

Litzsinger Road Ecology Center

Community Newsletter

9711 Litzsinger Road • Ladue, MO 63124 • Phone (314)442-6717 • www.litzsinger.org

Renewing your LREC Partnership for Next Year

By Bob Coulter

Spring will be here soon, and with it, time to start thinking about whether to renew your partnership with us for another school year. As you know, our primary focus is on place-based education, which essentially involves using the local community as the basis for your study. In other words, we're looking to support programs that engage you and your kids with local habitats and native plants and animals. Ideally, these motivate students to engage in stewardship projects.

Looking to next year, we'll be working with each of you individually to explore how your plans can grow on the successes you have realized this year. As soon as you are ready to think about next year, please set up a meeting with your primary staff contact to discuss four key issues:

1. What are your goals for nature study for next year?
2. How do field studies at LREC complement the other studies you're doing in your school yard and neighborhood?
3. What professional development goals do you have that LREC can support?
4. What's particularly interesting in your program that might be a model for other schools?

Discussing these issues with your LREC staff contact will help you to develop your plans. With a limited number of schools we can serve, we always have more interest in the site than spaces we can offer. We will start scheduling for next year in May, with priority going to the schools that hold the most promise for making good use of LREC in conjunction with interesting projects back at school and in the community.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact me at bob.coulter@mobot.org or (314)442-6737. ☞

Inside this issue:

Welcome, Deanna and Danelle!..2
A St. Louis Watershed Quiz.....3
Watch the Weeds, Whips, and Wildflowers.....4

Upcoming LREC Events:

Volunteer Educator Enrichment: Birding at LREC

March 18, 2–3:30pm. Meet at the Barn. Led by Nancy Solodar, this will be an "in the field" experience utilizing the LREC bird feeders and surrounding woods. We will be identifying the most common birds at LREC. Bring binoculars if you have them. Call Martha at (314)442-6717 if you plan to attend.

Upcoming Opportunities:

March Morpho Mania

February 28–March 31. At the Butterfly House. Enjoy the addition of hundreds of brilliant blue morpho butterflies. Special programs on weekends. Free with admission. See www.butterflyhouse.org or call (636)530-0076 for more information.

Native Plant School

Native Plant Propagation from Seed: March 12, 1–4pm. At Shaw Nature Reserve. \$12 (\$8 for Garden Members). Reserve your place by calling (636)451-3512.

Global Garden Speaker Series: Chris Kilham

March 26, 2 & 7pm. At the Garden. Called "the Indiana Jones of natural medicine" by CNN, Chris Kilham is a medicine hunter, author, and educator who searches the globe for plants to cure illnesses, alleviate pain, and mitigate countless disorders. Ticket prices vary. More information at www.mobot.org.

Welcome, Deanna and Danelle!

By Bob Coulter


LREC is pleased to introduce two new staff members who have joined the team since the beginning of the year.

Deanna Lawlor joins us as the School Partnership Coordinator working with our “Community Science Investigators” after-school programs. This is part of our expanding partnership with MIT to explore ways technology can enhance kids’ understanding of (and commitment to) their local environment. We’ll be working with middle school students here and in the Boston area on some interesting projects. Deanna is a former teacher in the Maplewood-Richmond Heights district, and she recently earned a graduate degree from Antioch New England University, which is widely recognized as a leader in place-based education.

Danelle Haake joins us as a restoration ecologist, replacing Jennifer Brown (who left us in December to be at home with her son Caleb). Danelle brings a great deal of expertise in watershed and riparian conservation issues, as well as strong connections to the many organizations in the community focusing on these areas. Danelle’s graduate degree from Iowa State was in Natural Resource Management. Most recently she was an independent consultant, but in the past has worked as an environmental scientist here and in Iowa. Her expertise will be invaluable leading our riparian corridor improvements and in developing creek-related educational programs. ☞



Top: Deanna Lawlor.
Bottom: Danelle Haake.
Photos by Sean Fears.

