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From Outrage to Justice

*By Michael Brune,
Sierra Club Executive Director*

By now, you've likely seen the video of Christian Cooper, a Black birder, being unjustly harassed by a white woman who was illegally walking her dog off leash in Central Park. Amy Cooper's call to the police could have resulted in yet another death of an unarmed Black person at the hands of an officer -- just like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others before them.

What happened to Christian Cooper is part of a long, ugly history of racial exclusion in our parks and public spaces. Like water fountains and lunch counters, many national parks were once segregated. Black people have been killed for drifting into waters that were supposed to be for whites only. Just a few months ago, a Black person, Ahmaud Arbery, was killed for

running in a neighborhood that his murderers seemed to believe was for whites only.

Racist incidents like these go a long way toward explaining why Black people feel excluded from our country's wild places and national parks. But Black people and other people of color deserve to be safe in our parks and public lands. They deserve to be safe while going for a run. They deserve to be safe sitting in their own vehicles, as George Floyd was before he was pinned to the ground and murdered by police. They deserve to be safe relaxing in their own homes, as Breonna Taylor was doing when officers fired more than 20 rounds into her kitchen and living room. They deserve to be safe, period.

We should be outraged -- and I know that millions of us are indeed outraged -- by the racist violence inflicted upon Christian Cooper,

Arbery, Floyd, Taylor, and so many others. But as Sierra Club members and supporters, we need to go beyond outrage to working for justice. As an organization, we're committed to making the outdoors a safe place for everyone. So many of us have found peace, joy, and community in the woods, on the water, on the mountains, and in the desert -- and we know that everyone deserves to have the outdoors as a refuge, especially in these challenging times.

To make that vision a reality, we need people like you -- people who have joined our outings, who volunteer their time and money to protect their local wilderness -- to become anti-racist allies. You are the person best positioned to make sure that your local trails and birding spots are safe places for people of color.

Continued on Page 3.

Chapter Chair's Column: Standing in Solidarity

By Jennifer Conner, Chapter Chair



The Missouri Sierra Club mourns

George Floyd, Breona Taylor, and Ahmaud Aubery and all people of color who have been

murdered due to unchecked racism and police violence. We stand in solidarity with those who fight against racism and the grave inequities affecting black, indigenous and people of color in our country.

Our motto is Explore Enjoy and Protect. All the activities the Sierra Club offers and all the actions we take are based on this these three principals. But our motto assumes that ALL people are free to explore and enjoy. As we witnessed with

Christian Cooper, a black man who was birdwatching in Central Park and targeted based on the color of his skin, this is not the case.

Likewise, we cannot expect our black and brown neighbors to help protect our planet when we as a society and within our communities are failing every single day to protect them. Just as people of color are more likely to suffer at the hands of police violence, they are also statistically more likely to live in areas with the most pollution and are disproportionately affected by the current global pandemic. This is why what all of the Sierra Club does must be centered around equity inclusion and justice.

Martin Luther King Jr said "No one is free until we are all free." And we must extend this perspective into our work. Because we cannot

continue to fight to save our planet without acknowledging the vast racial disparities that prohibit people of color from enjoying the same beauty of outdoor spaces and we cannot call for the protection of place, without also protecting the people who are suffering therein.

We have admittedly fallen short of this in Missouri in the past and for that I am deeply sorry. We are educating ourselves and have made the commitment to do better. Most importantly, we will prioritize the voices of frontline communities and share their messages. I encourage you to reach out to our office during this difficult time so we can share resources on how to be better neighbors, allies, and friends. Black Lives Matter.

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About the Missouri Sierran

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From Outrage to Justice continued

Just like we need to work hard to fight climate change and protect nature, we need to be active in dismantling the racism that is tearing our country apart. Indeed, we cannot separate these issues. The companies that have profited from fossil fuels and accelerated the climate crisis are the same ones who have benefited from environmental injustice, colonialism, and racism.

