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MO Stream Teams Keeping Our Waters Clean

MARCH 28TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

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*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Missouri - In 1988, a small group of anglers got fed up with unsightly trash disrupting their fishing in Roubidoux Creek. These conservation-minded Missourians decided to clean this section of stream in south-central Missouri. In doing so, they formed the first Missouri Stream Team in 1989. The Roubidoux Fly Fishers Association (Stream Team 1) is still going strong 25 years later. During that time, the Missouri Stream Team Program has grown to more than 4,000 Stream Teams around the state with more than 85,000 volunteers.

The Missouri Stream Team Program is a citizen-led effort to conserve Missouri streams. Sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), the Program focuses on education, stewardship, and advocacy for Missouri stream resources.

“The success of the Stream Team Program is a great example of how Missourians care about conserving fish, forests, and wildlife, and how MDC, DNR and CFM work with citizens to conserve our natural resources,” said MDC Fisheries Biologist Amy Meier, one of several Stream Team biologists with the Conservation Department. “Stream Team activities also provide unique

opportunities to discover nature in new and exciting ways.”

Meier added that the ongoing work of more than 4,000 stream teams and their more than 85,000 volunteers have made enormous positive impacts on the health of Missouri’s streams over the last 25 years. That work includes volunteers giving more than 2.2 million hours of time, energy and passion, removing more than 10,000 tons (20 million pounds) of trash from Missouri waterways, planting nearly 265,000 trees along streams, conducting more than 25,000 water quality monitoring trips, and stenciling more than 17,000 storm drains.

“Stream Team volunteers have a passion for clean, healthy streams and do amazing work to help improve our streams and other waters so Missourians can enjoy clean drinking water and outstanding recreational opportunities” Meier said.

To celebrate 25 years of education, stewardship and advocacy for Missouri stream resources, the Missouri Stream Team Program is inviting all Teams (and new volunteers) to participate in “25 Days of Stream Team” events around the state. Running from March to October, events include stream cleanups, water monitoring efforts, education activities, storm-drain stenciling, and more. For a calendar of events, visit mostreamteam.org.

“The anniversary celebration is an effort to increase awareness of citizen-led stream conservation efforts, to encourage participation in the many types of activities that Stream Teams perform, to recognize the accomplishments of Stream Teams over the last 25 years, and to demonstrate how Stream Teams benefit our aquatic resources,” Meier said.

She added that participants can track their activities to receive special appreciation items for attending multiple events, and be entered into a drawing for larger prizes at the end of the year.

“Missouri is fortunate to have 110,000 miles of flowing waters, and the Stream Team Program continues to spread the word about keeping them clean, healthy, and safe,” Meier said. “Even seemingly little things citizens do to help streams makes big differences, such as planting trees and native vegetation along streams, picking up litter, performing water-friendly lawn practices, and educating others about the importance of clean water.”

The Stream Team Program is open to anyone in Missouri with an interest in streams and offers a variety of activities for individuals, families, schools, and communities regardless of age, background, or ability. For more information, visit the website at mostreamteam.org or on Facebook at facebook.com/mostreamteams.

Shown in the photo: Bernie Arnold of Stream Team 211 digs muck out of a 1,200 pound tire during a massive two-day roundup in Southeast Missouri in 2013. This particular tire was so massive it could be seen in the stream via satellite image. Nearly 900 tires were removed from streams and sinkholes in two days.

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