

WildCare Institute Update

Summer 2013

Created in 2004 to bring together conservation initiatives under a single organization, the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Institute is dedicated to creating a sustainable future for wildlife and for people around the world. The Institute and its 12 centers take a holistic approach to troubled ecosystems by addressing three key ingredients in conservation success: wildlife management and recovery, conservation science and support of the human populations that coexist with wildlife.

Here's the latest news on the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Institute Center activities.



Center for Conservation in Madagascar

Dr. Fidisoa Rasambainarivo (“Fidy”), has been accepted for the University of Missouri-St. Louis graduate program as a Ph.D. student. He is the second student to be accepted into this program. (Allonso Busalleu from Peru earned a master’s degree this summer). Fidy is a Malagasy veterinarian with a long history with the Saint Louis Zoo and the Madagascar Flora and Fauna Group (MFG) and the WildCare Center for Conservation in Madagascar.



Madagascar team wears WildCare Institute T-Shirts.

Saharan Wildlife Recovery Center

This Center provided a Field Conservation Grant to the Mali Elephant Project. In a six-month progress report, Project Director Dr. Susan Canney outlined the challenges faced through a period of intense military action in Mali. “Dr. Carney and her team are true heroes,” said Center Director and Assistant General Curator Bill Houston. “What they have been able to accomplish for these elephants in the midst of intense political turmoil and civil unrest is extremely impressive. Dr. Canney has engendered remarkable commitment and engagement in communities in and around the Gourma region where the elephants live.” To meet the needs of herders from the north and to stave off incursions into habitat set aside for the elephants, project members have built firebreaks funded by the WildCare Institute grant. They built 95 percent of the planned firebreaks in the first six months of the program, and in response to a crisis with a dam in the region, the team’s community outreach has led to establishment of additional firebreaks along the river.

Center for Conservation of the American Burying Beetle

Some 604 of the Saint Louis Zoo’s endangered American Burying Beetles were reintroduced to Wah’ Kon-Tah Prairie in Southwest Missouri on June 4, 2013. The effort, coordinated by WildCare Institute’s Center for American Burying Beetle Conservation, marks the second consecutive year that the beetles have been introduced to this site. “We are in the process of surveying for their offspring, which would be adults now,” said Center Director and Zoological Manager for invertebrates Bob Merz. “I’m very happy to report that in the first week of the two-week survey, we found 13 offspring of the beetle parents that we reintroduced to the wild. It is very encouraging that we are finding offspring since on June 5 a severe storm stalled over the prairie. This storm resulted in precipitation of 1.35 inches of rain in a little over four hours, dumping approximately 145 million gallons of water on our release site in a little over four hours.” He added that a survey like this does not represent all the beetles living in the area but does capture a small amount of the total. It is also

encouraging news because by the time this carrion feeder was placed on the United States federal endangered species list in 1989, the only known remaining population was in Rhode Island. Since its federal listing, field surveys have discovered populations in six other states in the Midwest but none in Missouri. The American Burying Beetle was last found naturally in Missouri in the mid-1970s.

Center for Native Pollinator Conservation

This spring, the Center's PAUSE (Pollinators/Art/Urban Agriculture/Society/and the Environment) project team selected and won approval for a pollinator garden in Florissant, Missouri. The Saint Louis Zoo, the National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi and Tohono Chul Park of Tucson sponsored this program to engage youth in designing and establishing pollinator gardens and pollinator habitat sculptures, while reaching out to residents of urban communities. PAUSE participants were also charged with sharing messages about the importance of developing pollinator habitats within community gardens. This \$200,000 project was paid for in part with an \$86,000 grant from Museums Connect made possible by the U.S. State Department. The three participating institutions covered the remaining costs.

From October 2012 through July 2013, young students chosen as PAUSE participants in St. Louis, Tucson, Arizona and Nairobi, Kenya, learned about pollinators and working on garden design and art projects. A contingent of Kenyan participants visited St. Louis and Phoenix in April, and St. Louis and Tucson PAUSE participants went to Kenya in June.

While some PAUSE participants will continue to work on the 3.5-acre garden site in downtown Florissant, the development of the park in Florissant is now being managed entirely by the WildCare Center for Native Pollinator Conservation. The site near the Saint Ferdinand Shrine will include a community garden (with both individual and shared gardens for food bank donations), an orchard and traditional American Indian "Three Sisters Gardens" in addition to re-creations of early settlers' gardens. The site includes a utility transmission line right-of-way area which will become a restored prairie and pollinator corridor.

Congratulations to Peter Lalampaa, Grevy's Zebra Trust!



Peter Lalampaa (center)

Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund announced Peter Lalampaa as a 2013 Disney Conservation Hero. This award recognizes Peter for his passion and dedication to protecting wildlife and wild places in Kenya. Belinda Mackey, Executive Director of Grevy's Zebra Trust, and Martha Fischer, Director of the Saint Louis Zoo's WildCare Institute Center for Conservation in the Horn of Africa, nominated Peter for his outstanding community conservation work, particularly his conservation efforts to benefit Grevy's zebra and its arid habitat. Peter is one of only 14 Disney Conservation Hero award recipients this year.

