock feed, and bee hives if these are readily available. She talked about their feeding behaviors from early spring through late fall and winter. Denning behavior, MDC's winter den checks, the size of most bears, and specific 'bear aware' behaviors we would be wise to implement were covered. If we sight a bear, there is a form to report that on the MDC website. The website also has a bear story page, and a map where one can track bear sightings in the state. This was another excellent program, and well received by the members in attendance.

After a short break, the business meeting was called to order by President Judy Cavender at 7:45. The first order of business was Judy's introduction of Sarah Havens, the Chapter's new Extension advisor. Her official title is "Extension Field Specialist in Natural Resources," and she is the first and so far only person with this job title. Her own background is in forestry and biology. She began her position on August 20, and will cover 64 counties south of Rte. 50. She will divide her time among natural resources, 4-H support, Industrial support and teaching, and advising our group. She is housed in the Extension Office here in Rolla, and her email is havenss@missouri.edu.

Next Judy thanked those responsible for the evening's refreshments and Phyllis Murphy reminded the group that we need more people to bring snacks for the rest of the year and into January, encouraging us to sign up.

The Minutes of the August meeting were approved as written. Drew Lane gave the Treasurer's report: the Chapter has a total of \$5,387.08 at present.

Committee Reports

1. Next Helen Johnston reported for the Advanced Training Committee. She thanked everyone involved in the 9/22 Fall Family Fun Day. She mentioned the upcoming Owl Prowl on Wednesday, October 3 at Bray Conservation Area. Steve Bost from Montauk State Park will speak and lead the owl prowl. The presentation will begin at 6:00 p.m., to be followed by the owl prowl at 7:00. On Saturday, November 10, we will visit the Missouri S&T Mineral Museum at 10:00 a.m. We will have a guided tour through the museum, which is located in McNutt Hall on the MS&T campus. Helen will be sending further information as to the location of the tour. If members wish to attend either of these, contact

Helen as soon as possible. The Missouri Botanical Symposium will be held here in Rolla on November 16, and further information about this event and a registration form can be found at www.missouribotanicalsymposium.org.

The speaker for the October 22 Chapter meeting will be John Bryan, US Forest Service Silviculturalist, who will give a presentation on 'Oak Tree Decline.'

If members have suggestions for programs for the upcoming year, please email or call Helen, as the Advanced Training Committee is beginning to formulate the schedule of programs for next year.

2. Susan Wrasmann, chair of the Volunteer Committee, reported that this Sunday, September 30, from 9:00 a.m. to noon volunteers from Lambda Sigma Pi will be planting native plants at the Westside Marketplace development. Chapter volunteers are most welcome to assist as there are hundreds of plants to set out. On the same day from 1:00 to 3:00 there will be a work day at the Center garden with the Rolla High School EcoClub. On October 3 from 9:00 to 12:00 there will be bare root milkweed planting. Contact Susan for specifics on all these workdays.

Susan also offered thanks to all who worked so hard on the native plant sale that was, sadly, cancelled, and reminded us to enter the volunteer hours we spent in preparation for the event. It is hoped that there will be an alternative location planned in future years should we be caught in a storm again. Susan also mentioned a Prairie Seed Mixing day on November 8; contact Susan for more information.

Susan also announced that " **Rivertowns: 100 Miles, 200 Years, Countless Stories,**" a film covering the social, natural and cultural changes in Missouri River communities over more than two centuries, will premiere on Channel 9 this Wednesday evening, Sept. 26, at 7 p.m. She had seen a preview of the film and said it is excellent.

Pam Barnabee announced that there will be a Bray work day on October 9 from 1:00 to 5:00; with subsequent Bray work days generally scheduled from 1:00 to 5:00 on the second Tuesday of the month.

3. Lorely Lather, Co-Chair of the Core Training Committee, reminded us that work on the next Core Training session will begin September 25 at 1:00 in the University Extension office. There are currently 11 committee members. The class will run from March through May of 2019.

4. For the Communications Committee, Jerry Barnabee thanked everyone for their help in making the Fall Family Fun Day at Montauk State Park on September 22, 2018 a great success. The fish and other food was excellent, as was Steve Bost's talk.

As always, if there are any problems with the website, please contact Jerry.

Kari Lane, newsletter editor, solicited material for the newsletter and Chapter Facebook page. In addition, she asked that any member interested in participating in our outreach program for home schoolers and other community groups contact her to discuss what topics they would be willing to speak about.

Announcements

In Announcements, Jan Sassman announced the Missouri Prairie Foundation's 2018 Annual Member Meeting and Evening on the Prairie on Saturday, October 20, 2018. The annual event will be held this year on the Prairie at the Sassmans' Prairie Star Restoration Farm. The evening will include walking tours of the farm, featuring reconstructed native grasslands, restored woodlands, and

outstanding replicas of Henry David Thoreau's cabin, Aldo Leopold's shack, John Muir's camp, and an American Indian teepee. A casual picnic dinner buffet will be available to purchase, as well as complimentary wine thanks to Past MPF President and bartender Randy Washburn. Presentations and a silent auction will be part of the festivities. Contact Jan for additional information.

Bruce Sassman announced the next two "Legends of Conservation" events. On October 27 at 2:00 at Runge Center in Jefferson City, the program will feature Ding Darling, an important conservationist. Limited auditorium seating is free and available on a first come, first served basis. An exhibit of Ding's cartoons, artwork and photographs will be on display at the Runge Center during October. On March 20, 2019, The Life and Works of Rachel Carson will be presented in Jefferson City. This will be a ticketed event, and more information will be available as the time draws closer.

Pam Barnabee announced that there are currently several discrete, smallish native plant areas at Bray that are available for adoption by interested members. Members may select an area and then maintain it on an ongoing basis. Adopters will have a free hand in the management of their areas. To participate, call Pam or Connie at Bray.

Carolyn Schlauch announced a Wild Game Dinner at New Friendship Baptist Church in Waynesville, MO, Sunday, September 30 at 6:00 p.m. at which the special guest speaker will be our own Drew Lane. In addition, Lorely and Ron Lather will attend and speak briefly about the Missouri Master Naturalists program, our Chapter, and the upcoming Core Training Program.

Bear River's Anna and Ari thanked members for their contributions of towels for their new wildlife rehabilitation program.

Next Judy presented awards, and announced our next meeting on October 22, 2018. There will be an Executive Board meeting on October 21, 2018 at 5:30, at Alex's Pizza.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gallagher
Secretary