



SIERRAN NEWSLETTER

Volume 54, Number 2

WINTER 2023

From the Field: Building Community Through Deep Canvassing



Dani Loma-Jasso, Grassroots Organizing Intern

"How much power do you have over your utility?" That's the question I've been asking residents near the Hawthorn coal plant in downtown Kansas City. The answer? People feel disenfranchised, disappointed, and discouraged. It is my job to help them recognize their own power and stand together with them to make a difference.

Folks are frustrated by the lack of accountability utilities like Evergy have to the community. Even after making their homes more energy efficient, their utility bills are climbing and coal pollutes their air. Evergy has a pattern of not listening-- even after residents and the City of Kansas City called for Hawthorn to be closed, Evergy pushed back its retirement date. Our neighbors are tired of being ignored.

That's where deep canvassing comes in. Deep canvassing is a conversation where we share our stories and experiences. We are able to build trust and find solutions that are rooted in understanding, not talking points. This work has been so powerful for me. As a first generation immigrant woman, there have been times when I have been frustrated by my lack of voice. The people I speak with have felt the same way, but I've found if I show vulnerability, people will reciprocate and are more open to telling me their stories and have a chance to be heard. This is why I love grassroots organizing. Because I know that together and through understanding, we can make real change in our community. So come join me on the doors and see for yourself how transformative these conversations can be and watch us win, together!



Grassroots Organizing Intern, Dani, hits the doors in Pendleton Heights and Indian Mound neighborhoods. Photo by: Dani Loma-Jasso



Preparation meeting before Deep Canvassing. From left: Michael Berg, Janet Blauvelt, Ryan Philyaw, Kevin Grooms, & Billy Davies. Photo by Billy Davies

Unlike other forms of canvassing, deep canvassing shows behavior change for long periods of time!

Hawthorn emits nearly 3 million tons of CO₂, SO₂, and NO_x each year causing major health issues.

Get involved & learn more at sc.org/kickcoalkc

Tenets of Deep Canvassing

- Stories, Not Debate**
Create mutual understanding grounded in lived experiences.
- Empathy & Vulnerability**
Sharing our stories leads us away from prejudice, stigma, or fear and allows us to consider other perspectives.
- Curiosity, Not Persuasion**
Asking open-ended questions that seek to understand people's values, beliefs, and experiences.
- Listening to Understand**
Build trust and respect to build a better future *together*.

Hawthorn is an environmental justice concern- the community is 44% people of color, more than twice the state average.

CHAPTER CHAIR'S COLUMN

Going Deeper



By Kevin Grooms, Chapter Chair

This fall, I've had a chance to learn about deep canvassing, as part of a pilot project the Missouri Sierra Club is leading. It's actually something I've wanted to do for a while now, and my first experience of it was not exactly what I expected.

If you're unfamiliar with deep canvassing, it's more involved than a traditional canvass, when volunteers spend time knocking on doors of local voters in support of a candidate or campaign, with the simple goal of having that voter's support at the ballot box. It's a quick interaction, ending with a "Yes/No/Maybe," then it's on the next door, and hopefully dozens more by the end of the canvass.

For a traditional canvass, a political or fundraising campaign talks to folks who are likely to support their cause and vote or donate funds. But deep canvassers talk to a larger variety of people, including many who might not see things your way, at least at first. And the goal is not to knock on as many doors as possible, or to approach people with a simple "ask" and move on, but rather to have a conversation, and to listen at length to that person's viewpoint without judgment. If we can establish rapport, and find some common ground, the canvasser then shares their story, and why they see an

issue a certain way. By now, the person at the door has begun to see this issue a little differently, and may begin to change their mind.

I assumed this would come easy to me. Thanks to the Sierra Club, I've had no shortage of contact with new people—whether on a petition drive or getting out the vote, every stranger is just a friend I haven't met yet!

But I found myself a little hesitant. It's not that I have little to say about the issue here, not at all. Our campaign is to close the Hawthorn power plant, one of the last remaining coal-fired plants in the country to operate in a densely populated urban area. The people we're talking to live up the hill from the plant, in the direct line-of-fire of its massive smokestack you can see for miles. I have facts on why this plant needs to close, but that's not what I was supposed to share. The reason I was hesitant was that I hadn't taken enough time that morning to reflect on my own story.