Born into a pastoral family, Peter spent his childhood herding his family's cattle. His daily interactions with wildlife, such as tracking wildlife routes to water sources for his cattle herds, sparked a passion for wildlife and the environment in Peter at a very young age. Through school and into adulthood, Peter followed his passion and strived to fulfill his lifelong dream of becoming a conservationist, always hoping to find ways to strengthen the link between pastoral livelihoods and ecosystem health. By conserving wildlife and its habitat, Peter knows it will also be possible to improve the livelihoods of his people, creating a win-win situation.

Peter played a critical role in the early development of the Grevy's Zebra Trust, a non-profit organization in northern Kenya dedicated solely to the conservation of one of the world's most endangered large mammals, the Grevy's zebra. Over the past six years, he has been a key member of the leadership team which has continued to grow the Trust into the respected and successful conservation organization that it is today.



Chawna Schuette with Ozark hellbender

Zoo Hellbender Keeper Given Top Award

Zoo Herpetarium Keeper Chawna Schuette, who has played a major role in the captive breeding and reproductive success of the Ozark hellbender, was awarded the Joseph Laszlo Memorial Award on August 3 at final ceremonies of the International Herpetological Symposium held in New Orleans. Since 1991, this award has been

presented to the speaker at the IHS meeting who has demonstrated that his or her work represents new and exciting views and advances in herpetology. The award recognizes the lifelong achievements and contributions to the field of herpetology by the late Joseph Laszlo, long-term Superintendent of the Department of Reptiles at the San Antonio Zoo, San Antonio, Texas. "The symposium was pleased to recognize Chawna not only because of the importance of the research but also because she represents the next generation of scientists who are important to the future of species like the hellbender," says Ken Foose, President of the International Herpetological Symposium, Inc. "Bringing young people into conservation science that helps us protect salamanders and other herpetological species is critical to the health of our ecosystem and to early detection of problems in the environment that could affect human health." Ms. Schuette's presentation, "Captive Propagation and Egg Incubation of the Ozark Hellbender at the Saint Louis Zoo," covered the science and practices behind the success of the Zoo's WildCare Institute Ron Goellner Center for Hellbender Conservation in reproducing the endangered Ozark hellbender. In 2011, the Center and Zoo announced the first-ever captive breeding of this salamander. Chawna Schuette began her career as an intern at the Saint Louis Zoo in 1998.



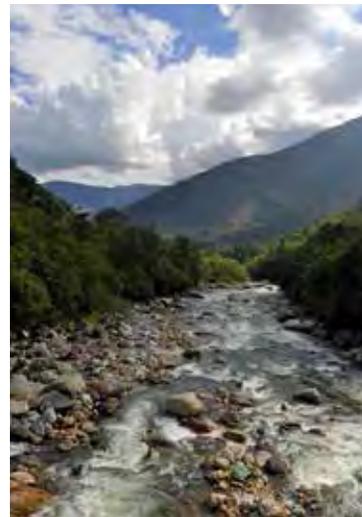
Zoo Pursued, Won Grant for Ecuadorian Center Dedicated to Housing Critically Endangered Frogs

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has awarded \$24,700 to the Quito, Ecuador, Centro Jambatu de Investigacion y Conservacion

de Anfibios (Jambatu Center for Research and Conservation of Amphibians). The grant application was supported by the Saint Louis Zoo, a center partner since 2006.

Founded in 2011, the Centro Jambatu's staff and students manage over 24 species of amphibians, 15 of them listed as critically endangered. Eleven of the 15 have been reproduced at Centro Jambatu—making their assurance population of amphibians one of the most significant and largest in the western hemisphere. The grant will go toward building an additional frog building with frog rooms, feeder insect room and meeting/office space to help save eight species of harlequin frogs from extinction through breeding and management. Most of the harlequin frog species are listed as critically endangered and endangered with a very high risk of extinction—a problem faced by as much as half of the planet's more than 6,000 amphibian species.

Rising temperatures, habitat destruction and the spread of the deadly chytrid fungus have wiped out multiple amphibian species in recent years. Amphibian chytrid fungus has quickly spread from Africa across the planet; it affects amphibians' skin—a vital organ they use for drinking and breathing. Scientists are working to find a cure for this deadly disease.



"Ecuador is lucky to have one of the world's finest amphibian biologists, Dr. Luis Coloma, as a resident. With the world's amphibian populations in drastic decline, the Saint Louis Zoo's WildCare Institute made a decision to support Dr. Coloma and his ongoing program dedicated to the conservation and sustainability of Ecuadorian

amphibians," says Mark Wanner, Saint Louis Zoo Zoological Manager of Herpetology & Aquatics. "Centro Jambatu is a great example of scientific research, captive breeding and strong collaborative effort to ensure species survival. Due to the factors affecting wild amphibian populations today these assurance colonies become the last hope for many unique amphibian species."

Ecuador is unique in having 70 percent of the world's flora and fauna species within its boundaries, including 448 known species of amphibians.



Saint Louis Zoo
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