Cathleen Creley Memorial Conservation Grant Now Open

St. Louis Audubon Society works to positively impact birds and their habitats throughout the St. Louis region. The Cathleen Creley Memorial Fund Conservation Grant was established to distribute grants that will support bird conservation projects in the St. Louis region and appropriate wintering habitats. The total amount available for the 2020 grant is estimated to be $5,000.

One or more grants will be awarded depending on the income of the fund for a given fiscal year, the quality of the grant proposals received, and the results of the grant ranking system. Additional information, and grant application, can be found here. The grant application period will close on Friday, May 29.
Plant a Bird Feeder

By Mitch Leachman

Birds are in trouble. You’ve seen the headlines, and we’ve reported a number of them in this newsletter. Three billion birds lost since 1970, including a more than 50% decline in grassland birds. Climate change will compound habitat loss, pesticide exposure and other human effects and place an estimated two-thirds of North American birds at risk of severe population decline and even extinction.

Native plants are one thing all experts agree can make a difference. With the human footprint expanding all the time for homes and stores, warehouses and parking lots, energy and transportation, birds (and other wildlife) have few places to safely rest during migration and to raise their young. Native plants feed insects which are food for nearly all our songbirds, and our own yards and gardens are a great place to add those natives. Consider adding some to existing garden beds; side-by-side with the current ornamental plants. Start small and get your ‘feet wet’ with natives.

Once you get started with native plants, you will be hooked. Hooked on the wonder of the critters they attract. On just a single species of native milkweed in our small suburban lot, we’ve observed tussock moths, native bees, a tree frog, and yes the Monarch butterfly completing its entire life cycle including laying eggs, nectaring, and feeding on leaves as a caterpillar.

Those inspiring moments of nature in your own landscape will encourage you to plant more natives to see what else you can attract. You may choose to replace some of the non-native ornamental plants which you decide are simply boring. You might consider creating new garden beds, converting some of the neat and green but also boring lawnscape into a new naturescape with native plants. With an estimated 40 million acres of lawn in the country, we have plenty of opportunity to ‘upgrade’ to natives.

The protein-rich insects that feed on native plants during the growing season are essential food for baby birds building muscle and bone. In the fall and winter, the songbirds we see need fruit and seeds to keep them fueled. The former can be provided with native shrubs and trees, and the latter from native flowers and grasses. Speaking of inspiration, we have watched goldfinches feed on the seeds of asters, coreopsis, coneflowers, black-eyed susan, and sunflowers, all native plants in our little landscape.

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Plant a Bird Feeder Continued…

Should you be a do-it-yourselfer, check out the many online tools for native plant gardening, such as:

- National Audubon’s [Plants for Birds](#)
- National Wildlife Federation’s [Native Plant Finder](#)
- Missouri Botanical Garden’s [Plantfinder](#), with an excellent advanced search function

Should you want a bit more help, check out the [Native Plant School](#) at Shaw Nature Reserve or the [Go Native series](#) of continuing education classes at Meramec Community College. Grow Native!, the Missouri Department of Conservation and St. Louis Wild Ones are also great resources.

Finally, you might be interested in our naturescaping consultation service called [Bring Conservation Home](#), which includes a typically 2-hour visit at your home with a team of our Habitat Advisors who provide you feedback and ideas on-site, followed by a detailed written report with their suggestions for native plants based on the visit and your goals. To request a visit, simply [complete the online form](#).

Some 150 years ago Emily Dickinson wrote, “Hope is the thing with feathers.” More recently, National Audubon stated “You are what hope looks like to a bird.” I agree with both, and I hope you do, too!