What does it look like to practice anti-racism in the outdoors? I'm not going to pretend to have all the answers. But if you're white and you get outdoors with people of color, listen when they talk about what they need to feel safe, and work to make it happen. Don't dismiss people's stories of experiencing aggression or fear in the outdoors, even if they don't match your reality. Ask your local park administrator what they're doing to protect people of color. If you or your friends encounter an Amy Cooper on the trail, step in to

de-escalate the situation and reduce harm. What bystanders do matters.

And we need folks of all identities to get involved with existing efforts to make the outdoors safe for everyone, because everyone can benefit from time spent in nature. Learn about the Sierra Club's Outdoors for All campaign and how you can get involved. Support our partners in this space, like Latino Outdoors, GirlTrek, and Outdoor Afro (full disclosure, I serve on their board).

None of us will end racism through our individual actions. Systemic evils demand systemic changes. But together, we can work to make the outdoors a safe haven for everyone who needs one. As Christian Cooper told The New York Times, "We should be out here. The birds belong to all of us."

And our anti-racist practice must not end when we leave the park, or get into our cars and drive

away from the trail. As so many have noted, Amy Coopers are in our workplaces. They're in our schools. They're in our churches and temples. The racist fears that drove her to call the cops on Christian Cooper are the same ones that motivate officers to use deadly force.

We must hold ourselves responsible for calling out injustice wherever we see it, and working for change. Because, to paraphrase Christian Cooper, this world belongs to all of us.

Here are some ways to get started on this journey:

- Donate and/or show up to support local groups fighting for racial justice like: Missouri Black Protester Relief Fund, Missouri NAACP, and Arch City Defenders
- Look at the organizations leading this movement nationally: The Movement for Black Lives and Black Lives Matter. We stand in solidarity with them.
- Read the Environmental Racism in St. Louis Report available online at bit.ly/EJReport

Wanted: Mayors for Clean Energy



By Gretchen Waddell-Barwick,
Interim Chapter Director

We are facing unprecedented times. During a global pandemic and social upheaval, our federal and statewide governments have chosen to line their pocketbooks and rollback environmental protections. With state and federal lawmakers failing to take action, it is up to our local governments to show leadership.

Clean energy pledges can make a difference. In addition to building public support for clean energy, major utilities are *required* take these goals seriously. And we have already seen changes.

The Missouri Public Service Commission has adopted a requirement, recommended by Sierra Club, which requires regulated utilities - Ameren, Eergy and Empire - to take these commitments into account in their long-range plans. Because of these commitments, the PSC requires utilities to develop options for meeting renewable energy goals from municipalities.

Now is the time to start a statewide movement. Nationally 1 in 3 people live in an area that has committed to 100% clean energy. Is your city on the list?

**Don't see your mayor on the list?
Send them a message today at
sc.org/mayors-action**

Missouri Mayors for Clean Energy

Mayor Bob Nation, Chesterfield
Mayor Brian Treece, Columbia
Mayor Reggie Jones, Dellwood
Former Mayor Thomas P. Schneider,
Florissant*
Mayor Barry Greenberg, Maplewood
Mayor Terry Epps, Pine Lawn,
Mayor Lyda Krewson, St. Louis
Mayor Nickolas Guccione, Wentzville
Former Mayor Sly James, Kansas City*
Mayor Edward Mahan, Rock Hill
Mayor Matthew G. Robinson,
Hazelwood
Mayor Michelle Harris, Clayton

*These mayors are no longer in office and the new mayor has not signed the pledge.

What Happened During the 2020 Legislative Session

by Michael Berg
Organizer

It's a strange time, and the legislative session was strange. After canceling five weeks of session because of the COVID-19 crisis, the legislature returned for a chaotic last three weeks of session. Republican leadership of both the House and Senate claimed that the end of session would only deal with the passage of a budget and pandemic related issues, but instead they went right back to the agenda they had before the break. The legislature dispensed with norms of open government by having "open hearings" on bills at a time when the entire state was under a stay-at-home order. Adequate provisions for remote participation were not made. Controversial bills had no citizen testimony. As the people of Missouri were at home worried about our health and potential economic collapse, the Missouri House passed giant omnibus bills dealing with issues like the legalization of brass knuckles.

