



L-A-D FOUNDATION

Since 1962

2014-2015 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY GRANT ACTIVITIES

ENHANCING THE ADAPTIVE CAPACITY OF OZARK WOODLAND AND GLADE ECOSYSTEMS



WCS funds have been essential for purchasing equipment for fireline preparation and prescribed burning operations. Recent additions to our inventory include one additional Stihl chainsaw to help expedite fireline preparation and additional personal protective equipment for our crew members. Our trailer and previously purchased equipment continue to work well.

A job description went out November 17, 2014 for our 2015 stewardship crew.

Two members returned from last year: Melody Matchett, second from left, and Ian McLaughlin, center. These returning members provided useful continuity.

We hired three new members to complete our five person stewardship crew, with members originating from Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, and New York. Each member contributed diverse expertise gained from backgrounds in fire and natural resource management.





Missouri experienced prolonged periods of snow cover this year, making fireline preparation and conducting prescribed burns impossible through most of February. During this time, our stewardship crew was able to cut and burn invasive cedar trees off of glades, further contributing to the restoration of the native species and the adaptability of local natural communities.

Months of planning came together on March 21, 22, and 23, when L-A-D Foundation and its Pioneer Forest staff were joined by National Park Service staff and resources to complete burning of the 1800-acre unit on Jerktail Mountain.

Favorable weather continued through early April, and staff was able to complete two additional burns of our shortleaf pine woodland units.

Favorable weather conditions not only gave us the desired fire effects on the Jerktail Mountain and Virgin Pine units, but humid conditions kept the risk of spot over low, and favorable winds allowed for good smoke-management.





Virgin Pine Burn Unit, March 2015

As of March 31, 2015, we have met or exceeded all goals set out within the WCS grant, including:

- Completing more than 2,100 acres of prescribed burning of Ozark woodland and glade ecosystems
- Developing partnerships and joint burn plans with agencies throughout the region
- Establishing a system of monitoring to measure the effects of burn activities
- Communicating our achievements and discoveries through a variety of media: web page, webinars, and local newspaper reporting

The grant through WCS has allowed us to increase our ability to reintroduce fire to fire-dependent ecosystems. We have gone from approximately 160 acres under management to over 2,100 acres in just two years.

We plan to continue the work we began with the WCS grant to maintain these lands and include additional important areas in the years ahead.



Jerktail Mountain Burn Unit, March 2015



*Fire through cedars,
Jerktail Mountain Burn Unit, March 2015.*

Some challenges remain. We continue to deal with the encroachment of invasive species into glade and woodland areas. For example, *Sericea lespedeza* has increased its presence beneath the more open canopy. We hope to continue removing this and other invasive species throughout the spring and summer.

Plans are underway to conduct avifauna monitoring this spring in conjunction with the US Forest Service.

Fire-effects monitoring of vegetation and fuels will continue with the photo reports of the burn units and fire assessment reports from the National Park Service.

We will continue to work with the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science to communicate our progress on the project web page which they host.



*Fire on a glade at Jerktail
Mountain Burn Unit, March 2015.*



Our 2015 stewardship crew, left to right: Andrew Braun, Jacob Pulfer, Ian McLaughlin, Nathalie Woloszyn, and Melanie Matchett.

We thank them for another great year!