

OZARK SIERRAN

One Earth One Chance

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Rape ...on the Jacks Fork River

by Tom Kruzen, Mining Chair/Ozark Chapter/ Sierra Club and Director of the Center for Responsibility and Accountable Public Servants (CRAPS)

Rage could have described my aura last October as I walked through the door, however, Angel told me that there has to be another word that more accurately described my mood of that day. Several years ago I swore to my wife and myself that there would be a kinder/gentler (at least a more civil) Tom. This was not working that cold day in October 2004.

I had just returned from a trip to one of my favorite spots on the South Prong of the Jacks Fork River. I was looking for a small limestone rock I could use as an example of karst at an upcoming water education conference at the St. Louis Science Center. What I found instead was the finest example of river rape that I had ever seen. My favorite respite from the "real" world had been a river crossing with a low water bridge and a great river bottom hardwood forest replete with goldenseal

and ginseng, along with orchids and *waldsteinia fragarioides* (barren strawberry), a Missouri rare and endangered plant. Several years ago the previous landowner had done a pretty heavy high-grade timber harvest on the east hillside but it was recovering. It still had an assemblage of peace and solace, commodities rarely acknowledged by state and federal resource handlers.

The sight my eyes saw this day was a 600 yard bulldozed riverbed and river bank up and down stream from the low water bridge on Texas County Stillhouse Road, known as Dixon Crossing. This is accessed by taking NN Highway north about five miles west of Mountain View. Someone with entirely too much time and/or money had gouged the riverbed, removing six-seven feet of the bed and dozing it upon the river bank, smothering

continued on page 5...Jacks Fork River



INSIDE

- Energy Notes.....p 4
- Dates You Need to Know.....p 2
- Book Review.....p 3
- National Club Election.....p 8
- Outings.....p 11

Special Elections April 2

Elections held for:

- Missouri Senate—16th District
- Missouri Senate—22nd District
- Missouri House—38th District
- Mayoral Election—Springfield

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Conservation Lobby Day

April 13, 2005 from 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
at Missouri's State Capitol in
House Hearing Room 2

Let your elected officials know about issues of importance to you.

The Sierra Club is sponsoring its annual Lobby Day. With a new Governor and a new Director at the Department of Natural Resources, it is more important than ever to demonstrate strong support for environmental protection. The best way to do this is by turning out a large group at Lobby Day. Several of our environmental and conservation group allies will co-sponsor the event so we are expecting a large turn out. Showing elected officials you care enough to make the trip to our state Capitol speaks volumes.

This is an excellent opportunity to stop and visit

with the new Governor and your elected officials to discuss the importance of environmental protection and conservation for Missouri. There are several critical issues and programs working their way through the legislative process. The timing of our Conservation Lobby Day should fall at a time when serious conservation and environmental legislation will be at critical junctures. Please plan to **attend and bring a friend**. We will have informational speakers and detailed handouts to provide background materials for lobbying.

It is a great chance to get involved in the issues that matter to you and meet new friends in the process. We always try to pair first time lobby day attendees with an old pro. Plan on attending and help us protect Missouri's environment.

More details on speakers to be announced.

For more information call the Sierra club office at 1(800) 628-5333 or email us at ozark.chapter@sierraclub.org

You can visit our website to check out the legislative bills we are currently tracking, visit <http://missouri.sierraclub.org> and select Green Report Track Legislation.

We've Been Framed: Lakoff Lessons for Progressives

by Alan Journet, Conservation Chair, Trail of Tears Group

What Happened?

Following the 1964 GOP debacle when Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater was trounced by incumbent Lyndon Johnson, a group of right wing extremists embarked upon a scheme to turn the tide. Back then 'conservative' was as dirty a word as 'liberal' is now. A consequence of that plan was the wave of electoral victories that swept George Bush back into the White House and a host of right wing Republicans into federal and state legislatures.

Prompted by a 1970 memo from Chamber of Commerce Chief Counsel (soon-to-be Supreme Court Justice) Lewis Powell, the right wingers sought corporate funds to establish foundations and think tanks that would promote the right wing cause in the media and on campus. A primary goal was to frame issues to favor their policies and plans.

One result of their success is that progressive and moderate Americans are finding themselves increasingly unrepresented. It is important to understand that this is essentially not a contest between Democrats and Republicans. Moderate and progressive members of Republicans for Environmental Protection, for example, have lost their voice as much as have progressive and moderate Democrats. As Thomas Frank pointed out in his 2004 discussion (*What's the Matter with Kansas?* Metropolitan Books, N.Y.) moderate Republicans are being muscled out of their own Party by right wing extremists. Unless genuine moderates and progressives in both parties understand what happened, the right wing extremists will continue their march to political domination at the expense of those values that the rest of us hold so dear.

It's a Matter of Framing

If you play with me for a moment you'll see the problem. To paraphrase George Lakoff (*don't think of an elephant! KNOW YOUR VALUES AND FRAME THE DEBATE* 2004 — Chelsea Green Publishing, Vermont), for the next five minutes, whatever you do, "do not think of an elephant!" Even if you're trying to play along with me, I bet you've already conjured up the trunked, big-eared image in an attempt to block it.

Essentially, this is what framing is all about. By generating favorable images and frames for offensive and distasteful programs and policies that would be rejected

if their details were known, the right wing radical regressive Republicans soothe the electorate into supporting a legislative platform that they should and otherwise would reject. Sometimes the act of framing can be achieved simply by giving a soothing name to a policy or bill.

A couple of examples will illustrate the problem:

The Bush plan of cutting taxes in an attempt, not only to shift the tax burden from wealthy to middle and low income Americans, but also to bankrupt the nation and force the cessation of government programs has been called "tax relief." The beauty of this frame is that it is impossible to fight. If there is relief, there must be an affliction; in this case the affliction is taxes. So taxes are immediately depicted as evil. And who could possibly argue against relief from an affliction except someone who has evil intentions? So, the problem faced by opponents of dismantling government programs is that they must first build a competing frame that paints taxes as something other than evil. In this case, an alternative frame could be to identify taxes first as an investment in the nation—current and future, and second as the patriotic responsibility of all Americans.

In the environmental arena, Bush has identified his plan to promote air pollution as "Clear Skies" and his plan to log our national forests as the "Healthy Forests

Initiative" Clearly these frames set up images that many moderate Americans concerned about air quality or our public lands will find attractive. The alternative frames that depict these as "Dirty Skies" and "No Tree Left Behind" would be more accurate. However, until we can associate such frames with Bush programs in the minds of voters, we will not be successful.

The master of the right wing framing language is Frank Luntz who has written tomes on the correct language to use to generate appealing frames for unappealing ideas. A valuable attribute of a successful frame is that if critics use the frame even when negating it with evidence and argument, they have conjured up the image, and the evidence and argument have already been lost.

The Nation as Family

In his analysis, Lakoff identifies two competing visions of the nation as family. On the one hand, the prevailing right wing perception is of the authoritarian father/parent who through discipline and punishment must train children (who are born bad) to obey. Without this punishment and training there will be no morality

continued on page 10...We've been framed

The *Ozark Sierran* is published four times a year by the Ozark Chapter of the Sierra Club. Annual dues of Sierra Club members pay for subscription to this publication. Non-members may subscribe for \$15 per year.

Items for publication: Contact **Claus Wawrzinek** via E-mail at claus@missouri.sierraclub.org or phone (816) 517-5244, **PRIOR TO SENDING**, for information on how to submit articles.

The editors reserve the right to edit articles! Material may be edited for length, content, or clarity. It is our job to help you communicate. If you have strong creative ownership of your writing, and wish to review your edited article before publication, *consider your deadline 10 days prior to the published deadline*. With notice, we will be happy to work with you.

Reproduction quality photographs (prints) or artwork are dearly welcome. Please send us photos...

OZARK SIERRAN

The published deadline is the real, honest-to-goodness, drop-dead deadline—not a couple of days or a week later! Submissions received after the deadline are subject to the possibility they won't appear in the issue: you will feel bad and we will feel bad. Call us

nasty, but we are determined this newsletter will come out on time!

