



MOBCI HABITAT NEWS

A Publication of the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative
SUMMER, 2009



Letter from the MoBCI Chair

Wow, what a year for the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative also known as MoBCI!

In March, Kelly Srigley-Werner (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and I had the honor to travel to Washington, DC to accept the **2009 Bird Conservation Award** from the U.S. **North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) Committee and Association of Joint Venture Management Boards.**

As quoted from the announcement: “The **Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative** is honored with the **2009 Bird Conservation Award** for their excellence in partnership development and on-the-ground accomplishments.”

Established in 2003, the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI) is a grassroots partnership of 48 (now 55) organizations dedicated to delivering bird conservation at the state and local levels. MoBCI gathers and bonds all members and their respective organizations into a common workforce for bird conservation.

Read more about the **2009 Bird Conservation Award** on our web site: www.mobci.org.

This honor is not only for the current MoBCI Steering Committee but all the past committee members who played a part in establishing MoBCI. To spread the honor, I am asking all past MoBCI Steering Committee members attend the 2009 MoBCI Annual Conference so that all who have served on the MoBCI Steering Committee may stand and be recognized for their role in our success.

The 2008-2009 MoBCI Steering Committee is made up of representatives from the MoBCI partners. The group meets regularly to bring issues and concerns to the table. Our partners have a variety of perspectives including conservation, birding, hunting and habitat restoration - all with the concern to protect all birds and their habitat. One of our most important tasks is to administer the on-the-ground restoration Grant Program, plus the MoBCI Annual Conference.

Since the 2008 MoBCI Annual Conference, the following organizations have become new MoBCI partners: Avian Conservation Alliance of the Americas, Boonslick Chapter of the Master

Naturalist, City of Des Peres Parks and Recreation Department, Conservation Federation of Missouri, Coldwater Outing and Game Preserve, Massasauga Flats, LLC, Missouri Army National Guard and Missouri Watershed Institute, Inc. With these organizations, we are 55 partners strong!

As MoBCI continues to bring partners to the table, it increases its ability to become more effective in sharing information and supporting each other's initiatives.

The MoBCI website www.mobci.org is an example of providing information not only to our partner organizations but also to other interested parties. Mike Currier (with the help of our developer) continues to support the website. The website has many features including links to our partner organization's websites and other areas of interest. Please check it out!

The Missouri Department of Conservation and the USFWS Partners Fish and Wildlife Program provide the funding for the MoBCI Grant Program. The MoBCI Grant Committee accepted 9 proposals resulting in \$100,500 in grants. These proposals were on-the-ground habitat restoration throughout the state of Missouri. Projects, such as restoring prairie habitat and grasslands, restoring wetlands and removing the invasive honeysuckle, were initiated with the help of the funds provided by these grants. Matching funds are required for a MoBCI grant, which means that an additional \$244,650 (including \$13,000 from USFWS Partners) was added to the MoBCI Grants funds to make a total of \$345,150 for habitat restoration in Missouri!

In May 2009, representatives from the MoBCI Steering Committee plus Don Johnson, Conservation Commissioner and Director John Hoskins, Missouri Department of Conservation met with Gov. Jay Nixon to proclaim May 9 as Bird Conservation Day. Every year, for the proclamation, we focus on a different Missouri native bird species – this year our focus bird was the wild turkey. John Burk presented Gov. Nixon a Charley Schwartz print of turkeys roosted over the Missouri river with the Capitol in the background (the print was provided by the Conservation Federation of Missouri). Gov. Nixon was delighted with the gift and also reconfirmed his commitment to conservation.

The MoBCI Steering Committee looks forward to the 2009 MoBCI Annual Conference on August 21-22 at the Days Inn Conference Center in Columbia, Missouri. Our conference committee lead by John Burk has put together a very informative program focusing on **“How can we make a Difference? A big picture view of effective Bird Population Management”**.

Please enjoy this year's conference and become involved!

Respectively,



*Linda Tossing, St. Louis Chapter of the Audubon Society
MoBCI Steering Committee Chair*



The 2009 Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Grant Program Continuing Support for Bird Conservation Projects in Missouri

The 55 member organizations of MoBCI continue to demonstrate their commitment to support bird conservation efforts throughout Missouri by funding more conservation projects. During the six years that MoBCI has been conducting a grants program (2004-2009), more than 70 bird conservation projects have been funded. During just this short period, MoBCI has directed more than \$2.1 million to on-the-ground bird conservation projects; MoBCI has awarded \$734,500 in grants, which brought more than \$1.4 million in additional matching funds to these projects from MoBCI conservation partners. Each year, additional funding and administrative services for MoBCI projects are provided through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Missouri Department of Conservation and Missouri Prairie Foundation.

This grant cycle was a highly competitive one, with 17 partner organizations submitting grant proposals. Successful grantees for 2009 submitted some excellent habitat projects in Missouri that will benefit birds and other wildlife in grassland/prairie, savanna, and woodland habitats. Hoping to fund the widest variety of projects possible, the Grants Subcommittee offered many of the grantees less funding support than they requested; as a tribute to their dedication to bird conservation, all grantees accepted their reduced funding and merely adjusted their project scope to reflect expenditures. A summary of the projects for which MoBCI member organizations were awarded grants during the 2009 granting period is provided below.