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In Memory of Greg Poleski: Founder of Greenway Network

“Greg was a guiding light in keeping Missouri and the St. Louis area an environmentally friendly place. He will be sorely missed in the conservation community.” Pam Wilcox

“His voice for the river will be eternally missed but will never be forgotten.” Charlene Waggoner

To learn more about Greg’s life and accomplishments, please read the St. Louis Post Dispatch article “[Protector of the Missouri River wins one more battle before canoeing downstream.](#)"
Field Trip Report

By Bill Rowe
Photos by Mike Grant

Saturday, February 22
Thirteen of us met at the intersection of 79 and I-70 on Saturday morning for the third SLAS field trip of the new year, delighting in the weather (clear, 28 to 55). We made a preliminary stop in Elsberry, where we watched a Eurasian Collared-Dove as it flew back and forth between a grassy patch and a barn, each time with a billful of nesting material. This brief list simply records that bird and a few others: https://ebird.org/checklist/S64915870

At Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, we met up with a carload of Columbia folks who had come to join us. We found the area more watery than usual, many of the wetland cells (which were mostly dry in August) being now simply lakes. The diversity of waterfowl was only fair, but the numbers were high, especially of Northern Pintail, the most abundant species by far. No unusual birds crossed our path, but we enjoyed seeing good numbers of Bald Eagles and Red-headed Woodpeckers among others. Our total list is here: https://ebird.org/checklist/S64876406

Following lunch in Elsberry, we took the back way toward BK Leach CA but had to stop after only a mile for fine views of a Prairie Merlin, which was an adult female or a juvenile of either sex (they are virtually the same in plumage). https://ebird.org/checklist/S64906014

Moving on into BK Leach CA, we had nice studies of some additional duck species on the various ponds (e.g., Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck), plus a handful of other new birds for our day's list: https://ebird.org/checklist/S64907005

We enjoyed the company of Jeff and Kath Mayne of Fulton, and Edge Wade, Eric Wood, John Besser, and Josh Mosteller of Columbia. Thanks to all of them for making the trek over here, and of course to our St. Louis area participants.

For more information on upcoming field trips, visit our online calendar.
Owls of Missouri - Engineering Marvels

Thursday, March 26th at 7 pm
Schlafly Branch of the St. Louis Public Library

Brenda Hente will explore the science behind these widely adaptable birds of prey, including their awesome anatomy and mysterious behaviors. She will describe the four native owl species that live in Missouri and the four owl species that migrate through or visit most years. Videos, photos, and stories will be used to show the habitat and range of each owl, characteristics, vocalizations, nesting and breeding habits, and predator/prey relationships. Come and learn more about "Whooo" is living in the Show Me State!

Brenda Hente has been observing and documenting two pairs of Great Horned Owls in the St. Louis area since 2010. She researches raptors of all kinds and has studied under ornithologists Scott Weidensaul and Dr. Stephen Kress, at Maine Audubon’s Hog Island camp. She is also a contracted Instructor for the Missouri Botanical Garden and Shaw Nature Reserve, giving classes on owls, raptors and other native birds. Brenda is an educator by day, teaching middle school science and history.

(Eastern Screech Owl - photo by Mike Grant)

This is our annual joint program with the Eastern Missouri Group of the Sierra Club. The Schlafly branch is located at 225 N. Euclid Ave, St. Louis, MO 63108.

For questions, call (314) 599-7390 or stlaudubon@charter.net.

Silent Skies St. Louis

Silent Skies St Louis is a citywide celebration of the arts and conservation. Events and activities will take place around the St. Louis area between April 1 and June 30, 2020. Learn more here.
POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
Bring Conservation Home Outreach Specialist

Job Title: Outreach Specialist
Employment: Part-Time, Temporary (April - November)
Pay: $11 - $15 per hour
Reports to: BCH Program Coordinator

The Bring Conservation Home (BCH) program works to inspire and educate people about the critical role they can play in re-creating nature at their homes, schools, work places, and churches. The BCH Outreach Specialist will assist with a wide range of community outreach efforts including native landscape consultations, volunteer Habitat Advisor training and mentoring, and community and civic group presentations.