The *OZARK SIERRAN* is produced on a Macintosh computer, so we strongly prefer to receive material electronically (E-mail), or on a CD, **WITH A HARD COPY OF THE TEXT**. Typed articles are also OK (must be received a few days before the deadline). All submissions must include name, address, and phone number of the author. If you want your submission returned (including your CD), please include a SASE.

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Dates You Need to Know

4/11	Conservation Lobby Day, Missouri Capitol Building. Meet in House Hearing Room 2
6/01	Submission deadline, July-August <i>Ozark Sierran</i> , contact Claus Wawrzinek, claus@missouri.sierraclub.org , (816) 517-5244
6/11	Chapter ConsCom meeting: Kansas City, contact Ken Midkiff, kmidkiff@mchsi.com
6/12	Chapter ExCom meeting: Kansas City contact Keet Kopecky, kkopecky@kc.rr.com , (816) 966-9544

Current River Natural Area Celebrating 50 Years in April

by Dan Dees, Susan Flader, and Greg Iffrig

Current River Natural Area is Missouri's oldest natural area and our only known virgin old-growth, white oak stand. It is in the center of what is thought to be the largest area dominated by white oak prior to European settlement. This was and still is Missouri's Big Woods.

The Society of American Foresters, in 1947, had begun a program to designate virgin forest types for various species as protected natural areas. Several people recommended this particular grove, among them The Nature Conservancy and Dr. Julian Steyermark.

Negotiations began in 1953 between National Distillers, the owner at the time, and concluded in 1955 when the Society of American Foresters and Leo Drey, then the forest's new owner, agreed to the designation. The agreement was recorded in the Shannon County courthouse in April of that year.

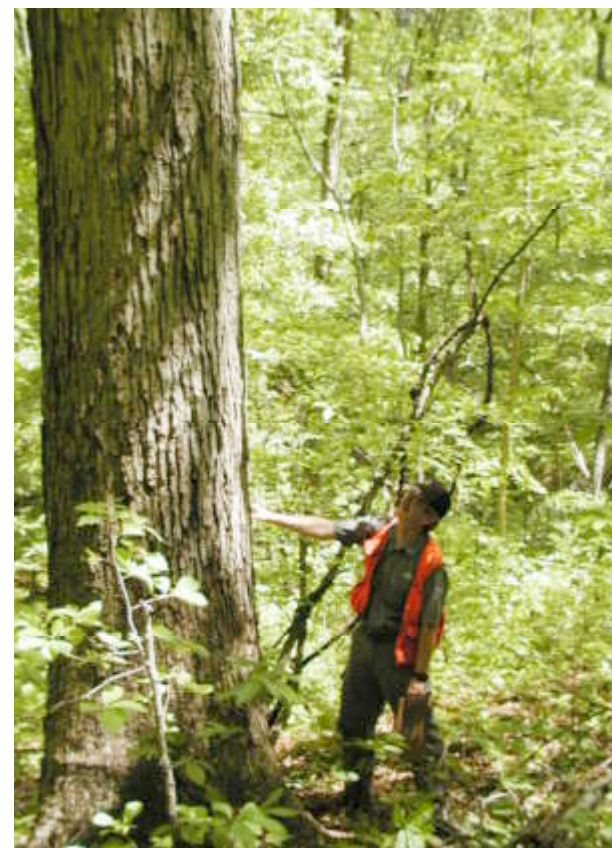


Some call them primordial oaks, they are certainly old. Dr. Richard Guyette, a dendrochronologist from the University of Missouri-Columbia, has aged white oak trees here at 300-400 years old. Among the many oak species at home in Missouri, white oak is the longest-lived. Originally small, only 10 acres, now a much larger 255-acres surrounding the original site will be added to the natural area by the current day Missouri Natural Areas Committee. Here, too, are rare groves of these ancient oaks, many of which are larger, taller, and perhaps older than the monarchs in the original natural area.

Most Missouri Natural Areas are islands of natural integrity within an ocean of intense landscape fragmentation. Current River Natural Area is nestled within the largest single piece of land in the state; no other unit of land under public or private ownership is larger. This important natural area, with its long history, is found in an area of more than 90 square miles. Most of this sizeable area is recognized as the Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry, part of the L-A-D Foundation's Pioneer Forest.

Perhaps most telling is what is not here. This may be Missouri's least threatened natural area. There are no signs of invasive exotic species, no utility corridors, paved roads, flight paths, or any of the effects of urbanization. Even the forests of Pioneer are the most conservatively managed of any in Missouri, the result of more than half-a-century of single-tree selection management. Here, there is high natural integrity amidst a large and primitive, forested landscape.

On Saturday April 30 at 10:30 a.m. there will be a re-dedication of the original site along with a dedication of the 255-acre addition. The sizeable addition, commemorating the natural area's 50th anniversary, will be done through the L-A-D Foundation. This is because on July 6 of 2004, Leo, one of Missouri's truly remarkable conservation heroes, donated the most spectacular gift of real estate ever in the state of Missouri, and perhaps the nation, signing over nearly the entire acreage of Pioneer



Forest to the L-A-D Foundation. The L-A-D Foundation now carries as one of its principal missions protecting this conservatively managed forest in perpetuity.

Come join us. Come celebrate. Come to walk through a very old forest in the heart of the Ozarks. For more information you may contact the Foundation's office at 721 Olive, Room 1016, St. Louis, Missouri, or call (314) 621-0230. 📞

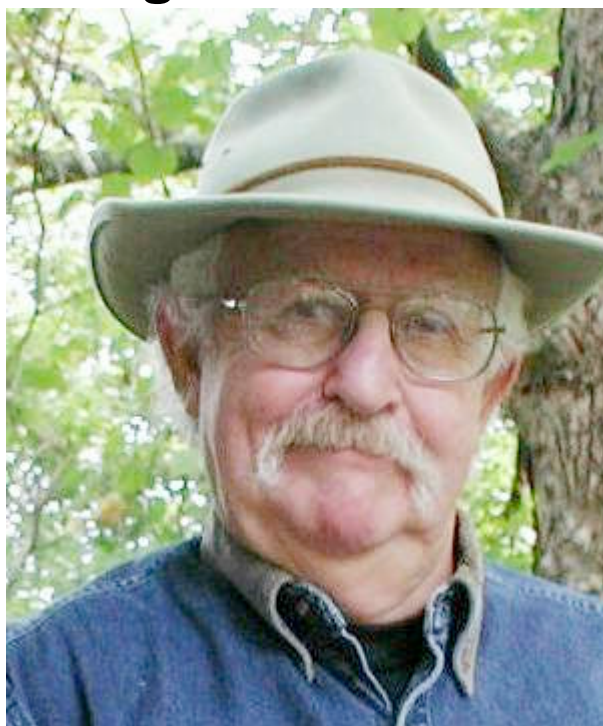
Food Feud: An activist slings a cleaver at the meat business

by Bob Schildgen—Senior Editor, SIERRA Magazine

THE MEAT YOU EAT: How Corporate Farming Has Endangered America's Food Supply by Ken Midkiff (St. Martin's Press, \$23.95)

Henry Kissinger is a farmer. That's one of the many revelations in this feisty exposé of how the corporate-dominated food system damages the environment. Former Sierra Club Clean Water Campaign director, Midkiff sounds like a local farmer grumbling while he sips coffee at the worn Formica counter in a local café. "Too much manure in one place," is the problem with giant livestock operations. As one of his farmer friends puts it, "Mother Nature never intended for 80,000 hogs to shit in the same spot."

Behind this putrefying proximate cause of the disaster is the corporate ownership that turns the art of agriculture into an industrial process. "What most of us think as farming barely exists," says Midkiff. "There are fewer and fewer individual farmers tilling their own soil. Fewer farm kids are playing in the creek, which has ... most likely been poisoned with fertilizer, pesticides, or bacteria." Instead, millionaires like Kissinger sit on the board of ContiGroup, "one of the wealthiest agribusiness corporations in the world," raising millions of hogs a year. "Joe Luter, the CEO of Smithfield Foods, the largest producer of pork in the world, describes his occupation as 'farmer' yet lives in a condo on Park Avenue." It's pretty clear that the industrialized agricultural system, with its gigantic machinery and concentrated mar-



kets, is incompatible with traditional methods, where a farmer orchestrated the growth of a variety of crops and livestock—and manure was an asset instead of mere sewage.

