



Channels

**6183
Stream Teams
Strong!**

Information for and about **Missouri Stream Teams** • Fall Issue 2020

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3rd Quarter Prizes

- ◆ Pelican Intrepid 120 Kayak
- ◆ Hummingbird Feeder - 20oz
- ◆ Sportneer Camping/
Backpacking Chair
- ◆ Paddling the Ozarks
- ◆ Life 4 disc set
- ◆ Contigo Snapseal 20oz
Travel Mug
- ◆ Youth Prize: Bugs of the
Underworld



Please keep sending us
your Activity Reports . . .
You might win NEXT!

Missouri River Relief: Adapting to the "New Normal"

By Amy Meier, Editor, MDC Stream Team Biologist

For nearly 20 years, Missouri River Relief (Stream Team 1875) has been a pioneer for providing memorable experiences on the Missouri River in unique ways, including large-scale river cleanups, serene on-the-river boating excursions, and hands-on field education programs for students and adults alike.

Leading into the year 2020, big plans were in store to continue to expand upon successful programs that fulfill their mission to connect Missourians to the Big Muddy. These included four large scale river cleanups which typically involve up to 300 volunteers per event; hands-on education projects such as Missouri River Days, a collaborative project with Columbia Public Schools to take every fourth grader in the district on the Missouri River; additional student projects such as Missouri River All Stars and the Missouri River Academy; and monthly public presentations for the Big Muddy Speaker Series.

However, COVID-19 threw all of these inspirational, hands-on activities that would have potentially reached thousands of people into a tailspin; but the passionate staff, board, and crew for River Relief are rising above the challenges faced by the global pandemic. "Business as usual" can certainly not be an option when social distancing is the new normal for an organization that specializes in life-changing experiences to bring people to the river that provides drinking water to 40% of Missourians.

Recognizing the challenges that lie ahead, Missouri River Relief staff collaborated to tackle them head-on. Presentations for the Big Muddy Speaker Series moved into the new virtual reality of presenting online through Zoom. It turns out that even more people could be reached from their homes using a virtual platform. And while a large-scale cleanup with 300 volunteers on a Saturday on the Missouri River would not be possible, the same or more tonnage of trash could be acquired over a longer period of time with smaller groups adhering to clearly defined and strict safety protocols. This was shown in Hartsburg over a five-day period, yielding 4.5 tons of trash removed from Missouri River banks. Small groups have made a huge difference in the watershed, becoming "trash mobs" that are trending on social media, which in themselves have yielded more than seven tons of trash collected so far this year! And while the Missouri River Days and Missouri River Academy programs could not be held in person, youth education and outreach can still be achieved through the Watershed Expeditions at Home program with resources provided in a "Camp in a Box."

It takes a unique amount of energy, time, thoughtfulness, and ingenuity to adapt to a new normal; Missouri River Relief has shown, in a very short period of time, their resiliency and adaptability for continuing to reach as many people as possible with their passion to share all the Missouri River has to offer.



Small groups and social distancing can still bring big results in the age of COVID-19. Hartsburg crew cleanup, June 2020.

In Case You Missed It...

The very first virtual Stream Team Academy Creek Course on an Introduction to Mussels is now available to view online! Many thanks to all the participants who were able to join us live. The great thing about virtual programs, though, is that they are recorded so you can catch up at any time you want! For those who may have missed the informative talks on mussel biology, diversity, distribution, conservation, history, identification, and outreach opportunities, you can tune in to the [Missouri Stream Team YouTube Channel](#) to view them at your leisure!

Many thanks to our Academy instructors for their time and effort to provide their expertise on Missouri mussels:

- Dr. Chris Barnhart, Missouri State University, on his presentation on mussel biology and reproduction;
- Travis Moore, Missouri Department of Conservation Fisheries Management Biologist, who gave two presentations on mussel ecology, distribution, and collecting as well as a talk about large river issues and activities that Stream Teams can do to help understand and protect these vulnerable creatures;
- Andy Roberts, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who emphasized the issues and threats facing mussel species survival; and
- Stephen McMurray, Missouri Department of Conservation Malacologist, who provided information including tips and tricks on mussel anatomy and identification.

Please stay tuned as we continue our live “Stream Sessions” for you to join us on presentations about the world surrounding our streams through mid-November, featuring stream related organisms such as snakes, riparian plants, and turtles. Registrations to attend these live presentations and available recordings will be posted on our website at mostreamteam.org.

