

Resourceful wetlands

The St. Charles Ecopark wetland tries to rebuild part of Missouri's natural landscape. Like all wetlands, this one is useful for both wildlife and humans. The list of wetland benefits is long. Along a river, wetlands can reduce flooding, filter pollutants, prevent soil erosion, recharge groundwater, and attract hundreds of species from dragonflies to great blue herons.

You'll notice that different plants prefer differences in moisture or water depth. For example, water plantain and sedges may grow at wetland edges, with pickerel weed and rushes in shallow standing water.

When the Missouri was a river of constant movement, it created channels, bars, and wetlands, all habitat for plants and animals. Now most wetlands in Missouri are disconnected from their rivers or gone completely. That's why it's even more important to save the wetlands we have left.



Top to bottom: Great egret. B.K. Leach Memorial Conservation Area on Mississippi River, Arrowhead (foreground), a common wetland plant, American lotus.



Top to bottom: Red-winged blackbird, Southern leopard frog, Muskrat, Wood ducks. (All photos courtesy of Missouri Department of Conservation)