Midkiff's populist insight not only makes for colorful blasphemy against agribusiness magnates who peer down on this mess from their penthouses. It also helps him expose how destructive practices hammer people as hard as they do the environment. After busting packing house unions, the slaughterhouses brought in migrant workers, one whose fate Midkiff describes: "Juan could not take a break even to sharpen his knife or use the bathroom... He pissed down his pants at his workstation while he was attempting to hold a slab of greasy meat and trim off the fat, his knife slipped and severed two of his fingers. They fell onto the worktable, became contaminated, and were not reattachable." The work Juan did, "disassembly," is corporate-speak for butchering.

One way out of the dilemma is for consumers to demand food grown sustainably, with concern for the land and the people who work on it, Midkiff says. They must seek out distributors, including farmers markets and the emerging farm co-ops. These groups set decent prices to enable a farmer to meet the cost of production and stay in business (instead of going bankrupt, as in 1999, when hog prices plunged to nine cents a pound). To make the task easier, Midkiff provides a state-by-state list of contacts, which enhances his valuable contribution to the growing movement for sustainable agriculture. 📞

See You in September?

Largest Gathering Ever: Sierra Club Convention to Welcome Thousands to San Francisco, Build Vision for Future

Sierra Summit 2005 was born at a Sierra Club Board of Directors meeting two years ago. Harvard sociologist and former United Farm Worker organizer Marshall Ganz gave a talk about successful social movements of the past century, and noted that they all held conventions where local leaders celebrated, told their stories, and returned home inspired and energized. Bob Perkowitz, a trustee of The Sierra Club Foundation, asked why the Sierra Club couldn't host a convention, then he offered to donate seed money to get the ball rolling. Former board member Nick Aumen offered a resolution accepting that challenge and charging a task force to pursue it.

Gallons of blood, sweat, and tears later, and voilà, Sierra Summit 2005, the Sierra Club's first-ever large-scale convention, to be held September 8-11 in San Francisco's Moscone Center.

The summit will feature speakers and entertainment—comedian Bill Maher will headline Saturday night and pundit Arianna Huffington will speak Sunday at lunch, an exposition featuring more than 150 green and outdoor businesses as well as a cooking stage, a climbing wall, and an on-site eco-house. And at the center of all this activity will be an unprecedented gathering of delegates from chapters, groups, committees, and task forces, who will work together to plot the direction of the Club for the coming years.

"This will be the most inclusive direction-setting process we've ever had," says board member Greg Casini, co-chair of the Summit Steering Committee.

For years, the Sierra Club has hosted an annual meeting that includes the board of directors and the Sierra Club Council, where each chapter is represented by a Council delegate. But at most, several hundred members have gathered at one time. The Sierra Summit will bring 3,000 members together, 1,000 of whom will be Summit delegates.

There is broad debate in the environmental community now that so much is at risk," says Summit Co-Chair Lisa Renstrom. "With the summit, we have an extraordinary opportunity to give voice to our members, and draw upon their experience, passion, and wisdom to set our future."

Other speakers at the summit include Poet Laureate

Robert Hass, documentary filmmaker Ric Burns, "green" architect Bill McDonough, Mississippi River cleanup champion Chad Pregracke. There will also be dozens of panels, such as "Women Who Rock," "Working to Build Progressive Media," and "The Impossible Will Take a Little While." Other workshops will focus on international tourism, technology and activism, leadership development, campus organization, and more. The Sierra Club Showcase will give participants a chance to share their activism success stories. The expo will include green lifestyle/organic food exhibits, outdoor equipment retailers, hybrid vehicles—there's even going to be a "green" dollhouse, with miniature (and functioning solar panels). (For more, see "Sierra Summit 2005 At-a-Glance," at right.)

Before, during, and after the Summit, volunteers from the Loma Prieta, Mother Lode, and San Francisco Bay chapters will lead outings and explorations to local parks, trail restoration service trips in Golden Gate National Recreation Area (part of the Dr. Edgar Wayburn Legacy Project), and even, promises David Simon, longtime leader who is coordinating the outings, a trip to the San Francisco Giants game on Friday night. (All outings will be accessible via public transportation.)

The Summit delegate-selection process, which is still being refined, is designed to reflect the broadest possible participation while honoring the Club's leadership structure. Here's how the delegates break down:

Each group will send one Summit delegate, and each chapter will send four—its Council of Club leaders delegate, a senior leader, someone under 30, and someone from outings. Another 163 at-large delegates will be selected, based on chapter membership size—one at-large delegate per 5,000 members. In addition, there will be about 285 national delegates, including the board of directors, conservation govcom members, and other national leaders.

The direction-setting process will start far in advance of the summit, says Casini, and in fact has started already in some chapters. In the Rocky Mountain Chapter, for example, chapter leaders held a pre-summit discussion recently where they came to a consensus that the top priority for the Club was to develop more effective messages and framing about values.

Between now and the summit, says Casini, the Club will be surveying activists about the goals we should set, the roles we should play, the strengths we should nurture, and how we can best build involvement and support for our work in local communities. (You can find

surrounding buffer area, arguing that the area's tallgrass prairie, migratory birds, and aesthetic view should be protected. The judge ruled their suit failed to state a proper legal claim.

Environmental Groups Appeal Permit For A New Coal-Burning Power Plant Near St. Louis

The Sierra Club, American Bottom Conservancy, American Lung Association, Clean Air Task Force, Lake County Conservation Alliance, and Valley Watch have appealed the air pollution permit issued to St. Louis-based Peabody Energy by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) for its proposed Prairie State coal plant. The groups filed the appeal with the Environmental Appeals Board (EAB) of U.S. EPA in Washington, D.C. The EAB is expected to take six to nine months to rule on the appeal, so a decision may not come until 2006.

"We filed this appeal because this dirty coal plant represents a tremendous health threat to citizens in

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first-ever National
Environmental
Convention & Expo**

September 8-11, 2005

**The Moscone Center
San Francisco, CA**



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www.sierrasummit2005.org

out more about the Summit delegate process at clubhouse.sierraclub.org/sierrasummit/delegates.)

To register, go to www.sierrasummit2005.org and either complete the form online or mail or fax it in. You can also call (301) 694-5243 or e-mail scs051.attendee@expoexchange.com.

If you sign up by May 31, you save \$75 off the regular Sierra Club member rate.

(The registration fee varies depending on whether you are a member, leader, or delegate, as well as whether you attend the whole summit or part of it.) ☞

Energy Notes

by Wallace McMullen

Lawsuit against wind power development dismissed

A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit in February filed by the Flint Hills Tallgrass Prairie Heritage Foundation that had sought to stop/block development of a large wind farm in Kansas. The proposed wind farm of 100 wind turbines, about 45 miles east of Wichita, will be the state's largest producer of wind energy.

Empire District Electric Co. of Joplin, Missouri is one of the major investors in this 150 megawatt project being developed by Scottish Power PLC and Greenlight Energy Inc. of Charlottesville, Virginia. The wind farm is expected to generate enough electricity to power 42,000 homes annually, and a major portion of the output will go to the Joplin area.

The Foundation sought to prohibit commercial wind energy development in the Flint Hills ecosystem and a

Illinois and the surrounding region," said Bruce Nilles, attorney for the Sierra Club. "Peabody should use the best available technology to protect the health of surrounding communities in southern Illinois, Chicago, and the St. Louis metro area. Surely the world's largest coal company can do better."

According to IEPA's permit, the Peabody Prairie State plant will potentially emit more than 50 million pounds of new pollutants every year, including 270 pounds of mercury, (which can cause brain damage to a developing fetus, babies and young children); 11,866 tons of sulfur dioxide, and 5,216 tons of smog-forming nitrogen oxides. In addition, the plant would emit thousands of tons of carbon dioxide per year, the primary greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming.

