





## **Note from the Executive Director**

What a year it has been! I've been so busy with everything we've had going on that I didn't realize until I sat down to compile this report exactly how much we've done this year. New conserved properties, exciting developments on existing land, a new partnership with a local business, a growing partnership with Patagonia, and so much more. No wonder I've been so busy! I hope you're proud of all the work we've accomplished together in 2021 - here's hoping 2022 is even better!

Sincerely,



Mike Powell

## **Note from the President**

What comes to mind when I ponder our work as a local land trust?

A little creek in the heart of the city where the neighbor kids' imaginations can run wild.

A towering limestone bluff overlooking the Missouri River, reflecting the glow of the setting sun onto the Katy Trail.

An old mine site transformed into an abundant grassland ecosystem and its accompanying herds of hearty sheep.

Parcels of native prairie and forest, large and small, with many passionate volunteers and landowners committed to their restoration and stewardship.

Collectively, we are creating a patchwork of protected spaces that will be treasured across Mid-Missouri for generations to come. It is an honor and an inspiration to collaborate with the Greenbelt Land Trust community.

Many THANKS to YOU for your support this year, in all its forms.

Sincerely,



Emily Wright

## Welcome to the new Watson Conservation Easement!

To kick things off, I'm very pleased to announce the new James and Anne Watson Conservation Easement has been added to Greenbelt's portfolio of protected lands! This 50-acre property, just outside Columbia city limits, includes remarkably high-quality forest and woodland habitat in the Perche Creek watershed.



Jim and Anne purchased the property this year and immediately set about protecting it with a conservation easement. Their son, Michael, is working to develop and implement a forest management plan for the property to improve habitat and achieve higher levels of carbon sequestration.



Great landowners make everything we do so much easier, and, by that measure, the Watsons will fit right in with all the wonderful people who have conserved their land with us. Big thanks to Jim and Anne for their forward-thinking attitude and generosity. We are excited to continuing to partner with them to protect this outstanding property for future generations.

## **Big News at Big Sky Nature Preserve**

This week, we accepted donation of a 24-acre parcel, immediately adjacent to the existing Big Sky property. The donor of the land, who wishes to remain anonymous, has taken care of the land for nearly fifty years and wanted to ensure it remained protected for the future.



The new tract more than doubles the preserve's footprint, includes vital, high-quality forest and woodland habitat close to the mouth of Bonne Femme Creek, overlooking the Missouri River. It also adds buffer for the sensitive oak savanna atop of the bluff at Big Sky, and will help preserve our access to the property for monitoring and management.

We are so grateful for our anonymous donor for their contributions as stewards of this land, and for their generosity in donating it to Greenbelt. We look forward to protecting their legacy at Big Sky Nature Preserve for many, many years to come.



## Community and Stewardship at Spring Valley Nature Preserve

2021 has been a big year at Spring Valley Nature Preserve, too. Spring Valley is the smallest property by acreage in Greenbelt's portfolio, but its impact far outshines its size! We were honored to be invited this year to participate in the Spring Valley neighborhood's annual potluck, where



Executive Director Mike Powell and board members Emily Wright and Dee Dokken enjoyed socializing with neighborhood residents and sharing lovely bouquets of flowers donated by Three Creeks Farm and Forest. The event was a lovely reminder of the value of our communities, and how wonderful it can be to be surrounded by such a wonderful group of people.

We haven't just been socializing and having fun, though! Greenbelt's Conservation Committee partnered with Mizzou graduate students Sarah Brown and Victoria Burnett, Mizzou Natural Resources professor Robin Rotman, as well as Spring Valley neighborhood resident and organizer extraordinaire Stephen Bybee to develop and begin implementation of a new management plan for the Spring Valley property.

This document lays out our management goals going forward, and was timed to roll out with the completion of the sewer line construction project that ran through the property last year. I'm pleased to report that the property looks wonderful, with natives sprouting, birds chirping, and squirrels running rampant.



We've also got something new planned for 2022. Local resident and Boy Scout Paul Sandvol has worked with us to develop a proposal for his Eagle Scout project on the property! Paul will partner with his fellow scouts to create a seating area on the property where residents and visitors can take in the preserve's beauty by birdwatching or just watching County House Branch burble by.

That's not all, though! Keep your eye out for volunteer and social opportunities at Spring Valley Nature Preserve in 2022.



## **Hundred Acre Woods is Looking One Hundred Percent Better**

It's been three years, almost to the day, since a friend of Jim and Joanna Whitley donated Hundred Acre Woods Nature Preserve to Greenbelt Land Trust. I am pleased to report that, after that time, woody invasives have been completely extirpated from the prairie, and the restoration process is in full swing – with a few years of burning and overseeding, the largest remnant prairie in Boone County will look like a whole new place.

Our efforts, which have been led by Stewardship Chair John George, have been recognized with a Plant Stewardship Award from the Hawthorn Chapter of the Native Plant Society, as well as a Group Collaborators award from the Missouri Invasive Plant Council, and were completed with funding from the L-A-D Foundation, the Conservation Federation of Missouri, and, most importantly, supporters like you.

