

News from the Sierra Club Kansas Chapter

WAYPOINTS

SIERRACLUB.ORG / KANSAS

SEPT 2026
VOLUME 9
ISSUE 9

Family Farm in Lecompton, KS
Photo | Tad Kramar



PRESS RELEASE:

WEALTH Coalition Demands Data Center Moratorium Pending Adoption of Guardrails

The Sierra Club Kansas Chapter worked with our allies in the WEALTH coalition to develop the following statement.

[Read it here.](#)



Lindsay Hamilton
Facilitator, KS WEALTH Coalition
(316) 312-3181
hamilton@climateandenergy.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Kansas WEALTH Coalition Calls for a Data Center Moratorium Until Significant Guardrails Are Put in Place

The WEALTH Coalition demands state and local policies that prioritize the health, safety, and welfare of Kansas communities.

Kansas (September 1, 2026) - The Kansas WEALTH (Water, Energy, Air, Land, Transportation, and Health) Coalition released a joint statement calling for a data center moratorium until significant guardrails are established to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Kansas communities.

The attached statement defines the principles under which guardrails must be developed:

- **Corporate accountability** - Requires developers to be transparent and accountable
- **Transparent third-party studies** - Evaluates the environmental and infrastructure impact
- **Protection of local water resources** - Safeguards the long-term needs of Kansans
- **Establish reasonable buffer zones** - Distance from schools, hospitals, and neighborhoods
- **Meaningful public participation** - Creates opportunities for community input
- **Comprehensive review processes** - Base reviews on unique impacts and local circumstances
- **New Clean Capacity and Energy** - Generate or purchase their own new clean energy
- **Energy efficiency standards** - Build to the highest standards to reduce further grid impacts
- **Public reporting** - Ensure accountability regarding public water and energy use
- **Fair labor standards** - Require prevailing wage and apprenticeship programs

The statement is posted online (bit.ly/ksdatacenters) and is available as a sign-on letter for individuals and organizations who want to show their support for a data center moratorium and common sense guardrails that protect our Kansas communities.

Quotes from our members:

"The mad rush to site and build large-scale data centers, supported by state tax abatements and with little public oversight, puts us in a wild-west scenario. The challenges that these huge facilities pose – profligate use of water and energy in particular, but also how we make the richest corporations in human history live up to their commitments to our communities – must be



Lindsay Hamilton
Facilitator, KS WEALTH Coalition
(316) 312-3181
hamilton@climateandenergy.org

addressed before we mortgage our state's future to tech billionaires." – **Rabbi Moti Rieber**, Executive Director, Kansas Interfaith Action.

"The choices we make around large-scale data centers today will define our region's climate future for generations. If we fail to power this massive digital demand with clean energy, we risk locking in higher pollution, overburdening our power grid, and leaving local communities to pay the price. By demanding clean energy generation, grid resilience, and genuine accountability right now, we can ensure technology drives a thriving, sustainable future—rather than compromising it." — **Dorothy Barnett**, Executive Director, Climate + Energy Project

"Whether it's the extreme energy consumption, water use, air pollution, land disturbance, or other problems, these hyperscale data centers have proven detrimental to the environment and to the communities that host them. Kansans deserve more protections to ensure A.I. data centers are designed sustainably, sited properly, taxed appropriately, and don't harm our communities and environment." — **Zack Pistora**, Kansas Director, Sierra Club

"Large-scale data centers will strain our power supplies and tap into already limited water sources, particularly impacting the most vulnerable across the state. Kansans are speaking out to say we don't want Kansas communities to shoulder the burden of data centers, while the wealthy reap the rewards. Kansans deserve better." — **Tom Buller**, Executive Director, Kansas Rural Center

About KS WEALTH: The mission of the Kansas WEALTH Coalition is to advance climate resilience and clean energy policies across the state. By collaboratively and equitably building power, we identify opportunities to reduce risk and increase resilience in the face of a changing climate. Reducing climate risks positively impacts our state's Water, Energy, Air, Land, Transportation, and Health - WEALTH

We've been collaborating with our many local allies to push back on massive energy loads from data centers, which keep coal plants open and trigger a vast buildout of methane gas-fired power plants.

Our focus is on educating decision makers about key negative environmental impacts. In addition to threatening long-term climate targets and tethering customers to volatile international gas prices, data centers consume excessive amounts of precious water resources for cooling and they rely on heavy backup diesel generators that emit unhealthy pollution.

Is there a data center being built in your area?

Do you want to join local advocacy efforts?