"Air pollution in the St. Louis metropolitan area is already a problem and Peabody's dirty coal plant would make the situation much worse," said Kathy Andria of the American Bottom Conservancy, which is based in East St. Louis. "Nearly 300,000 children in Illinois suffer from asthma, and the rate in the St. Louis Metro area is double the national average." ☞

Jacks Fork River.....continued from page 1

the well established bank side vegetation to a depth of 10–12 feet. The gravel had been stacked as if to harvest in long extended piles crafted to a totally unstable 40 degree angle! As I surveyed the damage, my eyes came upon two newly created twenty foot-wide channels cut deeply across the island that is on the upstream side of the bridge. This island formerly had a slow seeping back-water slough on its north side. In high flood stage, this slough took the burden off the south channel. The two recent cuts now diverted the almost the entire south flow around the island to the north slough. Someone had changed the entire river.

At first I thought someone or perhaps the county was doing illegal gravel mining, but it did not look as if any gravel had been removed. It had simply been rearranged. Upon further investigation, a little tributary, Little Pine Creek, which empties into the south channel a few hundred yard upstream from the bridge had also been straightened—scraped and raped a couple of hundred yards from the mouth upstream. All this to what purpose?

Enraged, I called Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the Army Corps of Engineers because this apparently fell under their purview. Not only had the macroinvertebrate life of the stream been killed, crushed and stranded on dry land but the valuable bankside vegetation—the willows and sycamores that hold the silt, gravel and rich bottomland loam in place, but these thieves had actually changed the course of the river, all possible violations of Sections 303 and 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. Also, even though this part of the river is not included on the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, it is still a federally and state protected Outstanding Resource Waterway. I reminded the bureaucrats of this as they told me where to direct my anger in writing. I filed a written complaint and faxed it to the lame-duck governor and the agencies. I explained to them I was being a good boy and the words I was using were toned down for their benefit. I also reminded them of the importance of this river—and that it was major reason I moved here from Iowa a quarter century ago—the clear unspoiled waters of the Jacks Fork.

The next day Bill Zeaman from MDNR's Land Reclamation division (573-751-4041) and Arthur Goodin from MDNR's Southeast Regional Office (573-840-9750) showed up along with Mary Palmer, a fisheries biologist from the West Plain's Office of MDC. I met them there with a compact disc of 50 or 60 pictures I had taken. During the next week, the bureaucratic shuffle went something like this:

- 1) MDC claimed they were not a "regulatory agency" regarding water, and no dead fish were found as this had been done several weeks before, and any fish were gone. (MDC is a Stream Team Partner)
- 2) MDNR claimed that no real pollution had been evidenced as much of the silt had already been flushed downstream and so could not bring any laws to bear. I asked about the new gravel mining rules and they said that if it was a county road crew, they are exempt from the rules. (MDNR is a Stream Team Partner)
- 3) Later that week, Louis Clarke of the Army Corps (Walnut Ridge, Arkansas Office) came down along with EPA Water Enforcement Agent, Larry Long (800-223-0425). They agreed that what was done was bad and broke all kinds of federal rules and laws. The Army Corps has a Memorandum of Understanding—that when something like this is done to an Outstanding National Resource Waterway the jurisdiction would be handed over to

the Environmental Protection Agency, in this case, Region VII from Kansas City.

Investigations by these agencies and the West Plains Daily Quill found that this RIVER RAPE had been accomplished by the Pierce Township Road Board. Texas County has a real strange township form of government, whereby liability for roads is transferred from the county to the townships. The county commissioners have no "say" in this matter, although Texas County Commissioner, Linda Garrett has sparred with Ken at Land Reclamation Commission meetings in support of extending gravel mining!

She and the County Commissioners were unaware of the damage at Dixon Crossing. She referred us to the Piece Township Road Board. A year earlier this very same group of good ole' boys had torn up another upstream tributary of the South Prong and got in trouble over it from the Army Corps. They issued a "cease and desist" order, which obviously did no good. These "public servants" simply moved down stream. It could get the township board up to \$33,000 per day from that stop order—that's times 365.

An interesting factoid emerged from the Quill's investigation. While Linda Garrett and these road commissioners like to claim their extended gravel mining rights under the heading of "private property rights"—none of these parties contacted the landowners through which the river flows and their bulldozer marched.

I have included before and after photographs which do not begin to tell the story but give you an indication of the type of reckless ignorance that is currently allowed on some of the cleanest and most pristine waterways in the state of Missouri and the Midwest.



It has been almost four months now. The elections are behind us and the new governor is making changes at MDNR as is the White House at EPA. High waters have carried tons of gravel, silt and topsoil down the river loosened by compounded ignorance, greed and just plain ornery stupidity.

OUTRAGE is the proper emotion here and I encourage, nay, challenge you all to contact these public servants and register your outrage over this. Ask them to make the Pierce Township Road Commission pay for properly done river restoration. Contact the road commissioners and tell them how they damaged the waters of the United States and broke the law!

Contact Information:

Linda Garrett
Texas County Commission
210 North Grand Avenue
Houston, Missouri, 65483
(417) 967-5465

Donald Shelhammer
Texas County Presiding Commissioner
210 North Grand Avenue
Houston, Missouri, 65483
(417) 457-6621

George Beltz
Pierce Township Road Commission: Treasurer
19506 Highway "Y"
Willow Springs, Missouri, 65793
(417) 932-4761

Dale Bradford
Pierce Township Road Commission: President
1653 Bradford Road
Willow Springs, Missouri, 65793
(417) 932-4841

Troy Bradford
Pierce Township Road Commission: Secretary
1792 Bradford Road
Willow Springs, Missouri, 65793
(417) 932-4387

MDNR Toll Free Number: (800) 361-4827

MDC Toll Free Number: (800) 669-3787

Governor Matt Blunt: (573) 751-3222

Scenic Rivers Area Events Calendar

Jacks Fork River Cleanup June 4, 2005

This cleanup encompasses 44 miles of the Jacks Fork River. The river has been divided into seven sections. Afterward, there will be a Bar-B-Que, live music and prizes to give away, including two new Canoes. Call (417) 932-4363 for more information.

Canoe Training Seminar

On July 9, 2005, The Scenic Rivers Stream Team Association will hold a one day canoe training seminar as a fund raiser. The charge is \$15 per person.

Contact: Mary Ann or Justin Mutrux
(417) 469-4869 for further details.

SRSTA Picnic August 6

This is a picnic to say thank you to all the people that have helped preserve and protect the Jacks Fork River, and to just plain have fun. There will be a raffle for some very fine gifts. There will also be canoe races, including the famous "Any Way You Can" race, which is a barrel of laughs. For more information contact Ted or Pat Haviland at (417) 932-4363.

To learn more about the Scenic River Stream Team Association go to www.srsta.com

Mark your calendar (further details will be in the next issue)

July 23, 2005 Meramec River picnic

June 18, 2005 Gasconade River Cleanup

Newburg cleanup in September. The city of Newburg (near Rolla) does a litter cleanup on the Little Piney River. They cook hot dogs and hamburgers for the participants of the cleanup, and there will be a drawing for prizes.

Big Mess on Big Creek

by Ken Midkiff, Chapter Conservation Chair

As detailed in the previous issue of the Ozark Sierran, renegade sand and gravel operations are wreaking havoc in our Ozark streams. While it may still be cold and rainy now, it won't be too long before canoeists ply our state's waterways—and backhoes, front loaders, and dump trucks will be busily removing sand and gravel.

There are ways to remove sand and gravel that are less harmful than other ways. There is, however, no way to operate heavy equipment on Missouri streams without causing damage...the goal is to **MINIMIZE** the damage.

Recently, a trip to Big Creek, a tributary of the Current River demonstrated that there are those who will avoid legal and less harmful ways in order to make a quick buck. A complaint was filed with the US Army Corps of Engineers and with the Land Reclamation Program of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, contending that all standards and regulations had been violated.

COMPLAINTS FOR AGENCY ACTION MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

Date of Complaint:

Type of activity: Sand and Gravel mining

Location of activity:

Nature of Complaint:

Basis of Complaint: Personal observation at the site.

Comments:

Submitted by:



As can be readily seen, the ecology of this stream is utterly destroyed. Heavy equipment had been operating in the flowing water channel, had altered the channel, eroded the banks, and excavated below the water line. Apparently all of this was done without resorting to explosives, but the area has every appearance of being blasted.

