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For Immediate Release

Alliance of Conservation Groups Announce Biodiversity Plan for Region

BiomeSTL will be unveiled at a Thursday even at the Missouri Botanical Garden

WHAT: Wild Ideas Worth Sharing: *BiomeSTL*

WHEN: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 1

WHERE: Ridgway Visitor Center at the Missouri Botanical Garden, 4344 Shaw Blvd., south St. Louis

COST: Free, [registration required](#)

INFO: www.mobot.org; (314) 577-5100, 1-800-642-8842 toll free

(ST. LOUIS): A new regional Biodiversity Vision, Atlas, and Action plan, will be unveiled Thursday at an event at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

The event, which is part of the Garden's Wild Ideas Worth Sharing speaker series, will introduce *BiomeSTL*. The event is free and open to the public. It starts at **6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 1 at the Ridgway Visitor Center**. Registration is required by **Wednesday, Oct. 31**. Free refreshments will be served.

BiomeSTL: Biodiversity of Metropolitan St. Louis is the result of a multi-year effort to place natural assets at the center of how communities are designed, planned, and sustained. This alternative atlas aims to transform how the 2.8 million residents of the region see, understand and actively care for the place where they live. It will serve as both a practical resource for decision-makers and a catalyst for community action.

"The human-drawn lines of city and county boundaries play a huge role in how we function and live. But nature missed the memo on those boundaries," said Sheila Voss, Vice President of Education at Missouri Botanical Garden and co-chair of the project team. "Our rivers, creeks, streams, woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, caves, and bluffs literally connect us all. These places, and the diversity and quality of life they enable, are undervalued community assets."

More than just a series of maps, *BiomeSTL* will serve as a regional hub for ecological data, species inventories, biodiversity corridor projects and plans, case studies, research findings, nature-friendly policies and practices and a county-by-county inventory of community groups actively stewarding local landscapes. Phase I of the project – a vision map and ecological data directory – will be made available online by the end of the year.

A regional citizen science inventory is [already available on iNaturalist](#), a global platform that leverages citizen observations to document biodiversity around the world. The project boasts more than 40,000 observations of biodiversity in metro St. Louis submitted by citizens of all ages.

“The target audience is not just decision-makers within cities and counties who shape long-term land use and development strategies, but also the general public,” said Louise Bradshaw, Director of Education at Saint Louis Zoo and co-chair of the OneSTL biodiversity working group. “The citizen science component is one simple way that everybody can get involved.”

Donna Coble, Executive Director of Forest ReLeaf of Missouri and project team co-chair, said one key to the project is that it’s not “starting from scratch.”

“St. Louis has an impressive mix of conservation leaders – non-profits, agencies, universities, businesses, citizen groups – who have been at this for decades. BiomeSTL is just the next chapter that stitches together this good work, and serves it up in both a useful and motivational way,” she said.

The BiomeSTL atlas and action plan is just one part of the much broader, regional OneSTL sustainability plan, activated by six multi-sector working groups focused on a range of issues and opportunities including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, expanding access to healthy food, increasing biodiversity, advancing transit-oriented development, reducing waste and protecting waterways.

“The St. Louis region is coming together to improve public health, grow the economy, and create a more sustainable future,” said Aaron Young, sustainability planning manager at East-West Gateway Council of Governments, which led the creation of the OneSTL plan.

Each working group was tasked with development of a single target, which, when achieved, could collectively advance sustainability in the region. The goal is for all of metropolitan St. Louis to be using a regional biodiversity vision, atlas and action plan to guide their planning, policies and practices by 2025.

For more information about the BiomeSTL project, the organizations involved, and how you can participate, visit www.mobot.org/biomeSTL.

For more information about the OneSTL Sustainability Plan and how you can pledge your support, visit <https://onestltargets.org>

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