



From Injustice to Action

Sawyer Wampler, Legislative & Nominations Chair

Ask someone how to combat climate change, and the answers may fall into familiar categories. Some may think of hippies or tree-huggers – protecting the environment by lessening dependence on the consumer economy. Others may conjure up visions of the Green New Deal, a massive push to reshape the U.S. economy into a more environmentally just one. But the movement to protect the environment goes much deeper than these visions of combating climate change – including the topic of **energy justice**.

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

Tabling with Myisha!



Read more: sc.org/mo

Deep canvassing in St. Louis was one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had.

Hearing the stories about how high utility prices affect folks and transforming pain into proactive action is worth all the time and energy I put in. It helps grow neighborhoods into civically engaged communities while making us better leaders.



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

Always Go to the Show



By Katie Hasty, Chapter Chair
I used to work as a music journalist. It was fantastic despite the not-so-great pay and spotty mornings. And I learned an adage that has guided me since: **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 miss an epic opening act, a rare song, some other sensational thing, and it will never be replicated. Not really.

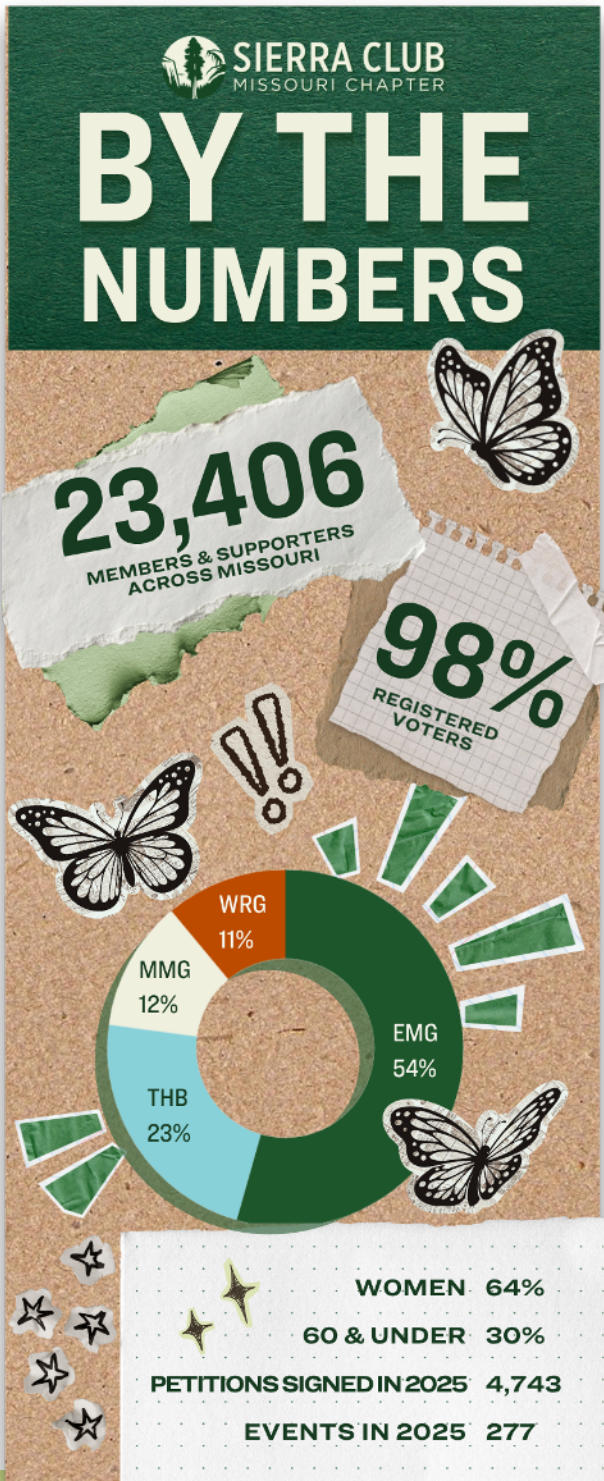
The Sierra Club's version of this is exactly the same. Every day, the natural world is putting on a show, whether we watch it or not. We're just lucky invitees.

