



MoBCI NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative

SUMMER, 2006



Strength in Partnerships

An old polish proverb reads "Two heads are better than one." and Vincent Van Gogh remarked that "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." This is remarkably true of the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI). There have been great accomplishments, some small, some large that make what we have achieved in the last 4 years, GREAT!

What is it that makes our efforts for bird conservation great? It's teamwork. It's the theme of this year's Conference "Strength in Partnerships." It's the dedication and hard work of MoBCI members and of the Steering Committee. **We will have a lot to celebrate at our 2006 Annual MoBCI Conference this year so I hope you will join us. Please mark your calendars for August 18-19 at the Holiday Inn Select in Columbia, Missouri.**

The following are some highlights of this year's actions of the Steering Committee, which help bring conservation to Missouri birds.

The First Major Contribution to the MoBCI Foundation

Recall that last year, the Steering Committee worked to set up a not for profit 501(c3) foundation to accept donations from entities interested in bird conservation. Charlie Scott, former Steering Committee member and Field Supervisor of the Columbia, Missouri Ecological Services Field Office for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, worked to secure funds from a settlement resulting from the destruction of a bald eagle nest. Currently, MoBCI Foundation treasurer, Jerry Wade, has placed \$10,000.00 in a 3-month interest bearing Certificate of Deposit for safekeeping. I ask all member organizations of MoBCI to think about how these funds should be used. Current ideas include placing the funds in an endowment, incorporating it in the grants program, or using it for a high profile habitat project. However, the Steering Committee wants to hear from YOU! Please consider ways in which you would like to see these funds put to good use for bird conservation.

www.MoBCI.org/Directory/Newsletter

Bookmark the new MoBCI website and it will work for you and Missouri birds. This is a huge accomplishment and we owe tremendous gratitude to Mike Currier, Missouri Department of

Natural Resources, for his hard work and vision in getting the MoBCI website up and running. This website will be your one stop portal to see where bird habitat projects are occurring, where the next bird meeting will be, where to get that rare glimpse of a “lifer”, where to find out about grants, general information on bird species, information on the annual conference, a message board so you can keep up with other bird enthusiasts across the state! Whew! It is a great website and a great start to keep MoBCI members informed but it also requires your help. You can provide information to link to the website by contacting Mike Currier at mike.currier@mo.dnr.gov and he will work with you to get your information displayed. Mike has also formatted this newsletter, no small task I can tell you. Take time to thank Mike for his hard work at the Conference. In addition, Linda Tossing has been diligent in making sure the Directory is up to date so that you can contact any member of MoBCI. Thanks so much Linda for keeping track of everyone. If you need to make changes to your directory profile please contact Linda at ltossing@aol.com.

Grant Proposals on MoBCI.org

This year, the Steering Committee recommended to post 2007 MoBCI grant proposals on the website so that other member organizations can review them and express whether they would be interested in assisting as a partner in the project, hence the theme “Strength in Partnerships”. This will be a great opportunity to put your skills to work with other interests in your local area and will also help generate more ideas for new applicants for additional bird projects around the state. If you have a question about the proposal, there will be contact information available.

Strength in Partnerships MoBCI Grants

You will read about the dedication of Truman wetlands later in this publication and it was a celebrated event which was the direct result of partnering, pooling resources and using funds from the first MoBCI Grant Program, how gratifying to think about the power of partnerships and for those of you involved in that project, how gratifying to know that you were a part of it. Thanks to Dave Erickson and the Missouri Department of Conservation again for continuing to secure funds for the MoBCI Grants Program through Dave’s leadership and the leadership of all the partners who have sent in proposals, together we have put over ½ a million dollars on the ground for Missouri birds! Come to the Conference and we will show you more about project successes.

We have accomplished so much in such a short amount of time with little accomplishments and big accomplishments that come together to make MoBCI great. We all owe a special debt of gratitude to Jerry Wade, John Burk, and Alan Leary for organizing and planning this year’s Conference, they make it look so easy. I want to thank ALL the members of the Steering Committee for their help in making this past year a success for Missouri birds and their habitats. And to member organizations, you have never seen such a dedicated group of individuals work so hard for bird conservation in our state. It is very rare for individuals to miss a Steering Committee meeting and that just shows me how strong our leadership is and how strong our organization is. If you would like to contribute to that strength there will be openings on the Steering Committee for the coming 2006/2007 year. Please contact me at Kelly_srigleywerner@fws.gov or any of the Steering Committee members (www.mobci.org for a directory) to see what is involved and to learn how your contributions can continue to make



this organization of organizations a glowing success! It is a wonderful experience and rewarding too. We will always need renewed energy and passion that I know exists in every organization of MoBCI. Birds help get us there but it is a concern about our environment, about our forests, streams, wetlands, and prairie in Missouri that drive us. Please keep the momentum of MoBCI alive and join the Steering Committee, you'll be glad you did.

Don't forget the Conference in Columbia, Missouri at the Holiday in Select August 18th and 19th. We'd love to see you!

*Kelly Srigley Werner
MoBCI Steering Committee Chair*

2006 MISSOURI BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE CONFERENCE

The 2006 MoBCI Conference will be held on **Friday, August 18 and Saturday, August 19** at the Holiday Inn Select on Hwy. 70 and Stadium in Columbia Missouri. This year's theme will be "Expanding Good Habitat" and will include presentations on the Mark Twain National Forest Plan, Greater Prairie Chicken Recovery, and a National Bird Management Plan.