This of course affected our Sierra Club legislative program. We had three Lobby Days planned but due to



Missouri Sierra Club Lobby Day participants on March 11, 2020. Photo by Xandi Barret.

the pandemic were able to only have one. We also talked with many legislators in their district, but had to cancel some meetings. Despite these difficulties, we had two major successes and one major loss on our priority issues:

Grain Belt Express - Once again there was a legislative attack on the Public Service Commission-approved Grain Belt Express wind power transmission line - a move that we

very much opposed. The Grain Belt Express project is vital for creating the clean energy infrastructure we need to transition the state to renewable energy. Despite a last minute effort at deception led by House Speaker Elijah Haahr, a bi-partisan Senate filibuster held to stop the anti-Grain Belt express bills.

Eleven Point State Park - Yet again, we stopped legislation to auction off the magnificent Eleven

Continued on page 7

We Stopped the Sale of the Eleven Point State Park!

by Marisa Frazer,
Public Lands Organizer

We stopped the sale of the Eleven Point State Park in the 2020 legislative session! Thanks to all the Sierra Club members who contacted their legislators to stop this scheme!

The park features six miles of river frontage on the Eleven Point River, the only federally recognized Wild and Scenic River in Missouri. This park will preserve unfragmented forest coverage along the river, benefit migratory bird populations, reduce erosion and nutrient input into the river.

Our efforts to secure the park's protection, however, are ongoing. On the legal front, the Club is mobilizing supporters in Oregon County to oppose a lawsuit that seeks to force the sale of the new park. Nearly 100 people filled the Oregon County courtroom at the Summary Judgment hearing on December 19. The next trial date is



Kayakers on the Eleven Point. Photo by Marisa Frazier

August 4 at 9am at the Oregon County Courthouse in Alton. Club members from Oregon County are encouraged to attend!

The Club is also participating in updating the management plan for the Eleven Point Wild and Scenic River. The current management plan is the original one from the establishment of this park in 1968. The updated plan will determine

how the river is managed for decades to come, including: how to protect the easements that include the riparian corridor of the river, how to manage river accesses, and how to protect river water quality. We will continue to advocate for this park, to restore and preserve its 4,167 acres of native savanna, woodlands, streams and riparian corridors.

Defending our Health and Democracy in 2020

By Ashton Kuehnel
Democracy Organizer

VOTE YES ON AMENDMENT 2! Missourians deserve accessible and affordable healthcare. Thanks to the hard work of our team and our strong, statewide coalition, Missouri will vote on Medicaid Expansion on August 4th. Our 65 member team of Sierra Club activists gathered over 7,800 signatures with Healthcare for Missouri. From gathering signatures in crazy weather, to late nights at the office notarizing petitions, we cannot thank you enough! Our top signature collectors were: George Stair, Jim Turner, John Bohney, Jonathan Lehmann, and Gloria Garidel.

The Sierra Club endorses Amendment 2, or Medicaid Expansion, because we recognize climate change impacts our most vulnerable neighbors. From high asthma rates to increased heat

related illnesses, Missourians need healthcare access to protect themselves from the threats of climate change. Additionally, we need to bring millions of our tax dollars back to Missouri to keep our rural hospitals open. The COVID-19 pandemic proves that Missourians need accessible and affordable healthcare.

To help the Sierra Club continue outreach about Medicaid Expansion, sign up at bit.ly/MedExVolunteer.

PROTECT REDISTRICTING REFORM!

Missouri legislators are putting a devious plan on the November 2020 ballot to repeal the Clean Missouri redistricting reforms. These politicians want to rig our system to keep themselves in power. If you're interested in helping the Sierra Club stop the Dirty Missouri plans, join us at bit.ly/MOFairMaps.



Kansas City Organizer Billy Davies, Thomas Hart Benton Chair Kevin Grooms, & Jameson Wells from Jobs with Justice gathered signatures for Healthcare for Missouri at the Chiefs Super Bowl Victory Parade.

