

# THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND

CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE



## LOWER MERAMEC RIVER: *Source Water Demonstration Project*

Between 2001 and 2004, The Trust for Public Land, the U.S. Forest Service, and a team of academics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, conducted four highly successful demonstration projects aimed at protecting forests in watersheds. A few years later, TPL and these partners evaluated the Upper Mississippi River Basin to find a Midwest project that would build upon the early successes of the first four demonstration projects.

The Lower Meramec River Basin was identified as an ideal location for a pilot project to demonstrate how forestland protection and management in watersheds can protect drinking water supplies.

### **TPL's role**

TPL, together with project partners, developed maps that identify target areas for conservation, restoration,

and stormwater objectives in the Lower Meramec River Basin. The team worked with the Meramec River Tributary Alliance (MRTA) to arrive at a plan for on-the-ground implementation of watershed solutions.

### **Project components included:**

- Conducting an analysis of current watershed conditions and producing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps.
- Hosting a strategy exchange—a series of meetings with national, state, and local experts to discuss strategies for watershed education, drinking water protection, stormwater best management practices, septic system improvements, and land conservation techniques.
- Forming a subcommittee and developing action plans for each of the topics discussed at the strategy exchange.

## Project highlights

The MRTA created specific action plans to tackle issues relating to septic system maintenance, stormwater management, voluntary land conservation, and water quality awareness. Some of the project successes include:

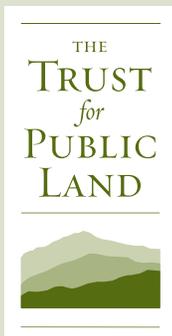
- The strategy exchange provided a format for shared learning between national and regional experts. As the process unfolded, relationships deepened and new ideas took shape: for example, the St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District formed the St. Louis County Phase II Septic Tank Work Group to address issues like landowner outreach for proper maintenance of septic systems.
- The MRTA reached consensus on specific solutions for protecting and restoring the river and its watershed.
- The East-West Gateway Council of Governments secured a \$100,000 grant to complete a watershed plan.
- With help from the Open Space Council (OSC), the Missouri Department of Conservation acquired a 152-acre property located in the La Barque Creek Watershed with help from the Open Space Council (OSC). The land was one of the top-five priority parcels identified in the Source Water Protection Project.
- OSC helped the Missouri Conservation Commission acquire another 428 acres in the LaBarque Creek Watershed for future inclusion in the Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family Conservation Area.

## Results

Local experts and other partners collaborated with national experts using sophisticated mapping technology and a focused forum to develop new solutions. These tools enabled water suppliers, land-use planners, local foresters, and local and state officials to conserve and restore natural resources, drinking water supplies, and important wildlife habitat.

*“The Greenprint created a dedicated group of individuals all working towards land conservation. More than a year after project completion, the group continues to be engaged and working towards implementation of our common goals.”*

—Brittany Barton,  
Open Space Council



*The Trust for Public Land conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.*

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