See, the reason this sort of campaign works is that research shows that people do not change their minds based upon fact, but based upon their feelings. On a deep canvass, we're there to share our personal story, a real-lived experience, that might be relatable to a potential action-taker in an affected community. When it comes to spouting facts, which we've all done in the heat of a debate (and I did by sheer habit on this particular afternoon), we're setting up the perfect conditions for a retreat behind our respective lines in the sand we like to draw, with the deeply held

beliefs that keep our self identities in tact—and prevent us from changing our minds.

Many of you have taken an action that included sharing your experience.

If you've spoken with a legislator, or a regulator, from the informal face-to-face to the podium at an official hearing, just your presence allowed you to demonstrate your deeply felt experience. The more personal your story, of how pollution affects you and your loved ones, or why you feel it's important to be a member of Sierra Club, the quicker you can get your idea across, especially to someone with a different perspective. I know when I go back out to this neighborhood to talk about the power we actually have against a major utility, I'm going to focus more than ever on my "why" for being there at their door, on the moments that serve as my inspiration to be a climate activist.

You know why you're in the Sierra Club, and why you strive for environmental justice. If you had to tell someone, out loud, why you care so much, what's your story?



Janet Blauvelt, and Kevin Grooms deep canvassing in Kansas City. Photo Credit: Billy Davies

THE SIERRAN A biannual publication of the Missouri Sierra Club

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Support Your Passion for a Just and Sustainable World

Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's Missouri Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as the beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.

To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.



Julia Curtis • (800) 932-4270 • giftplanning@sierraclub.org • myplan.sierraclub.org

SNAPSHOTS FROM AROUND THE STATE



Sierra Club's Jenn DeRose, Michael Berg and Andy Heaslet. Photo by Jenn DeRose.



Sierra Club staff members, who are represented by the Progressive Workers Union joined UAW Local 2250 in Wentzville to stand in solidarity with auto workers in this fight for a just, clean energy economy. Big automakers owe their employees a fair contract that uplifts these workers at the forefront of the clean energy transition and their communities.



Dan Chiles, tree farmer and former Springfield City Council member and Mayor Pro-Tem presented "An Optimists' Guide to Climate Change" at a White River Group event in August. Photo by Pam Shaver.



Mid-Missouri Group members Christine Doerr, Alyce Turner and MO State Representative Adrian Plank at Columbia Walk for the Climate. Photo by Peter Schneeberger.



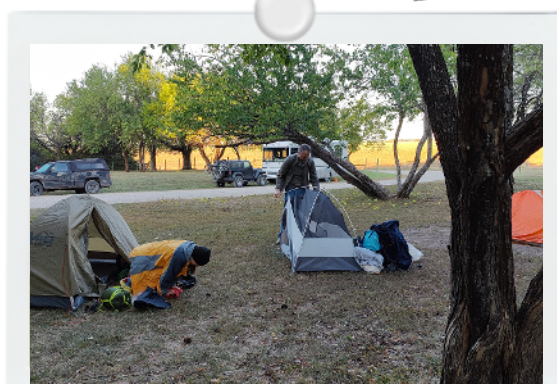
UAW Member with Sierra Club's Leah Clyburn. Photo by Jenn DeRose.



Group photo from a Thomas Hart Benton Group Backpacking Class Shakedown. Photo by Matt Verhulst.



Mid-Missouri Group members Christian Sasse and Peter Schneeberger at Pridefest in Columbia, MO. Photo by Christine Doerr.



Eastern Missouri Group Outings Leader Matt Self lead an overnight backpacking trip in Hawn State Park in October. Photo by Matt Self.



Participants gathered around the campfire at the THB Backpacking Class Shakedown. Photo by Matt Verhulst.

— 2023 IN REVIEW —



By Gretchen Waddell Barwick,
Chapter Director

Sometimes the road to a clean and healthy planet seems insurmountable. Progress is slow. Anti-environmental talking points and misinformation are prevalent. It can be hard to remember how much we have accomplished and celebrate our wins!

The Sierra Club Missouri Chapter has been empowering people to explore, enjoy and protect Missouri for more than 50 years. We've already been able to build so much together, and **we're more ready than ever to take on our next fights.**

Together, we're fighting to make change:

- Missouri politicians want to make it easier for polluters to contaminate our land, air, and water. Our lobbying teams and volunteer leaders are in Jefferson City speaking up for you. Every time you respond to an email or show up at a lobby day, you are making our movement more powerful.
- We need to demand that our wild spaces are protected, not decimated through mining, private development, and factory farms. Our staff and volunteers are successfully finding resources and opportunities to protect our beautiful natural resources through administrative advocacy and community organizing.