The keynote speaker will be the Forest Supervisor for the Mark Twain National Forest, Mr. Ronnie Rohm. Mr. Rohm will address the crowd on Friday night during the social with a presentation covering the new forest plan for the Mark Twain Forest and how this plan will support all-bird conservation from an ecosystem and landscape level approach.

There will be sessions that focus on 2005 MoBCI Grant Projects. Project originators will give brief presentations on the progress of their projects. The format provides an opportunity for group discussions and informal conversations during poster sessions. The goal is to enhance partner awareness of what is currently being accomplished and provide a catalyst for the development of existing projects and the formulation of innovative new ones.

The conference will conclude Saturday afternoon with breakout sessions designed to identify future tasks to be undertaken during the following year by MoBCI and it's member organizations. Please refer to our website at mobci.org for a conference agenda and registration information.

If you have any questions concerning the conference please contact John Burk (573)592-7865, jburknwtf@charter.net or Jerry Wade at WadeJ@missouri.edu.

Mark Twain National Forest Plan
Available on-line at:



http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/marktwain/projects/forest_plan_revision



MoBCI GRANT PROGRAM CONTINUES TO SOAR

The strength in partnerships and MoBCI's success in bringing organizations together to improve habitat for birds in Missouri was exemplified again in the 2006 MoBCI grants program where 10 of 16 submitted proposals were funded for a grand total of **\$374,857.50** conservation dollars committed to habitat restoration for Missouri birds.

For its fiscal years 2006/2007 the Missouri Department of Conservation will provide \$125,000.00 to fund projects. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through its Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, will provide an additional \$17,100.00 in partnership to support bird habitat restoration work being conducted on non-state/non-federal lands in Missouri for a grand total of \$142,100.00 for this year's grant program.

MoBCI Grant Proposals were solicited, reviewed and ranked by members of the MoBCI Grants Sub-Group and recommendations were made to the MoBCI Steering Committee who in turn offered the final list of recommended projects to the Missouri Department of Conservation for final consideration and to complete the granting process.

Funded projects included those which conducted on-the-ground habitat work for birds, had multiple partners, targeted suites of priority bird species, and projects which addressed the objectives listed in one or more of the major national bird conservation initiatives (i.e., the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight, North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative.

In 2006, projects awarded included:

- \$6,500.00 to Clay County Parks for its *Clay County Grassland and Savanna Restoration Project*, which will restore and recreate 2,500 acres of pastures and cropland to pre-settlement grassland and savanna landscape at Smithville and Rocky Hollow Lakes. Objectives include converting existing rowcrop fields and fescue pastures to native grass and forb grasslands, eradicating sericia lespedeza and Johnson's grass, preserving and enhancing degraded savannas by through management techniques, and utilizing patch burn/grazing as methods to maintain restored areas.
- \$20,000.00 to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for *Revegetation of Wetland Natural Communities at the Edward "Ted" and Pat Jones Confluence Point State Park* which will restore native wetland communities including bottomland forest, shrub swamp, wet prairie and marsh. Trees and prairie plugs will be planted by local school children as part of the Division of State Park's urban outreach program.
- \$20,000.00 to Kansas City Wildlands for *Kansas City Wildlands-Bridging the Gap Blue River Parkway* which will restore native habitat for birds and other wildlife in an urban bottomland forest along the Blue River. Restoration is a continuation of work accomplished through a large-scale elimination of invasive shrub honeysuckle from bottomland forest along the Blue River Parkway. After eradication, habitat will be improved by enhancing and



protecting biological diversity by planting native soft and hard mast-producing trees and shrubs, thereby improving the aesthetic and recreational value to the public in urban setting.

- \$20,000.00 to Missouri Prairie Foundation for *Summer Work Crew* to continue its efforts to treat native prairies throughout the state for invasive sericea lespedeza, to remove unwanted trees from MPF and privately owned prairies, to pile, burn and cut brush, and treat other invasive species such as sumac, as needed.
- \$20,000.00 to Missouri Prairie Foundation for *Private Prairie Preparation Project* to supplement on-going private land restoration efforts in the Grasslands Coalition's Taberville Focus Area, Golden-Dorris Creek Focus Area and Stony Point-Horse Creek Focus Area, and to initiate private land restoration efforts in the Mystic Focus Area in preparation for greater prairie-chicken recovery activity in 2006 and 2007. These Focus Areas were all identified as priority sites where long-term greater prairie-chicken recovery is possible.
- \$5,600.00 to National Wild Turkey Federation for *Glade Restoration Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative* to begin glade restoration of 156 acres on the Spring Creek Gap Conservation Area in Maries County through the removal of undesirable woody vegetation to provide improved early successional habitat for various birds species.
- \$20,000.00 to the Ruffed Grouse Society *River Hills Forest Habitat Project* to continue to encourage private landowners through cost share funding and educational efforts to help achieve a goal of maintaining 10 – 15 % of the project area in a regenerating oak-hickory forest condition. Currently, less than one percent of the forest is regenerating and the lack of early-successional stands are causing a population decline in many of those forest wildlife species that depend on young forest habitats.
- \$20,000.00 to The Nature Conservancy for *Tallgrass Prairie Restoration, Grand River Grasslands Prairie Remnants* to restore Tallgrass Prairie habitat on critical prairie remnants on Conservancy owned lands and adjacent private lands in the Grand River Grasslands landscape of northwest Missouri. When completed, extensive amounts of woody vegetation will be removed from draws and fence lines at Pawnee Prairie, Dunn Ranch, Perkins tract, and a privately owned tract of land in the corridor between the protected area preserves.
- \$10,000.00 to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Missouri Private Lands Office for *Wet Prairie Restoration in the Confluence Focus Area Phase II Lincoln County, Missouri* to continue to work with local landowners to enhance wetland diversity by restoring prairie cord grass on private land located in the Confluence Focus Area to benefit waterfowl, shorebirds, large wading birds and songbirds during migration.

