



Act for Justice

Sawyer Wampler, Legislative & Nominations Chair



The Energy Justice Movement

Read Sawyer's full article:
sc.org/mo

When individuals think about climate change and how to combat it, what commonly comes to mind? Some may think of hippy or tree-hugger ideology, protecting the environment while lessening dependence on the consumption of the market economy. Others may even conjure up visions of the Green New Deal, a massive attempt by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey to shift the United States economically into an environmentally just country. The movement to protect the environment goes much deeper than these visions of combatting climate change, including the topic of **energy justice**.

Tabling with Myisha Johnson!



According to the Initiative for Energy Justice, **energy justice** is defined as the goal of achieving equity in both the **social** and **economic participation** in the energy system, while also **remediating social, economic, and health burdens** on those disproportionately harmed by the energy system. Energy justice aims to make energy accessible, affordable, renewable, and democratically managed for all communities.

Deep canvassing in Saint Louis was one of the most rewarding experiences I've had. Our team went door to door to have long, fulfilling conversations with our neighbors about **energy justice**. Hearing their stories about how high utility prices affect folks & mobilizing communities into action is worth all the time and energy put into deep canvassing. Deep canvassing grows neighborhoods into civically-engaged communities, and it grows us into better leaders.



Deep Canvassing Team members:
Myisha Johnson, Kalina Weber, & me!

CHAPTER CHAIR'S COLUMN

Missouri Summers: Always Go to the Show



By Katie Hasty, Chapter Chair

I used to work as a music journalist. Dank beer-stale basements, disco naps, \$12 water bottles, 2am festival headliners that started hours late. I spent more than 15 years of trekking stadiums in the rain and dragging myself home to file copy before sunrise.

Don't get me wrong, it was a fabulous former life. The pay wasn't great and the mornings-after were sometimes spotty, but the adage that passed between fellow believers held up almost every time: "Always go to the show."

Because you rarely regret having gone. The threat of missing out is so much worse than the inconvenience of showing up. You might have missed a weird opening act that set the room on fire, or a song you know by heart performed by the very artist that placed it there. There's a tingly sensation that something magical is happening right now, in front of you, with 10 to 20,000 of your new best friends — and it will never be replicated in exactly the same way. Not really.

The Missouri Chapter's version of this is exactly the same.

Every day, the natural world is performing, putting on a show whether we watch it or not. The whole point is that we're the lucky invitees. Sierra Club Missouri programs include walks and talks, hikes, river paddles, bike rides, trail seminars, and camping outings. You're invited to pick up trash for our neighbors (yay!) and go on a Missouri Monarch Mission even if you can't tell a monarch from a viceroy (you'll learn!).

I challenge you to think of a single time you genuinely regretted going outside. Missouri's weather extremes are a known quantity. The heat is brutal and the Ozarks' muggy air is so thick you could clink it with a drink. Your buddy might bail on the river float. The park might be muddy.

But enjoy and explore anyway. Bring sunscreen and extra water. Hedge the morning walk by going a little earlier than you planned. Pull the car over for a sunset you almost drove past, and commit the tune of the breeze to memory.

Always go to the show.

MO CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

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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.



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Group Updates

Mid-Missouri Group

Mid-Missouri Group continued their advocacy for climate action by co-hosting a climate change and environment forum for Columbia City Council candidates. Additionally, they sponsored and were part of the steering committee for a "Solarize Columbia" campaign that successfully installed 396.24 kw of solar power to 39 households, cohosted a No Kings event, and gathered signatures at the Columbia Earth Day Festival for a petition regarding the recent Endangerment Finding.



Thomas Hart Benton Group

Thomas Hart Benton Group has started holding a Legislative Action Hour the third Wednesday of each month. In early May, Outings leaders held the popular Beginning Backpacking class. The THB Conservation Committee is planning their "Missouri Monarch Mission," which will feature family friendly activities and speakers on July 18th at Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area in Blue Springs.



Eastern Missouri Group

For the 48th year, the Eastern Missouri Group sold their famous lemonade at the Earth Day celebration at Forest Park in St. Louis. Some of the money earned was used to buy equipment to help water 350 trees that were planted in O'Fallon Park in April because the Park suffered severe damage from the May 2025 tornado. The watering effort will continue for 3 years until the trees become established.



White River Group

The White River Group has continued in our work to protect public lands by working with the park officials at Shepherd of the Hills State Park. In the past, our events have included glade restoration through the elimination of cedars. More recently, we have helped monitor macro-invertebrates in Roark Creek by capturing, counting, and identifying these creatures in the creek.



Big Data Centers Make Bad Neighbors

When a data center developer comes to town, the reaction is predictable: local officials get dollars signs in their eyes but most residents are outraged. They pack public hearings to protest. Moratoriums are proposed and city councilors who vote in favor of the data center may be voted out of office.

