

2005 Annual Report
MISSOURI
ForestKeepers
A SUMMARY OF NETWORK ACTIVITIES



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In the nine years since the Missouri Forestkeepers Network was launched, volunteers have monitored trees, improved their forests, and planted trees. Some of the most active and dedicated members have been with the program since the beginning, while others have joined just in the last year. The program has grown and expanded, going well beyond the original intent simply to monitor Missouri's forests. Consider the mission of the program today...

To develop a network of informed citizens working to conserve, sustain and enhance Missouri's urban and rural forest resources through volunteerism, advocacy and management.

The Missouri Forestkeepers Network is a program designed to encourage citizens to actively promote and participate in the care of Missouri's forests on a volunteer basis. We want Missourians who:

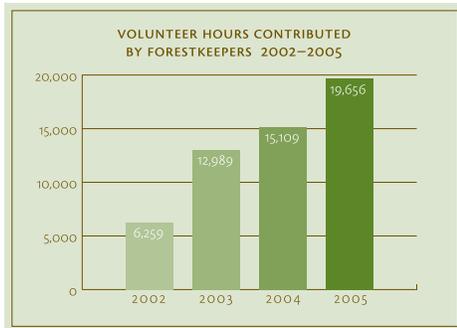
1. Are aware of the benefits of trees and forests to the state of Missouri
2. Understand tree and forest systems
3. Support and participate in the management of forests and trees on public and private land
4. Serve as informed advocates concerning current forestry issues

To achieve these goals, we are striving to:

1. Increase enrollment efforts and the continued participation of current members
2. Foster more involvement in program and support by Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) staff
3. Engage more members in program activities
4. Increase members' awareness of forest management principles and issues
5. Explore future partnerships and private support
6. Update and implement the annual strategic plan

WE'RE STILL MONITORING TREES

Many Forestkeepers are initially attracted to the program because of the opportunity to get outside and work with Missouri's natural resources. Many members submitted activity reports and tree observations in 2005. The fall and spring reporting periods resulted in the submission of reports and observations from 7% of the membership, representing a 12% increase over the previous year.

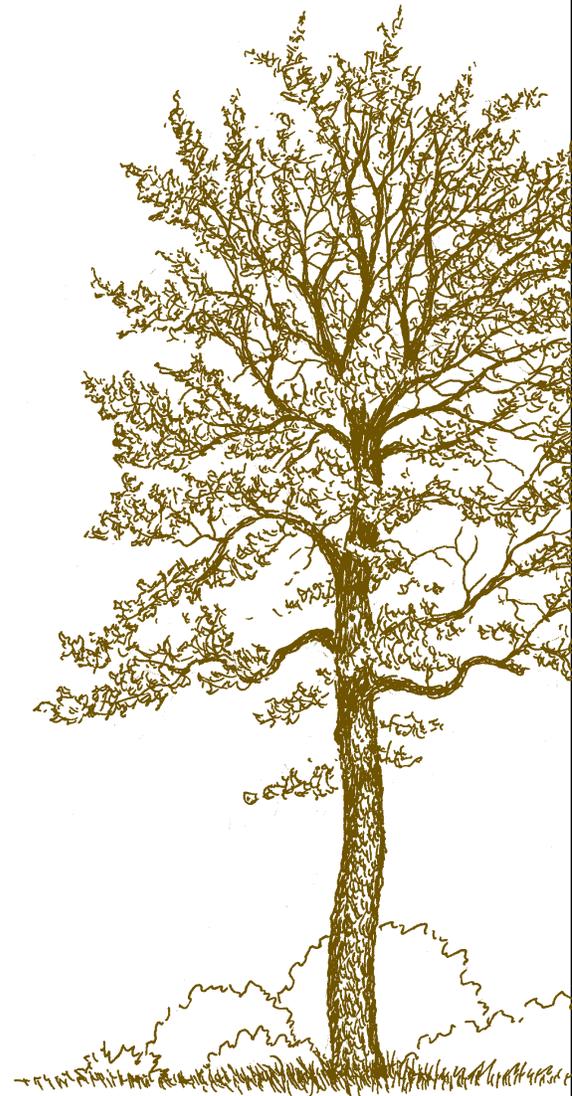
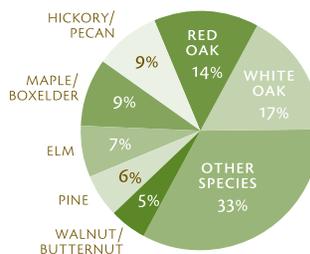


In addition to collecting data, members reported attending environmental conferences and workshops, planting trees, contacting the media, harvesting timber, installing food plots, and monitoring wildlife, among other activities. Overall, members participated in 511 forestry-related activities.

Through these activities, Forestkeepers contributed a total of 19,656 volunteer hours during the year. This is a remarkable 30% increase in volunteer time from that reported from the Network in 2004!

2005 TREE OBSERVATION DATA SUMMARY

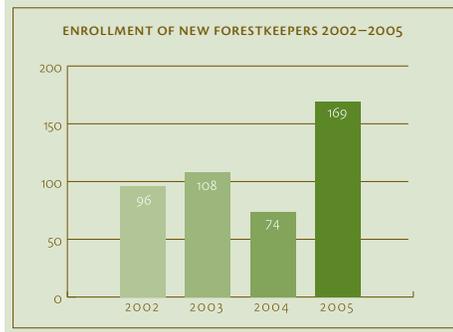
- 121 tree observation projects
- 40 different tree species identified
- 2,023 total trees observed in 47 counties
- The average tree size was 12.86 inches in diameter at breast height