The MoBCI Steering Committee congratulates those recipients of this year's MoBCI Grant Program and encourages all MoBCI organizations to participate in the grant process. If you have questions about how the grant process works, please contact a Steering Committee member at the upcoming MoBCI conference and attend the workshop for Grants presented by Kit Freudenberg, Missouri Heritage Foundation.--*Kelly Srigley Werner, MoBCI Grants Subcommittee Chair*

*Get your **2007 MoBCI** proposal on the website **MoBCI.org** to encourage other partners to become involved in your project! Contact mike.currier@dnr.mo.gov to post. All you need is an electronic copy (Word 97 or better).*



MoBCI-Funded Wetlands Project Focus of Partnership Celebration

The newly restored Dehn Wetland near Clinton, Missouri, served as an appropriate backdrop during a ceremony to celebrate the completion of wetland restoration projects on Harry S Truman Reservoir lands managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. During the May 24th ceremony, Conservation Director John Hoskins recognized MoBCI and all the other partners whose contributions helped to secure a \$50,000 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant. MoBCI, Audubon Society of Missouri, Ducks Unlimited, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were among the 15 partners that made the >\$300,000 wetland restoration project possible. As part of the ceremony, the partners unveiled a special sign that commemorates the partnership effort. Director Hoskins said, “There are many types of partnerships, but I am convinced that none are stronger than partners in conservation.”



Participating Partners in the Truman Lake Wetland Restoration Project:

From left to right: front row - Deputy Lt. Colonel Kelly Butler (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), Chris Woodson (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), Richard Spring (Kansas City Power & Light Co.), Jerry Wade (Audubon Society of Missouri), Wayne Lovelace (Forrest Keeling Nursery); second row - Bob Marchi (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), John Hoskins (Director, Missouri Department of Conservation), Lowell Mohler (Chairman, Missouri Conservation Commission), George Seek (Ducks Unlimited, Inc.), K. C. Newby (Agri Drain Corp.), Bob Suddarth (Forrest Keeling Nursery), James Kiely (Aquila); back four - Senator Delbert Scott, Jim Gulliford (EPA Regional Administrator), Kelly Kiefer (Sharp Brothers Seed Company), and Norm Stucky (Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation).

The May celebration was especially appropriate since May is officially designated as American Wetlands Month, a time when state, federal and private partners across the nation hold special events to recognize and celebrate the ways in which wetlands enrich the environment and the lives of people. Jim Gulliford, EPA Region 7 Administrator, flew in from Washington, D.C. to join in this special



partner recognition in celebration of American Wetlands Month and Senator Delbert Scott was on hand in a show of his support for conservation partnerships.

This successful project coupled the resources of government agencies, private conservation groups, corporations, and private businesses with the NAWCA grant to restore 770 acres of marsh, bottomland hardwoods, and wet prairie habitats at several sites in Henry and St. Clair counties. Through the construction of small levees and water control structures, this project utilized existing infrastructure (notably a pump station and pipeline purchased some years ago from the City of Clinton) and natural water flow patterns to maximize benefits and minimize costs. This project is embedded within a series of wetland restoration projects on the Osage River basin. It builds upon partners restoring 1,200 wetland acres about 30 miles upstream on the South Grand River on the 6,578-acre Settle Ford Conservation Area, 1,800 acres in 10 wetland pools at Four Rivers Conservation Area on the Osage River and additional 5,661 acres purchased and restored in 1999. These projects produced diverse wetland habitats for a variety of resident and migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and forest-dwelling birds.

Water depth and duration regimes that favor nesting and brood rearing by marsh dwelling species will be provided. Resident waterfowl during breeding season will benefit from an invertebrate food source for broods. Project sites will supplement Truman Lake shallows as habitat for migratory waterfowl, including dabbler species. Among species groups, breeding and migratory shorebirds will benefit the most, and with the least amount of management. Depending on the amount of cattails and other robust emergent marsh vegetation, there is a high possibility of attracting *marsh wrens*, *least bitterns*, and *American bitterns*. Short, wet-prairie habitat type may attract *sedge wrens* and *northern harriers*. Willows and buttonbush in wet prairies would attract *willow flycatcher* and *black-billed cuckoo*. Many other more common species would also be present.

This project also supports and adds value to desired outcomes identified in many plans and initiatives, such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture, North American Bird Conservation Initiative (on the interface between the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie and Central Hardwoods Bird Conservation Regions; bird species from **both** regions will benefit), Partners in Flight, North American Colonial Waterbird Conservation Plan, Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (species of conservation concern and their habitats identified by MoBCI), U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and The Nature Conservancy Ecoregional Conservation in the Osage Plains/Flint Hills Prairie.

The public will benefit from additional and improved opportunities for recreational viewing and hunting and increased aesthetics of the area. The Dehn Wetland Restoration Site, a 65-acre marsh two miles west of Clinton, Missouri (Henry County), is perhaps the most prominent, easily accessible wetland restoration site of the six total project sites restored as part of this project. A parking lot and the new partner sign located adjacent to an abandoned portion of old Hwy. 18, is situated atop a knob and provides a vista of the Dehn Wetland pools to the north. Nearly 1.5 million people live within a 1-hour drive of project sites. For more information on this project or how to become a wetland conservation partner, call 573-522-4115, ext. 3353 or e-mail gene.gardner@mdc.mo.gov.