Stream Team Awards For Activities Conducted in 2019

Congratulations to our Ambassador Award winners!



Ambassador Awards are presented annually to recognize Stream Team members who exemplify the Team goals of education, stewardship, and advocacy.

Stewardship Ambassador Awards

- **Chris Myers** (Stream Team 5614 - Kayak Dardenne)
- **Jeff Barton** (Stream Team 3550 - St. Francois County Watershed Big River Rats)

VWQM Ambassador Award

- **Tim Kirchhoff** (Stream Team 509 - Missouri Smallmouth Alliance)

CSI Ambassador Award - Hamilton Creek CSI Project

- **Steve McCarthy** (Stream Team 5099 - McCarthy's Creve Coeur Creek Team)

Education Ambassador Award

- **Karen Keck** (Stream Team 1847 - Kirksville Crickers)

Advocacy Ambassador Award

- **Emily Tracy-Smith** (Stream Team 442 - Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences Society/FASS)

Monitoring Minute

Missing: VWQM Workshops in 2020

By April Sevy, MDC VWQM Coordinator



Water quality monitoring is something a person can do solo or with their family, which is great for a year full of social distancing. COVID-19 has resulted in enhanced protective measures to reduce the spread of the virus. As many parents and students have experienced first-hand, these measures have a huge effect on classroom learning. So, what does this mean for Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring workshops, which are mostly classroom learning with a little streamside practice?

We were able to hold two in-class Introductory-level workshops this spring before the world as we knew it came to a screeching halt. The remainder of the Introductory workshops along with the Level 1 workshops were canceled for 2020. Stream Team staff were now faced with the challenge of how to take our training virtual or outside where everyone can safely learn.

Level 2 Validation certifications were our first attempt to adjust our training for this wild and unpredictable year. Rather than going through Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) in the classroom for three hours, we took this training outside – Why didn't we do this sooner?! While we normally have about 20 volunteers participate in Validation training each year; this year we have about half of that requesting the certification which is still on-going.

What about new and Level 1 monitors? These trainings require a lot more presentation, which means more development of the actual workshop. This has also brought up discussions on how and when these workshops should be offered. Stream Team staff are currently developing virtual or hybrid workshops for 2021.

There are a lot of unknowns, so we welcome your input. How do you feel comfortable learning amidst a health pandemic? Have you participated in a virtual learning platform that used a great tool that we could incorporate? Do you want to attend a specific water quality training or have a group that is interested in training? You can send any comments or requests regarding VWQM training to April.Sevy@mdc.mo.gov.
Happy Monitoring!

The Riffle Review

a bi-monthly glimpse of Stream Team activities

Team Snapshots

Since our last issue of Channels, Stream Team members reported:

- 740 total activities
- 3,756 total participants
- 54,260 total hours
- 52.21 tons of trash collected
- 127 water quality monitoring trips
- 20,160 trees planted

Check out more highlights below . . .

Team 387 The Girshner Family Team hasn't let up at all in their last 27 years cleaning up the Finley River; this year, they have been spreading out their cleanups a little more to keep numbers small, but with big results! "It's the new/young volunteers that keep our Team energized. Their enthusiasm is contagious and refreshing!" said David Girshner.

Team 1700 Taking goggles on a float trip is always a good idea, as Jeffery Shoults expressed, taking his nephew for his first float trip on the Meramec River this summer. "I think he's hooked!" he said, after collecting three bags of trash.

Team 2586 Recent high water may have washed in some additional debris on the Big Piney, but the Madras family with the Big Piney Farm Team did what they could, collecting a couple of flotation pads, bottles and cans along the way, and of course a tire. "Higher water made for a faster trip!" said John Madras.

Team 3098 Snail collection has been underway to help understand aquatic snail distribution around the state, but Rosemarie Mier found it challenging to collect snails in the St. Francis River due to the presence of a water moccasin, so she delicately collected snails around the outer pools of the Tieman shut-ins to stay safe. Sounds like a good plan!

Team 3762 While an entire new 18-hole course will be added to the new JB Bunker Disc Golf Park in St. Louis County, apparently it needed a lot of cleanup ahead of time. Enter Jim Anderson with a single-handed effort to remove the abandoned bed frame, mattress, couch cushions, sewer pipes, cans/bottles, and a dozen tires to help prep the area. Bravo!