Little Black Woodland Bird Habitat Project

MoBCI Grant \$6,200; Matching Funds \$6,200

Partnering Organization(s): Pheasants Forever/Missouri Chapter Quail Forever (lead), Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, and Audubon Society of Missouri

This project is located within the Little Black Pinery COA in north central Ripley County and is within Audubon's Current River Watershed Important Bird Area (IBA) and The Nature Conservancy's Cookson Hills Focus Area. Shortleaf pine and pine-oak woodland habitats in these focus areas are rare or non-existent, causing the decline of several bird species of regional concern. This grant will fund approximately 110 acres of Wildlife Stand Improvement (WSI), building upon a 700-acre woodland restoration project that has been underway since 2006 through funding from the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) and Missouri Department of Conservation. The oak and pine woodland restoration will be accomplished through a combination of WSI, control burning and commercial thinning. Pioneer Forest (L-A-D Foundation) has already allowed some control burns of it adjacent lands and some WSI will be included on their lands during this grant. After viewing the successful improvements to these woodland habitats, adjacent private landowners have applied for federal cost-share funds for a managed timber harvest and control burns to do pine woodland management. The grant will also fund bird monitoring in both treated and untreated acreages.



Regional Prairie Stewardship Crew

MoBCI Grant \$11,000; Matching Funds \$16,000

Partnering Organization(s): Missouri Prairie Foundation (lead), The Nature Conservancy, Kansas City Parks Department, Missouri Department of Natural Resources-Division of State Parks, Wildlife Forever, Missouri Department of Conservation, and private landowners adjacent to public tracts.

The project will entail work on at least 14 properties in several counties in Southwest Missouri; the majority of these properties occur within the Grasslands Coalition Focus Areas and several COAs. The three-person “stewardship crew” will systematically search more than 5,000 acres of grassland habitat for sericea lespedeza, sumac, and encroaching woody vegetation, all which threatens floral diversity and habitat quality. The team, working in conjunction with land managers from MDC, TNC, DNR and others, will apply chemical treatments and prescribed fire as control measures. Other work, such as clearing brush, treating sumac and buckbrush, and creating fire lines may also occur as allowed by time and field conditions.

River Hills Forest Habitat Project

MoBCI Grant \$12,000; Matching Funds \$20,000

Partnering Organization(s): The Ruffed Grouse Society (lead), Audubon Society of Missouri, National Wild Turkey Federation, Missouri Department of Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and private landowners

The River Hills Forest Habitat project area in Central Missouri includes portions of Callaway, Montgomery and Warren counties within the Missouri River Hills COA. The core of this project area is Daniel Boone, Danville, Little Lost Creek, Reform, and Whetstone Creek Conservation Areas, and Reifsnider State Forest. Of these, Daniel Boone and Little Lost Creek CA’s have been identified as Important Bird Area by Audubon Missouri. This grant will build upon already successful efforts to encourage private landowners in this area, through cost share funding for on-the-ground management activities, to significantly increase the regenerating oak-hickory forest condition. Dense young forest and edge habitat would be expected to benefit local birds such as ruffed grouse and Northern bobwhite as well as American woodcock, Bell’s vireo, blue-winged warbler and prairie warbler, which are included on the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s Partners in Flight Watch List. Initial work involving this partnership effort began in 2003, and as of 2008, 68 different cooperating landowners have completed woodland improvement projects on almost 2,400 acres and additional landowners are waiting for funds for more habitat work. Monitoring of bird populations will be ongoing to assess project impacts.

Grassland Bird Recovery in Cole Camp

MoBCI Grant \$5,000; Matching Funds \$20,000

Partnering Organization(s): Audubon Missouri (lead), National Wild Turkey Federation, City of Cole Camp, Hi Lonesome Master Naturalists Chapter, and Missouri Department of Conservation,

The Cole Camp IBA is recognized by the National Audubon Society as a critical grassland and encompasses approximately 31,000 acres, embedded within the larger 165,000-acre Cole Camp/Hi Lonesome COA. With funding already secured, through Toyota’s TogetherGreen grant, the



ultimate goal of this partnership effort (to be continued through 2012) is to design and implement conservation practices that are both prairie wildlife friendly and profitable to landowners and communities. Quality habitat is needed by an entire suite of declining grassland birds and other prairie wildlife and will be achieved by removing woody plants and converting fescue and row crops to wildlife friendly grasses. By reaching out to landowners through ongoing dialogue, workshops, training, and demonstration, this project will encourage landowners to make more informed land management decisions for grassland species. Response to community interests by maintaining an active partnership with the City of Cole Camp is also a high priority; the Cole Camp Community Conservation Strategic Plan is the first of its type in Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative. As an added bonus, Missouri Master Naturalist volunteers (recruited specifically for this project under Audubon leadership) will continue to monitor grassland bird populations to help estimate the impacts of landscape scale grassland restoration efforts over several years.