Announcing...	Caleb Alexander Fears	
	Born January 26, 2009	
	7:43 a.m.	
	8 lbs. 12 oz.; 22 inches	
	Proud papa is Sean Fears (LREC School Partnership Coordinator)	

A St. Louis Watershed Quiz

By Eddie Jones

Situated in a flood plain, Litzsinger Road Ecology Center is no stranger to flooding. Is your home in a floodplain? Have you been the victim of a flood? It behooves all of us in the St. Louis region to be aware of such things as flood plains, streams, and watersheds. Watershed education is one of the cornerstones of LREC's education programs.

As a recipient of this newsletter, you are invited to quiz yourself on St. Louis streams and watersheds:

1. **What is the name of the creek that flows through Litzsinger Road Ecology Center?**
2. **The creek referred to in the above question flows into a larger stream. What is the name of that stream?**
3. **Which major river in the St. Louis area receives water from the other two major rivers?**
A. Meramec B. Mississippi C. Missouri
4. **What is the major difference between the sewer systems in St. Louis City and St. Louis County?**
5. **In which part of a watershed is development most advisable?**
A. floodplain B. riparian corridor
C. stream channel D. upland
6. **How many river miles separate the mouth of the Missouri from the mouth of the Meramec?**
A. 15 B. 25
C. 35 D. 45
7. **Drinking water for St. Louis City and County is taken from which river?**
A. Meramec B. Mississippi
C. Missouri D. all three
8. **How much of the land surface in the City of St. Louis is impervious to rainwater?**
A. 1/10 B. 1/4
C. 1/3 D. 2/3
9. **What is the name of the watershed in which you live?**
10. **What is the name of the LREC curriculum that focuses on watershed concepts?**

For answer key, see **Watershed**, page 5

The Snow

By Martha Schermann

It comes down quietly and covers all that it lands on, yet it will reveal much. Look at the tracks of birds, squirrels and rabbits. It begins clean and white and pure and then with the coming days becomes dirty and muddy. It makes us think of our start in life as pure and innocent, and then as the days go on, we become polluted. By working with children we can we achieve that return to innocence.

—January 25, 2009



Watch the Weeds, Whips, and Wildflowers

By Malinda Slagle

March is the time of year when I think about three things: weeds, whips, and wildflowers. The wildflowers are probably the most fun. It's the beginning of spring, and on the first warm day I rush down to the woods to see what tiny jewels are blooming. In the woods at LREC, the tiny pink flowers of spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), and the white flowers of rue anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*), false rue anemone (*Isopyrum biternatum*), and bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) all bloom in March. I love seeing the tiny petals and the carpets of leaves in the woods.

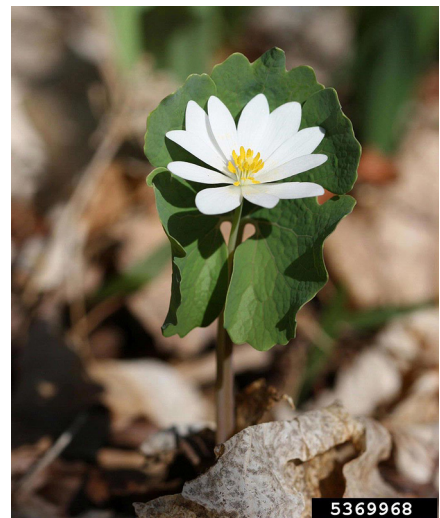
Even more fun to watch are the insects. The flowers are all buzzing with tiny sweat bees (Family *Halictidae*) and miner bees (Family *Andrenidae*) that live as adults only for a few weeks in the spring. These bees live in nests full of tiny eggs by themselves, and they must find pollen and nectar to provide larval food. The bees that collect pollen are all females; they provide all of the food for the larvae. We have over 100 species of bees that live here at LREC and many of them are in these solitary nests.

March is also a great time to plant tree seedlings or whips. We order these every year from the George O. White nursery run by the Missouri Department of Conservation in Licking, Missouri. A bundle of 25 is usually about \$8, depending on the species. You can order them online at <http://mdc.mo.gov/forest/nursery/seedling/>. We ordered 125 this year, so we'll need help planting them on Tuesday and Friday mornings and other times with student groups.

These whips are very easy to plant, only requiring a small slit in the ground, just enough to cover all their roots with the roots nicely spread out. They are easy to start along the creek banks where digging large holes is impractical. They are best for larger restoration projects, not yards or small schoolyards, since they start out very small. If you are patient, and have a perfect spot for them to grow, they do grow quickly with some loving care: just pack the soil back in place after planting and water when dry in the first year.