Our events and outings include hikes, bike rides, walk-and-talks, paddles, and camping. You're invited to pick up trash for our neighbors (yay!) or to a Missouri Monarch Mission even if you can't tell a monarch from a viceroy (you'll learn!).

Our weather extremes are a known quantity. The heat is brutal. 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 we explore and enjoy anyway. Bring sunscreen and extra water. Set off a little earlier to hedge the heat. Pull over for a sunset you almost drove past, and commit the tune of the breeze to memory.

Always go to the show.



CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

- Chapter Director:** Gretchen Waddell Barwick
Chapter Chair: Katie Hasty
THBG Chair: Ruanda McFerren
EMG Chair: Ed Bayham
WRG Chair: Pam Shaver
MMG Chair: Carolyn Amparan
Political Committee: Ross Hunt & Caroline Pufalt
Energy Committee: Henry Robertson
Conservation Committee: Caroline Pufalt
Outings Committee: Brian Barwick
Legislative Committee: Sawyer Wampler
Finance Committee: Stephanie Todd

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.

Group Updates

Mid-Missouri Group

This spring, MMG co-hosted a climate change and environment forum for Columbia City Council candidates. Additionally, we sponsored and took part of the steering committee for a "Solarize Columbia" campaign which successfully installed 396.24 kw of solar power to 39 households. We also co-hosted 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

THB started holding a Legislative Action Hour the third Wednesday of each month. In early May, Outings leaders held the popular Beginning Backpacking class. Our 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, EMG sold their famous lemonade at the Earth Day celebration at Forest Park in St. Louis. Some proceeds were used to buy equipment to help water 350 trees in O'Fallon Park, planted after the Park suffered severe damage from the tornado in May 2025. The watering effort will continue for 3 years until the trees become established.



White River Group

WRG has been 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 identifying and counting its creatures.

Big Data Centers Make Bad Neighbors



Henry Robertson, Energy Chair & Data Center Committee Member

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 through the country, catching most of us unprepared. Cities and counties are scrambling. While the Missouri Legislature adjusted utility rates to fund grid expansion, it passed zero environmental or zoning guardrails for data centers. Transparency is lacking; developers won't reveal which tech giant or company is going to take over the data center or if they don't have a final user yet, raising the risk of the venture.

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 (AI). You can find data centers in downtown St. Louis and Kansas City, but as they grow larger, they're seeking out the wide-open spaces of rural Missouri.

Look on the next page for some of the major environmental issues surrounding data centers. And remember: we the people have power. Speak up and demand better!



Electricity. It's hard to wrap your head around the amount of energy needed to feed and run AI. "Campuses" for several data centers are approaching 10 GW of energy consumption. For comparison, our biggest electric utility, Ameren Missouri's total generating capacity is 9.3 GW; that's their coal power plants, nuclear plant, natural gas plants and renewables. They serve 1.2 million households, businesses and institutions but soon that will be enough for some data centers.

Some hyperscalers will build their own power plants. But more often they will expect to draw from local electricity grids. Natural gas is expected to be the preferred fuel, which environmental advocates warn amounts to a climate disaster.



Water use. Data centers can use 5 million gallons of water a day to cool hot microchips 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. But there's a trade-off for using less water: cooling can account for up to half of a data center's total electricity use.



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 DarkSky International: light should be low-level, shielded and targeted downward.



Heat. Cooling throws internal heat into the external air. Cambridge 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 (aka "forever chemicals"). In data centers they're found in cooling and fire suppression equipment and in electronic waste such as discarded microchips.

ONE hyperscale data center uses as much energy as Ameren Missouri can generate.