Central Missouri Quail and Grassland Bird Focus Areas Partnership

MoBCI Grant \$10,000; Matching Funds \$80,000

Partnering Organization(s): Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation (lead), Moreau Valley Quail Forever Chapter, Corner Covey Quail Forever Chapter, Ozark Border Bobwhites Quail Unlimited Chapter, Gary Pointer Quail Unlimited Chapter, and Missouri Department of Conservation

This partnership project spans several central Missouri COAs and Quail Focus Areas (QFA); namely the Tipton Upland Plain QFA (near Manito Lake and Lamine River Conservation Areas), the Bull's-eye QFA (between the Davisdale Quail Emphasis Area and Moniteau Creek Conservation Area), the Sweet Springs QFA (centered on the town of Sweet Springs and Blind Pony Conservation Area), and the Covey Junction QFA (located at the junction of Osage, Gasconade and Maries counties and borders Canaan and Cooper Hill Conservation Areas). Identified for its opportunity to enhance habitat on a landscape scale, this project will improve grassland conditions and management on a minimum of 200 acres in each QFA (800 acres total) by July 2011. Other objectives include providing technical assistance to 10-20 landowners in each QFA (40-80 total) and encourage them (through cost share for on-the-ground projects and outreach efforts) to manage grazing and haying lands to benefit grassland birds. At least one landowner workshop will be held in each QFA by July 2011, to demonstrate successful grassland management.

Clay County Grassland & Savanna Restoration Project

MoBCI Grant \$10,000; Matching Funds \$20,000

Partnering Organization(s): Clay County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites (lead), National Wild Turkey Federation, Missouri Prairie Foundation, Smithville Lake Project Office/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Missouri Department of Conservation

An overarching project, located at Smithville Lake (a 5,400-acre tract located two miles northeast of Smithville, Missouri) and Rocky Hollow Lake (a 137-acre tract located two miles northwest of Excelsior Springs, Missouri), both in Clay County Missouri, will restore 2,300 acres of pasture and cropland to a grassland and savanna landscape. Since 2003, Clay County Parks Department has accomplished approximately 1,400 acres of prescribed burns, chemically treated 476 acres (140



acres of sericea lespedeza), removed 150 undesirable trees, and planted 143 acres of warm season grass and forbs. The major objective from this current MoBCI grant will be to plant 50 acres of warm season grasses and forbs and to conduct prescribe burns and tree removal on nearly 800 acres of degraded savannas and tall fescue fields. Spanning 10 years, objectives of the larger project include the converting of existing rowcrop fields and fescue pastures to native grasses and forbs, eradicating sericea lespedeza and Johnson grass, preserving and enhancing degraded savannas by using savanna management techniques, and utilizing patch burning and grazing to maintain restored grasslands and savannas.

Dunn Ranch Native Prairie Restoration of the Westlake and Eckard Tracts for the Greater Prairie Chicken and other Declining Grassland Bird Species

MoBCI Grant \$19,100; Matching Funds \$42,250

Partnering Organization(s): The Nature Conservancy (lead) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Private Lands Office

This project site is located within the 70,000-acre Grand River Grasslands COA of northwest Missouri and southwest Iowa. This partnership project involves the restoration of 400 acres of upland tall-grass prairie, building upon existing native tall-grass prairie habitat on adjacent portions of Dunn Ranch and nearby Pawnee Prairie Conservation Area. Objectives of the project include reducing woody vegetation encroachment and opening vistas for grassland dependent bird species, including the Greater Prairie-Chicken. Non-native tall fescue will also be eradicated and native warm season greases will be established along with prairie forbs, resulting in structure and habitat diversity for a variety of declining grassland dependent bird species. As recent as 2001, Greater Prairie-Chickens were observed using both the Westlake and Eckard Tracts. Monitoring will include bird surveys, covey counts, and vegetation response assessment throughout the life of this project.

Prairie State Park Stewardship Crew

MoBCI Grant \$20,000; Matching Funds \$20,000

Partnering Organization(s): Missouri Prairie Foundation (lead), Prairie State Park/Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and Missouri Department of Conservation

This Work will be conducted within the 3,500-acre Prairie State Park, approximately 90 percent of which has been designated a state Natural Area. Prairie State Park is within the Western Cherokee Grasslands COA. Using the park's stewardship plan as their guide, seasonal labor (or contractors) will control sericea lespedeza across Prairie State Park. Encroaching trees and brush will also be controlled and fire breaks may be established as time allows. This management is expected to increase floral diversity, structural heterogeneity and the overall quality of grassland wildlife habitat for many bird species of conservation concern. This project builds upon a 2008 MoBCI grant project, entitled Tzi-Sho Natural Area Grazing Disturbance Restoration. Prairie State Park has a long-term vegetation monitoring project and park staff, partners and volunteers conduct annual prairie chicken counts, breeding bird surveys, Christmas bird counts, migratory bird counts, butterfly surveys and frog and toad surveys.



Savanna and Open Woodland Habitat Restoration on Whetstone Creek Conservation Area
MoBCI Grant \$7,200; Matching Funds \$7,200
Partnering Organization(s): National Wild Turkey Federation and Missouri Department of Conservation

This project will occur in Units 2,3, and 4 of the 5,147-acre Whetstone Creek Conservation Area, Callaway County, Missouri; Whetstone Creek CA is a Quail Emphasis Area. The purpose of this project is to improve woodland bird habitat management by restoring open woodland conditions. This project will be achieved by contracting timber stand improvement (TSI) services that will thin 70 acres of overstocked, closed canopied oak/hickory woodlands. In addition, all of the open lands on the area are managed intensively (e.g., prescribed fire) for quail and other grassland birds by encouraging the development and maintenance of grass/shrub habitats on over 2,000 acres. To date, however, little emphasis has been placed on the management of the 1,936 acres of the forest/woodland component in the units covered by this project. This project will contribute to the objectives of the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, which hopes to facilitate seamless integration of bobwhite habitat restoration efforts with those for migratory songbirds and other wildlife. Annual covey counts at 20 stations (monitoring) will be conducted in October as often as favorable conditions allow, but no less than 2 counts per station