-- Gene Gardner, Wildlife Programs Supervisor,
Missouri Department of Conservation



MoBCI GRANT REPORT OZARK RIVERS AUDUBON CHAPTER GRANT

The Ozarks Rivers Audubon Chapter (ORAC) was awarded a Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI) Grant in 2003 for the purpose of aiding in the restoration of grassland, savanna, and woodland communities on Tanager Trails Ozark Nature Reserve (Tanager Trails). Tanager Trails is a 57-acre parcel of land located within the city limits of Rolla, Missouri. The area was purchased by ORAC to provide green-space for citizens of the greater Rolla Area to explore and learn about terrestrial natural communities of the northern Ozarks. The three specific objectives of the MoBCI grant were to establish a permanent fire line, removal of eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), and control of exotic and invasive plants. A breakdown of grant expenditures is provided in Table 1. All of the objectives of the MoBCI Grant for Tanager Trails were met by the end of Fiscal Year 2005.

Table 1. Breakdown of expenditures from the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Grant awarded to Ozark River Audubon Chapter for use on Tanager Trails Ozark Nature Reserve.

Expenditure Item	Funds Expended
Contract cedar removal	\$3857.00
Herbicide	\$3012.00
Dozer contract for fire break construction	\$1600.00
Miscellaneous expenses	\$531.00
Total Expenditures	\$9000.00

Approximately 2-miles of permanent firebreaks were constructed using a contract dozer hired using funds from the MoBCI Grant. The firebreaks were strategically located to complement existing natural and man-made breaks (Figure 1). Some sections of the constructed firebreaks were incorporated in the system of walking trails. Completed fire breaks were planted with native wild rye (*Elymus* spp.) and sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) to prevent erosion and are to be maintained in an open state to provide for minimal preparations prior to prescribed fire activities.

Eastern red cedar was removed from approximately 12.5 acres using contracting and in-kind services (Figure 2). A contractor was hired using funding from the MoBCI Grant to clear-cut 4.5 acres of eastern red cedar from the grassland unit. An additional contractor was hired to selectively remove cedar from approximately 1 acre of savanna and was subsequently included in a prescribed burn of the glade unit. Members of ORAC girdled hardwoods in the savanna unit prior to removal of eastern red cedar. Several in-kind “cedar-blitzes” were organized by members of ORAC to selectively remove eastern red cedar from the woodland units of Tanager Trails. Periodic prescribed fire will be used to remove slash from eastern red cedar removal and prevent further encroachment (see Figures 3 & 4).

One of the biggest challenges in the restoration of natural communities on Tanager Trails is the control of exotic and invasive species, including privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), sericea lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), and oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*). Funding provided by the MoBCI Grant permitted ORAC to purchase several herbicides to assist with the control of these and other exotic plant species. Members of ORAC have initiated an integrated



Figure 1. Schematic location of fire breaks on Tanager Trails Ozark Nature Reserve, Rolla, Missouri.

