

# 2021 Annual Report



## The Open Space Council for the St. Louis Region

*Founded in 1965, the Open Space Council works independently and collaboratively to conserve and sustain land, water, and other natural resources throughout the St. Louis region.*

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# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

What an exciting time to be a member of the Open Space Council. 2021 has been an exceptional year of growth and land conservation efforts for the organization that we love. As the President of the Board of Directors, I want to take a moment to highlight a few of the organization's accomplishments and recognize the efforts of Bonnie, our tireless executive director, the wonderful staff, dedicated board members and our outstanding volunteers. At the end of 2020 the Open Space Council completed an update to our strategic plan which set the wheels in motion for our accomplishments in 2021.

**Board Growth** – We welcomed eight new board members to the organization this year. This group of diverse board members have already improved the Open Space Council with their passion, fresh ideas and needed skills. I also want to recognize the outgoing board members for their many years of valuable service to the organization.

**Staff Growth** – We added new staff members to assist with conservation programs, marketing and communications and administration. Bonnie and the new staff overcame numerous challenges by successfully organizing events and programs while navigating the ever-changing pandemic protocols.

**Public Open Space Growth** – 2021 marked another year of successful land conservation efforts with the acquisition of over 150 acres of open space adjacent to Greensfelder County Park. The Open Space Council and several other conservation organizations joined forces and funding to make the acquisition a reality. In the upcoming years we will be working with St. Louis County Parks to help with needed property clean ups and invasive species removal.

It is my sincere pleasure to serve on the board and do my small part to improve the environment and make the St. Louis region a better place to live. Looking forward to continued organization success in 2022 with your help.

**SCOTT EMMELKAMP**

President, Board of Directors  
Open Space Council



*In This Report*

**Program  
Performance  
Updates**

**Operation Clean  
Stream and Trash  
Bash Impact**

**Community  
Stewardship  
Alliance Pilot**

**Public Land  
Expansions and  
Restoration**

**Events and  
Fundraising**

**Volunteer and  
Employee  
Spotlights**

**Financials,  
Memberships &  
Sponsors**

**Board of Directors**



**The Open Space Council**  
for the St. Louis Region

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Here's to over 50 years of conservation! 2021 has been a busy year for the Open Space Council (OSC), and we are happy to report that it has been a success despite a few challenges.

The **Community Stewardship Alliance** held 17 volunteer workdays across St. Vincent, Lower Meramec, and Creve Coeur Parks. Our 7 Ambassadors managed 223 volunteers. These stewards removed over 4 acres of invasive species and planted 175 Trees. More detail about partners roles and reporting metrics for this year's pilot program can be found by visiting our website and clicking on the [CSA tab](#).

Our annual **Operation Clean Stream** and **Trash Bash** land and water cleanups along the Meramec River, River des Peres, and Missouri River Watersheds included 2,106 volunteers. These volunteers removed an average of 30 pounds of trash/person totaling over 25 tons. In addition, they pulled over 15,000 pounds of metal from our land and waterways and marked over 500 storm drain inlets. Further information about all of this year's Operation Clean Stream partners and impact can be found on our [website](#), as well as a detailed report on the 2021 Trash Bash that can be found [here](#).

**Operation Wild Lands (OWL's)** began in 2007. This year's event at Belleview Farm Park is a part of the continued conservation efforts to help maintain the public lands previously donated by OSC. Two additional workdays at The Al Foster Trail engaged youth through education by continuing invasive species removal projects. On these workdays, 75 volunteers removed almost 3 acres of invasive species.

In 2021 through our **Land Trust** program, OSC supported the acquisition of 156 acres of private land adjacent to Greensfelder County Park in Eureka, Missouri. This land was donated to St. Louis County Parks to expand this beautiful open space and provide additional conservation and recreation opportunities.



## IMPACT Numbers

2,111  
Volunteers



Over 5,900  
volunteer hours

25+ Tons of  
Trash and  
1,140 Tires  
Removed from  
our land and  
water

Over 200  
Native Trees  
Planted in  
Parks



7+ Acres of  
Invasive Species  
Removed

156 Acres  
Added to  
Greensfelder  
Park





# 2021 EVENTS

We hosted two socially distant **Paddle After Dark** Events at Simpson Lake in Valley Park this year. Guests enjoyed music by the lake, refreshments from 4Hands Brewery, and the weather was beautiful. Thanks to all who attended. The proceeds from these events benefitted this year's **Operation Clean Stream** and raised over \$3,600. In addition, for each ticket purchased, our Board of Directors planted a native tree at Emmeneger Nature Park in Kirkwood. They planted over 50 trees! Additionally, we hosted a socially distant **Winter Warmer Hiking Challenge** and **Virtual Cocktail Hour** that raised just over \$1,000 to support our work.

OSC also participated in **GiveSTL Day**, a regional day of giving, and thanks to our donors were able to raise over \$5,000 to help support our Land Trust Program. Finally, we concluded our **Online Auction** in December, raising another \$5,200 to help fund ongoing conservation projects in 2022.





# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

We are so grateful for our volunteers. Thank you to everyone who gives their time and resources to support our mission.





# MEET THE STAFF

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The Open Space Council expanded capacity in 2021 by welcoming several new staff members to the Team. Andrew Clubb, Megan Fritze, and Stephanie Schrage joined existing Executive Director Bonnie Harper and Americorps Member Leah Freesmeier to help manage programs, communications, and administrative duties.