Qualifications:
• Requires a flexible schedule and ability to work outdoors in a variety of weather conditions
• Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
• Working knowledge of native plants and best practices in landscaping for wildlife
• Ability to recognize the most common invasive plants in the St. Louis region
• Understand the basic relationships between native plants, insects, and birds
• Familiarity with basic stormwater and best management practice concepts
• Ability to work any place across the St. Louis Metropolitan Area including Illinois
• Valid driver’s license with a good driving record and up to date insurance
• Access to personal computer and email

Primary Responsibilities:
• Support landowner habitat consultations which typically consist of a site survey, landowner interview, and written report
• Write timely, follow-up reports and submit to BCH Program Coordinator
• Assist with the development and implementation of feedback surveys for Habitat Advisors and landowners
• Assist with community events and presentations to increase awareness about the BCH program and the adoption of wildlife-friendly practices

This Position Is Ideal For Someone Who Is:
Dependable - can be counted on to give the very best; keeps all commitments
People-oriented -- enjoys interacting with people and has a strong customer service focus; high level of relationship building and interpersonal skills
Adaptable/flexible -- self-starter with the ability to work independently with minimal direct supervision; understands and balances diverse views and beliefs
Detail-oriented - highly goal oriented, has a track record of energy, drive and performance

Application Deadline: March 8, 2020

Applicants should submit a letter of interest that outlines relevant work experience to Mitch Leachman, Director of Programs, St. Louis Audubon Society- stlauubon@charter.net.
Environmental Stewardship Projects

Saturday March 14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> at Creve Coeur Park: Honeysuckle removal

Bring your favorite lopper or saw. We return to the “upper park” to continue clearing the plant from the upland forest. Use this address in your device: 13219 Streetcar Drive, Maryland Heights, MO 63043. It’s the address for Go Ape, but continue past it, past a ball field, tennis court and restroom. Park after the playground in the 1-way loop drive. We will meet at the Scout Shelter which will be on your right.

Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup>—Confluence Trash Bash

For details and to register please visit: http://www.stltrashbash.com/

Honeysuckle Sweep for Healthy Habitat—the Month of March

BiodiverseCity St. Louis helps promote the removal of bush honeysuckle around St. Louis. In addition to our dates above, visit their website for more projects in which to participate.

Saturday April 11<sup>th</sup> at Creve Coeur Park: Pollinator garden clean-up

The native plant pollinator gardens are looking great, but they need a little TLC, including some fill-in plantings. Help us get them ready for the growing season. Meet in the south parking lot of the Creve Coeur Lakehouse at 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Road, 63146.

All projects begin at 9:00 am with registration starting at 8:30 am. All are half-day, ending by noon. Gloves and other supplies/materials are provided. All ages welcome, except as noted, but those under 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times.

Please register for all projects at http://stlouisaudubon.eventbrite.com. For questions, contact Mitch at (314) 599-7390 or stlaudubon@charter.net.
Save the date… May 2020!

St. Louis Birdathon

Join us for a fun and interactive bird-watching event!

Bidders of all skill levels are welcome- expert birders, casual birdwatchers, beginners, kids, families and teams.

Together we can make a difference for St. Louis’s native birds and wildlife. Start forming a team now!

Board Meetings:
Open to everyone. Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of even months at 7 pm at the Sunset Hills Community Center at 3915 S. Lindbergh Blvd.

Board President- Katy Fechter
stlaudubonpresident@gmail.com

Director of Programs- Mitch Leachman
stlaudubon@charter.net

Director of Operations- Amy Weeks
mailto:operations.stlaudubon@gmail.com

Membership:
When you join St. Louis Audubon Society, you are supporting year-round nature education, vital habitat restoration and stewardship opportunities for people of all ages. Your support goes a long way! Learn more here.

Newsletter:
Tale Feathers is published monthly. For submissions, comments or corrections, contact Amy at:
mailto:operations.stlaudubon@gmail.com

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