Certain weeds are best killed in March. The ones that come to mind at LREC are lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) and garlic mustard

See **Weeds, Whips, & Wildflowers**, page 5



Top: spring beauty.
Photo by Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org.

Middle: rue anemone.
Photo by Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org.

Bottom: bloodroot.
Photo by Steven Katovich, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org.

Weeds, Whips, & Wildflowers, from page 4

(*Alliaria petiolata*). Lesser celandine is in the buttercup family and has a little waxy yellow flower that carpets areas of our woodland floor February through April. Because of its early emergence, it prevents native spring wildflowers from coming up. Garlic mustard, too, outcompetes native wildflowers. It is in the mustard family but smells like garlic, hence the name. We spray both of these plants with Accord® or Rodeo® (the versions of Round-up® safe to use near water) in March. In April and May we have large garlic mustard pulls with volunteers. Get ready, we might call on you!



So, for some, March may be a time of spring clothes or tulips, but for a restoration ecologist, it's a time of weeds, whips, and wildflowers. 🐌

Left: lesser celandine.
Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, www.forestryimages.org.

Right: garlic mustard.
Photo by : Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, www.forestryimages.org.

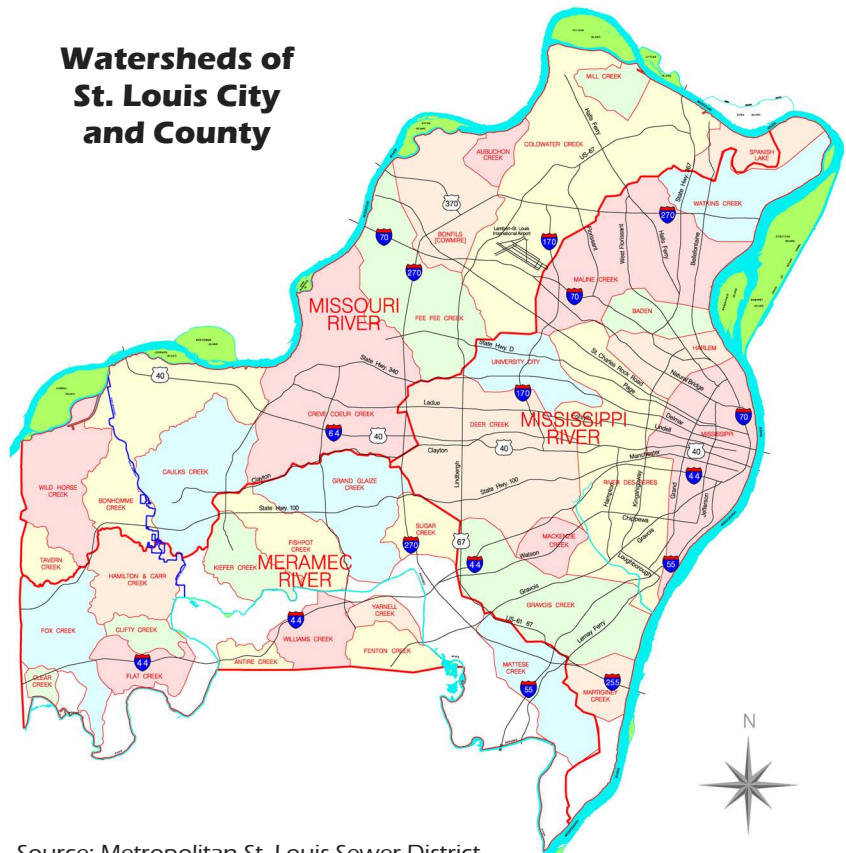
Watershed, from page 3

Answer Key

1. Deer Creek
2. River Des Peres
3. B (Mississippi)
4. City: combined storm and sanitary sewer; County: separate storm and sanitary sewers
5. D (upland)
6. C (35)
7. D (all three)
8. C (1/3)
9. Check the map at right
10. *Navigating Urban Streams*

(You can contact a LREC staff person to get the name and even a copy of this and other LREC field lab curricula.) 🐌

Watersheds of St. Louis City and County



Source: Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District