Andy was born and raised in St. Louis and has always appreciated the region's numerous parks and recreational opportunities. He graduated from Missouri State University with a B.S. in Philosophy and a double-minor in Sustainability and Community Planning. Before OSC., he worked as Land Management Coordinator for the Green City Coalition (St. Louis, MO).

Stephanie graduated from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, earning her B.S. in Marketing and Philosophy. Her professional experience includes a decade of promotion and event planning supporting environmental causes, historic preservation, and economic development. In addition, she has worked with the Piasa Palisades Chapter of the Sierra Club and National Main Street, animal advocacy non-profits, and solar power initiatives. She serves as the Chair for the Board of Directors for Alton Main Street in her hometown and continues to volunteer with animal advocacy groups.

Meg studied Business Management and joined the Open Space Council in 2021 after working for the City of Sunset Hills Parks & Recreation Department. While she was born and raised just outside of St. Louis, she split her time between her family's cattle farm in Bunker, Missouri, and the Lake of the Ozarks. Her fondest childhood memories include chasing crawdads in the creek down the road from her grandparent's house and swimming in the lake nearby.



**Pictured from Left to Right**

**Front Row: Bonnie Harper, Executive Director, and Megan Fritze, Administrative Assistant**

**Back Row: Andrew Clubb, Conservation Program Manager, Stephanie Schrage, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, and Leah Freesmeier, Americorps Member, Development Coordinator**



# FINANCIALS

As is required for all charitable organizations by the IRS, The Open Space Council participated in our yearly financial review with a licensed CPA Firm and the detailed breakdown of the report as well as the annual IRS 990 are available on our website by clicking [here](#).

# PARTNERS & SPONSORS

Thanks to our 2021 partners and sponsors. Their support allows us to continue our essential work of protecting and preserving our open spaces making the St. Louis Region a better place to live, work, and play for generations to come. Additional sponsors not pictured are LAD Foundation, Crestwood-Sunset Hills Rotary Club, and The Elizabeth Brown Foundation.





# MEMBERS & DONORS

We also want to thank all members and donors whose generosity allows us to fund our important conservation projects and land acquisition work.

## Public Lands Advocate Members

Bernie Arnold, Bradley Evanoff, Kate & David Hatfield, Mark Ohlendorf, Susan & Danny Christie and David & Karla Wilson

## Open Space Council Sustainers

Adam Bellows, Jimmy Cruse, Claire Meyners, Stephen Owens, Kevin Lee, Gregory Rigelman, Matthew Self, and Ryan Winter

## Operation Clean Stream Stewards

Lindsay Armstrong, Cynthia Brown, David Brown, Gerald Brown, Amy & Larry Cain, Donna Coble, Julie Dougherty, Scott Emmelkamp, Mary Fischer, Reimund Goerlich, Esley Hamilton, Paula Hart, Nancy Hartman, Ralph & Diane Heck, Venable & Cynthis Houts, Theresa Jones, Peggy Lambing, Kirk Lambrecht, Brian Lu, Michael Meredith, Mary Neal, Gene Nickason, Paul Ohlendorf, Tom Ott, Caroline Pufalt, Aryn Rehbein, Adam Rembert, Gary Rutledge, William & Caroline Sant, Brian Schaffer, Stan Winkler and Theresa Wolf

## Operation Wild Lands Stewards

Gerald Arb, Edward Bayham, Harvey & Francine Cantor, Dennis DeJong, Katie Devoy, Diane Droege, Debbie Emmelkamp, James & Barbara Faupel, Bob Foster, Andrew Gondzur, Catherine Hu, Robert & Patricia King, Joann McAndrews, Karen & Glennon Meyer, Cory Murner, Joyce & Mike Patton, Paul & Kathy Paulson, Jill Powell, William Rable, Melissa Sauter, Dale Shuter, Claudia Spener, Frank & Ellen Wentz, and Peter Witteried

## Basic Memberships

Gerry Biedenstein, Andrew Blaylock, Paul Cain, Judith Campbell, Frank Cruse, Ryan Cutrell, David Emmelkamp, Johnathan Franco, Zoe Geist, Amy Gragert, David Haessig, Ann Hayes, Clarice Hutchins, Gary Jeske, Kristina Karl, Angela Kelly, Sharon Koboldt, Julia Lastarria, Cassidy Miles, Jeffery Mudd, Meghan O'Keefe, Julia Santiago, Stephanie Schrage, Lydia Stephenson, Henry Thomas and Mia Thomas



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Open Space Council Board is comprised of 27 individuals dedicated to the mission of protecting open spaces in and around St. Louis. They give their time and resources to supporting this mission and making our community a better place to live, work, and play for generations to come. Our board meets 6 times a year and each member serves on at least one committee. 2021 has been an exercise in teamwork, and our board members have been a catalyst, helping OSC grow and flourish throughout these unprecedented times.



**Pictured from Left to Right**

**Front Row: Betsy Crites, Susan Christie, Lindsay Armstrong, Libby Reuter, and Elizabeth Simons**

**Middle Row: Larry Cain, Donna Coble, Brian Schaffer, Anselmo Testa, Scott Emmelkamp, and Aryn Rehbein**

**Back Row: Kirk Lambrecht, Adam Rembert, Dave Brown, James Cruse, David Wilson, and Matt Green.**

**Not Pictured: Gerald Brown, Allison Brown, Catherine Hu, Gene Nickason, Hal Davies, Jeff Davis, Tad Biggs, Dennis Wilhelmi, Mark Ohlendorf, and Becky McMahon**