

Fall 2024

Cityscape

Promoting Stewardship for Missouri's Community Forests



MCFC 2024 Annual Conference In Columbia Was A Thrilling Success!

There was a lot of excitement in downtown Columbia August 21-23, 2024 as MCFC members and other community forestry enthusiasts gathered at Columbia's iconic landmark Tiger Hotel for MCFC's annual Conference. Broadly based on the theme of 'Data-Driven Decision Making for Community Forestry', the conference program provided a wide range of useful information. A few of the unique concepts explored include integrating artificial intelligence into arboriculture, utilizing drones, multispectral imaging and LiDAR for tree inventories, and a fascinating look at preventing crime and solving mysteries with trees. Attendees overwhelmingly gained from the interesting and valuable ideas presented by all of the conference speakers, and their efforts and participation in building such a strong conference program is greatly appreciated.

Our gratitude also extends to our conference sponsors and exhibitors, whose generosity brought so much value and assistance toward making this conference a triumph. The Missouri Department of Conservation, Arborjet, and Cambium Tree Expert were our conference Gold Sponsors, Davey Resource Group and Ozark Mountain Biscuit & Bar hosted the special Award Banquet this year, Arthur Ratliff Tree and Stump Removal was a Bronze sponsor, and Break Sponsor was Midwest Trees. Additional exhibitors also include Equipment Share, the Columbia Tree Board, Forrest Keeling Nursery, Pea Ridge Forest, Rainbow Ecoscience, Missouri Department of Agriculture, Tree Diaper, and Forest Releaf of Missouri.

Kudos as well to both the MCFC Administrator, Andy Berg and the Conference Committee which planned and nicely orchestrated this wonderful event. Jacob McMains led the conference committee as chair, with Central Regional MCFC committee members Ann Koenig, Steve Fritz, Dave Dittmer and Brett O'Brien all contributing to it's success.

[See photos and more conference details on following pages!](#)



MCFC 2024 Annual Conference—Continued



Jad Daley, conference keynote speaker, speaks with City of Columbia Mayor, Barbara Buffalo, in the Grand Ballroom of the Tiger Hotel. The Mayor, along with MCFC chair Sarah Crowder, provided the conference welcome and opening remarks to the gathering attendees soon after.

Joe Kovolyan, Director of Landscape Services for the University of Missouri Campus, provides an overview of the University of Missouri Botanical garden during the conference tour on Francis Quadrangle.



Bill Reininger, Executive Director of Tower Grove Park, explores the challenges of creating resilient infrastructure in public open spaces. Joined by Neil Eisenberger from the Lamar Johnson Collaborative in this presentation, they showed why the Tower Grove Park East Stream Restoration Project pushed the boundaries on how we can view and address green infrastructure in the public realm.



MCFC 2024 Annual Conference—Continued

Conference attendees meet and visit with Exhibitors to connect and learn about important products and services offered.



A tree board panel discussion moderated by MDC's Ann Koenig featured tree board members from four different Missouri communities. The panelists each shared their unique experiences, insights and strategies for overcoming obstacles and leveraging resources to enhance community green spaces.

The Annual Award Banquet had a new twist this year as it was an evening event held offsite at the impressive new facility of the State Historical Society of Missouri. In addition to the 2024 presentations of the Missouri Arbor Award of Excellence (see following pages for the winners!), the banquet also featured the conclusion of the conference's Silent Auction. The auction raised 748.00 dollars which will go toward a scholarship program newly created in recognition of the many contributions of MCFC members Martha Clark and Gene Brunk. See last page for more details.



A Note From SYZGY— Stories of Community Engagement From Forest ReLeaf of Missouri



Triangle Park is a natural space located in the historic Ville neighborhood in North St. Louis City. It is not a city park, but a neighborhood oasis for residents. Back in 2019, Northside Community Housing worked with Arbolope Studio to create a space that was pleasant to walk through and that took advantage of the land’s topography. The use of a triangle path functioned best and that’s how the corner lot got its name. As Forest ReLeaf began its EJ work, we noticed all the trees were dead at Triangle Park. We found out that the shut down during Covid-19 had halted its care. In Spring of 2022 our #TreetheVille initiative kicked off with the replanting of 20 native trees. However, we knew we couldn’t just replant the trees and leave the large garden beds overgrown and neglected. Forest ReLeaf and a variety of volunteers have remained dedicated to the maintenance of this park over the last 2 years. On May 23, apprentices from Urban Harvest, along with volunteers from the neighborhood and Arbolope Studio, came together to weed, mulch and plant annuals donated by Brightside. The colorful blooms, and the continued investment by staff and volunteers has neighbors coming out to compliment the efforts, and even better, to join in.