[Let us know.](#)

SIGN THE PETITION To Decision Makers

Pass a moratorium on new large-scale data center projects until significant guardrails to improve transparency, local control, and responsible oversight can be implemented; *guardrails must include:*

- Corporate accountability
- Transparent third-party studies
- Protected local water resources
- Reasonable buffer zones

- Meaningful public participation
- Transparent review processes
- Requirements to generate or purchase their own clean energy and storage of the highest energy efficiency standards
- Transparent reporting
- Fair labor standards

We need policies that prioritize the health, safety, and welfare of Kansas communities!

[SIGN THE PETITION NOW.](#)

Director Dive-In

Zack Pistora, Sierra Club Kansas Chapter
Director

**[Option: Watch me dive into September's
HOT topics for the Kansas Chapter on this
90-sec video!](#)**

Happy September, everyone!

Right now, we're heavy into the political season with the election coming up. ([Don't forget to register to vote by Oct 13.](#)) We have candidate endorsements we're about to drop, along with a [2026 Legislative Scorecard](#) to know where your candidates stack up in terms of their environmental position.



We're also doing the [Kansas Solar Access Initiative](#) . Kansas is one of the top 10 states for sunny days, but we're bottom 10 for solar power. That's got to change, so stay tuned.

But here at the Kansas Chapter, the number one issue we're getting asked about these days is [data centers](#). Communities that are getting approached about data centers are doing an amazing job in self-organizing, attending their county commission meetings, and advocating for their communities.

In case you don't remember, the Kansas Chapter of the **Sierra Club was the only state organization group to oppose Senate Bill 98**, the big tax giveaway to lure data centers into Kansas. And, we continue to help support those communities pushing back against these data centers. We say "**No Dirty Data Centers**" and "**Guardrails before Gigawatts!**"

So if we can be of help, reach out to us. Stay tuned for more information to come. Finally, thank you for continuing to help us protect our environment!

NOW AVAILABLE
[2026 Legislative Scorecard](#)

Do Your Legislators Vote For or Against the Environment?

Our Legislative Scorecards rate legislators based on whether they vote for or against environmental legislation we support.

DENIED BUT NOT DEFEATED

Sedgwick County Commissioners deny two solar farm proposals after months of advocacy and deliberation.

Lori Lawrence, Solar for Sedgwick County Coalition member and Sierra Club Southwind Group member

For more than six months, Sierra Club worked with other organizations to organize support for utility-scale solar farms in Sedgwick County.



Volunteers show up to the Aug 5, 2026 Sedgwick County Commission hearing in support of two proposed solar farm projects: Galena and Branchline | Photos courtesy of Lori Lawrence



On Wednesday, August 5, Sedgwick County Commissioners voted down two large-scale solar projects: Galena and Branchline.

Strong Union turnout did not sway the commission. Thirty members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers showed up in support of the Galena project, which would have provided 12 months of work here at home.



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers show up to Aug 5, 2026 Sedgwick County Commission hearing in support of the Galena project | Photo courtesy of Lori Lawrence

We lost this time, but we're not giving up. The rise of solar power is inevitable.

[Read the full article here.](#)

ACT NOW! EPA Climate Pollutant Regulations in Danger



Photo | iStock

Ty Gorman, Sr. Campaign Organizing Strategist, Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign

The Trump administration wants to eliminate the “Endangerment Finding,” a key safeguard for regulating climate pollutants.

One of Beyond Coal’s bedrock wins was the acknowledgment that the Environmental Protection Agency has authority to make an "Endangerment Finding," to determine whether specific greenhouse gas emissions are atmospheric pollutants that threaten the biosphere. This authority is the legal underpinning for ***all*** climate regulations, and Trump’s allies know that killing it will devastate our ability to regulate greenhouse gas pollutants under a future administration. **This is an *all-hands-on-deck* moment for the environmental movement.**

Here's what we need you to do.

1. Testify at the public hearing once it is announced, and bring a friend. Stay alert for additional details from the Sierra Club once we know more.
2. Help organize an in-person community event to gather public comments, raise awareness and build volunteer leadership.
3. Help write a letter to the editor for a local paper, website, or social media account that you can access.
4. Reach out to me at [913-227-9310](tel:913-227-9310) or Ty.Gorman@sierraclub.org.

Thank you for taking action.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Want to volunteer with the Kansas Chapter? **[Let us know HERE.](#)**

Fill out [this form](#) to set up an introductory meeting with our Chapter Leaders. We want to hear about your interests, experience, and availability!

