



Spring 2022 | Newsletter Vol. 22

“Fostering stewardship through outdoor experience, youth education and conservation.”

Aquatic Resource Restoration in Shoal Creek Watershed

Land Learning Foundation (LLF) has formed the Shoal Creek Consortium with [The Nature Conservancy \(TNC\)](#), [Midwest Waters Initiative](#), and [Missouri Stream Teams](#), in a multiyear project to restore and conserve stream and wetland resources in Southwest Missouri’s Shoal Creek Watershed. The cornerstone is 35 acres at the confluence of Hickory and Shoal Creeks north of Neosho, acquired by LLF with support from Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as Natural Resource Damage Restoration Trustees for Missouri.

Photo Above: Nathan Eckert (Neosho National Fish Hatchery), Stephanie Grathwohl (Midwest Waters Initiative), and Eric Dannenmaier ([RiverLaw.org](#)) at the confluence of Hickory and Shoal Creeks.

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LLF will work with engineers from the Saint Louis University [WATER Institute](#) to develop an aquatic habitat restoration plan for the Site, and partner with faculty from Neosho High School, [Missouri State University](#), and [Crowder College](#) for water quality monitoring. We’re also pursuing training opportunities with the [Prairie Fork Conservation Area](#), an education and research initiative jointly managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), University of Missouri, and Missouri Prairie Foundation.

Staff from the [Neosho National Fish Hatchery](#) are also working on aquatic resource restoration in the watershed, and the Confluence Site will be one location where they will reintroduce mussels in the Shoal Creek system including, potentially, the endangered Neosho Mucket (*Lampsilis rafinesqueana*).

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Eric Dannenmaier ([RiverLaw.org](#)) talks with Ashley and Andrew Packwood (Stream Teams United) and Stephanie Grathwohl (Midwest Waters Initiative) about restoration plans for the Hickory-Shoal Confluence.



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Tom Guernsey and Don Woodward planting trees along Hickory Creek. Photo by Eric Dannenmaier.

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LLF Deputy Director and Biologist Katie Wiesehan, along with Conservation Counsel and Riverlaw.org Director, Dr. Eric Dannenmaier, are coordinating the Consortium effort. Initial funding was received in April 2022, yet Katie explained “we are already active at the Confluence Site; planting over 200 native trees, preparing an outdoor education platform, and conducting a stream cleanup with local Stream Team volunteers led by retired Joplin police officer Tom Guernsey.”

“The level of local enthusiasm and support is impressive,” Eric noted, “and essential to shaping and sustaining watershed conservation efforts in the long-term.” MDC’s Cara Arrigo will train volunteers at the Confluence Site through its [Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring](#) program, which lets citizens take an active role in protecting water resources.

Core funding is provided by MDNR and USFWS, with additional support from the US Environmental Protection Agency [319 Nonpoint Source Program](#), the [National Fish and Wildlife Federation](#), and the [Conservation Federation of Missouri](#) (CFM). CFM’s President, Biologist Zach Morris, will have an active role in helping to design streambank and wetland plans and to reintroduce native plants at the Confluence Site. Zach pointed out that “the breadth of experience and the talent represented by Consortium partners make this a unique opportunity for Southwest Missouri.” Drew Holt, TNC’s Western Ozark Waters Coordinator, who has worked in the region for many years, agreed; adding, “This is a great opportunity to build on prior conservation efforts of many dedicated private landowners and public partners in this unique watershed.”

For more information, visit our project website at ShoalCreekWatershed.org.

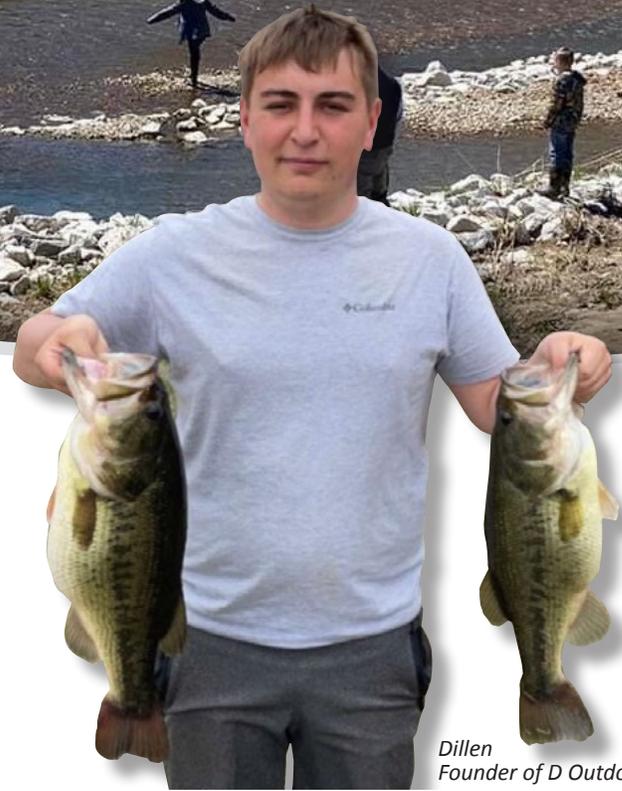


Join us for all of the upcoming events near you!