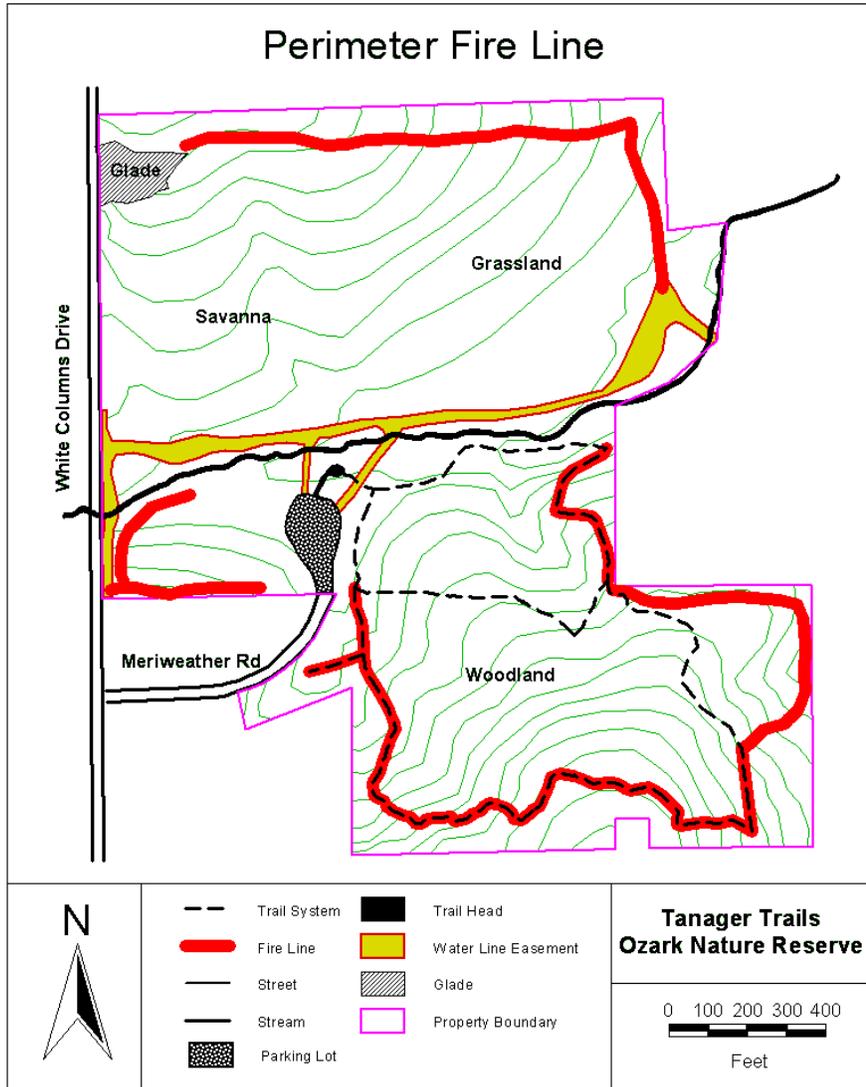
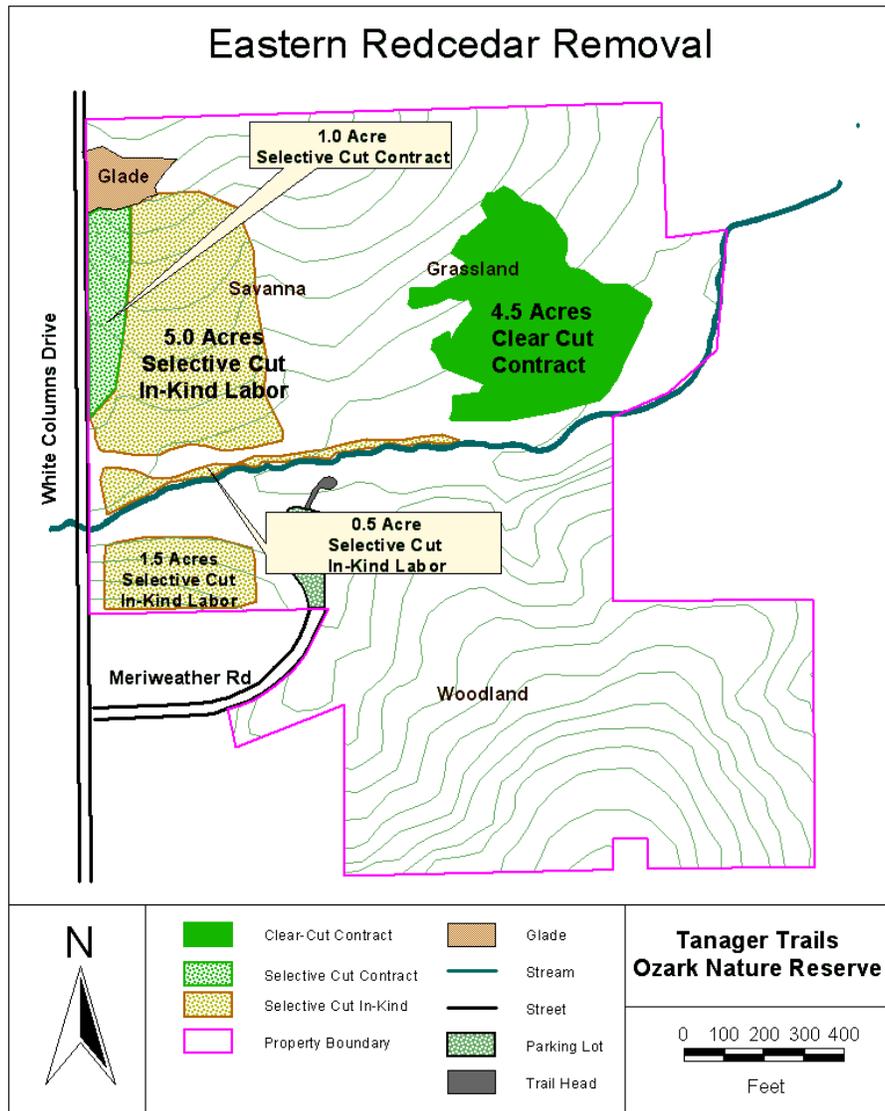


Figure 2. Location of eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) removals from Tanager Trails Ozark Nature Reserve in Rolla, Missouri.



plan to remove and control exotics plants using a combination of prescribed fire, mechanical removal, and chemical treatment. Exotic plant control will be an on-going practice on Tanager Trails.

Several partners have emerged to assist ORAC in meeting the objectives of the MoBCI Grant as well as the overall management goals of Tanager Trails. Partners include the Boy Scouts of America, University of Missouri – Rolla (UMR) Biology Department, UMR Fraternities and Service Organizations, Forest ReLeaf of Missouri, Master Gardeners of Phelps County, Meramec Hills Master Naturalist Chapter, We Help Others (WHO) Club of Skokie, IL, the City of Rolla, and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

-- Robert N. Chapman, *Wildlife Management Biologist, Missouri Department of Conservation.*



Figure 3: results of "cedar blitz" at Tanager Trails Nature Reserve near Rolla, Missouri

**Visit MoBCI.org to learn
about
bird conservation projects in
your area.**



Figure 4: Savanna unit of Tanager Trails Ozark Nature Reserve following removal of Eastern Red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) and subsequent prescribed burn.



MOBCI BIRD CONSERVATION DAY PROCLAMATION SIGNED BY GOVERNOR BLUNT



From left to right: Kelly Srigley Werner (USFWS), Wayne Morton (Missouri Prairie Foundation), Steve Heying (Missouri Falconers Association), Governor Matt Blunt, Doyle Childers (Missouri Department of Natural Resources), Ted Cooper (Ruffed Grouse Society).