Missouri law exempts from obtaining state permits sand and gravel operations conducted by county commissions or landowners who use such sand and gravel for personal use. **BUT**, while retrograde state legislators got their buddies freed from obtaining state permits, **ALL** sand and gravel operations—regardless of size or purpose—must obtain federal permits. To conduct a sand and gravel operation without such a permit is a flat-



out violation of federal law (Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act).

Ozark Chapter Sierra Club members frequently take canoeing trips on the streams of the Ozarks. Sand and gravel operations can interfere with enjoyment of a quiet float stream. For various reasons (lack of funding, lack of staff, lack of interest) neither the US Army Corps of Engineers nor the Land Reclamation Program of MDNR routinely or even randomly inspect sand and gravel operations.

It is up to us, then, to report violations of federal law and state standards. A general rule is: "If it looks bad, it's probably illegal." When in doubt, report. A complaint form is included in this article—send to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Little Rock District
P.O. Box 867
Little Rock, AR 72203-0867

AND to:

Land Reclamation Program
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102

If you need assistance filling this out, or wish to submit this anonymously, please contact me: kmidkiff@mchsi.com or phone the Chapter Office at (573) 815-9250. 📧



Tax Increment Financing—"Race to the Bottom" hurts our Environment

by Ginger Harris*

Missouri is one of over 40 states that authorize the use of tax increment financing or "TIFs" by local governments. Under TIF, the increased tax revenue associated with a proposed project—the "tax increment"—is used to help build the development. TIF law allows a local government to sell bonds, thereby borrowing against future tax revenues to help finance a project.

Prior to TIF, local governments subsidized development projects by giving property tax abatements. TIFs are more valuable to developers, however, since the upfront value of TIF is greater than the "present value" of future tax abatement. TIFs are also useful to local governments that are bumping up against constitutionally-mandated maximum tax rates.

But abuse of TIFs has had very significant negative effects. Furthermore, TIFs introduce enormous inequities and inefficiencies into local economies.

The way TIF districts are created treats taxing jurisdictions unequally. Typically half or more of the representatives on TIF commissions represent the sponsoring municipality, with the rest divided among all other affected jurisdictions—school, fire, sewer, library and other districts, plus the county.

Some TIF projects treat existing businesses unfairly. A TIF used to subsidize a retail project, for example, gives unfair advantage to stores in that project over competing stores. When people shop at a new TIF mall they spend less at the old mall. That not only penalizes other retailers, but also contributes to our throw-away economy.

TIF projects sometimes fail, leaving the jurisdiction with defaulted bonds, as has happened in the city of St. Louis. But even if a taxing jurisdiction eventually benefits from a TIF, surrounding jurisdictions often suffer. When shoppers spend money at a TIF mall in a neighboring community, they spend less in their own commu-

nities. Thus, their own community loses tax revenues.

TIF projects often cause increased traffic, leading to street widening and loss of safety for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. TIF subsidies also distort the market by enticing developers to locations that are not economically or environmentally appropriate—just to benefit from a subsidy. As we've seen with the opening and closing of big box stores around the country, their owners have no loyalty to the communities where they locate—here today, gone tomorrow, leaving white elephants in their wake.

Studies in Minnesota and Wisconsin have found that TIF subsidies contribute to urban sprawl. Originally designed to spur development in disadvantaged areas, TIFs have come to be widely used for suburban development, often in prosperous communities.

continued on page 10...Tax Increment Financing

Ozark Chapter commits to long-range Strategic Plan

by Melissa Blakley, Chapter Development Associate

Ozark Chapter leaders realize we are facing the toughest challenges we have ever faced to protect our beautiful and natural state. Many Missouri legislators are determined to roll back environmental protections that safeguard our water, our air and our communities, and intend to render ineffective the state agencies responsible for holding polluters accountable.

Our predicament in Missouri is similar to the national situation in which Congress and the Bush Administration are attempting to roll back the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act and Wildlands protection through policy changes, administrative directives, and legislation.

Both in Missouri and nationally, agencies created to protect our natural resources and ensure the health and safety of our communities—such as the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency—have become dominated by political appointees whose agendas are out of step with such basic principles as “polluter pays,” the public’s “right to know,” and personal accountability.

As you may know, the best defense is a good offense, which is why your Ozark Chapter leaders have stepped up to the challenge by developing a long-range strategic plan to protect Missouri—not just this year but far into the future. This plan sets priorities that incorporate many of the programs members are already engaged in across the state, in combination with a long-range sustainable fundraising plan to achieve our expanded vision.

Priority Campaigns

Energy: Promoting clean energy solutions while opposing

As the only environmental group lobbying the Missouri Legislature, the Sierra Club gives a strong environmental voice to issues directly affect you and your community.

Thanks to the financial support and volunteer participation of members like you, the Ozark Chapter is a strong voice for your issues—for your values, backed by over 10,000 Missouri members. Please find your “Invitation to Protect Missouri” in this newsletter and send a contribution today.

Sierra Club members are active in communities all over Missouri—working on clean streams, air quality, transportation options, smart land use, clean energy, in-stream gravel mining, forest protection, habitat restoration, parks preservation, urban conservation, invasive species, lead mining and more.

more dirty coal-burning power plants.

Water Quality: Protecting the integrity of Missouri’s water resources.

Public Lands: Preserving and restoring forests, riverways and urban wildlands.

Livable Communities: Promoting sustainable communities and transportation choices.

With your help, Sierra Club leaders can implement our new strategic plan to defend the progress we have made and to lead Missouri in a new direction. These plans include engaging more volunteers in direct advocacy and public education, developing strategic coalitions, campaigns to hold elected officials accountable, and litigation when it is necessary.

We need your help more than ever. As a grassroots environmental organization the Sierra Club is only as effective as its membership. We rely on you, our members both for volunteer leadership and financial support. The Ozark Chapter receives only a very small fraction of the annual dues that pay for your Sierra magazine and national conservation programs.

You should have received an “Invitation to Protect Missouri” in the mail in the last few weeks. If you have never made a donation to the Ozark Chapter please consider making one now. If

you have made the same contribution year after year, we thank you and ask you to please consider an increased contribution. Your donation—no matter how large or small—is vital to our plan to protect Missouri.

Please do your part. If you have misplaced your “Invitation to Protect Missouri” you can find a copy at right. Mail to: Ozark Chapter Sierra Club, 1007 N. College, Suite 1, Columbia MO 65201



*Invest in Missouri's future
If not for your lifetime, for theirs!*

Missouri's environment is under attack!

Yes, I want to make a generous contribution to help protect and restore Missouri.

\$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100
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I want to join the automatic Monthly Giving Program (\$10 minimum)

Deduct \$ _____ /mth from Checking/savings* Credit Card

Check enclosed.* Please charge my Visa MasterCard

Account Number _____ Exp _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

* Please make your check payable to Ozark Chapter Sierra Club (1007 N. College, Ste 1, Columbia, MO 65201, 573.815.9250, <http://missouri.sierraclub.org/>). Contributions and gifts to the Ozark Chapter Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts.

* For a tax deductible gift make your check payable to: “Sierra Club Foundation, Ozark Chapter.”

Please do not publish my name as a donor.



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1-800-341-0528
Email: TreeHuggerJim@aol.com



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First Affirmative Financial Network LLC is an independent Registered Investment Advisor registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

National Club Election Coming This Spring

The annual election for the Club's Board of Directors is now underway. In March, you will receive in the mail your national Sierra Club ballot. This will include information on the candidates for the Board of Directors as well as three ballot questions to be decided.

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization at all levels that requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from its grassroots membership in order to function well. Yearly participation in elections at all Club levels is a major membership obligation. Your Board of Directors is required to stand for election by the membership. This Board sets Club policy and budgets at the national level and works closely with the staff to run the Club. Voting for candidates who express your views on how the Club should grow and change is both a privilege and responsibility of membership. The same responsibility rests with the membership when ballot questions on major policy issues are to be voted upon.

Members frequently state that they don't know the candidates or the background of the ballot questions and find it difficult to vote without learning more. You can learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members you know. Visit the Club's election website: sierraclub.org/bod/2005election. This site provides links to much more information about candidates, their background and views and also additional information on the ballot questions.