This year a tsunami of data center proposals has swept the country, catching everyone unprepared. Cities and counties are scrambling to write zoning rules; the Missouri Legislature passed no laws to regulate them. Transparency is lacking; developers won't reveal which tech giant or other company is going to take over the data center, or they don't have a final user yet, raising the risk that the venture is speculative and the center won't be built.

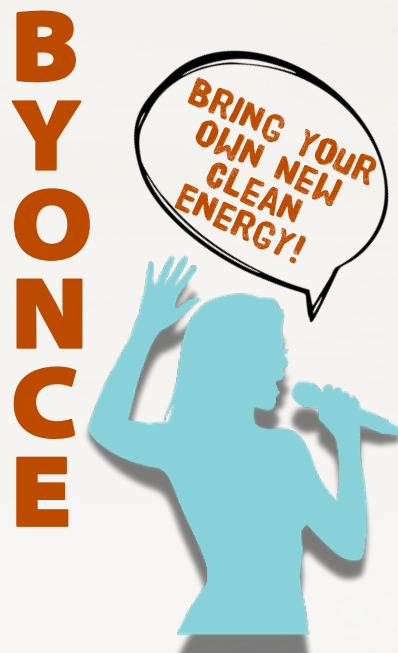
A data center can be anything from a computer cabinet in the corner of an office to a massive "hyperscale" data center used to train and run artificial intelligence. You can find them in downtown St. Louis and Kansas City, but as they grow larger they're seeking out the wide-open spaces of rural Missouri.

There is no widely agreed-upon definition of a hyperscaler, but the main metrics are the area it covers, which can be hundreds of acres, and its electricity demand. The Nebius project in Independence and a Google project in Montgomery County would each need 1.2 gigawatts (GW) of electricity. Bigger ones can be expected.

Here are the major environmental issues raised by big data centers:

 **Electricity.** It's hard to wrap your head around the amount of energy needed to feed and run an AI. "Campuses" for several data centers and even some individual data centers in states like Wyoming are approaching 10 GW of energy consumption. For comparison, take our biggest electric utility, Ameren Missouri. Ameren's total generating capacity is 9.3 GW; that's their coal power plants, nuclear plant, natural gas plants and renewables. Everything they have to serve 1.2 million households, businesses and institutions will soon not be enough for some data centers.

Some hyperscalers will build their own power plants. Some of those will be solar or wind plants with battery backup. But more often they will expect to draw from the grid owned and managed by monopoly utility companies like Ameren and Evergy. Natural gas is expected to be the preferred fuel. Hundreds if not thousands of GW of new natural gas generation nationwide will be a climate disaster.



 **Water use.** You may read that data centers can use 5 million gallons of water a day to cool hot microchips. This is true if they use "evaporative" cooling, which pipes water through the server rooms to absorb heat and then releases the resulting steam into the air. "Closed loop cooling" takes much less water — an occasional top-off or, as some companies claim, a one-time fill. They cool the heated water for reuse with rooftop air chillers. But there's a trade-off for using less water: they use much more electricity, up to 50% of the data center's total consumption.

 **Noise.** People who live even a few miles away hear a disturbing 24/7 hum from external cooling equipment, and the noise from backup diesel generators, which are like jet engines, is as loud as a jet passing overhead. Noise sources can be shielded or enclosed.

 **Light.** Security lighting is another 24/7 nuisance. Zoning rules should require compliance with the standards of the International Dark Sky Association: light should be low-level, shielded and targeted downward.

 **Heat.** Cooling throws internal heat into the external air. Cornell researchers estimated that land surface temperatures around data centers can increase by 2°C. Neighborhoods downwind from data centers in the Phoenix area, studied by Arizona State, had temperature increases of up to 2.2°C

 **PFAS.** Why not; they're everywhere. In data centers they're found in cooling and fire suppression equipment and in electronic waste such as discarded microchips.

TAKE ACTION ON DATA CENTERS

- Organize within your community - get to know your neighbors
- Keep your eye out for opportunities to testify at public hearings
- Join our Data Center Committee: sc.org/mo-volunteer
- Sign our Data Center action alert: LINK LINK



2026 Legislative Update

Carolyn Niswonger, Mid-Missouri Organizer



The 2026 Regular Session was a crucial year for the Missouri Chapter as we found ourselves playing both offense and defense in the Capitol. From solar regulations to and emerging data center development, Missouri finds itself at a critical turning point in determining what its energy future will look like and who will shape it.

Through organizing and coalition-building, we helped stop the most restrictive solar regulation bill ever filed from crossing finish line. While the bill ultimately failed, its introduction sparked broader conversations throughout the General Assembly about solar development, local control, and the future of renewable energy in our state.

For the first time, the Missouri General Assembly began seriously considering legislation related to data centers and large-scale energy demand. Recognizing the long-term implications these developments could have on communities, infrastructure, and energy generation, we worked to build relationships with key lawmakers and stakeholders early in the process to provide insights and policy recommendations. This is where our offensive stance was key. What became clear throughout these conversations is that energy policy is no longer a niche issue, it is quickly becoming one of the defining policy conversations in Missouri, transcending party lines and drawing interest from legislators across the political spectrum.