Gene Gardner
MoBCI Steering Committee Secretary (2008-2010)

Working Together for Forest Wildlife
An Update on the River Hills Forest Habitat Partnership Project
 By Gary Zimmer, Senior Regional Biologist, Ruffed Grouse Society

Oak-hickory forest types have dominated Missouri forests for the last 6,000 years but have been changing at an accelerated rate since the time of European settlement. In the absence of periodic disturbance, oak dominated stands across the state are converting at a fast rate to forests comprised primarily of shade-tolerant species. Management activities to maintain this important young forest habitat component and the long-term maintenance of the oak-hickory forest type in Missouri are mostly limited to public land holdings. Non-industrial private landowners currently control 85% of the forestlands in Missouri and play a major role in the populations of wildlife in the state.

Oaks have a fundamental role in central hardwood wildlife communities. Acorns are the base of a complex ecological web that affects the regeneration and abundance of oaks, the abundance of mast-consuming wildlife, the predators and parasites of mast-consuming species, and the abundance of defoliators and decomposers of oaks. Oak-hickory forests are disturbance dependent. Fire, either natural or man-caused, has been the main force behind the maintenance of these forest types for centuries. Only in recent times has fire ceased to be a management tool.



Resident and migratory birds use a wide range of forested and semi-forested habitats in the central hardwood landscapes. Several birds identified as Species of Conservation Concern in Missouri, including chestnut-sided warbler, hooded warbler, loggerhead shrike and ruffed grouse, breed in young forest or shrub habitats. Dense young forest and edge habitat would also be expected to benefit the Northern bobwhite as well as migratory songbirds, including American woodcock, Bell's vireo, Bewick's wren, brown thrasher, blue-winged warbler, Eastern towhee, field sparrow, great-crested flycatcher, prairie warbler, white-eyed vireo and yellow-breasted chat. Of these, American woodcock, Bell's vireo, blue-winged warbler and prairie warbler are included on the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners in Flight Watch List as species not listed under the Endangered Species Act but that warrant conservation attention. Bell's vireo, Bewick's wren, blue-winged warbler and prairie warbler have been identified as priority birds for the Central Hardwoods Bird Conservation Region (BCR 24). All of these species, except blue-winged warbler, have shown significantly declining population trends in Breeding Bird Survey reports. Mammals including the endangered Indiana bat, flying squirrels and bobcat are expected to respond favorably to activities that promote oak-hickory forest types.

To address these needs, a partnership was formed in 2000 to regenerate oak/hickory forest habitat in three counties in Central Missouri (Callaway, Montgomery and Warren Counties). Included within this area are six state-managed ownership's that form the core of the project area (Daniel Boone, Danville, Little Lost Creek, and Reform Conservation Areas, Reifsnider State Forest and Whetstone Creek Wildlife Management Area). To compliment management activities on these state properties, private landowners are encouraged through a cost-share assistance program to conduct approved management practices to promote young oak/hickory forest habitat. Landowners of high priority project sites, especially those on property immediately adjoining state conservation areas, can be reimbursed up to 90% of actual project costs. A number of partners developed a comprehensive plan for the management of the River Hills Area and have sought out and received project funding. Practices that can be implemented to provide young forest habitat include woodland improvement, woody edge enhancement and opening creation. Woodland improvement is the elimination of shade tolerant competitors and providing conditions more conducive to regenerating an oak/hickory forest. Woody edge enhancement consists of the cutting of mature trees adjacent to open land to promote a corridor of brushy habitat. The final practice creates small openings in mature oak/hickory forests to help stimulate natural regeneration of oak/hickory forest types.

The goal of the project is to maintain 10 – 15% of the project area in a regenerating oak-hickory forest condition. At the start of the project around one percent of the forest in the project area was in that condition. This project will increase young forest habitat and provide conditions more conducive to regenerating oak/hickory forests.

On the ground project work within the River Hills Project Area began in the spring of 2003. As of July 2009, 71 cooperating landowners have completed 86 projects on 2,748 acres and received reimbursements totaling \$154,531.17. This has included 2,608.8 acres of woodland improvement activities, 87.95 acres of woody edge enhancement and 51.45 acres of group openings. Since the projects inception, it has been the recipient of five Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI) grants totaling \$78,767. To date an additional \$128,299 in contributions has been received from



eight other partners. These partners include the Ruffed Grouse Society, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Missouri Department of Conservation – Private Lands Services and Forestry Divisions, National Wild Turkey Federation, Quail Unlimited, Enterprise Leasing and an anonymous donor. Missouri Audubon has also contributed in kind services towards the project.

To target potential landowners, the Ruffed Grouse Society and Missouri Department of Conservation facilitate an annual private landowner workshop each spring within the project area. Often bringing in 50 to 80 area landowners, these workshops have been important in demonstrating forest and wildlife management techniques new to many attendees. Many attendees have gone on to become cooperators in the project.

Additional cooperators are already signed up for funding assistance for the remaining funds on hand, with projects on-going at this time. To compliment these activities, nearly 1000 acres of timber harvests or woodland improvement work has also been completed on state management areas within the project area.

While still in its infancy, the project has seen dramatic improvements in young forest habitat. As expected, songbird populations were the first to respond to the new and improved habitat in the project area with the first increase in ruffed grouse numbers noticed this spring.