2,500 MW of wind energy coming to MO

The Public Service Commission approved the Grainbelt Express Wind Transmission Line and cited Sierra Club's Ready for 100 cities in the decision.



Hosted 150+ outings

Sierra Club leaders took hundreds of folks out to explore and enjoy our planet through hikes, service trips, trail maintenance, river clean ups, backpacking trips, and more!



Stopped dozens of dangerous bills in Jeff City

Our activists stopped dozens of harmful anti-democracy and anti-environmental bills from career politicians and their big money backers.



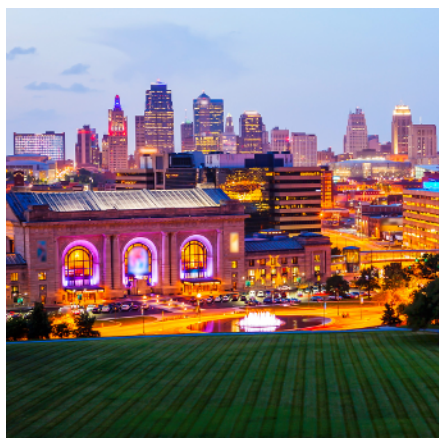
Demanded EPA take action in MO

After decades of inaction by the MO Department of Natural Resources, we sent a public letter calling on the EPA to intervene and protect Missouri's clean air and water.

- Sometimes we need to remember why we do this work. Which is why we are proud to support our dozens of outings leaders statewide who help us explore and enjoy our planet.
- Local wins led by local activists are making the difference in our climate activism. Local solutions to climate issues are pushing the envelope and helping communities become more climate resilient. This means stronger communities where people actually want to live and thrive.

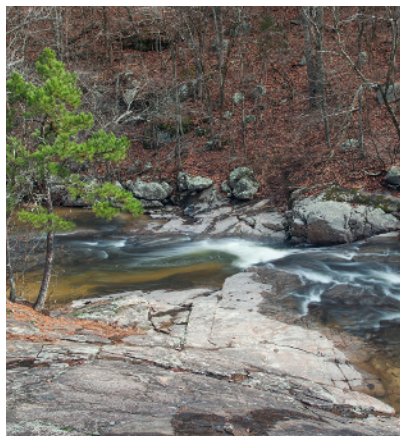
The way the Sierra Club, Missouri Chapter makes change is making waves. We are winning and we can keep winning. We spend our time and resources empowering Missourians to be changemakers. This work is driven not by the few, but by the many. This work is tough, but rewarding. This work is a marathon, not a sprint.

Thank you for helping us make a difference! I hope we will see you at an event this year as we celebrate the joy of our movement and come together for a healthy, livable planet.



KC's stronger, energy efficient building code

After two years of advocacy, Kansas City has adopted the best building code in the state. State politicians tried to attack this and other codes, but we defeated HB580!



Protected Hawk State Park

The people stepped up and said "no way!" to a silica mine near Hawk State Park. Through advocacy, local action, and legal action, we won! We are proud to protect our parks, natural spaces, and clean water.

2024

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS



Real Solutions for Clean Energy

This year holds dozens of opportunities for real, meaningful investment in a clean energy future. From utility planning and federal funding opportunities, to local projects, 2024 will be a big year for Missourians!



Protect Land, Water, and Air

The key to meeting our conservation goals is to find ways to protect large and small pieces of land. This can be extremely time consuming and complex. Check out our 30x30 toolkit to learn how you can make a difference in your community.



Get Outdoors

In 2024, we will continue to invest in our statewide outings leaders' training and resources. Outings are a key tool in building our base and sharing Missouri's beauty.



Power of the People

We will focus on engaging community members and providing opportunities for advocacy on Sierra Club priorities. We hope to see you out there!



Stop Dangerous Legislation

Jefferson City politicians are already introducing bills that want to uphold the fossil fuel industry and make it harder to protect our clean air, clean water, and public lands. We will stop them again!



Train Community Leaders

We can't achieve our goals alone. We need strong community leaders like you. In 2024, we will teach our leaders grassroots organizing best practices so they can make change in their backyards.



Have fun!

We are a club! In 2024 we will invest time and energy to spend time together and share our joy in our work!