You should use your own judgment by taking several minutes to read the ballot statement of each candidate and the pro and con statements on the ballot questions. Then make your choices and cast your votes. You will find the ballot is quite straightforward and easy to mark. A growing number of members find the user friendly Internet voting option to be very convenient as well as saving postage!

Population Ballot Question

For years prior to 1996, Club members discussed taking a position on US immigration policy. In February 1996, the Sierra Club Board of Directors adopted a resolution which said that the Club would take no positions on US immigration levels or policies. In 1998, that position was put to a member vote, and 60% of the Club members who voted supported the Board-adopted position of neutrality on immigration. Following the vote of the members, the Board adopted in 1999, and subsequently revised in 2003, its population policies to maintain the Sierra Club's neutrality position on immigration levels or policies. In response to a request that the issue again be submitted to the membership, the Board of Directors agreed to put the following question on the 2005 ballot, but the Board also recommended members vote "NO" on this question.

Shall the Sierra Club policy on immigration, adopted by the Board of Directors in 1999 and revised in 2003, be changed to recognize the need to adopt lower limits on migration to the US as shown below

[Note: The current Sierra Club policy on immigration, adopted by the Board of Directors September 23-26, 1999, and revised in 2003, is quoted here verbatim, with proposed deletions ~~struck out~~ and additions underlined and marked as new language]

“Immigration:

The Board of Directors finds that under existing Sierra Club population policies:

The Sierra Club advocates reductions in the population in the United States and the world.

~~The Sierra Club will pursue this objective by vigorous implementation of the membership vote in the spring of 1998, which stated that”~~

The Sierra Club reaffirms its commitment to addressing the root causes of global and United States population problems and offers the following comprehensive approach:

- The Sierra Club will build upon its effective efforts to champion the right of all families to maternal, infant, and reproductive health care, and the empowerment and equity of women.
- The Sierra Club will continue to address the root causes of migration by encouraging sustainability, economic security, human rights, viable ecosystems, and environmentally responsible consumption.
- ~~The Sierra Club supports the decision of the Board of Directors to take no position on U.S. immigration levels and policies.~~
- The Sierra Club recognizes the need to reduce U.S. birthrates (add the following new language) and adopt lower limits on migration to the United States to address our nation's rapid population growth and its harmful effects on the domestic and global environment.
- The Club remains committed to environmental rights and protections for all within our borders, without discrimination based on immigration status.

Statement in Favor of this Question

U.S. population is growing explosively as never before. During the 1990s we grew by 33 million—equivalent to another California. All 50 states added population for the first time ever. Census Bureau projections show that children born today could witness our population topping one billion!

A new Club flyer asks: "What does Population have to do with the Environment?" It answers: "Everything." A rapidly growing population means more polluting coal burned to generate electricity, more imported oil, more forests clearcut to provide construction materials, more farms, wetlands and natural landscapes developed into endless sprawling subdivisions, roads and strip malls. Every Club objective is frustrated by population spiraling out of control.

From 2000–2004 US population grew by 12 million: immigration was 5.3 million and births to immigrants were 4 million. Should the United States therefore close its doors to all immigrants? Should we wall ourselves off from those fleeing persecution? Of course not. This ballot question suggests no such thing. It simply adopts policy recommended in 1988 by the Club's Population and Conservation Committees. It doesn't change priorities or reallocate resources.

The Club's current approach of improving conditions in foreign countries to reduce migration pressures has been

in place for 9 years. Yet population growth here is faster than ever! We should redouble efforts to improve the lives of those in impoverished places. But this is not enough. Our government must develop a comprehensive population policy, or we soon will become another India or China, a nation swelling with humanity.

Our working poor are the first to suffer as an overflowing labor supply depresses wages. Yet the poor cannot escape the crowding, pollution, and high costs of overpopulated areas. Future generations—who have no voice in current policies—are the ultimate victims.

Our poor and disadvantaged, disproportionately minorities, have shown in poll after poll that they oppose mass migration, especially illegal immigration. And the media – see cover stories in *TIME*, *Los Angeles Times Magazine* and *Environment Magazine*—can talk openly and honestly about such problems. But our Club cannot under current policy.

In 2000, Club hero David Brower said, "Overpopulation is perhaps the biggest problem facing us, and immigration is part of the problem. It has to be addressed."

Please read the ballot question carefully. It's a modest but needed change for sustainability. Please vote "YES."

Visit www.SustainableSierra.org for Board/other endorsers, more information.

Dick Schneider, member, Conservation Governance Committee

Statement in Opposition to this Question

Please VOTE NO to end the fight over immigration that is dividing the Club, and affirm the Sierra Club's commitment to tackle the environmental problems caused by global population by addressing its root causes: the lack of health care, education, family planning, and empowerment of women worldwide. (For information, see: <http://www.sierraclub.org/population>.)

Watersheds and bird migrations have no political boundaries. Environmental protection and population growth are global issues. To address them otherwise – as this measure would do—is short-sighted. More border guards will not heal our environment.

Robert Redford reminded us in last year's divisive Club election, "Immigrants are not responsible for polluting our air or putting poisonous mercury in our water. It's not the immigrants blocking fuel-efficiency standards for cars. They are not the owners of the oil and gas companies ... exploiting public lands." Blaming immigrants will not solve our environmental problems. To date, members of the Sierra Club have conscientiously avoided this kind of scapegoating.

The only path to the Club's long-term effectiveness is to address the root causes of population and global migration. This means remaining neutral on immigration. The Sierra Club has repeatedly supported that approach. Club members affirmed it in 1998 by voting against another anti-immigration measure and voted overwhelmingly last year to reject a slate of petition candidates running with an objective of forcing the Club to take an anti-immigration stance.

Now, one of the anti-immigration activists has warned the Sierra Club: "Immigration reformers are still out

continued on page 9...National Club Election

National Club Election.....continued from page 8
there, like guerrillas, ready to strike in the night.”

Can we, and the earth, afford to divert the Sierra Club's focus from environmental protection to fights over immigration yet again? We face serious threats to the environmental progress of the last century:

- Removing of protections for wildlife and wilderness in our National Forests

- More smog and mercury in our air and water
- Open season on endangered species, and opening protected wildlands and coasts to oil drilling
- And a President pretending that global warming is a myth

Enough is enough. The Club's elections end April 25—just days after the birthday of our founder John Muir, an immigrant. Please vote “NO.”

Larry Fahn, Sierra Club President

Anne and Paul Ehrlich (*The Population Bomb*)
Robert Kennedy, Jr.
Governor Bill Richardson (New Mexico)
Dr. Edgar Wayburn, Honorary Sierra Club President
Carol Browner (former EPA Administrator)
12 Sierra Club Presidents
Former Sierra Club Executive Directors: Mike McCloskey, Michael Fischer

Missouri Department of Natural Resources Faces Scrutiny

by Tom Kruzen

The Conservation and Natural Resources Committee of the Missouri House of Representatives held a hearing to get public input on what citizens thought of the Department of Natural Resources.

Although most citizens highly value clean air and clean water, they rarely have direct contact with the Department of Natural Resources as they are the agency charged with regulating business and polluting entities. Several Sierra Club members took time out of their busy schedules to share their thoughts on how important the job of the Department of Natural Resources is. Below is my story that speaks to the issue of the good work conducted by MDNR.

February 7, 2005

House Conservation and Natural Resources Committee
Re: audit privilege and the value of MDNR

Chairman Hobbs and Members of the Committee,

As far back as the Roman Republic and through our Euro-American history certain resources such as water, air and certain designated public gathering places have been protected in law and designated as belonging to the public. These are referred to historically as “the commons.” For my wife and I, it has especially been so about water. We met in Iowa and began to raise a family there over a quarter century ago. Iowa wells had become so polluted with pesticides and nitrates from fertilizer that it was not deemed safe to let our children drink from them. The same was true for our well. Iowa's rivers and creeks ran brown with soil and were devoid of fish and the marine insects that fed them. Twenty-six years ago we sought a cleaner place to raise our children and that place was the Southern Missouri Ozarks of Shannon County.

Shortly after we built a house and started gardening in our new home, we learned about the Doe Run Company's plans to expand their mining operations only fifteen miles from us in the Eleven Point River area. We learned about how toxic lead was and how fragile the karst topography of this region was.