On May 10, 2006, Missouri Governor Matt Blunt met with members of the MoBCI Steering Committee for the signing of the 2006 Bird Conservation Proclamation. Steering Committee member Ted Cooper of the Ruffed Grouse Society presented Governor Blunt with a signed copy of the Jim Rathert book *In Focus* and a Missouri Bird Conservation Membership Directory while extending the group's thanks for Governor Blunt's support for conservation efforts. Accompanying the group (see photo) was Steve Heying's peregrine falcon – the bird was a real hit at the Governor's office.

Attending the signing ceremony were John Burk (National Wild Turkey Federation), Glenn Chambers (Conservation Federation of Missouri), Ted Cooper (Ruffed Grouse Society), Doyle Childers and Mike Currier (Department of Natural Resources), Dave Erickson (Department of Conservation), Steve Heying (Missouri Falconers Assoc.), Alan Leary (Department of Transportation), Wayne Morton (Missouri Prairie Foundation), George Seek (Ducks Unlimited), Linda Tossing (St. Louis Audubon Society), Jerry Wade (Audubon Society of Missouri), and Kelly Srigley Werner (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).



Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI)

"Working Together To Conserve Bird Populations and Their Habitats"



The 2006 proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS, Missouri's citizens value the conservation of our natural environment as one of their most important concerns for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the 37 partner organizations of Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI) are comprised of hunters, bird watchers, conservation professionals, private businesses, academia and wildlife-watching citizens; people committed to hunting and bird-watching working together to restore and conserve habitat for birds, and

WHEREAS, the MoBCI connects people and organizations in habitat conservation efforts statewide, supplying partnership grants for projects such as: Truman Lake Wetlands, Kansas City Wildlands – Bridging the Gap, River Hills Forest Habitat, and the Native Grasslands Restoration Project, and

WHEREAS, bird watching is one of the most popular recreational activities in the United States with over 1.3 million people in participating in bird watching in Missouri near their homes; and, over 642,000 watch birds on trips throughout Missouri; and, over 90 percent say they are interested in observing birds in the outdoors.

WHEREAS, within Missouri, the total economic impact of wildlife watching and bird hunting, that is, bird watchers and bird hunters together spend \$621.4 million, generate \$1.2 billion in total business-generated activity, support 11,080 jobs, create \$29.3 million in sales tax revenue, and generate \$10.9 million in state income tax; and

WHEREAS, the second Saturday in May has been established as an international celebration of birds and bird conservation:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MATT BLUNT, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI, do hereby proclaim the second Saturday in May to be:

BIRD CONSERVATION DAY

in Missouri.



WORKING TOGETHER TO CONSERVE AND RESTORE BIRD POPULATIONS AND THEIR HABITATS



ANOTHER MISSOURI YOUTH WINS THE 2006 NATIONAL JUNIOR DUCK STAMP CONTEST



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that a redhead duck will be featured on the 2006-2007 Junior Duck Stamp. The design for the new stamp painted by 15 year-old Rebekah Nastav of Amoret, Missouri, was chosen by a panel of judges on April 20, 2006 at the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest held in Washington, DC.

This is the second national win for young Missouri artists competing in the Junior Duck Stamp contest in the last three years. Nastav, who entitled her acrylic painting "Morning Swim" is home-schooled and has been studying art with Susan Harding for several years. Nastav entered the contest for three years in a row and won the Missouri State Junior Duck Stamp Contest earlier this year.

The First Day of Sale Ceremony for the 2006-2007 Federal and Junior Duck

Stamps was held on Thursday, June 1, 2006 at the 2006 World Philatelic

Exhibition at the Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC. Nastav was available to sign stamps and covers at this event.

For more information and a complete list of images and contest results, please see the Duck Stamp Program's home page at

www.fws.gov/duckstamps

Nastav received a \$5,000.00 award and a free trip to Washington D.C. along with her art teacher and a parent. The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program is a dynamic arts curriculum designed to teach wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students in kindergarten through high school. This program incorporates scientific and wildlife management principles into a visual arts curriculum. Previously, the 2004 winner was Adam Nisbett, with his "Morning Watch" of the Fulvous Whistling Duck.

--Kelly Srigley Werner/USFWS

Kelly is Chair of the MoBCI Steering Committee and Supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Missouri Private Lands Office in Columbia.



98% of the dollars from 'Duck Stamps' goes directly towards the purchase, restoration, and protection of wetland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System.



CP33 COUNTING QUAIL Does it all add up?

The relatively new CP33 program (Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds) is going gangbusters in most states. This program will provide hundreds of thousands of acres of field borders in the 20 participating states for grassland/shrubland birds, including the Northern Bobwhite. Missouri was originally allotted 20,000 acres, but as a result of high interest by farmers, we were one of few states that were reallocated 2,600 acres from states who were not selling the program.

But will this habitat produce an increase in bird populations across these farms, across these states? How can we tell? Which birds will be impacted by these buffers? Can we actually go out and count these birds? If so, how?

These questions and many others were answered at the University Forest Conservation Area near Poplar Bluff, Missouri – a field station deep in the Ozarks – a most unlikely place for a discussion on cropland buffer practices. However, a centrally located meeting point for small game coordinators, biologists, and researchers from 11 different states. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and Mississippi State University (MSU) co-hosted this training session. Missouri had a pilot year of sampling quail in these CP33 buffer fields and many other states have looked on to see how this first fall sampling worked for the agency.