Summary of Research And General Report on the Conditions for Avian Wildlife at Little Lost Creek and Daniel Boone Conservation Areas in Warren County

Summary of Findings:

Little Lost Creek and Daniel Boone Conservation Areas, in the Missouri River Hills in Warren County, provide excellent matrices of habitat for forest and woodland breeding birds. Species composition is quite varied, and habitat needs of both open and closed canopy species seem to be met quite effectively. Generally speaking, the experimental intensive management of the area seems to be increasing the both the diversity and quantity of birds found on the area.



Summary of Habitat Types:

Control:

Generally speaking, the control sections harbored a moderately diverse suite of birds, though in lower actual numbers than disturbed landscapes in most cases. Species like Worm-eating Warblers and Red-eyed Vireos were seemingly more abundant here compared to any other management type, and most truly open-canopy species like Yellow-breasted Chats were absent. Presuming that many currently managed areas would look like the control sections were they not actively being managed, there is no doubt that overall avian diversity would suffer on the areas if current management practices were not being undertaken on other portions of Daniel Boone and Little Lost Creek CA's.

Clearcut, 1-6 years old:

Despite the jarring visual nature of the 1-6 year old clearcut when compared with the traditional vista of a forest or woodland, these points generally had the highest number of detectable birds of any management type (though it must be noted that the open canopy made visual detection easier and, correspondingly, points on these management type had the most visually detected birds). Species such as Yellow-breasted Chats and White-eyed Vireos were abundant, and opening-loving birds like Indigo Buntings and Great-crested Flycatchers were also present in greater numbers here than anywhere else.

Additionally (and somewhat unexpectedly), edges of clearcuts *seemed* to serve as valuable habitat for species not typically associated with this landscape. Pileated Woodpeckers were more vocal and abundant on the peripheries of the clearings than anywhere else on the area. This also seemed to be true of Red-shouldered Hawks and a few other unexpected species. 1-6 year old clearcuts were, without a doubt, a great source of species diversity on Daniel Boone Conservation Area. Despite the negative connotation the word "clearcut" has, it appears that when done on a small scale it can be quite valuable for songbirds. However, these also seemed to be valuable "points of entry" for the parasitic Brown-headed Cowbird, as they were found in good numbers on this habitat type as well.

Clearcut, 6-15 years old:

Generally speaking, clearcuts of 6-15 years of age harbored the lowest actual number of birds as well as the lowest diversity of species. While species like Black-and-white Warblers and Northern Cardinals were found in decent numbers, most points had a very low number of birds present (and anecdotally, one point was literally birdless, lacking any avian presence whatsoever during the survey period). There can be little doubt that this habitat type, among those surveyed at the area, is the least desirable for songbirds.

Shelterwoods:

The shelterwoods points surveyed offered the greatest diversity of species (and most likely the greatest number of overall birds) of any type of closed-canopy management type surveyed. Birds such as Summer Tanagers, which prefer a more open canopy, seemed to exist in relatively large numbers alongside birds more traditionally associated with dense woods, such as Worm-eating Warblers, albeit the latter were found in lower numbers. Additionally, the presence of birds such as



Yellow-breasted Chats, Blue-winged Warblers and Scarlet Tanagers suggests a great variety of birds can use these points.

Lastly, the presence of four Hooded Warblers (a state species of concern on the S3 level) outside the stronghold of their range in Missouri on shelterwood management areas suggests this management style should not be overlooked should a species recovery plan ever become necessary. More details on the Hooded Warblers found on the area can be found later in the “Species of Conservation Concern” subsection. In conclusion, the shelterwoods areas seemed to meet the needs of the widest variety of birds of any type of management, and the practices undertaken here certainly merit consideration on virtually every other area in the Missouri River Hills where forests are actively being managed.

Woodland Restoration:

Woodland Restoration areas, as was to be expected, seemed to harbor species that preferred a more open canopy, such as Indigo Buntings and Summer Tanagers. Overall, there was a healthy species composition that seemed to indicate a move towards successful establishment of a woodland ecosystem. However, the understory in many cases was marked by more shrublike growth, and did not seem to have many of the grasses and forbs characteristic of this ecosystem (and necessary for many of the understory-dwelling birds found in woodlands). It was quite obvious, however, that aggressive management was taking place (evidence of controlled burns, thinning of the canopy, etc.) were being undertaken and, if done consistently, will certainly move towards creating a more ideal woodland habitat. At present, the work on these areas appears to have paid dividends, and will undoubtedly continue to do so if management is continued.

Thinning:

Thinned areas tended to show a similar species composition in comparison to both shelterwoods and woodland restoration areas, but overall seemed to have fewer birds than shelterwoods points (however, this distinction will be fine enough it probably will need to be analyzed with the data on the Excel spreadsheet). Species like Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Mourning Doves, and Summer Tanagers, as well as others that prefer a thinned canopy, seemed to be using these areas in solid numbers. The question of whether thinning is as effective as shelterwood cuts or woodland restoration, however, is a question that deserves more exploration. Unfortunately, my data is a little skewed, as weather was not so favorable during the surveying of some of these points. It did seem, however, that greater numbers of species as well as greater numbers of birds were using the thinned areas than the control areas, suggesting thinning has a positive effect when compared to no treatment at all.