It is the second most karstic region in North America according to Dr. Tom Aley, a hydrologist at the Ozark Underground Laboratory; the primary such region being Mammoth Cave, Kentucky. Our Ozark limestone layers were riveted with fractures, channels, holes and hundreds of caves. Whatever is put on the surface in karst will find its way very quickly without much, if any, filtration into the underground water supply. These aquifers are the sole source of most of our well water (including municipal supplies), springs and lovely Scenic Rivers. Mining lead here would put all that at risk. We were on a fast learning curve about lead mining and its repercussions.

Flying over Doe Run's Buick Recycling Plant in 1992, we took pictures of thousands of 55 gallon drums of toxic, lead bearing materials that Doe Run was “recycling” at their converted primary smelter. Sometime after the flyover some employees of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources saw three of my photos and were very

interested in them. Without saying much, they had asked for copies and I provided them. Three months later, I read in the newspaper that MDNR had fined Doe Run's facility \$300,000 for violating five sections of the federal Clean Water Act. These were repetitive offenses and it was gratifying to know that the state of Missouri held water quality very seriously. Later that same year I was present when Governor Mel Carnahan signed the Memorandum of Understanding that created a truly unique and now entirely successful program called “Stream Teams.” It was very clear that Missouri valued its waterways. My wife and I were among the first to sign up for the program and are both now rated as third level water quality monitors. MDNR was a signatory and the state agency that helped train the volunteers. Some of the first monitoring equipment was purchased with \$50,000 of that fine!

Like Governor Blunt, who hales from the Ozarks, we are constantly being made aware just how fragile water quality can be here. West Plains and other communities in this karst region often struggle week to week to provide potable water for their citizens; boil water orders are common. When Springfield's Southwest Waste Water Treatment Plant releases raw sewage into sinkholes, we all know it is going to end up in places other than just “downstream.” “Downstream” in karst can mean a major spring in another state or a well in another county. We cannot always rely on local leaders to do the right thing. Sometimes they would rather stick their heads in the sand than confront a problem head on.

A couple of years ago, Mountain View's old Waste Water Treatment Plant disintegrated, releasing raw sewage into Jam-up Creek which is a tributary of the Jacks Fork National Scenic River. The city did not immediately report the problems with the plant and it wasn't until local citizens complained of foul smells that the problems came to light. MDNR not only made the city install temporary sanitizing equipment and then helped the city get funding for a much needed replacement plant. The new plant is now operational. They have done the same thing for scores of rural communities across the state, protecting ground water and the health of our people.

They helped formulate new rules that made well-drillers install wells in a responsible manner, protecting the aquifers from shoddy work that would allow contamination from unsealed well pipe. They have also inaugurated programs to clean up illegal dumps and have dramatically reduced (40% by 2000) solid waste from entering our landfills by encouraging recycling programs, all of which meant eventual cleaner water for Missouri citizens.

On the rotunda of Missouri's capitol building is inscribed: “*Salus populi suprema lex esto*: Let the welfare of the people be the supreme law.” The MDNR, for the most part, through both Republican and Democratic administrations has helped to fulfill that phrase, our state's motto. Whether it is managing the waste tire reclamation program which keeps us safe from disease-carrying mosquitoes and toxic tire fires or pressuring Doe Run to buy out homeowners living in the highly contaminated lead smelter town of Herculaneum, the diligent employees of MDNR have raised the quality of life for all of us in Missouri. It was fine for Doe Run to let their trucks and smelter contaminate people's streets, yards and homes...until a citizen asked the MDNR to sample the

streets. 300,000 ppm lead is what forced a buyout, a hideously high amount of lead to be on the “commons” And in people's homes! MDNR responded with compassion for the people in that town

Every day thousands of semi trucks run through Missouri's highways with thousands of highly toxic chemicals. Sometimes there are accidents and spills and it is MDNR which rapidly responds to these life-threatening actions. Missouri is a better, safer place to live and settle because of programs like this.

When I hear that certain legislators want to dissolve this agency or hobble it by installing an “environmental audit privilege,” it makes me feel uneasy and I wonder what will become of our still fairly clean environment in this state. I fear for my children and my grandchildren, who would have to live with the likes of a corrupt corporation like Doe Run, who along with its predecessors poisoned the lead production areas including Herculaneum for well over a century. Even the best corporations really only care about their bottom line and not the welfare of the people. If we delve into the world of self-reporting and voluntary compliance with health, safety and environmental laws, we will not only be stating that we care more for corporations than for citizens, but also will be making Missouri a less desirable place to settle and live. Why should the welfare of corporations take precedence over the welfare of real people? In southern Missouri, **TOURISM** and **AGRICULTURE** are the two primary ways people make a living. Polluted rivers and wells would threaten these vital industries and all of our citizens. Who would want to fish or float in a polluted river? Who would want to buy a home with a polluted water supply? The economic eventualities would be devastating.

Some would claim that MDNR is an agency out of control and applying the law in an overbearing manner. I say that this is a false claim. The Jacks Fork has been put on the impaired waters list bacterial pollution. I watched from the beginning when MDNR set up a TMDL committee of citizens to find creative and home grown solutions to such contentious pollution. At first I had my doubts that citizens with diverse interests could accomplish any remedies for too many horses, too many bad septic tanks and too many canoers, but over the last year this group has learned to trust one another enough to get some grants to study sinkholes in the watershed and get funding to upgrade septic systems in the area. Under the guidance of Steve Mahfood and the current crew at MDNR, I actually see hope in the Jacks Fork Watershed and in places like Herculaneum. I know Doyle Childers also to be an honorable man and one who will continue to lead this agency to protect that which we all value, the commons, our air, water and places like our state parks that make Missouri so special. Vote pro-life, not pro-corporation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tom Kruzen
213 East 3rd St.
Mt. View, Missouri, 65548

We've been framed.....continued from page 2

and the world will go to hell. Through his writings, James Dobson is a prime proponent of this school of thought. The reward for obedience is prosperity – thus wealth becomes a measure of one's morality. Those who do not learn to obey are doomed to fail. Economic failure becomes the penalty for disobedience and immorality. The extension of this philosophy is that social programs that take taxes from the moral wealthy and divert money to the immoral poor must be wrong. It is, therefore, only proper that the government should be bankrupted to the point that it can no longer fund social programs. Many other right wing values stem from this authoritarian model.

On the other hand, the Progressive vision is a gender neutral caring nurturing parent model. According to this model, children are born good but can be made better (i.e. happy, caring, and fulfilled) through a caring nurturing environment. Essential elements in this environment are freedom, opportunity, fairness, trust, honesty, open communication, and a sense of community responsibility. Many progressive values stem from this model.

Three Progressive Errors of Judgment

During the last election cycle, progressives continued to make three fundamental errors about voters:

"The truth will set us free." According to this myth, if only we provide the necessary information and education, the superiority of progressive policies will be seen by voters and they will cast their votes accordingly. Unfortunately, this fails to acknowledge the strength of frames. Thus, the frame that Saddam Hussein and Iraq

were responsible for 9-11, had links with Al Qaeda, had W.M.D. and posed a direct immediate threat to the U.S. was so skillfully set that even now millions of Americans still believe one or more of these claims that have so soundly been rejected by subsequent and well-publicized evidence. Given a choice between maintaining the frame and accepting contrary evidence, the voter maintains the frame and rejects the evidence. Without changing the frame, education just bounces off.

'It is irrational to vote against self-interest.' Although modern economic theory and foreign policy are founded on this assumption, voters actually vote their identity or their perceived values even if these are contrary to self-interest.

"Political campaigns are marketing campaigns of issues." Although both parties apparently developed campaigns based on this principle, the Republican success is because they communicated using the frames of the voters. While progressive candidates evaluate polls on issues and move to the 'Center' to capture the electorate, the Republicans campaign on their frames, make no move to the center, and still get elected. By using Orwellian language that labels a policy the opposite of what it does, they mollify the moderate voter with nurturing rhetoric camouflaging an authoritarian program.