Kim Wells, MDC Resource Scientist, shared with the group her crew's findings during this first fall of sampling for quail using point-distance methodology. Point-distance sampling will provide the number of birds per acre on these fields – an improvement over presence or absence surveying. However, this sampling methodology takes quite a bit more training for field observers

– a fact that was made obvious to us by Jody Bartz and Jill Utrup (MDC CP33 Coordinators) when they presented data showing the improvement of sampling by staff after distance training had occurred (Figure 1).

Estimates of the cost of this monitoring for each agency vary – however, Wes Burger (MSU) estimates that \$100,000 per state is likely. USDA and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) – formerly the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) are helping fund this required research. However, the bulk of the commitment in money, time and labor

Figure 1: Field Training – marking bird locations.



will have to come from individual state agencies and partners. Partners like Audubon, Master Naturalists, and Partners in Flight (PIF) will be instrumental in accomplishing surveys in many states.

In addition to bobwhite quail sampling in the fall, spring quail & songbird sampling will be conducted. Information from these surveys will show us the bird response to a new buffer. Bird response will be compared in CP33 buffer fields and paired croplands not enrolled in CP33. During this meeting near Wappapello, biologists had the opportunity to test their bird identification skills in a simulated field sampling situation. Several individuals including Wes Burger (MS), Catherine Rideout (AR), and Mark McInroy (IA)



were within 2 meters of the birds' actual location when plotting locations on the maps – that's a home run when you consider that some of the birds were close to a football field away. Other biologists were great at collecting ticks while surveying – a hazard of field work in the Midwest.

Without this scientific data, we would have a hard time proving that CP33 increases grassland bird abundance. Missouri is indeed the leader in this monitoring effort. Stay tuned for results from this year's monitoring efforts. Songbird sampling began in June and the second year of fall covey counts begin in October. We'll be sure to keep you updated on the bird response to these "Bobwhite Buffers."

---Elsa Gallagher, Upland Game Coordinator,
Missouri Department of Conservation

GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN RECOVERY IN MISSOURI

Nineteenth century pioneers reported finding "numberless flocks" of prairie chickens on Missouri's northern and western prairies. One estimate put their numbers in the hundreds of thousands statewide. Today, the state's prairie chicken population is somewhere around 500. The jury is out as to whether the bird can thrive in the Show-Me State again, but the Missouri Department of Conservation and an array of partners plan to try.

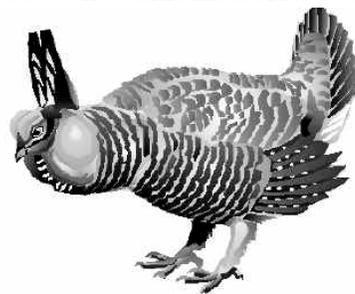
At its March meeting, the Conservation Commission received a presentation about a five-year Greater Prairie Chicken Recovery Plan. The document sets an ambitious goal of increasing the state's prairie chicken population to 3,000 and holding it there for 10 years. If that happens, the species will come off the state's endangered list. The prairie chicken's past in Missouri is nearly as uncertain as its future. No one ever kept records

of the number of the birds taken by hunters, although commercial markets in St. Louis recorded sales by the ton.

It was 1905 before the legislature imposed a daily limit on the number of prairie chickens hunters could shoot. Apparently the species was wearing thin by then. In 1907 the Legislature closed the season. It has never reopened. That same year the State Fish and Game Warden estimated the prairie chicken population in 25 counties at 12,500 birds, yet the birds' numbers continued to plummet. In 1929 Aldo Leopold, conducting a survey of game in the Midwest, found prairie chickens in 33 counties and estimated their total numbers at 8,647.

For a while the species seemed to rally. The Conservation Department started an annual prairie chicken census in 1941 and estimated the population statewide at 13,692. But by 1965 the census turned up just 7,500. Since then the Conservation Department has attempted reintroduction of wild-trapped birds from other states, but the newly established populations failed to thrive. From 1989 to 2005 populations declined from 3,000 to 500 birds. The species was designated as endangered in Missouri in 1999.

Although obstacles to successful recovery abound, the prairie chicken is not the first game bird to come close to extirpation. Wild turkeys and giant Canada geese were almost eliminated by the early 20th century. However, these species responded to the combined effects of closed



hunting seasons and reintroduction of wild-habitats and tolerating the presence of people and



the habitat changes that human activities create. In contrast, prairie chickens thrive only under very specific conditions.

Researchers also learned that simply setting aside high-quality grassland and letting nature take its course was not enough to bring back prairie chickens. Missouri's native prairies were shaped by fire and other forces, such as grazing. Without periodic burning and carefully planned grazing, grasslands rapidly become inhospitable to the big birds.

Armed with such knowledge, the Conservation Department's Wildlife, Private Land Services and Resource Science divisions have devised a plan for bringing prairie chickens back to parts of their native Missouri range. "This is a landscape-scale challenge, and it is going to require landscape-scale solutions," said Max Alleger, a Private Land Conservationist responsible for leading recovery team efforts. "No government agency has the resources to do it. In fact, all the state and federal agencies and private conservation partners put together couldn't do it. It is going to take conservation agencies, partners and private landowners working together if we are going to save this bird in Missouri."