Thanks to you, the Hundred Acre Woods prairie can flourish again! Here's hoping we'll get to see you at a Daffodil Day in memory of Jim and Joanna at the preserve this spring.





## Everybody's Welcome in the Hollow at Hinkson Valley Nature Preserve

If you missed out on Hinkson Happy Hour this year, don't fret – it will be back in 2022 – but you did miss out on the grand opening of our new Woodpecker Hollow Trail! This mixed use trail is open to bikes as well as hikers, and was developed in cooperation with the COMO Trail Association, branches off from the Hinkson Creek Trail in the southern section of Hinkson Valley Nature Preserve.



We could not be more impressed with the incredible work the COMO Trail Association did in building this trail. They worked closely with Greenbelt's

Conservation Committee, as well as adjacent landowners, to route the trail in a fashion that would provide access to the previously-inaccessible southern section of the preserve while protecting natural resources and ensuring an enjoyable hike or ride for anyone who uses it. If you find yourself with some time this holiday season, pick a sunny day and go check out Woodpecker Hollow – you won't regret it.







## The Working Lands Initiative is Gathering Steam

Our Working Lands Initiative has been slowly but surely gathering steam this year. First things first, check out our new logo! We're excited to have a visual representation of this important work, but we're even more excited about the work itself.

First off, we've got big news on something new! This year, we partnered with grocer and local food system advocate Root Cellar, as well as some new friends at CoMo Cooks, the shared kitchen operated as part of the Loop CID's ongoing economic development efforts, to apply for a Local Food Promotion Program grant. This grant, which is designed to help us build a more resilient, sustainable, and transparent local food system, was selected for funding earlier this month by the U.S. Department of Agriculture!

More details will be forthcoming soon, but you can look forward to lots of exciting things, including better information about the people and places that produce your local food products, better access and availability for local produce, expanded value-added offerings from local producers, and lots more. Our piece of the puzzle will be hiring a new Working Lands Initiative staff position to take point on these efforts, so keep your eyes peeled for that as well!

We are also still hard at work on a new Land Linking website, which is designed to connect aging farmers without successors to young farmers seeking land to cultivate (it'll do a few other, similar things, too). We had hoped to have it up and running by now, but we've run into a hitch with our web design help that's going to push our unveiling back into the new year. We're still optimistic that we'll be able to launch this new program in the very near future, so stay tuned!



## **Advocating for Conservation Near and Far**

We've been working hard at local advocacy this year, engaging with a number of grassroots efforts to protect important areas and help create a more sustainable and accessible Mid-Missouri landscape.

First, we were pleased to be a part of the coalition to protect the Gans Creek Wild Area earlier this year. The prospect of highly intensive, disruptive development in close proximity to the most sensitive habitat in Rock Bridge Memorial State Park is something that deeply concerned all of us. I'm pleased to say that City Council agreed, and the developer withdrew their petition. In addition to providing support in the form of letters, emails, and comments from our staff as well as our members, our work with the Gans Creek coalition also offered the opportunity to connect with landowners in the area who have expressed an interest in conservation easements, which offer them benefits and address the risk of development in the vicinity on a much more permanent basis. Huge thanks to Steve Schnarr, Robin Rotman, our own Dee Dokken, and everybody else who took the lead on this effort!

We were also very excited to partner with Local Motion and get involved in a dialogue with the City of Columbia's excellent Parks and Recreation Department about the allocation of the renewed Parks Sales Tax. When the initial priority list was released, we were disheartened to see that a disproportionate amount of the funds had been allocated to indoor sports facilities. While there is absolutely nothing wrong with indoor sports facilities, they are not the purpose for which the sales tax was created. Thanks to your voices, in cooperation with all of our partners, I'm pleased to say that the priority list was revised, and new trails were added providing vital trail access to underserved parts of town.

We're still hard at work on some issues, however. Most significant to what we do as a land trust is the ongoing fight to pass the Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act. The Act, which was originally introduced to Congress in 2017, is intended to address ongoing abuses of the conservation easement tax deduction and protect the vital incentive for landowners to permanently conserve



their lands. Most recently, the Act was attached to the Build Back Better legislation, but was ultimately dropped due to the objections of a Democratic lawmaker. We need your help to keep the pressure on! This legislation addresses a critical need; without it, everything we do is at risk. Please consider reaching out to your Congressional representatives. For more information, visit the Land Trust Alliance information page here: <https://www.landtrustalliance.org/tax-shelter-legislation>

### **Accreditation**

I'm pleased to say that the last of the work on our application for accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission is complete! The application was an enormous effort over the spring and summer of this year, but we represented the Greenbelt community accurately as a leader in the Missouri conservation community and an example of best practices in the land trust movement. Our final paperwork was submitted ahead of the final due date earlier this month, and now there is nothing to do but wait. The Commission let us know to expect a decision in early 2022, so keep your eyes peeled – with luck, we can celebrate this accomplishment together at the Land Trust Alliance Rally in New Orleans next fall!

#### **Board of Directors**

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