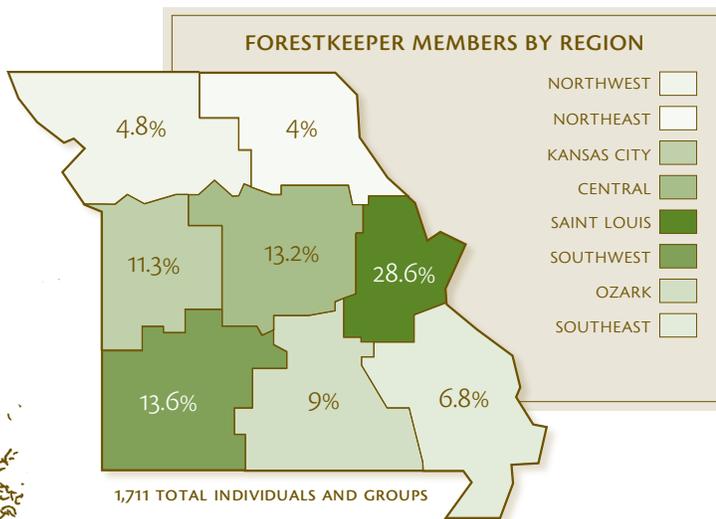
MEMBERSHIP

Enrollment in the program jumped in 2005 with 169 individuals and groups becoming members. This brings the total membership in the Network to 1,711 individuals and groups.

Members in the Network live in most counties in the state. Only Holt, Mercer and Atchison counties in northwest Missouri do not have a Forestkeeper residing in them (see map below).



To better promote the program to the public, a floor display was developed and placed in the MDC Nature Centers and resource offices across the state. The colorful “tree” includes a brochure holder and a place for various announcements. A counter card was also designed and placed in some of the smaller MDC offices.



OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

The Missouri Forestkeepers Network has many outstanding volunteers. Each year it truly becomes more difficult to choose recipients of our annual awards. Award winners are selected based on the activity reports they submit during the previous year. They must also have submitted at least one Tree Observation form. This year's deserving winner was Richard Hashagen, a resident of Phelps County. He was named Outstanding Land Steward and Environmental Educator of the Year for 2005, and is pictured above with Nancy von Brecht of Forest ReLeaf of Missouri (center) and Justine Gartner of the Missouri Department of Conservation.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MISSOURI FORESTKEEPERS NETWORK IN 2005

- Forestkeepers throughout the state contributed volunteer labor valued at nearly \$345,000*.
 - An official logo was designed for the Network to give the program a stronger identity. That logo now appears on the website, in various publications, and on our special incentives for members.
 - The Network newsletter was redesigned to include expanded articles and new features, giving members an opportunity to learn even more about Missouri's trees and forests.
 - We hosted the *First Annual Hunt for Strange and Extraordinary Trees* in the fall. Members responded with some truly amazing images! Selected photos from the hunt may be viewed on the Network's website at www.forestkeepers.org.
 - We also posted tree observation data submitted in 2005 on the website, making this information accessible to all members.
 - In an effort to further increase our service to members, staff began answering calls to the toll-free hotline (1-888-9-FOREST) during regular business hours. Calls were previously answered by a voicemail system.
 - A special introductory workshop was held in Blue Springs in the spring. It was highly rated by participants.
 - At the annual Forestkeepers Conference in Springfield in June, members and their guests enjoyed educational sessions on tree identification and pest problems.
 - New correlations linking Forestkeepers activities to the current teaching standards were developed for teachers for distribution beginning in 2006.
 - A new monitoring opportunity was developed to encourage members to help us find the dwindling number of butternut trees in the state.
 - A *Forest Mentor & Apprentice Program* was announced to help new members get started on their tree observations and other Forestkeeper activities.
 - The 360-plus members willing to share their e-mail addresses received regular electronic updates from the Network.
- * Based on the Independent Sector's valuation of \$17.55 per hour for volunteer time. For more information, visit www.independentsector.org.





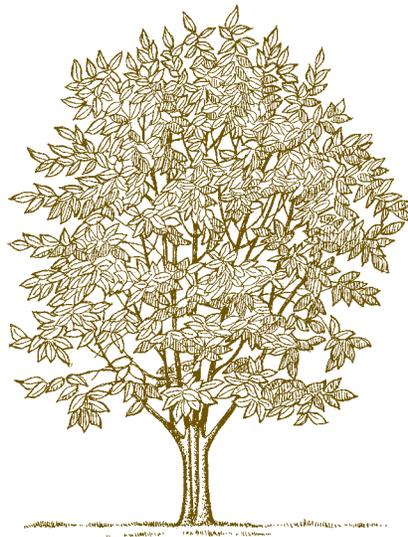
Looking Ahead in 2006

Plans for 2006 are well underway. Several exciting events are already on the calendar. The annual Forestkeepers Conference will be held in the Kansas City area in early summer and will feature sessions on tree identification and tree pests. Shortly thereafter, a focus group composed of Network members will be brought together to help identify exciting new activities and ways to recruit and energize members.

There will also be a **new monitoring opportunity** in the spring as we ask for members' help in identifying and locating pockets of oak wilt. In the fall, we will request assistance in measuring the nut production of oaks in northern Missouri. Data collected by Forestkeepers will be added to that collected by MDC in southern Missouri to get a better idea of the food available for deer and turkey in the state.

Finally, the **Hunt for Strange and Extraordinary Trees** was such a success in 2005 that we will ask members to take to the woods again to photograph nature's oddities. A sampling of the oddest images will be posted on the website when the hunt concludes.

Missouri's forests are among our most important natural resources. The Missouri Department of Conservation is proud of our partnership with Forest ReLeaf of Missouri in administering the Missouri Forestkeepers Network. But most importantly, we are proud of, and very grateful for, the many contributions of the members and citizens who volunteer to help us care for this critical resource.



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