KDWP Challenge Wrap-Up **Celebrate Your Kansas Adventure With a Gift From Us**

Stuart Bolt, Outings Chair, Sierra Club Kansas Chapter

July 4 was the last day to complete the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Park's 250th Anniversary Challenge and we hope it gave you a reason to get outside, explore Kansas, and make memorable discoveries along the way.



Kanza Nature Walk Events: Parkville Nature Sanctuary (left) & Black Hoof Park (right) | Photos Eliese Holt

If you completed the challenge, we'd be delighted to celebrate with you!

After you receive your KDWP certificate, send us:

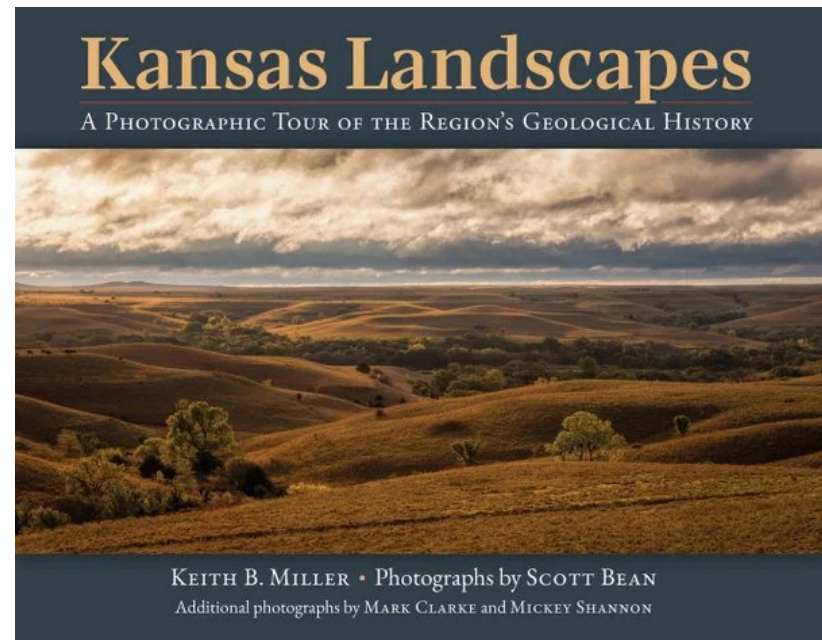
- a photo/scan of the KDWP certificate
- a photo of you on one of your Kansas adventures
- a short paragraph describing your favorite adventure

Email these items to me <boltstuart@yahoo.com> by September 30, 2026.

With your permission, we'll feature your photo and story in a future edition of Waypoints and on our social media channels so others can share joy in your Kansas adventure.

FREE GIFT WITH SUBMISSION

As a thank you, you'll receive *either* the beautiful photo book "Kansas Landscapes" or the Kansas Adventure Bucket List card pack, including 50 scratch off bucket list adventures around the state of Kansas.



There's more to look forward to—stay tuned for exciting Kansas Chapter outings coming this fall!



Kanza June Nature Walk at Cedar Niles Trail (left) & Kaw River Clean up (right) | Photos Eliese Holt

Can you help us with Flint Hills air monitoring?



Photo | The Science of Spring Burning, K-State Today

Gerry Snyder, Air Quality Committee, Sierra Club Kansas Chapter

With your permission, our Chapter air quality team would install a small, unobtrusive air quality monitor on your property. By doing so, you can have a positive impact on the public health of your community.

Do you live in one of these cities?