Presence of Species of Conservation Concern:

The only avian species of Conservation Concern encountered during the surveys was the Hooded Warbler, with 6 singing males heard (2 were encountered on shelterwood points). The Hooded Warbler is classified as a S3 species of concern, and is not traditionally found in high numbers outside of southern Missouri. The presence of 6 detected individuals suggests that properly managed habitat in the Missouri River Hills COA may be an important part of the species ability to maintain its population within the state. It appeared that shelterwood areas had the greatest numbers of these birds, as four were found on that management type (the others were found in a



matrix of a partially intact canopy with some brushy young undergrowth, simulating the environment of a shelterwood harvest pretty closely). It certainly appears that the disturbance of the forest was healthy for this species and benefits their numbers, as no Hooded Warblers were found in control areas. As management of the area continues, it is probably worth monitoring the number of Hooded Warblers present to see if there is a stable breeding population or if this year is simply an aberration. If the population is stable, it may represent an ornithological presence of pretty significant value for the species within Missouri's borders.

The only other species of conservation concern likely to be detected were Cerulean Warblers and Ruffed Grouse, and neither was found during this round of surveys. Given the relatively low number of grouse in the area and the suboptimal timing of the surveys to detect grouse, this is not surprising. Additionally, the most likely habitat for Cerulean Warblers (mature forest along creek and river bottoms, especially with sycamores) was not encountered much during surveys. The most likely area to detect this species (along Little Lost Creek proper) was not included within the points, and given that they are a rare species north of the true Ozarks in Missouri, their absence from the data is not surprising nor particularly concerning.

Hyperlinks to Daily Checklists:

Daily estimates of total birds encountered (not just on points, but on the entire areas, including hiking to and from points) were entered into CACHE, or the Conservation Area Checklist Project, a partnership between the Audubon Society of Missouri and The Missouri Department of Conservation. These should provide helpful supplemental data, as many interesting birds (such as American Woodcocks, Barred Owls, as others) were encountered on the area but not during point counts.

Conclusions:

There can be little doubt that the current management practices being undertaken at Little Lost Creek and Daniel Boone Conservation Areas are increasing avian diversity at both areas. When compared to control areas, the managed forests have both higher diversity of species and higher numbers of birds overall. The lone exception is the 6-15 year-old clearcut, but the 1-5 year old clearcuts have more birds present than any other type.

On the question of whether the management being undertaken at these areas is increasing the potential of the area to harbor songbirds, the answer is a resounding yes. Additionally, game birds such as American Woodcocks and Wild Turkeys seem to be responding favorably as well, as do birds of prey such as Red-Shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks. It is certainly my observation that such management is having a net positive effect, and if asked, I would certainly recommend its continuation, particularly with shelterwoods and woodland restoration. The expansion of such management to other areas would almost certainly also be beneficial, provided the resources and willpower exist.

Philip Wire, Surveyor



Conservation Leaders Develop an Outdoor Vision for the 21st Century.

In a historical echo, Missouri conservation leaders met in Columbia May 28 and 29 and hammered out a vision for the state's outdoor future. Outdoor education, water conservation and connecting families with the outdoors topped the list of priorities that leaders agreed should guide conservation for the next three-quarters of a century.



The meeting mirrored one that took place in Columbia 74 years ago. On Sept. 10, 1935, sportsmen and conservationists from across Missouri met in the ballroom of the Tiger Hotel to discuss the sad condition of the state's forests, fish and wildlife. Before leaving, they formed the Restoration and Conservation Federation of Missouri. That organization, known today as the Conservation Federation of Missouri, spurred the development of a conservation program that remains at template for other states.

Approximately 150 people attended the Summit on the Future of Missouri Outdoors at the Columbia Hilton Garden Inn. Attendees included the directors of the Missouri departments of Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources, the supervisor of the Mark Twain National Forest, the field supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and representatives of dozens of nongovernmental organizations. Three state legislators, Sen. Frank Barnitz (D-Lake Spring) and Reps. J.C. Kuessner (D-Eminence) and Charles Schlottach (R-Owensville), attended the meeting.

The summit's stated purpose was to chart a course for the next 75 years of Missouri's air, water, forests, fish and wildlife and the economic and recreational and economic activities that depend on them. The first day of the conference featured speakers who framed the discussion of the outdoors in the broadest sense.

Gov. Jay Nixon kicked off the event, exhorting attendees to go beyond conservation. *"The air needs to be cleaner,"* said Nixon, *who received the Conservation Federation's Conservation Legislator of the Year award in 1991, when he was a state senator. "The water needs to be cleaner and more plentiful, and more people need to appreciate the simple joy of the outdoors and the nature that we all share."*

"I ask you to go beyond what people did when they got together the first Conservation Commission 75 years ago. If we aim that high and work together, then in a room much like this, after all of us are long gone, there will still be a group of empowered and impassioned leading



Missourians who dedicate their time and resources to passing this planet on as a better place than they found it.”

Nixon emphasized the importance of getting more Missourians involved in outdoor pursuits related to nature. He also noted the need for conservation groups with diverse and sometimes divergent interests to focus on shared values. Following Nixon’s address, Yale University Professor of Forestry and Environmental Science Stephen R. Kellert spoke about why outdoor experiences are critical to Americans’ individual, physical, social and economic well being. And University of Missouri Professor Larry Brown spoke about how Missouri’s social geography has affected the state’s natural resources.

