



THE UPPER WHITE RIVER REVIEW

*The Newsletter of the South Missouri Water Quality Project, a USDA-NRCS Water Quality Office
Providing Conservation Solutions To Non-Point Source Water Pollution.*

Clear...Concise...and to the Non-Point

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Stewardship Compass by Steve Hefner



South Missouri Water Quality Project
Team Leader

In this first edition of "The Upper White Review," I wanted to first address the mission philosophy of the South Missouri Water Quality Project.

This project shall encourage voluntary conservation of natural resources and, in turn, provide technical assistance to all people interested in conservation planning.

Because the project is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), we are required to follow the established policies and procedures of the agency. These procedures are in place to protect the American taxpayer, the agency, and individual landowners. In every case, it is the individual landowner who weighs the options and decides whether the conservation practices fit their management objectives.

Our project area is the Upper White River Basin and includes land that drains into the Black, Current, Eleven Point, Spring, North Fork, and James rivers. The Upper White River Basin crosses portions of 21 counties and encompasses nearly 7 million acres of land.

USDA-NRCS has assembled a staff of trained professionals with backgrounds in forestry, nutrient management, hydrology, urban issues, and soils. Their services are available to complement local NRCS service areas, local soil and water conservation districts, state agencies, and grass roots organizations who work with individual property owners.

We desire to be a locally led organization. The project was first supported by a Resource Conservation and Development Council comprised of local conservation minded-citizens. I am now in the process of establishing a steering committee of local citizens who represent a diverse number of interests throughout the Upper White River Basin. This newsletter, "The Upper White Review," will be one of the methods we use to inform basin stakeholders about our efforts, accomplishments, and extended available services. Your input is welcome. Please call 417-581-2719 x5 or e-mail me at steven.hefner@mo.usda.gov.

Steering Committee Taking Shape

The South Missouri Water Quality (SMWQ) Project is organizing a steering committee comprised of citizens who represent important interest within the Upper White River Basin. A diverse committee has been assembled to represent agriculture (beef, poultry, and forestry), tourism (entertainment, floating, trail riding, and ecotourism), city governments, home builders, and conservation

groups. All share an interest in water quality.

The first steering committee meeting was held on July 22, 2004 at West Plains. Members began networking and providing input for the SMWQ Project. A mission statement was adopted, and members began sharing human capital assets. The next meeting is scheduled for December 2004.

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Septic Tank Maintenance Program

Septic tanks need to be checked every three to five years to see if maintenance is needed. Maintenance can protect both the environment and your system. If the tank fills, the accumulated solids can move into lateral lines and the system will fail. Repairs can be expensive. Failing septic systems place untreated sewage into ground and surface waters. They also present serious health and water quality risks.

Preventing these problems is fairly simple and much less expensive than replacing lateral lines. The James River Basin Partnership 319 Project has cost share money available that will pay 75% of the actual or average cost (which ever is less) for homeowners within the James River watershed.

Maintenance Procedure

1. Contact the South Missouri Water Quality Project office for an appointment.
1786 S. 16th Ave., Suite 105, Ozark, MO.
Phone: 417-581-2719 ext. 128
E-mail: clay.robertson@mo.usda.gov
2. Schedule a site visit to locate the tank and verify that it is within the project area.
3. Select a contractor and determine the approximate cost of the service.
4. Excavate the tank as needed to allow access for the contractor.
5. Submit PAID bill(s) to the South Missouri Water Quality Office. Receipts will be routed to the James River Basin Partnership office at 205 Park Central East, Springfield, MO.
Phone: 417-838-8878.
6. Holly Neill at the James River Basin Partnership office will issue reimbursement and mail it directly to your address.



Pumping the Tank

Call Clay Robertson at 417-581-2719 ext. 128 for further information.



"Assistance will be provided to develop a conservation plan for Stockstill Park."

Urban Conservation Project in Branson

The South Missouri Water Quality Project will be assisting the City of Branson in developing a conservation plan for Stockstill Park. Stockstill Park, located in the floodplain of Roark Creek, has experienced flooding problems due to increased urbanization upstream of the park. Past flooding impacts have impaired the recreational facilities of the park and have increased operation and

maintenance costs. Such impacts include the erosion of softball fields and playground areas.

The South Missouri Water Quality Project will be working with Casey Joe Earl, Branson's Horticulturist, regarding on-site practices including rain-gardens, native landscaping, and water diversions in order to deter the impacts of flooding.

Golf Course in West Plains Receives Assistance

This spring, the South Missouri Water Quality Project assisted the West Plains Country Club with a conservation plan for their golf course.

The West Plains Country Club requested assistance to develop a conservation plan that would include native vegetation which would cut down on maintenance costs while increasing the difficulty of play.

Three priority areas for planning and restoration were identified by a committee of members and staff.

These areas included:

1. establishing native warm grasses for out-of-play areas
2. enhancing a shallow sinkhole with native vegetation
3. providing edge treatment for a water hazard.

Native species ranging from various wildflowers to blooming shrubs were recommended in order to provide aesthetic benefits.

Urban Lawn Planning Gaining Speed

The South Missouri Water Quality (SMWQ) Project is partnering with the James River Basin Partnership to prepare urban nutrient management plans. Individualized urban nutrient management plans, based on soil testing results and lot measurements, are being prepared by the SMWQ staff. Homeowners who choose to participate receive a four-year urban lawn plan from the SMWQ Project and then a rebate coupon, which covers the soil laboratory analysis, from the James River Basin Partnership.