YOUR ACTIONS MATTER

TAKE ACTION ON DATA CENTERS

- Organize within your community and get to know your neighbors
- Seek out opportunities to testify at public hearings
- Volunteer with the Sierra Club and learn of upcoming opportunities to speak out locally, statewide, and at a federal level : sc.org/mo-volunteer

You can't drink data. Choose people over data centers.

2026 MO Legislative Update



Carolyn Niswonger, Mid-Missouri Organizer

The 2026 Legislative Session was busy for the Sierra Club Missouri Chapter, as we played offense and defense in the Capitol. From solar bans to data center development, we're at a critical point in determining what our state's energy future will look like – and who gets to shape it.

On defense, we built coalitions to stop the most restrictive solar regulation bill ever filed from crossing the finish line. The bill failed, but its introduction sparked broader conversations throughout the General Assembly about solar development, local control, and the future of renewable energy in our state.

On offense: The General Assembly seriously considered data center and large-scale energy demand legislation. Recognizing long-term implications for communities, infrastructure, and energy generation, Sierra Club built relationships with key lawmakers and stakeholders to provide insights and recommendations.

What became clearer: energy policy is no longer a niche issue. It's quickly becoming one of the defining conversations in Missouri politics – drawing interest from legislators across party lines.



PROTECT
WILD
PLACES



Protect Our Parks!



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 May 16th-18th.

On Saturday, we toured a regenerative organic farm at Flotsam Farm near Sycamore. 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, 19 of us enjoyed a float trip on Bryant Creek, soaking up the scenic beauty of the Ozarks, including bluffs, a riverside cave, and the creek's clear waters.

Eleven of us continued on Monday, 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 helped prepare the area for future prescribed burns and support the restoration of natural plants and wildlife. After, we explored a new trail within the soon-to-be-opened park that featured bluffs, streams, a waterfall, and 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 and partnership.

Since 2016, the Missouri Chapter has lobbied state officials to protect our parks; organized in-district meetings with decision-makers; and sent hundreds of letters, emails, and phone calls to support the permanent protection of Bryant Creek and our other new state parks.



ENJOY
EXPLORE
PROTECT

The 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 a weekend full of outdoor recreation, environmental education, hands-on stewardship, and demonstrating the Sierra Club's commitment to protecting and caring for Missouri's public lands.

Volunteer Classifieds

Are you an adventurous, nature-loving Missourian?

We want YOU to join a local outings committee! Training is required – you'll be supported by our existing team of wonderful leaders.



Community action + monetary support = sustainable organizations.

Join our Development Committee! We oversee fundraising campaigns, engage with Sierrans, and organize appreciation for our generous donors. Without a robust giving ecosystem, we cannot explore, enjoy, and protect Missouri to our fullest potential.



Calling all data buffs!

We need YOUR help with data insights, and evidence-supported strategies. Think how great your volunteer activity will look on your resume and LinkedIn profile! Training provided.



Searching for marketing minds

with interests in effective communications and media strategy. Via newsletters, social media, email, web, photography, print, and beyond, you can help share the Sierra Club story.

