

Forest Protection in the Meramec River Watershed

The Upper Mississippi Forest Partnership and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation jointly initiated the Upper Mississippi River Watershed Fund. The Foundation funds projects that benefit the forests of the Upper Mississippi while improving wildlife habitat and water quality.

Background

The Meramec River, Missouri's second-longest free-flowing stream, has a permanent channel that winds across more than 200 miles. Despite more than three centuries of land conversion, development, poor grazing practices, and population growth, the river continues to host impressive numbers of freshwater mussels, fish, and other species.

Much of the river's upper watershed remains heavily forested. Because the Meramec River is widely recognized as a priority for conservation, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources has designated portions of the upper river and two of its primary tributaries as "Outstanding State Resource Waters."

The Ozark Regional Land Trust is negotiating a donated conservation easement on 2 miles of frontage on the middle Meramec River. The owners of 720 acres located at the headwaters of the Meramec and an owner of 102 acres on the upper Meramec have also expressed serious interest in donating easements.

Location

The project is located in the upper and upper-middle Meramec River in the counties of Crawford, Dent, Franklin, Phelps, and Washington; and small portions of Iron, Reynolds, and Texas counties in Missouri.

Goals

Restore and protect important forest habitats and riparian areas in the Meramec River watershed

Results

The Ozark Regional Land Trust will secure donated conservation easements on large tracts of forest land, provide incentive payments to landowners who restore forested riparian buffers under the Conservation Reserve Program, and purchase conservation easements on critical riparian lands to protect or restore forested riparian buffers.

Outcomes/Accomplishments

Although the final acreage the Trust will protect is unknown, it expects to secure between 900 and 1,500 acres of donated conservation easements, approximately 11 miles of restored stream buffers, or 20 acres of purchased riparian buffers and bottomlands. Money from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Upper Mississippi River Watershed Fund is being leveraged by nearly \$400,000 in additional resources.

Partners

Ozark Regional Land Trust, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Missouri Department of Conservation

Grant Amount

\$ 50,000



For more information:

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