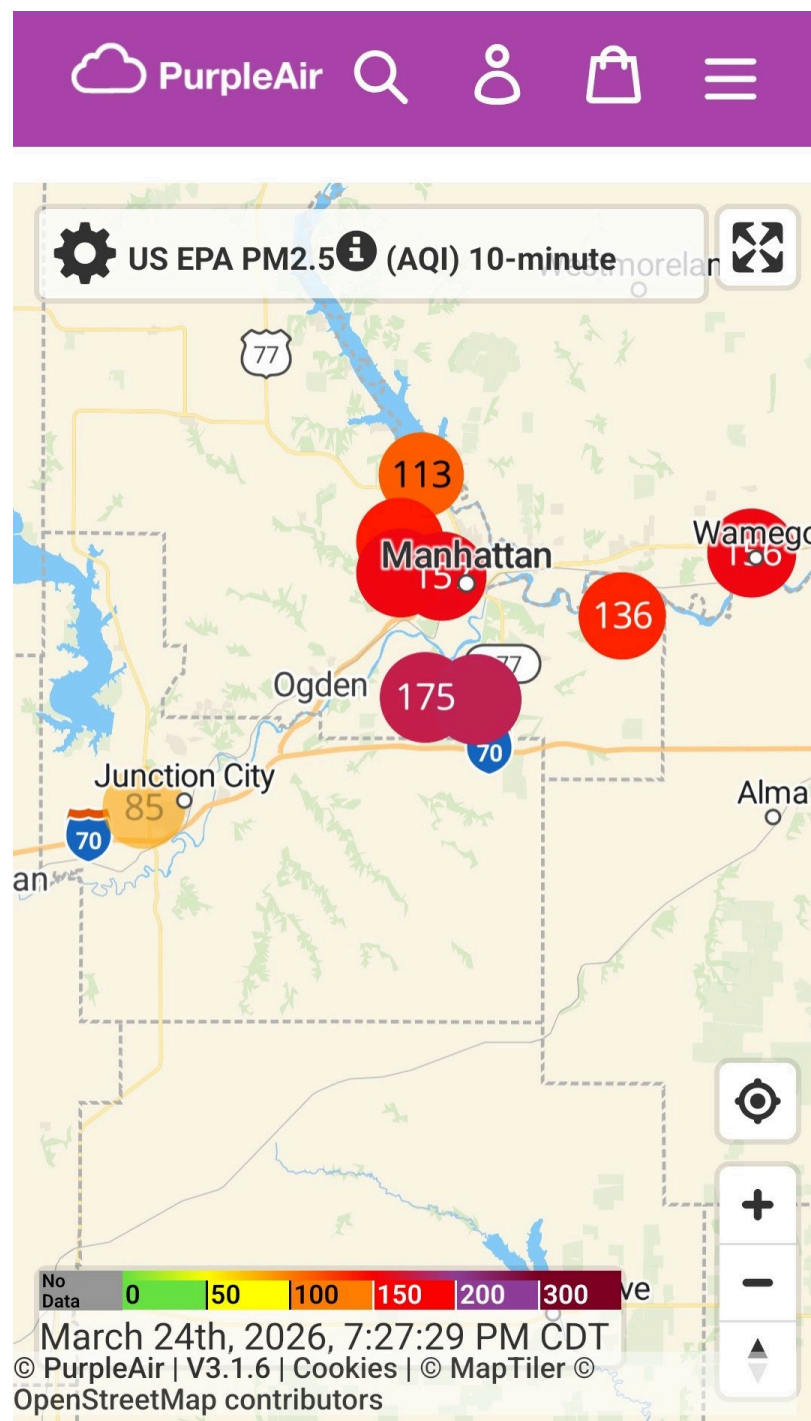
- Council Grove
- Cottonwood Falls
- Matfield Green

- Strong City
- El Dorado

We're working to expand a public alert system that identifies poor air quality conditions within the Flint Hills. For the past two years, we've installed [PurpleAir monitors](#) in and around the Manhattan area (see map below).

These monitors are part of a global citizen-science **network that helps alert the public to poor and potentially hazardous air quality.**

The PurpleAir network has helped people make informed decisions about outdoor activities during the annual spring prairie-burning season. This information is particularly important for people with asthma, older adults, and children with respiratory conditions.





PurpleAir quality monitor | Photo Gerry Snyder

For more information or to volunteer your location, please [contact me, Gerry](#) **before September 15, 2026.** Many thanks for your time and for helping support the health and well-being of Kansans.

Moving Forward with the Kansas Solar Access Initiative

Bill Roush, Energy Committee Chair, Sierra Club Kansas Chapter

The Kansas Chapter Energy Committee has been busy implementing their plan to making solar

We need five new locations to expand air quality monitoring across the Flint Hills. All that's required is access to:

- an AC power outlet
- internet connection

I'll schedule a convenient time to visit and install the small monitor.

more accessible across the state.

[Read more about the initiative here.](#)

- Representatives from [SolarApp+ Foundation](#) joined the Energy Committee at a recent meeting to help Sierra Club members advocate for instant rooftop solar permitting in Kansas communities.
- Energy Committee leaders met with the [Coalition for Community Solar Access](#) and Climate and Energy Project about how to move forward solar Power Purchase Agreements /Community solar /Distributed Generation in Kansas.
- Energy Committee leaders met with **SUN - Solar United Neighbors** representatives to discuss Kansas as an "opportunity state" for Plug-in /Plug and Play solar and strategize next steps for making the system legal statewide. Energy Committee volunteers have already started introducing the idea to Kansas legislators at public forums.