MDC, Missouri Community Forestry Council Announce Missouri Arbor Award of Excellence Winners

For more than 30 years, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the Missouri Community Forestry Council (MCFC) have honored Missourians for making significant and long-lasting efforts to care for trees in their communities.

A new group of recipients were recognized for their efforts with the Missouri Arbor Awards of Excellence for 2024. The awards were presented by MDC Community Forestry Coordinator Russell Hinnah at the annual Missouri Community Forestry Council Conference Aug. 24, 2024.

“The Missouri Arbor Awards of Excellence highlight the people and organizations working to provide sustainable, long-term efforts to care for trees,” said Hinnah. “Their work is extremely important to assure the many economic, social, and environmental benefits of a healthy community forest.”

Trees are visible and valuable assets to every community. They provide numerous benefits, including increasing property values, improving air quality, saving energy, protecting watersheds, and stimulating Missouri’s economy.

The Arbor Award of Excellence recognizes communities, institutions, businesses, organizations, and individuals who have improved trees in their community. Any program, project, or event that significantly contributes to the care or maintenance of trees qualifies for an award.

Nominations for this year’s awards were evaluated on sustainability, innovation, use of sound tree management principles; the contribution to the community, and the effectiveness of the tree care work, event, or program. Four winners were recognized.

Individual – Stan Stevens

Stan has been a well known and dedicated advocate for trees in his home community of Herman for many years. His many contributions include the effort to acquire the Tree City USA designation for Herman, which was achieved in 2005. As a founding member of the Herman Tree Board, Stan has also worked on many community projects such as Herman’s annual Arbor Day events. In addition, Stan was involved in several key aspects of a community forestry cost share project in Herman this past spring. The project, which includes a street tree inventory and a site-specific planting of 20 trees, is part of an ambitious goal to revitalize the tree canopy in downtown Herman.



Stan Stevens (center) receives award from MCFC chair, Sarah Crowder (left) and MDC’s Jason Jensen

Missouri Arbor Award of Excellence—Continued

Municipality/Government—City of Branson

In 2020, the Branson Parks and Recreation Department began a reforestation and ecological restoration project in North Beach Park and the results have been truly amazing. Known for its grove of towering cottonwood trees, North Beach Park is a scenic, 4.2 acre park located on the banks of Lake Taneycomo next to the Branson Landing. Led by Landscape Supervisor Amy Jackson, the focus of the project was to improve the wellness of the existing tree canopy while removing invasive and/or undesirable plant species such as creeping euonymus and poison ivy. In addition, this project included a regenerative planting of native trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs. This project benefited immensely from the assistance of volunteers, including garden clubs, local TreeKeepers, and members from ASM Global, a local organization responsible for the Management of the Branson Convention Center.



Amy Jackson, (center) receives award from MCFC chair, Sarah Crowder (left) and MDC's Jason Jensen

Organization—The Muny

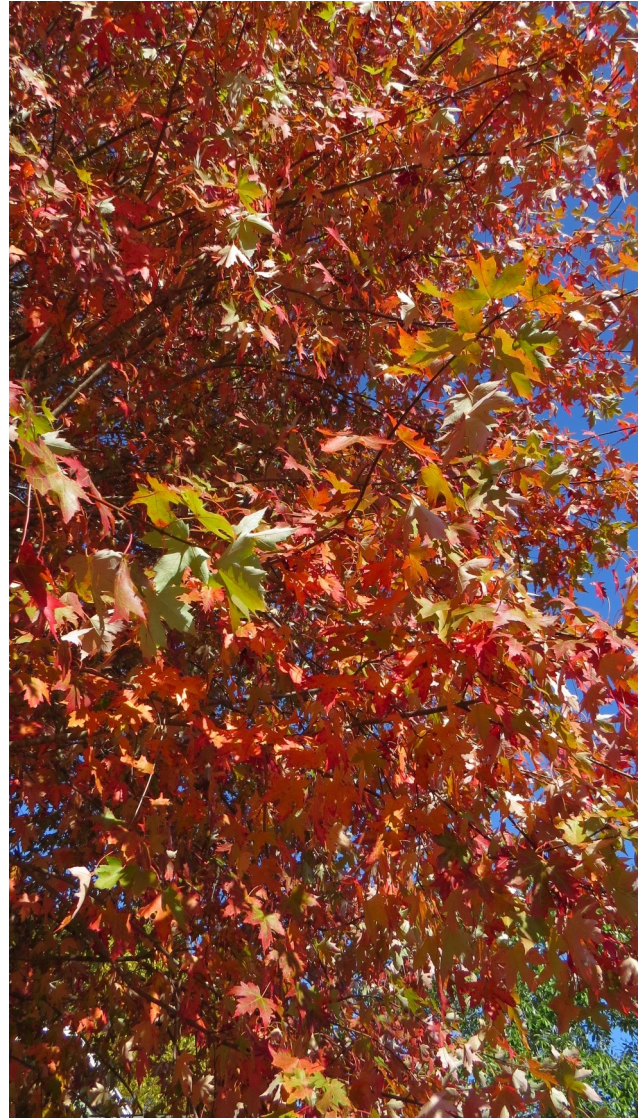
The St. Louis Municipal Opera Theater (Commonly known as The Muny Theater) in Forest Park officially opened in 1919, the stage area delightfully framed by two majestic bur oaks. Sadly, in 2017 extensive root decay was discovered during an inspection of these two oaks prior to a planned stage renovation and the trees were necessarily removed. Since the trees were such an integral component of the theater experience, The Muny decided to invest into Silva Cells, a type of green infrastructure valued for growing healthy trees in restrictive urban areas. The Silva Cells were incorporated into the new stage structure, and seven large trees were transplanted within and are currently thriving. Building on this effort, The Muny has focused on preserving the other mature trees on the theater's ground. To sustain this drive, The Muny has initiated a Tree and Beautification Fund to ensure the uniqueness of this theater in the trees is not lost. To see an inspiring video and more on this project visit the website- [Urban & Community Forestry Services for the Musical Theater Association of St. Louis](#) | [Davey Tree](#)