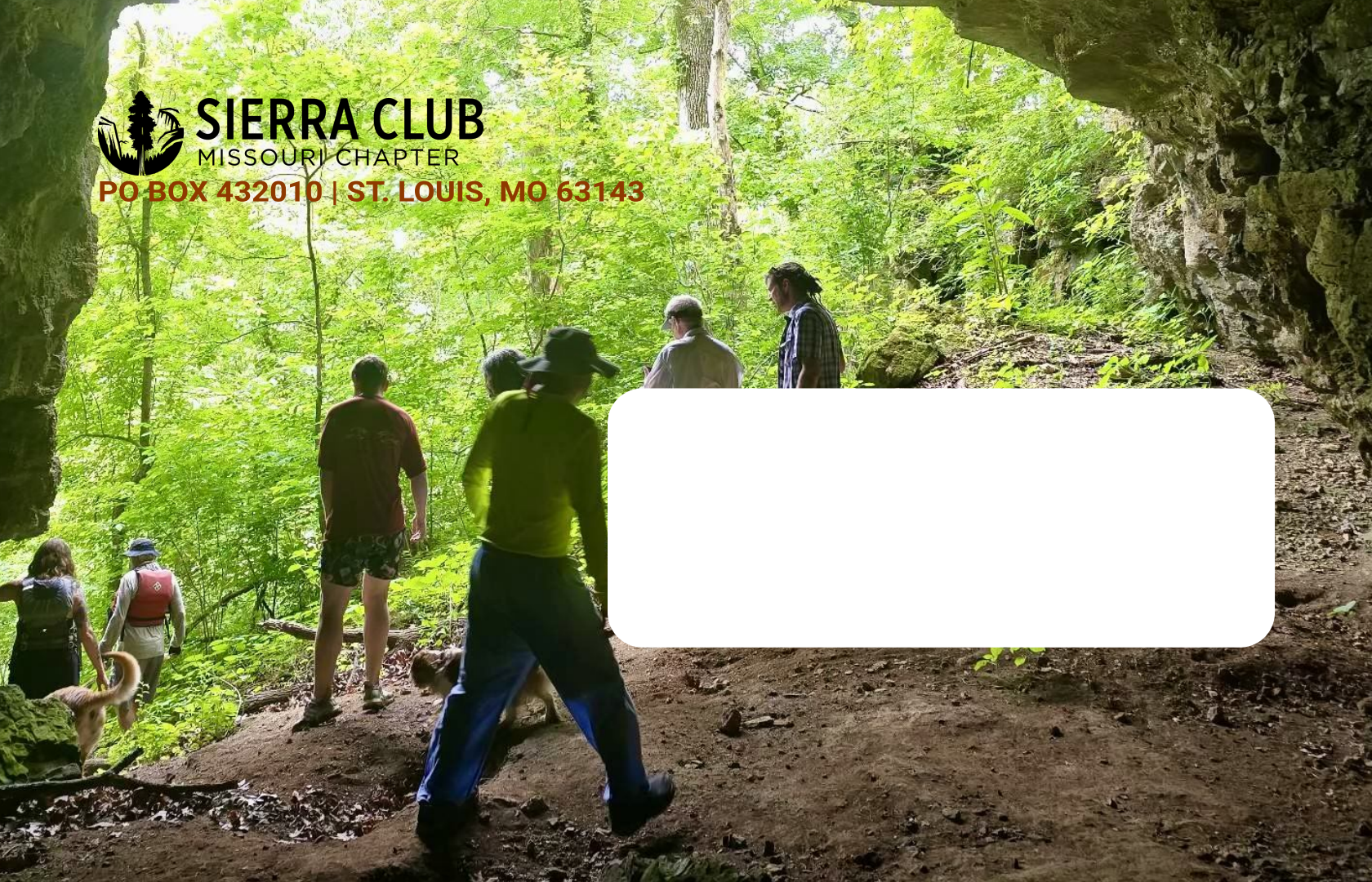


Get involved: sc.org/mo-volunteer



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MISSOURI CHAPTER

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Park Sense: How Many Have You Visited?

Missouri has **57 state parks**, but the Show-Me State isn't just for sightseers: It's a playground for our five senses. Head to these destinations, curated for the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin.



Sight: Ha Ha Tonka State Park One of Missouri's most visually dramatic landscapes. Expect castle ruins perched on a rugged bluff, a 100-foot-tall natural stone bridge, sinkholes, a turquoise karst spring, and boardwalk overlooks.



Hearing: Roaring River State Park Its 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. Wake up early to catch Ozark birdsong at dawn.



Smell: Wakonda State Park Located along the Mississippi River valley, this park offers a distinct, sweet aquatic fragrance. 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 river hills long inhabited by the Missouri people, this park's 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 and feel the smooth, water-carved volcanic rhyolite underfoot, icy river water rushing past your skin, and rock chutes to scramble over.