Private conservation groups will play a role in the effort. The Missouri Grasslands Coalition—a group of agencies and organizations focused on grassland conservation—has adopted the prairie chicken as a symbol of grasslands and supports the recovery effort. Coalition members, including the departments of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Missouri Prairie Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Audubon chapters and Quail Unlimited, among others, all are natural partners in the effort. However, Alleger said prairie chicken conservation efforts can not succeed without the help of private landowners who are willing—and financially able—to make their land more prairie chicken-friendly.

Just setting aside prairie land will not benefit prairie chickens and other grassland species. To maintain quality habitat, partners will use a combination of prescribed burning, managed grazing, haying and high clipping of grassland vegetation. To create the necessary landscape-scale habitat changes, the recovery plan draws on the Bird Conservation Area concept used by Partners In Flight. This approach starts with a 2,000-acre minimum core area of high-quality grassland. Participating partners then work with landowners to establish or maintain additional, high-quality grassland tracts in the surrounding 8,000 acres. The result is a 10,000-acre "model landscape" where prairie chickens can thrive.

Grasslands Coalition partners have identified six potential focus areas that include parts of Harrison, Adair and Sullivan counties in northern Missouri, Pettis and Benton counties in west-central Missouri and the southwestern counties of Barton, Bates, Cedar, Dade, Jasper, Lawrence, St. Clair and Vernon. The prairie chicken recovery plan calls for implementing this model in four focus areas by 2010.

The initial recovery emphasis will be around Wah-Kon-Tah Prairie Conservation Area (CA) east of El Dorado Springs, Taberville Prairie CA to the north, Hi Lonesome Prairie CA north of Cole Camp and large tracts of open land in southern Pettis County. If success is achieved there, efforts will expand to other focus areas. The plan calls for releasing and monitoring wild-trapped prairie chickens from other states, but not until land protection and management have created favorable conditions for their survival.

"Prairie-chicken recovery will be a long-term venture," said Alleger, "and like other endangered-species management programs, there is no guarantee of success. However, because prairie-chickens need a diversity of healthy grasslands across large landscapes, managing with them in mind serves the interests of myriad native



grassland plant and wildlife species. Investments in this effort will pay dividends toward helping to restore grassland ecosystems that once covered a third of Missouri.”

--Max Alleger, Private Land Conservationist, Missouri Department of Conservation

\$10,000.00 SETTLEMENT GIVEN TO MoBCI FOUNDATION FOR DESTRUCTION OF AN ACTIVE BALD EAGLE NEST

An active Bald Eagle nest in northeast Missouri was destroyed while clearing the right-of-way of an electrical line. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Law Enforcement personnel and the Missouri Department of Conservation investigated the destruction. The investigation documented the electrical company had knowledge of the eagle nest. The nest was inactive at the time the tree was cut down.

The Service and the U.S. Attorney's Office in St. Louis, MO. reached a settlement agreement with the electric company, resulting in the company donating \$10,000.00 to the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Foundation (MoBCI) and being placed on probation.

Service law enforcement personnel contacted the Missouri Ecological Services Office, who is responsible for endangered species in Missouri, and asked for input on how the settlement funds could be used. Ideas included an educational kiosk for Mark Twain Lake, an artificial nest structure, or a donation to the MoBCI Foundation.

Field Supervisor, Charlie Scott approached the MoBCI Steering Committee to seek their opinion and determine if there was a mechanism to accept funds in the interest of Missouri birds. The MoBCI Steering Committee discussed all ideas determining that a kiosk would provide little return for the damage done and that artificial nest structures weren't very successful. So they coordinated with the MoBCI Foundation to secure the funds.

On April 25, 2006, the MoBCI Foundation placed the funds in a 91-day Certificate of Deposit. Members of MoBCI should be prepared to discuss decision making on the use of the settlement at the General Assembly meeting at the upcoming 2006 MoBCI Conference. The Steering Committee would like to hear from you and are currently



investigating and discussing 1) endowment options from which earnings produced could be used for conservation projects; 2) application of funds directly via the MoBCI grant process; and 3) use of funds as an incentive for new partners.

Currently the Bald Eagle is protected by the Endangered Species Act as a threatened species. However, the Service is considering taking the bird off the Endangered Species List. To do so does not remove protection for the Bald Eagle because as our national symbol there are other protective Acts, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act which both protect Bald Eagle's by prohibiting killing, selling, or otherwise harming eagles, their nests, or their eggs.

--Kelly Srigley Werner, USFWS



www.mobci.org



Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Grant Program 2007 Call for Proposals

Do you have a bird habitat restoration project in mind but lack the dollars and resources to make it a reality?

Help is only a Grant Proposal Away!

The Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative is now accepting Grant Proposals.

Individual grant awards are available up to a maximum of \$20,000 annually

Grant applications must be received **no later than 5:00 p.m. Friday September 15, 2006**, at the following address: *MoBCI Grant Subcommittee, in care of Audubon Missouri, 2620 Forum Blvd., Suite C-1, Columbia, MO 65203.*

For information on how to apply go the MoBCI web site at www.mobci.org

Looking for Partners?

Plan to attend the Fourth Annual MoBCI Conference to be held August 18-19 at the Holiday Inn Select in Columbia Missouri. It's a great way to network your project, find new partners or play an important role in advancing "All-Bird conservation."





Wet Prairie Restoration at Edward "Ted" and Pat Jones Confluence State Park (St. Charles County), Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The project was funded as a 2006 MoBCI Grant Proposal.

Contributors to MoBCI Newsletter include:

John Burk, National Wild Turkey Federation
Dave Erickson, MDC
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Gene Gardner, MDC
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Please add to this list by submitting articles on your bird habitat restoration projects to the editor!!

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