Click each event to learn more!

Don’t forget to check out the [MDC events page](#) for events online and in-person near you.

- May 14: [World Migratory Bird Day](#)
- May 21: [CFM Springfield Banquet](#)
- May 14: [World Bird Sanctuary Native Plant Sale](#)
- May 14: [Kansas City Native Plant Sale](#)
- May 21: [Columbia Native Plant Sale](#)
- May 21: [Washington River Festival & Missouri River Cleanup](#)
- May 27: [Springfield Native Plant Sale](#)
- May 28: [Native Plant Sale, Joplin](#)
- June 4: [Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Intro & Level 1 Training](#), Neosho
- June 4: [Planting Natives & Honeysuckle Hack at Ladue](#)
- June 11: [Bike with Your Boots On, River Des Peres](#)
- June 18: [Upper Current River Cleanup & Kayak Giveaway](#)
- July 16: [Rock Bridge Water Festival, Columbia, MO](#)
- July 23: [Honeysuckle Hack at Ladue MS](#)
- August 13: [CFM Pull for Conservation Central](#)
- September: LLF Conservation Day, Troy, MO



Dillen
Founder of D Outdoors

“D Outdoors”

Hello! My name is Dillen, founder of D Outdoors. I am a sophomore at Westran High School, my parents are J.P. and Desaray and I have a younger brother, Quintin. As a young child, my Dad always took me along on his hunting and fishing adventures and from there, I developed a strong passion for the outdoors.

Last year, I began establishing “D Outdoors”. I decided that as much time as I spend outdoors, I wanted to start filming and sharing my experiences. I was fortunate to receive a grant from Land Learning Foundation to assist with startup costs and equipment. While I love being outdoors, video editing and software has certainly been a learning curve. I have advanced from a year ago, but still have a lot to learn!

This year I have only used my custom-made lures while bass fishing. While I love catfishing on the Missouri River, I enjoy hitting the local farm ponds for largemouth bass. On my ventures to the Missouri River, I have taken the boat out rod and reeling and a couple times just fished from the bank or setting in a local creek. I have just been catching small catfish, but I am anxious for the water to warm up!

I went snagging at The Lake of the Ozarks, not only was the fishing good, but I was also able to meet new people and build relationships. We would wake up early in the morning and hit the water, sometimes traveling 5-10 miles to get where we wanted to be to start trolling for spoonbill. Our group ended up with 19 fish for the season.

I went turkey hunting with my little cousin, and it turned out to be quite the hunt. Opening day, we had birds all around us, they just wouldn't work in our favor. It was a long day of walking and by the second day, my little buddy was pretty tired. We had nearly given up and decided we should head back, but good things come to those who wait! We were able to call in a Tom, and my cousin got it! It has been a good year for morel mushrooms as well. I find it very rewarding when I can call home and tell my parents not to worry about dinner, I'm bringing it home!

Be sure to check my YouTube channel “D Outdoors” as each view helps to put me closer to living my dream. I do plan to participate in a few fishing tournaments this summer so I will have to keep you posted!

As always, I'd like to say thank you to all my sponsors, King Louie Meat Apostles, Ray of Lhite, LLC, and Land and Learning Foundation.

Photo by Doug Helmers.



LLF Board Site Visit

On Saturday, April 9th, the Board of Directors for LLF held a quarterly board meeting. After the meeting, board members caravanned to a restoration site completed in fall 2021. This project shaped, restored, and protected 9,300 linear feet of South Fork Saline Creek in the Apple/Joachim ecological drainage unit. There was also a 0.75-acre forested wetland created during the project.

You never know what you'll get with April weather, but the sun was shining for the board field trip. Everyone enjoyed checking out streambank restoration, skipping rocks, and discussing what fish were in the creek. Board members asked great questions about the restoration process, and the site visit was a fantastic learning experience.



Carbon Smart Ag The Importance of Conservation Agriculture



One of LLF's partners in conservation, Mitico is laying the groundwork for new projects in conservation agriculture: "Carbon Smart Ag". Led by Certified Crop Adviser Nick Cuchetti, Mitico's work will assist Midwestern farmers in the transition to climate smart farming practices and help guide them through USDA-NRCS programs that incentivize farmers who undertake enhanced conservation practices.

Mitico is designing its programs around research showing that well-managed soil sequesters carbon from the atmosphere

and helps to address concerns about climate change. "Farmers have a tremendous opportunity to be leaders in the fight against climate change and it's exciting to be a part of that," said Cuchetti.

With new information coming to light daily regarding carbon markets, regenerative agriculture, cover crops, and soil health, Mitico will work with farmers to develop conservation plans tailored specifically to their operations. Contact Nick Cuchetti for more information at nick@miticomo.com or 573-502-4909.

“ Farmers have a tremendous opportunity to be leaders in the fight against climate change and it's exciting to be a part of that. ”

~ Nick Cuchetti
Certified Crop Adviser



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