VOTE for Chapter ExCom!

What is Chapter ExCom?

The Missouri Sierra Club Executive Committee (ExCom) guides the Chapter and our work throughout the state. As a member, you have the opportunity to vote on statewide leadership in addition to your own local group elections. At the Chapter level, we have 7 incredible candidates for your consideration. We invite you to learn more about the candidates and to VOTE!

★ Deadline to Vote ★
Ballots must be received by **Friday January 12, 2024** in order to be counted.

How to Vote by Mail

1. Use the ballot on page 7 with your address label attached to the back. This identifies you as an eligible voting Missouri Sierra Club member. You can also send by mail the entire page if that is easier. *Ballots without the correct name and member ID will not be counted.*
2. Vote for up to SIX (6) candidates. Indicate your choices by marking an X through the box to the left of the candidate's name on the ballot. If yours is a joint membership, two (2) members may vote, each in their own column.
3. Mail the ballot! Write **BALLOT** on the outside, and mail it to: Elections Committee Sierra Club PO Box 432010 St. Louis, MO 63143. Be sure your address and membership number are included on the back of your ballot.

How to Vote by Online

1. Visit: www.sierraclub.org/missouri-2023-chapter-excom-elections OR scan the QR Code below
2. Vote for up to SIX (6) candidates. You can only vote one time.



Scan to vote!

Questions? Contact Chapter Coordinator Ashton Kuehnel for support : Ashton.Kuehnel@sierraclub.org

Chapter Executive Committee Candidate Statements



Kevin Grooms

I live in Raytown in the KC area, and have been a volunteer leader for the Thomas Hart Benton group and the Missouri Chapter for 6 years. I have a passion for advocating for a clean and safe environment, and my most rewarding experiences have been representing Sierra Club in various campaigns, including speaking on behalf of clean air and water in legislators' offices, at the podium at municipal meetings, to the local media, and before regulatory bodies such as the Public Service Commission, MO Department of Resources, and the EPA. With a mind on our strategic goals and the best use of our chapter resources, I have collaborated with other leaders in the state to ensure the success of our fundraising priorities, encouraged the support of our outings programs, and taken opportunities to raise our chapter's needs to the national organization. Areas for progress in the coming year include fitting Missouri's goals into the Club's new emphasis on field organizing, and taking advantage of the election year to get more environmental champions in office at the local, state and national levels.



Katie Hasty

I am a recovering journalist and ruthlessly organized content analyst living in Waldo, KCMO. Originally from Overland Park, KS, I returned to the metro in 2020 after stints in L.A., Brooklyn, Chicago, and Austin. I joined Sierra Club in 2022 and I've volunteered with Mothers Out Front KC and local food rescue organizations since 2021. Working in the entertainment industry for 20+ years has provided me with a wealth of experience and skills in media + communications, data analysis, budgeting, networking, people management, and operations. Additionally, I'm a seasoned hiker, surviving NYC bike commuter, and fledgling gardener. I want to make the world a better place for my son.



Helen Host

Growing up in western Pennsylvania, I was blessed to be in a family that enjoyed outdoor adventures: camping, hiking, and exploring through all 48 contiguous US states before college. These experiences instilled in me a love of the outdoors and appreciation for environmental preservation. I am a wife and mother, a trail runner, a cyclist, a skier and outdoor enthusiast! Professionally, I am a Physical Therapist with a PhD from Washington University in Saint Louis; my 30+ year professional career has been focused on improving health and wellness in individuals. As a long-time supporter of environmental organizations including the Sierra Club, I realized in 2018 that I needed to become a more active participant in creating change. I've enjoyed volunteering as an Executive Committee member these last 2 years and hope to continue in this role. Working with other passionate Sierra Club members for a more livable planet is very motivating; together we can truly all make a difference. My career experiences plus my love of the outdoors and strong devotion towards preserving and improving our world's environment, make me a strong & enthusiastic candidate for this Sierra Club role.

