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Honeysuckle Project to Begin at Creve Coeur Park

ST. LOUIS – Volunteers organized by the St. Louis Audubon Society and St. Louis County Parks will begin removing invasive Asian bush honeysuckle from Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park on Saturday, November 13th. The plant has no natural controls and is spreading rapidly throughout the Park, degrading the landscape for birds and our native plants. The project continues a program designed to enhance the natural areas of the Park for the benefit of birds and other wildlife and for the enjoyment of the general public. In just eight months last year, over 300 volunteers planted 900 trees, removed nearly 8,000 pounds of trash from the Creve Coeur Creek watershed and restored 6 acres of wetland.

Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park is the largest unit of the St. Louis County Park System. It includes 2,100 acres in northwest St. Louis County, with more than 600 acres reserved for natural areas. Audubon chose the Park for the program largely due to its status as an internationally-recognized Important Bird Area (IBA). IBAs are sites that provide essential breeding, wintering or migration habitat to one or more bird species of conservation concern. Creve Coeur Park is one of only three areas so-designated within St. Louis County.

“The Missouri Department of Conservation and St. Louis County Parks have made the elimination of bush honeysuckle a priority,” said Mitch Leachman, executive director of the St. Louis Audubon Society. “A diverse array of native plants are lost everywhere honeysuckle takes hold—leading to a cascade effect on the ecosystem. Native insects will not feed on the ‘foreign’ plants, and the insect populations fall, leading to a decline in songbirds who depend upon them for food.”

Volunteers of all ages are welcome to register for the workday, from 9am to 1pm on November 13th, by providing their name, contact information and number attending at stlaudubon@charter.net or (314) 599-7390. Those under the age of 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times. No experience is required and lunch will be provided. “Workdays such as this are a great way for the Community to be involved in our parks and natural areas,” said Leachman. “Seeing what you personally helped accomplish after a morning of hard work is rewarding, especially when shared with a like-minded group.”

The overall restoration program is being funded, in part, by a grant from the National Audubon Society’s TogetherGreen program (www.togethergreen.org) which aims to provide leadership and opportunities that inspire people to take action at home and in their communities to improve the health of our environment. TogetherGreen is fully funded by Toyota and currently supporting 38 projects across the country—only two of which are in Missouri. Photos from previous workdays can be viewed at the chapter’s Flickr site, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/47550862@N08/>.

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Founded in 1915, St. Louis Audubon became the first affiliated chapter of the National Audubon Society in 1944 and shares its vision to create a community connection to nature through education and conservation. With a focus on birds, St. Louis Audubon provides the general public with classroom education programs, education seminars, field trips, and hands-on conservation projects. Representing over 3,000 members in the 10 county area of Greater St. Louis, it is the largest Audubon chapter in the state of Missouri.