Sean Smith (center) receives award from MCFC chair, Sarah Crowder (right) and MDC's Jason Jensen

Business/Institutions—Rockhurst University

Noteworthy as one of the first Tree Campus in the Kansas City area, Rockhurst University is commended for the outstanding work of University faculty, staff and students to ensure that green spaces on and around campus are not only beautiful, but also healthy, ecologically diverse, and contributing in a meaningful way toward sustainability as established in Rockhurst’s strategic plan. Among the efforts for which the University was given this award are the planting of dozens of trees of different varieties on and off campus; the establishment of the Kateri Community, a student housing option that is partially focused around the ideas of environmental sustainability; the development of an urban ecology course in the biology program that allows students to research and learn about the unique natural conditions in the city. In addition, students either organized or participated in service projects to clear invasive species such as bush honeysuckle from public spaces in the surrounding communities. Service projects, whether planting and maintaining trees, or invasive plant removal, are a rewarding learning experience for the Rockhurst students and valued as a means to connect to their local community.



Award presentation photo unavailable

Congratulations to all four winners and a job well done for making trees work in their communities! To find out more information on the Missouri Arbor Award of Excellence go to - [Missouri Arbor Award of Excellence | Missouri Department of Conservation \(mo.gov\)](https://www.mo.gov/missouri-arbor-award-of-excellence)



MCFC Volunteers Step up for Maintenance Work Along Veterans Trail of Honor in Springfield

On the cool morning of Oct. 15, 2024, Southwest regional MCFC members took time to spruce up meditation benches and memorial markers along the veterans Trail of Honor in Springfield. Part of the James River Greenway, the one mile section of trail called Trail of Honor is a wonderfully serene pathway that meanders along the banks of the beautiful James River and the edge of the hallowed grounds of the Missouri Veterans Cemetery. The group trimmed shrubs, weeded and mulched beds. Later they took time to re-mulch trees planted in the adjacent Missouri Veterans Cemetery. The following photos shows a few of the volunteers participating in this important and necessary landscape maintenance work. Appreciation and thanks to all!



MCFC Establishes Scholarship Program In Honor of Community Tree Advocates and Founding MCFC Members Gene Brunk and Martha Clark

Knowledge and continual education is a crucial component in any efforts toward implementing lasting improvements in community forestry across Missouri and beyond. This educational component has been central to MCFC's mission since the beginning, whether it's been myth-busting campaigns against poor tree care practices such as tree-topping and "volcano" mulching or providing individualized and/or group arborist training. It's important work, and there is great value in doing more.

As a means to further implement this important educational component, MCFC has created the Brunk-Clark Scholarship program. Named in recognition of two dedicated MCFC advocates, Gene Brunk (Jefferson City) and Martha Clark (St. Joseph), this program aims to empower and assist the community forestry leaders of tomorrow. Funding for this program will primarily be through funds raised by the MCFC Conference's Silent Auction, however additional donations from MCFC supporters and friends are sincerely welcomed.

Program details such as the application process and available funding are still being determined, but expect to hear sometime soon. And remember, MCFC has accomplished much since it's inception, a lot due to the volunteer efforts of MCFC members such as Gene and Martha. It is a tribute to all of them, to keep MCFC moving forward, in it's commitment to community forestry. 🌿



Gene Brunk, stands by framed photo awarded to him recently in recognition of his dedication.



Martha Clark, with a warm smile on a bright day from the 2016 MCFC conference tour of the Springfield Pinetum