Chapter Executive Committee Paper Ballot

Household Voter 1

Individual Membership, use this column.
Joint Membership, **Voter 1** use this column.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> KEVIN GROOMS | <input type="radio"/> DEBI PRATT |
| <input type="radio"/> KATIE HASTY | <input type="radio"/> SARAH RICHMOND |
| <input type="radio"/> HELEN HOST | <input type="radio"/> STEPHANIE TODD |
| <input type="radio"/> TSION PICHON | |

Vote for up to SIX (6),
One voter per household, per
column

Household Voter 2

Joint Membership, **Voter 2** use this column.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> KEVIN GROOMS | <input type="radio"/> DEBI PRATT |
| <input type="radio"/> KATIE HASTY | <input type="radio"/> SARAH RICHMOND |
| <input type="radio"/> HELEN HOST | <input type="radio"/> STEPHANIE TODD |
| <input type="radio"/> TSION PICHON | |

Vote for up to SIX (6),
One voter per household, per
column

Chapter Executive Committee Candidate Statements Cont'd



Tsion Pichon

A St. Louis native, I'm currently an honor roll student completing a degree in Soil Science Research through Oregon State University. I am a soil conservation enthusiast, an amateur entomologist (and therefore an amateur photographer), and an avid explorer of the outdoors. I am often looking up in the sky for birds of prey.



Debi Pratt

Protecting Missouri's beautiful lands, waterways, and air quality is very important to me-- making these available to all Missourians is similarly important. I believe the best hope for our future environment comes when we invite everyone to be part of the solutions. Advocating for an inclusion, equitable environment is my main goal in serving on the Missouri Chapter ExCom. My past volunteer skills include organizing, fundraising, social justice advocacy work, financial management, and other community-level volunteerism. I consider it a privilege to share these skills in helping to meet the Sierra Club goals.



Sarah Richmond

I have been passionate about environmentalism my whole life. I grew up lucky enough to have a connection to our beautiful woods, fields, lakes and rivers here in Missouri, and it is my biggest hope that the next generation is able to enjoy the same. Serving on the Sierra Club ExCom is my small action towards that brighter future. My boyfriend and I love to ride the Katy Trail, go paddle boarding and take our dogs hiking whenever we can.



Stephanie Todd

I have enjoyed my first term on the Executive Committee; meeting and working with people to support the environment. I also better understand the challenges our environment faces and have gained knowledge on how to address them. My background dealing with government programs, project management and communication has helped me support and develop our strategic plans and priorities. Some of the things I helped accomplish were improvements to the outings program by soliciting input via a survey, providing input to a draft bill that would prohibit pesticides in St. Louis City, and participating in discussions to reduce flooding in the St. Louis area. I am also very active on the Conservation Committee and often act as a liaison between Dark Sky Missouri and the St. Louis Audubon Society. I fully support the Sierra Club's mission that includes protecting our parks, fighting for clean air and water, supporting environmentally friendly candidates, and providing education about the environment. I look forward to continuing to work hard to further the Sierra Club's goals and appreciate your vote for a second term.

Vote in your LOCAL GROUP election by January 12, 2024!

Are you a member of the Mid-Missouri Group (MMG), Thomas Hart Benton Group (THB) or White River Group (WRG)? Vote online to learn more about the candidates running for your local group Executive Committee elections. Follow the links or QR codes below to learn more about candidates and to access your ballot.

MMG

[www.sierraclub.org/
2023-MMO-excom-
candidates](http://www.sierraclub.org/2023-MMO-excom-candidates)



THB

[www.sierraclub.org/
2023-THB-excom-
candidates](http://www.sierraclub.org/2023-THB-excom-candidates)



WRG

[www.sierraclub.org/
2023-WRG-excom-
candidates](http://www.sierraclub.org/2023-WRG-excom-candidates)





SIERRA CLUB

MISSOURI CHAPTER

PO BOX 432010 | ST. LOUIS, MO 63143



STAFF PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to the following Missouri-based Sierra Club staff members who recently received promotions!



William Davies, Jenn DeRose, and Marisa Frazier were promoted to Senior Field Organizers.



Ashton Kuehnel started her new role as Missouri Chapter Coordinator



Andy Knott was promoted to Deputy Regional Field Director, Central Region



Ed Smith was promoted to Senior Press Secretary, Central Region.

Staff Features

Sierrans hike at Hawn State Park. Photo credit: Matt Self

Welcoming our newest Sierran, Maeve Murphy Davies!

The Missouri Chapter welcomes our newest Sierran to our team and our beautiful planet. Maeve Murphy Davies was born on Thursday, July 13 to two very loving parents, our organizer Billy Davies and his wife Dr. Megan Carlson. Maeve is already bringing joy and change to the Kansas City area with his parents by joining community events and zoom calls. Congratulations to the happy family!



Photos courtesy of Billy Davies