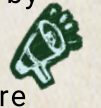


Volunteer Classifieds

Are you an adventurous, nature loving Missourian? Are you interested in leading your neighbors safely through exploring & enjoying Missouri's beautiful state parks and wild areas? We want YOU to join our local outings committees! Training required but supported by our existing team of wonderful outing leaders.



The personal is political. Do you want to make sure that Missouri communities are represented by environmentally supportive candidates? We are seeking civically engaged folks who are interested in preserving the environment via political action. Help us with candidate endorsements, grassroots led campaign efforts, and voter education by joining our Political Committee!



Community action + monetary support = sustainable organizations. Help grow the financial well-being of the Missouri Chapter by joining our Development Committee! Together, we oversee fundraising campaigns, grow our list of donors, and show appreciation to those who give support to our team and priorities. Without a robust donor ecosystem, we cannot explore, enjoy, and protect Missouri to our fullest potential.



Calling all statistics buffs and computer whizzes! The Missouri Chapter needs YOUR help growing our data culture through tracking our events & grassroots building metrics. Training across multiple platforms available -- but think how great those certifications will look on your resume & LinkedIn profile?!



Searching for creative minds with interests in marketing, media, & communications to help share our story at the Sierra Club. Wordsmiths & imaginative designers are needed to uplift our teams' victories, put out a call to action, and help educate others through social media, newsletters, websites, and more.



Get involved: sc.org/mo-volunteer

Protect Lands, Air, Water & Wildlife Bryant Creek State Park

Marisa Frazier, Senior Field Organizer



The Missouri Sierra Club hosted a stewardship and recreation weekend centered around Bryant Creek State Park and the surrounding Ozark landscape.

On Saturday, May 16, we toured a regenerative organic farm at Flotsam Farm near Sycamore, Missouri. Attendees learned about regenerative agriculture, soil health, and sustainable land stewardship while exploring the connections between food systems, healthy ecosystems and strong communities.

On Sunday, May 17, nineteen of us enjoyed a float trip on Bryant Creek, taking in the scenic beauty of the Ozarks, including beautiful bluffs, a riverside cave, and the creek's clear waters.

Eleven of us continued on Monday, May 18, with a stewardship project at Bryant Creek State Park. Nick Kromrie at Missouri State Parks led us in restoring a native glade ecosystem by clearing hundreds of invasive eastern red cedar logs. This effort will help prepare the area for future prescribed burns and support the restoration of the glade's natural plant and wildlife communities. After the restoration, we explored a new trail within the soon-to-be opened park that featured bluffs, steams, a waterfall, and wildlife habitats in the process of being restored.

Bryant Creek State Park was permanently protected and Phase 1 was opened in 2023 after years of conservation advocacy. The Missouri Sierra Club led teams who advocated in the capitol, organized in-district meetings with decision makers, and sent hundreds of letters, emails and phone calls advocating for this and our other new state parks since 2016.



The weekend expedition contributed meaningful conservation service while building community and deepening our connection to one of Missouri's newest state parks. Special thanks to Ed Bayham for co-leading this weekend full of outdoor recreation, environmental education, hands-on stewardship, and demonstrating the Sierra Club's commitment to protecting and



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Get Outdoors!

By Katie Hasty, Chapter Chair



State Park Challenge for the Senses

Missouri has **57 state parks**, but the Show-Me State isn't just for sightseers. It's a full playground for all five of our senses. Plan a trip to experience a destination curated for your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin. **How many of these have you visited?**

Sight — Ha Ha Tonka State Park No matter which trail you pick, this is one of Missouri's most visually dramatic landscapes. Expect castle ruins perched on a rugged bluff, a massive 100-foot-tall natural stone bridge, sinkholes, a turquoise karst spring, and sweeping boardwalk overlooks.

Hearing — Roaring River State Park It does what it says on the box! Roaring River's namesake spring gushes an average of 20+ million gallons of water a day straight out of a shaded bluff, feeding a world-class trout stream. For an added bonus, wake up early to catch the echoing Ozark birdsong at dawn.

Smell — Wakonda State Park Located right along the Mississippi River valley, this park offers a distinct, sweet aquatic fragrance you won't find in a typical Ozark cedar-glade. Each summer, the park's six quarry lakes fill with blooms of American lotus and white water lilies.

Taste — Annie and Abel Van Meter State Park Sitting on the fertile river hills long inhabited by the Missouria people, this park's rich forests are packed with native pawpaw and persimmon trees. If you go foraging, be warned: the fall-ripening wild persimmon is inedible until it turns fully soft!

Touch — Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park Wade through the water park and feel the smooth, water-carved volcanic rhyolite underfoot, icy river water rushing past your skin, and rock chutes to scramble over. A full-body tactile experience.

Join the Sierra Club in exploring and enjoying Missouri's State Parks through our **Love Our Parks** events all summer! Check out our calendar of events: sc.org/mo