Team 4300 Historic flooding didn't deter Team Xtream from pulling out everything from old bleach bottles to metal roof panels along their five-mile route on the Sac River, and they plan to return to retrieve excessive fishing line caught up along the banks in the future. The nice thing was they were also able to incorporate some instruction and safety lessons for the new kayakers in their group, said Richard Keese.

Team 4493 The Camo Boys are back at it after a little bit of a lull, but remembered how much fun they could have exploring the woods along the Black River to pull out trash that had been left behind, including 13 red bags of trash, a couple of tires, and a deep freezer. A rewarding adventure!

Team 5311 It looked more like a ball game than a litter pickup for the Upper Meramec River Rangers, who collected beach balls, tennis balls, a basketball, and a soccer ball along with five green mesh bags of trash and two tires. "We had fun climbing all over the [wood piles] to dig out the trash. It was like a competition to see who could find the most trash," said Karen Miller.

Team 6030 It can be especially rewarding when you find and remove something that could have caused irreparable harm to the environment as the Ramp Rats did on the Niangua: an old thermostat with a considerable amount of mercury still inside of it! The best part was knowing how much damage to aquatic and wildlife they helped prevent with their cleanup. Way to go!



Sharing is caring! The Sac River Raiders (Team 577) scouted for trash along the Little Sac River for a future cleanup when water levels would be better to navigate, but just couldn't resist picking up a little trash along the way.



Nixa Boy Scout Troop 200 (Team 4010) covered six miles of the James River, clearing nearly a ton of trash, including 14 tires, while sporting the new Stream Team t-shirts!



The Adventure Girls (Team 6086) put their heads together after paddling upstream on the Meramec to clean up while floating back down, figuring out how to attach their collected tires to their kayaks. Great thinking!



Enthusiastic newcomer Andrew Overmann (Team 6124, right) dove head first into an intense cleanup on Perche Creek (Boone County), hauling out this huge tractor tire along with half a ton of other trash and debris with new-found friends from Missouri River Relief.

It's Time To Order Your Streamside Trees

Tree seedling orders available now

Obtain a tree order form by calling the nursery at **573-674-3229** or **800-781-1989** (voicemail) or visit the MDC website at <https://mdc.mo.gov/trees-plants> to order electronically. Need more help? Email kat.lackman@mdc.mo.gov or call **800-781-1989**.

Remember that Stream Teams receive **FREE** tree seedlings when you include your Stream Team number on your order form.

Seedling Order Form
GEORGE O. WHITE STATE FOREST NURSERY

2020-2021



COALITION CORNER

News from Stream Teams United

Work in Water: Recognizing the Importance of Water Professionals in Missouri

By Mary Culler, Stream Teams United Executive Director

Where does your drinking water come from? Where does your wastewater go? And who are the people behind the process? These are questions that most Missourians would struggle to answer.

In August, Governor Parson signed a proclamation that declared August 16-22, 2020 as “Water and Wastewater Treatment Workers Week” in Missouri. As part of that recognition, the Governor provided a [video message thanking Missouri’s water professionals](#) for their role in providing safe drinking water and operating our wastewater treatment systems.

The state of Missouri has 2,740 public drinking water systems, with 1,428 of these being community drinking water systems. In addition, there are over 10,000 permits for sources of wastewater and stormwater discharges in Missouri. Of these 10,000 sources of water pollution discharges, almost 750 permitted facilities require management by a certified wastewater operator. Having knowledgeable, dedicated water operators is an essential part of the equation of clean water in our “Great Rivers State.”

Recently, Stream Teams United attended a “train-the-trainer” session hosted by the [Wichita State University Environmental Finance Center](#) to learn more about the new “Work in Water” program that was recently created through funding provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Wichita State University Environmental Finance Center works on a broad range of public health and environmental topics, with a focus on EPA Region 7, which includes Missouri.

[Work in Water Experience](#) teaches high school students about the critical role that public water utilities fill in their community. The unique, hands-on learning program allows students to see the skills, technology, and jobs that ensure the public has access to safe, healthy drinking water and wastewater treatment. The program includes classroom instruction and can include a tour and summer internship for students at a local utility.

Stream Teams United plans to host a virtual learning event on November 10 and 12, 2020 for Missouri Stream Teams to learn more about the “Work in Water” program. We’ve also set up [a contact form on our website](#) for schools, local utilities, or Stream Teams to use if they are interested in the possibility of having a Work in Water program in their community.

Stay tuned to [our website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for more information about registering for this November virtual learning opportunity!