Sierra Club Urges a Delay in Missouri Bear Hunt



By Marisa Frazier
Public Lands Organizer

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is pushing to open a black bear hunting season as early as fall 2021. While the Sierra Club is not opposed to all hunting, the Club opposes this proposal for three key reasons, including:

1) The black bear population in Missouri is still recovering-- it is too early to begin hunting. Due to over-hunting and loss of habitat, Missouri's bears were nearly extirpated by the 1920's. The MDC now estimates a bear

population of 540-840 bears. The slow reproductive capacity of black bears, including a long (17 month) period of female investment to support their young, makes this species prone to fluctuations due to natural mortality. Now is the time to build the bear population by improving habitat, creating wildlife corridors, and expanding

public lands. Compare Arkansas, which has a population of 5,000 black bears today. For the Missouri bear population to grow to that size would take 16 more years (using the 9% annual growth rate estimated by the MDC).

2) MDC has not addressed user conflicts on public land. The proposed hunting season would begin on the third Monday of October-- peak hiking season in the Ozarks. Conflicts between hunters with high-powered rifles and hikers, canoers, and other user groups have not been addressed in the MDC plan. Many more

Missourians use public lands to hike during October than would use the lands to bear hunt, but of course the hikers could not be in the woods alongside people shooting at bears.

3) Dogs and baiting methods make for unfair chase.

The MDC is explicitly not ruling out the use of dogs and baiting to hunt bears. Why is that? If bears are really overpopulated, why would one need to use bait and dogs to find one? These methods violate the principle of "fair chase" in hunting, and would negatively impact other species as well.

The Sierra Club is urging the MDC to delay any bear hunt in Missouri. Instead, let's work together to improve habitat quality, to obtain additional public lands, and protect wildlife corridors that would allow bears to grow in numbers. Let's come together around a shared agenda of expanding the black bear

Black Bear photo by Steve Hillebrand of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Staying Connected to the Missouri Sierra Club

Online Tools to Take Action

Follow Missouri Sierra Club's social media accounts; like, comment and share our posts to your own account!



@MOSierraClub



Columbia: Sierra Club Osage Group
 Kansas City: THB Sierra Club
 St. Louis: EMG Connector
 Springfield: Sierra Club White River Group
 Missouri Chapter: Missouri Sierra Club



@MOSierraClub



addup.sierraclub.org/ take action through petitions, calls to decision makers & more!

All Summer: statewide virtual meetings!

The Sierra Club cares about the well-being and safety of all our members and staff. So rather than hosting in-person meetings or outings we will be hosting statewide Zoom calls on some of our largest campaigns, so you can still stay connected to the Sierra Club from the comfort and safety of your own home. Don't want to join on your computer? No problem! You can join from your phone. Meetings will be on the last Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM. Check out our Facebook or watch your email to RSVP.

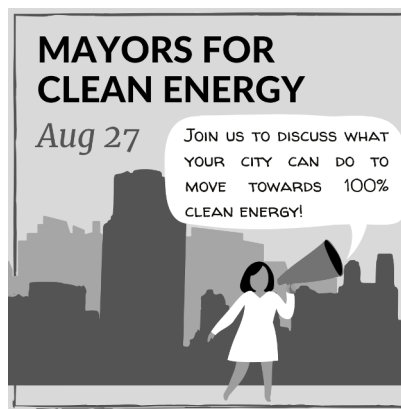


Photo Highlight: Making Energy Efficiency History in St. Louis!



Gretchen Waddell Barwick and Michael Berg stand with the entirety of the St. Louis County Council immediately after they passing the updated energy efficiency building code in 2019. From Left to Right: Waddell Barwick, Lisa Clancy, Rita Heard Days, Kelli Dunaway, Mark Harder, Rochelle Walton-Gray, Ernie Trakas, Tim Fitch, and Berg.

In 2019 the Sierra Club was proud to stand by our allies and community partners as St. Louis County Council unanimously passed an updated building code that is 15% more energy efficient than the current building code. Earlier in the year St. Louis City passed a strong energy efficient building code as well which is more than 25% more energy efficient than their previous code. In these areas new homeowners will save \$250-580 per year on utility bills. The energy codes will impact new single-family homes, multi-family housing, and commercial buildings. In 2020, we were proud to support our friends at the U.S. Green Building Council to pass the Building Energy Performance Standard in St. Louis City. This measure is the first standard of its kind in the Midwest and puts existing commercial and multi-family buildings on track to improve their energy efficiency and reduce their impact on the planet.