Before the summit, organizers surveyed influential Missourians about outdoor recreation and conservation. Survey results provided a starting point for discussions about top outdoor priorities. On the second day of the conference, attendees separated into working groups based on interest in the following topics:

- Water
- Air
- Plants, animals and habitats
- Outdoor mentorship
- Conservation Funding
- Education
- Public land
- Private land
- Leadership structure
- Stakeholder input

Each working group developed a list of important conservation actions for the next 75 years. During the final summit session, the working groups presented their lists to the full group, and all attendees voted on the entire list. The top 10 priorities emerging from this process were:

1. Teaching Missourians about the outdoors
2. Ensuring clean, abundant surface and groundwater
3. Connecting families and communities to nature
4. Supporting and funding outdoor resources and activities
5. Conserving plants, animals and habitats
6. Acquiring public lands for outdoor uses
7. Helping private landowners
8. Ensuring clean air
9. Developing an organizational structure for outdoor leadership
10. Promoting stakeholder input

Conservation Federation President Glenn Chambers (and former MoBCI Steering Committee Member) said the consensus that emerged from the gathering of conservation leaders was Get the message out that *“quality, healthy outdoors is essential for life.”*

D.J. Case & Associates Marketing Research Director Dan Witter said the message he carried away from the gathering was, *“We as a people may be able to survive without the outdoors, but we will be a terribly impoverished people – spiritually and physically – if we track that direction. In other words, 10 out of 10 people need the outdoors, not just hunters and anglers, but everybody.”*



The Conservation Federation organized the summit in cooperation with Audubon Missouri, Bass Pro Shops, D.J. Case & Associates, the George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Missouri departments of Conservation and Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy and the Missouri Association of Municipal Utilities.

Jim Low, Missouri Department of Conservation

\$10,000.00 Settlement Given to MoBCI Foundation Benefits Wetlands in North Central Missouri



Bald eagles, secretive marsh birds, large wading birds, songbirds and waterfowl will have more land to call home with the acquisition of 1,436 acres of existing cropland which will be converted to a complex of native wet prairie, wetlands, and riverine forest and, based on proximity, will expand the 3,566 acre Pershing State Park.

Last year, the MoBCI Steering Committee approved exploring the acquisition as a place where the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative could help recoup the loss of the bald eagle nest and in late July, the MoBCI Foundation, by unanimous vote of the Steering Committee, signed over \$10,000 to assist in acquiring the land for all-bird conservation.

This acquisition was granted by the farming family who willingly sought to insure that the Missouri Department of Natural Resources would be the owners and managers of the land. In turn, another farm in the uplands was purchased for their continued family farming heritage.

In 2005, an active Bald Eagle nest in northeast Missouri was destroyed while clearing the right-of-way of an electrical line, resulting in a \$10,000 settlement being given to the MoBCI Foundation to determine the wisest use of the funds for bird conservation, but particularly for the Bald Eagle.

The overall purchase of the land was approximately \$7.1 million and involved a unique partnership of corporations, Non-government organizations, and state and federal agencies.

This purchase helps to enhance the Locust Creek corridor in Linn and Chariton Counties with wetlands, wet prairie, and riverine forests on private, state and federal lands contributing to a nearly contiguous habitat landscape of approximately 32,000 acres.

The Bald Eagle, as our national symbol, is protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act which protect Bald Eagles by prohibiting killing, selling, or otherwise harming eagles, their nests, or their eggs.

--Kelly Srigley Werner, USFWS, MoBCI Steering Committee



Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that a single wood duck was selected to appear on the 2009-2010 Federal Junior Duck Stamp. The design for the new stamp, painted by 16 year-old Lily Spang of Toledo, Ohio, was chosen by a panel of judges on April 22 at the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest held at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.

Allen Kane, Director of the National Postal Museum said, "The National Postal Museum is always honored to be associated with the Junior Duck Stamp Program, as this is a vital tool in conserving our nation's natural resources. We are excited to continue our partnership by hosting this year's contest."

Overview of the Junior Duck Stamp Program



The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program (JDS) is a dynamic arts curriculum that teaches wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students in kindergarten through high school. The program incorporates scientific and wildlife management principles into a visual arts curriculum with participants completing a JDS design as their visual "term papers".

The JDS has increased in popularity significantly since its inception in 1989 and moreover since the implementation of a national art contest and stamp in 1993. The program was first recognized by Congress in 1994 when the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act was enacted. In 2000, Congress reauthorized the program and



expanded it from seventeen states to include student participants in all fifty states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories.

Participation in the program nationwide has remained steady since 2000 with nearly 27,000 students entering a state art contest each year. While the program's data collection methods do not account for students who participate in curriculum activities without submitting artwork, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of students have been educated on the importance of waterfowl and wetlands conservation since the enactment of the 1994 legislation.

Revenue from the sales of the JDS reached \$172,000 in Fiscal Year 2004 and goes to support awards and environmental education for students who participate in the program as well as efforts to market the JDS .

Preparation for the Junior Duck Stamp contest and involvement in the program requires students to think about and understand at least the fundamental principles of anatomy and environmental science and can be a valid barometer of a student's grasp of these topics. The program also provides an opportunity for students to learn science and express their knowledge of the beauty, diversity, and interdependence of wildlife artistically. In fact, preparation for the program often includes a visit to a National Wildlife Refuge- a prime location for not only observation of our nation's wildlife, but also for experimentation and hands on experiences in hundreds of visitor centers located within the refuges.