At press time, SMWQ staff has prepared 115 lawn nutrient management plans. A summary of the soil testing data has revealed some interesting trends. As a result of soil testing each lawn, the SMWQ staff has recommended no phosphorus applications to 38 lawns for the next four years. An additional 30 lawns required only a moderate phosphorus application for lawn maintenance. Potash application was only needed on 16 lawns, and only 12 lawns required lime.

If you are interested in obtaining an urban nutrient management plan, contact the SMWQ office at 417-581-2719 ext. 5.

***“Over 100 Homeowners
Now Have a Nutrient
Management Plan in the
James River Basin.”***

Restoring Declining Habitats

Private landowners are restoring lost landscapes across the Missouri Ozarks. With this restoration comes an improvement in wildlife habitat and plant communities.

Two common examples of declining habitats are savannas and glades. Glades are found on dry, shallow soils with bedrock near or exposed on the surface. Savannas are located in woodland and transitional soils between the glades and deeper depositional soils. Savannas support both grass and woody species.

Both glades and savannas are located on droughty positions of the landscape, usually on the mid-slope of hillsides. These habitats are becoming scarce due to the encroachment of cedar and the exclusion of naturally occurring fires. In pre-settlement periods, glades were void of cedars and open areas were more abundant. Today,

restoration usually involves removing cedar and mimicking natural fires with periodic control burns. This management technique supports native grasses and wildlife vegetation that provide forage and shelter to an array of wildlife.



Burn Restoration on Glade in Stone County, Missouri

Savannas hold similar characteristics with the addition of open grown trees with a grass understory. Restoration requires the removal of woody

vegetation. On savannas, this entails the reduction of the canopy to 20-40 percent cover consisting of native tree species.

If the trees are of merchantable size, they can be harvested creating an income for the landowner. Harvesting or woody removal is followed by a schedule of periodic control burns to remove fuel buildup and control woody sprouts. Native grass and forbs are able to germinate from the seed bank once shade has been eliminated from the sites. Management of glades and savannas are an excellent way to attract wildlife while restoring a declining habitat.

To obtain more information or to inquire if this is practical for your property, contact the South Missouri Water Quality Office to schedule an appointment with the NRCS resource forester, Robert DeMoss. He will assist in inventorying your property and formulate a plan.

Creek Corner

Williams Creek

Profiling the small streams of the Upper White River Basin

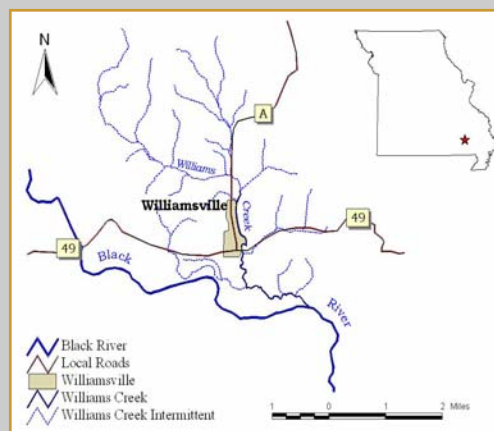
Hydrology: Williams Creek drainage is located on the extreme eastern edge of the Upper White River Basin. Approximately 28 miles of first and second order intermittent streams supply the three mile section that runs through the town of Williamsville. The watershed comprises 5 percent of the Black River basin.

History: Both Williams Creek and the town of Williamsville were named after William Williams who settled the area in 1826. Located near the confluence of Williams Creek and Black River, the town was first incorporated in 1887. Historically, development has been linked to the fertile bottomlands near Black River, virgin timber, and the railroads. Rose Cramer states in her book, "The History of Wayne County," that on August 26, 1925, Black River, normally a half mile away, stood 42 inches high in Glad-den Hotel.

Location: Southeastern Wayne County, Missouri

Drainage: 10.1 Sq. Mi./6500 Acres

Receiving Stream: Black River



SALT Grants Awarded to Two SWCDs

Congratulations to the Barry and Taney County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) on recent grant approvals. Each county has received a Special Area Land Treatment (SALT) grant from the Department of Natural Resources for water quality conservation.

The South Missouri Water Quality Project provided planning assistance with each district during the application process. Grants will be admin-

istered by the local SWCD staff of the Flat Creek (Barry County) and Beaver Creek (Taney County) watersheds. Projects are scheduled to begin in July 2004.

To receive more information about the Flat Creek and Beaver Creek SALT opportunities and cost share, contact Tina Mills (417-847-4309 ext. 110) and Shellia Braden (417-546-2089) respectively.

Building GIS Capabilities

The rapid growth of locally-led groups in recent decades reflects the increasing national concern for watershed issues. These groups search for far-sighted solutions that blend the environmental, economic, and cultural interests at the community level. There has been a concurrent rise in the ability to conduct assessments and planning due to technological advances in

Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Computer-based analysis of watershed hydrology, water quality, and aquatic conditions are now the standard approach taken to assess needs and identify conservation opportunities.

The South Missouri Water Quality Project will engage with local groups to provide technical expertise in watershed planning and assessment. The office

has been actively expanding its ability to provide watershed planning and assessment services. The South Missouri Water Quality Project has completed a GIS-based assessment of the suitability of land in the James River Basin for application of poultry litter and has provided county and watershed maps for different users in the service area.