The 2020 Legislative Session, continued

Point State Park to private interests. You can learn more about this issue on page 4 from our Public Lands Organizer, Marisa Frazier.

"Dirty" Missouri on the Ballot – The Sierra Club made a large effort in 2018 to get CLEAN Missouri on the ballot and then help to pass it. CLEAN Missouri creates fairer state legislative districts and enacts needed legislative ethic reforms. The Republican leadership did not like the idea of creating fair districts and passed Senate Joint Resolution 38 (SJR 38) on the third to last day of session. The bill is an attack on

CLEAN Missouri and also radically changes who is and is not counted for districting purposes, by excluding all non-citizens and children. This is a dangerous precedent. We oppose and are organizing efforts against the ballot measure. Our Democracy Organizer, Ashton Kuehnel led our work to support CLEAN Missouri by opposing SJR 38 and other similarly destructive bills, as well as proposed attacks on our initiative petition system.

The Legislative Committee consists of Chair Erica Hoffman, Dan Reed, Carolyn Amparan, James Harmon,

Dan Mandel, Mike Diel, Frances Klahr, Walter Bargen, Melinda Hemmelgarn, Caroline Pufalt, Paulette Zimmerman, Henry Robertson, Ross Hunt, Patricia Schuba, Lyn Anthony, Rachel Speed, Jonathan Lehmann, Suzanne Jackson, Claus Wawrzinek, Steve Mohler, Audrey Elder, Kristen Kramer, Mary Ann Wynkoop, Myra Scroggs, Jim Arneson and Joe Pitts.

To become involved in the effort to protect CLEAN MO on the November ballot, contact Ashton Kuehnel at ashton.kuehnel@sierraclub.org.

Updates from Missouri's Group Chairs

Eastern Missouri Group by Chair Ken Schecthman: EMG volunteers are continuing to stay engaged despite virus based restrictions. We have volunteers running for office; we have kept members apprised of environmental concerns regarding local ballot measures; volunteers have "attended" virtual municipal council meetings, state wide board meetings on flooding issues and on Missouri forests. We provided visuals for virtual St. Louis Earth Day. Our fourth Thursday monthly meeting time frame has become a time for state wide Zoom calls on topics such as ready for 100 and defending Clean Missouri. EMG volunteers are campaigning to defeat the Dirty Missouri bill at the ballot. Outings have been canceled but we keep connected to Ozark trail maintenance efforts, and will be ready for work as soon as possible. We tend our native garden outside the Sierra Club office and it is growing and blooming.

White River Group by Chair Louise Wienckowski: The WRG has had two Zoom meetings for the board and several local activists. We plan on continuing this monthly until the COVID situation changes (Contact Louise to join us!) We have discussed planning for the fall, assuming we will be able to meet in person. This includes rescheduling several events and outings that were to be held this spring. We are continuing to think of ways to influence Springfield City Council regarding environmental concerns in general, and in particular, the Ready for 100 campaign and energy efficiency codes. We talked about sponsoring a City Council candidate forum that focuses on environmental concerns. We are also talking about a panel discussion that would include City Council members and people with experience retrofitting old homes to improve energy efficiency. We also continue our support of public lands advocacy in our surrounding area.