The Junior Duck Stamp contest begins each spring when students submit their artwork to a state or territory contest. Students at the state level are judged in four groups according to grade level: Group I: K-3, Group II: 4-6, Group III: 7-9, and Group IV 10-12. Three first, second and third place entries are selected for each group. A "Best of Show" is selected by the judges from the twelve first-place winners regardless of their grade group. Each state or territory Best of Show is then submitted to the Duck Stamp Office and entered into the national Junior Duck Stamp Contest. To further the interdisciplinary underpinnings of the program, students are now encouraged, but not required, to include a conservation message on their entry form with their art design. The conservation message is judged in some states and at the national level for Best of Show winners. The message should explain something the student has learned about wetlands habitat, conservation or waterfowl. It may also be a statement used to encourage others to participate in conservation.



The first place design from the national contest is used to create a Junior Duck Stamp for the following year. Junior Duck Stamps are sold by the U.S. Postal Service and Amplex Corporation consignees for \$5 per stamp. Proceeds from the sale of Junior Duck Stamp support conservation education, and provide awards and scholarships for the students, teachers, and schools that participate in the program.



History

In 1989, with a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Dr. Joan Allemand developed the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program, a dynamic arts curriculum that teaches wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students from kindergarten through high school. The program incorporates scientific and wildlife management principles into a visual arts curriculum. Participants complete a JDS design as their visual "term papers," thus using visual arts, rather than verbal communication, to articulate what they have learned. Through this program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service introduces the Federal Duck Stamp program and the National Wildlife Refuge System to participants and educates new generations of citizens about the importance of waterfowl and wetlands conservation.



The JDS curriculum made its debut as part of a pilot program in California. In 1990, three thousand students in public and private schools were the first to participate in the JDS Program curriculum and art contest. Florida and Illinois were added in 1991 with Arkansas, Kansas and Vermont entering the program in 1992. At that time, a state stamp sheet was developed using the Best of Show winners from each participating state from 1991 and 1992. This \$10 stamp sheet included nine state JDS designs. Due to printing costs for the Best of Show stamp sheet it was determined that a national competition, using the Best of Show winning designs from each state, would be held to select a design for a Federal Junior Duck Stamp.

Maryland and South Dakota entered the program in 1993. With eight states competing, the first National competition was held to select one stamp to become the first Federal Junior Duck Stamp. That year, during the First Day of Sale Ceremony for the Federal Duck Stamp, judges selected the first, second, and

third place national winning designs. The first Federal Junior Duck Stamp design winner was Jason Parsons from Canton, Illinois. His design, titled 'Ruffling Redhead', was used to create the junior stamps which sold for \$5.00 each.

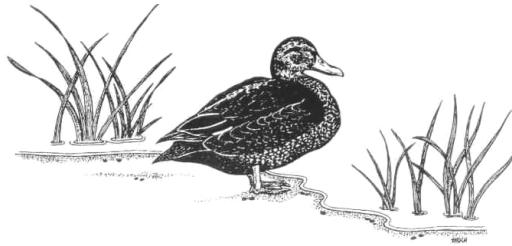
Seventeen new states joined the program in 1994. At that time, stamps were purchased by an individual as a contribution to the NFWF's Junior Duck Stamp Challenge Grant. Proceeds from the sale of the stamps were used as matching funds to support the program. With the grant term expiring, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored legislation to gain Congressional authorization for the Federal Junior Duck Stamp and to direct the proceeds from sales to support conservation education in the form of awards and scholarships for the participants.

The Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Act of 1994 was enacted on October 6, 1994. The Act directed the Secretary of the Interior to create a JDS and to license and market the JDS and the stamp design. The proceeds from these efforts are used to support conservation education awards and scholarships. In 2000, Congress preauthorized the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act for another five years, and expanded the conservation education program



throughout the U.S. and its territories. Since that time, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have joined the program.

Today more than 27,000 students throughout the United States, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands submit entries to a state or territory JDS Contest. The program's success is due to partnerships with Federal and State government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, private businesses, and volunteers who have helped to recognize and honor thousands of teachers and students throughout the United States for their participation in conservation related activities.



Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Grant Program

The Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI) is currently accepting proposals from private and public organizations or individuals who have partnerships that carry out bird habitat conservation projects in Missouri. Eligible activities include projects that protect, enhance or restore bird habitats on any lands in Missouri. All projects should be habitat based and not strictly designed for monitoring, however monitoring can be a component of the project and is recommended.

Individual grant awards are available up to \$20,000. MoBCI grants require a one to one match of funds that do not originate from the Missouri Department of Conservation. Funds may be spent over a two-year period. All grant proposals must be received by 5:00 pm September 30, 2009.

MoBCI is a voluntary partnership of 55 organizations and agencies with an interest in the conservation of all wild bird species.

For more information about MoBCI and the MoBCI grant program, visit www.mobci.org or contact Gene Gardner (573-751-4115, gene.gardner@mdc.mo.gov).

*Check the **MoBCI.org** website for more information on the Missouri Bird Conservation Grant Program and to see examples of past grant proposals that were funded.*



Contributors to the MoBCI Habitat News include:

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Please add to this list by submitting articles on your bird habitat restoration projects to Mike.Currier@dnr.mo.gov and they will be posted on mobci.org.



Woodland restoration River Hills Forest Habitat Partnership Project