Join us at the next Energy Committee Meeting

The Energy Committee is welcoming Austin Eden with Eide Bailly at the next (virtual) meeting [September 14 at 6:30 P.M.](#) to discuss 100% bonus depreciation as an incentive for businesses to invest in solar. The Committee will discuss strategy for educating small businesses and the general public about this unique incentive as a way to increase renewable energy development in Kansas. [Non-committee members are welcome to listen in.](#)

Check out our newly published pamphlet detailing the initiative, below. [Download the](#)

[pamphlet \(PDF\) here.](#)

Why is Solar Important?

Kansans deserve affordable energy that doesn't pollute our air or water.

When paired with energy storage systems, solar energy is one of the lowest-cost, most reliable electricity forms that will create local jobs – without the negative impacts on our air and water.

Why Kansas?

Kansas is considered a top 10 state for sunny days, yet we're in the bottom 10 for solar power production. ^(SEIA)

Unique topographical and geographical attributes give us the potential to generate abundant affordable, clean energy right here in Kansas!

sc.org/solarinitiative

JOIN OUR CLUB!

Become a member of the Sierra Club Kansas Chapter



sc.org/joinkansas

DONATE NOW

Support our renewable energy work in Kansas!



sc.org/ksdonate

July 2026
Contributors:
Bill Kroush, Energy Committee Chair
Eliese Holt, Kansas Chapter Coordinator
Kansas Chapter Energy Committee Members

SIERRA CLUB
KANSAS CHAPTER

Kansas Solar Access Initiative

Sign our statewide petition to support reducing regulatory and cost barriers to solar energy!



sc.org/solarforkansas



Types of Solar

- Rooftop Solar**
Solar panels mounted on rooftops of individual residences.
- Plug & Play Solar**
Small, portable systems that plug into a regular wall outlet to partially offset the energy needed from a utility provider.
- Commercial Solar**
Large solar systems installed on commercial properties to meet the energy needs of a business.
- Community Solar**
A solar facility shared by community members who "subscribe" for energy credit, separate from their primary utility.
- Utility-Scale Solar**
Large-scale solar installations that feed power directly onto the energy grid.

Our Solutions For Residential Solar Accessibility

- HOA Solar Freedom**
Remove unreasonable HOA restrictions on rooftop solar
Kansans should have the right to produce their own power, but right now HOAs can block your ability to install a solar system. We're supporting legislation that gives rights back to homeowners who want to install solar.
- Instant Solar Permitting**
Encourage localities to adopt SolarApp+ program
We're working with the SolarApp+ Foundation to encourage local governments to adopt a platform that can cut weeks off the process for permitting residential rooftop solar.
- Plug & Play Solar**
Legalize and popularize Plug-in/Balcony solar
Several states have already modernized laws to allow households to offset power bills with these easy and affordable plug-in systems. We're supporting legislation here in Kansas to do the same!

Our Solutions For Commercial Solar Accessibility

- Local Business Investment**
Help businesses claim 100% bonus depreciation for solar
New federal rules allow for businesses to deduct up to 100% of a solar project's costs from their taxable income in the first year. We're spreading the word about this great opportunity for businesses to reduce their long-term energy costs!
- Community Solar**
Ease restrictions with suitable state legislation
Community solar programs could allow more people and businesses to participate in the benefits of affordable solar energy. We're supporting legislation that permits the development of community solar programs.
- Utility-Scale Solar**
Continue support for utility-scale solar & battery storage
Increasing utility-scale solar is an opportunity for Kansas to become more energy independent and produce affordable, clean energy. We support these installations by lending our voice and expertise at the local level.

Pamphlet Design | Eliese Holt & Sarah Cain

Want to help make solar more accessible in Kansas?
Join the Energy Committee

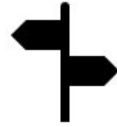
Take Action:

Tell Kansas Legislators We Need Solar Energy!

Let's work together to expand solar access and development across Kansas by reducing regulatory and cost barriers.

SIGN THE STATEWIDE PETITION NOW





what is a **WAYPOINT?**

Waypoint: *noun.* A stopping place on a journey; an endpoint of the leg of a course, especially one whose coordinates have been generated by a computer.

Submit Waypoints **Content**

Waypoints is the monthly newsletter of the Sierra Club Kansas Chapter.

Articles are edited for style and content and may be rejected at the discretion of the editors.

Editors: Eliese Holt and Mimi Moffat.

Events Calendar

Go on an Outing

Join Sierra Club
Kansas

Donate Today

FOLLOW SIERRA CLUB KANSAS