Osage Group by Chair Carolyn Amparan: During the first half of the year, the Osage Group has been active. Highlights include Climate Action and Adaptation Planning about how mid-Missouri communities can begin climate actions and a zoom meeting with Dr. Charlie Nilon spoke about Environmental Justice and Urban Wildlife. Legislative advocacy and political work included holding a lobby day, collecting Medicaid Expansion petition signatures, co-sponsoring a Columbia city council and school board candidate forum focused on climate change, clean energy and the environment. The Kirksville section also met with their local State Representative. The work for 100% Clean Energy for All and to stop climate change progresses. We are happy to report that member, John Madras has been selected for the Building Codes Review committee in Jefferson City. Our goal is to move Jefferson City to more energy efficient building codes. Membership continues to grow. Two events in February assisted in new member outreach and community education. At one attendees learned about the dangers of some pesticides to pollinators and at another attendees learned about climate change and reducing plastic waste. Conservation Chair, Dee Dokken is actively working with both the City of Columbia and county to move forward with a development plan for the West Area of Boone County. To get involved fill out the volunteer survey: www.sierraclub.org/missouri/osage/take-our-interest-survey. Volunteers are especially needed right now to assist with the Political Committee. Please reach out to the Executive Committee at sc.osage.group@gmail.com to get involved.

Thomas Hart Benton Group by Chair Kevin Grooms: Summer's here and Thomas Hart Benton Group continues to make change for a better environment. In spite of the pandemic, we're already accomplishing our goals for 2020. Outings Chair Eileen McManus has kept busy engaging new leaders to give members every chance to see the outdoors. Though we've paused in-person gatherings, our leadership is prepared to hold outings as soon as it's safe to do so. In the meantime, Eileen has provided outings for individuals in the form of self-guided forest walks, conservation advocacy, etc, available on our Meetup page at www.meetup.com/KC-Sierra-Club-Outings, where it is free to sign up and find ways to join us outside. Our Legislative Committee, co-chaired by Don Wallace and Robin Ganahl, helped drive enough public input to the city of Kansas City to update its climate protection plan and rapidly expand renewable energy. The resolution includes crucial equity safeguards, and we intend to mobilize our members and allies to ensure a plan that protects Kansas Citizens most vulnerable to climate change. This and our political work depends entirely on new volunteers, so please email THB Group Chair Kevin Grooms at kagrooms@gmail.com with your interest, and we will connect you with simple ways to make change for the better!



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NEWSPAPER
DATED MATERIAL

INSIDE

- From Outrage to Justice - a message from Sierra Club Director Michael Brune
- Black Lives Matter
- Chair's Column
- Staying Connected during COVID-19
- Mayors for Clean Energy
- Defending Democracy
- Legislative Update
- Group Reports
- ... and more!

Black Lives Matter: Confronting Environmental Racism

by Gretchen Waddell Barwick, Interim Chapter Director

Black Lives Matter. That is the cry we've heard across the country and our state for years and it's been amplified over the past few weeks. In rural areas, college towns, and large cities across our state, Missourians have said loud and clear: Black Lives Matter. We agree. We cannot be silent.

We at the Missouri Sierra Club have not done our part to upend the racist structures that have claimed the lives of Michael Brown, Anthony Lamar Smith, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many of our Black and Brown neighbors. As a predominantly white environmental organization, we have benefited from and upheld systemic racism for far too long. We distanced our mission of conservation and protecting the planet from the mission of eradicating racism and protecting people. **The fight for environmental justice is inextricably linked to the fight for racial justice.**

In Missouri, we see environmental racism in many ways. For example:

- Black and Brown communities experience higher levels of asthma and heart disease due, in part, to worse air quality from coal-fired power plants, highways, and ozone issues. This issue is exacerbated by racial discrimination in our healthcare system
- Nature is a human right, but there is a long, ugly history of racial exclusion in our parks and public spaces and that history lives on today in Missouri
- Black children in Missouri are more likely to experience lead poisoning, despite 50 years of efforts to eliminate this threat
- Black and Brown Missourians are less likely to have access to fresh, nutritious food and are more likely to live in food deserts due to redlining, which still happens today, and lack of access to reliable transportation

In the words of Sierra Club's own Hop Hopkins "You can't have climate change without sacrifice zones, and you can't have sacrifice zones without disposable people, and

you can't have disposable people without racism."

It is up to us to not just be allies in this issue, but to be actively anti-racist. The Missouri Sierra Club will confront racism, support front line communities, and double down on our efforts to be a more inclusive and equitable organization. I hope you will join us.



Black Lives Matter Protest St. Louis, MO.

Photo Credit: Ed Smith, Sierra Club