Responsibility and Reframing

One concern about framing is whether it is purely manipulative public relations—spin to coin a current term. The basic answer to this is that every news story, even every sentence, is framed in some way; we use frames all the time. The question is whether we wish to

compete with right wing Republicans by continuing to use their frames when we know they are dishonest and conceal a deeper and extremely menacing agenda or whether we wish to generate our own frames. These frames should both reflect our reality regarding our policies, but also should more accurately depict their policies. Frames can be based on honesty and evidence and designed to reflect accurately a policy goal, or they can be based on concealment and camouflage when they are designed to divert attention from underlying motives. The nurturing and caring progressive view demands openness, honesty, communication, and fairness. There is, therefore, no subterfuge involved in seeking frames that accurately reflect progressive goals.

What to Do?

If the Lakoff thesis is correct, it behooves progressives to work on identifying their moral values, linking these to issues and developing frames that present the progressive positions in a context that will be greeted favorably by the electorate. We must work together to achieve this end, and must start now—if not sooner.

To this end, the Ozark Chapter has identified developing the message on environmental issues as one of its top priority campaigns for 2005. Sierrans interested in exploring this idea further are encouraged to visit the web site of the Midwest Center for American Values: <http://209.61.245.210/> or the Rockridge Institute: <http://www.rockridgeinstitute.org/>. Also, Sierrans interested in joining the campaign by engaging in reframing activities within Missouri should contact Alan Journet at ajournet@semo.edu.

MoDOT's Plan for I-70 Could Waste up to \$1 Billion

by Ron McLinden

MoDOT is about to spend far more money than necessary to rebuild I-70. It all depends on how they use tolls to pay for it.

When they studied the 200 miles of I-70 between Independence and Lake St. Louis, MoDOT's consultants estimated future traffic would require six lanes all the way across the state. They advised widening the existing highway at a cost of \$2.8 billion.

MoDOT doesn't have that kind of money, so they're looking into making I-70 a toll road. That's not popular, but a lot of people are coming to the conclusion that tolls will be necessary. Toll roads would require amending the state constitution, and Senator Matt Bartle of Lee's Summit has introduced SB 31 and SJR 11 to put that question to the voters.

At a recent legislative hearing a MoDOT consultant testified that a moderate toll on I-70—five cents per mile or so—would divert 25 percent of traffic to other roads. Some would go to local roads and some to other routes like US 36 and US 50.

But if tolls reduce traffic, then the projections that justify a six-lane "free" I-70 are invalid for a tolled I-70 — and could even jeopardize the ability of tolls to pay off construction bonds.

How tolls are administered is also important. "Value pricing"—tolls that go up or down depending on travel demand—is gaining support around the country. Value pricing influences some motorists to choose other routes or modes or times for travel. As a result, traffic is evened out and congestion is reduced.

What an elegant concept—raise money to rebuild I-70, ease congestion, and reduce the need to add lanes, all by using the "market mechanism" of prices to allocate limited "travel space" on a highway!

Then there's the question of who pays tolls. Past studies have envisioned collecting tolls from long-distance travelers while local folks use I-70 for short hops without paying. But local trips increase congestion and reduce safety by adding merges and lane-changes. What's more, drivers actually pay less per mile in user fees to drive on I-70 than on other state routes. Continued free access to a very costly highway for short trips makes no sense at all.

MoDOT estimates it'll cost over \$650 million to rebuild just the 18-mile segment of I-70 through

Columbia. They envision eight lanes on much of this segment, plus frontage roads. With value pricing tolls and a local access fee, this segment could be rebuilt at a savings of \$100s of millions, and MoDOT could avoid displacing dozens of households and businesses.

And the stakes are high for Columbia itself. With I-70 expanded as envisioned, Columbia will continue to sprawl to the east and west. As that happens, prospects for a vibrant, livable center

city Columbia will diminish, and Columbia's cherished quality of life will deteriorate.

MoDOT needs to "give us a brake" in this I-70 "work zone." An over-designed I-70 across Missouri will waste \$100s of millions and further undermine MoDOT's credibility in the process.

MoDOT should decide to rebuild I-70 as a permanent toll road, and to use value pricing tolls and local access fees to reduce the need for expansion.

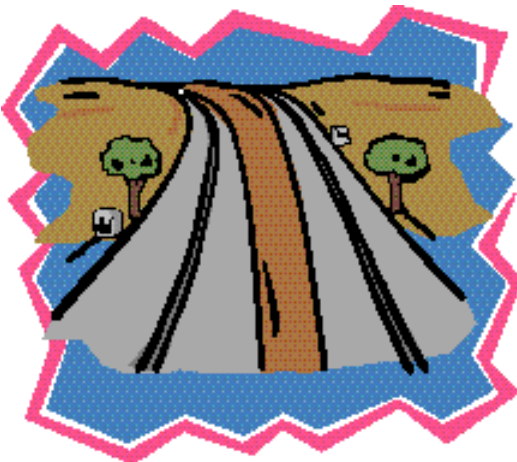
Tax Increment Financing.....continued from page 6

Projects can be eligible for TIF for three purposes: (1) to eliminate "blight," (2) to help "conserve" an area on the verge of becoming "blighted," or (3) to spur economic development. This third category has been misused to justify TIFs for "greenfield" projects that convert farmlands, forests or floodplains into shopping malls, hotels, offices, or (occasionally) even residences in exurbia. The law says a TIF is justified only if the development would not occur "but for" the subsidy. However, current law is lax about requiring such proof of the need.

Because of the negative consequences of TIFs, citizens in some St. Louis area municipalities have organized to force referenda on TIF projects. In 2000, citizens of Olivette put an anti-TIF/anti-development referendum on the ballot and won. Citizens of another St. Louis suburb attempted to block a TIF project in the Missouri River floodplain, but city officials ignored their petition, won a court battle, and completed the project.

The Ozark Chapter's Transportation and Smart Growth Committee is studying TIFs and following several bills in the General Assembly designed to tighten criteria required for a TIF or to ameliorate its impact: SB282, SB80, and HB91. If you'd like to help, contact me at gingerharris@charter.net

**Much of this article was written with the help of Professor Kenneth P. Thomas, Political Science Department, University of Missouri—St. Louis.*



SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS OZARK CHAPTER

Eastern Missouri Group

<http://missouri.sierraclub.org/emg/outings.aspx>

Apr 1 (Fri) – Is it dogwood blooming season? We hope so. Join us on a hike at Pere Marquette. Always a great lunch in Grafton afterwards. Contact Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

Apr 2-3 (Sat-Sun) – Backpack expedition, in search of the rare farting frog. Last year's attempt failed to find this elusive amphibian. We shall return to its former habitat, which was destroyed by a flash flood in hopes they have again taken up residence in their old home. This trip is suitable for beginners. Paul Stupperich, (314) 429-4352, or lonebuffalo@earthlink.net. Bob Gestel, (636) 296-8975, or rgestel@sbcglobal.net.

Apr 2-3 (Sat-Sun) – Jacks Fork Canoeing. We will put in on the upper section at the prongs. We will stop and see picturesque Alley Spring. We will also take some time out to explore Jam Up cave. Colin Maag, (314) 721-7397, or Kevin Hunter, (314) 544-5157.

Apr 3 (Sun) – Bell Mountain. We will do the classic route, a 9-mile one-way hike ending at highway A. This precambrian wilderness trek includes the boulder field on one of the highest points in the state. Wayne Miller, (314) 569-0094, or millwy@aol.com.

Apr 8 (Fri) – Giant City & Southern Illinois here we come. Lots of trails to hike and maybe a winery to visit. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

Apr 9 (Sat) – One day float on the Mineral Fork. This beautiful, small, quiet, undiscovered stream is just one and a half hours south of St. Louis. \$8.00 per person for canoe rental or bring your own. Colin Maag, (314) 721-7397.

April 9-10 (Sat-Sun) – Day hike in the canyon country of Southern Illinois. Our route through spectacular Jackson Hollow will follow the base of imposing, sixty-foot high sandstone cliffs, wind through building size boulders and past hundred-year old beech trees. This is a fairly strenuous seven mile hike for experienced hikers. Camping will be in a primitive Shawnee Forest campground. Limit eight. Hiking boots required. Terry Allen, (618) 398-1087, or Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762 (after 7:30 pm, week nights only).

Apr 13 (Wed) – Day hike. Remember all those cedar trees we burned on the glades at Washington St. Park? Let's revisit the glades and see all the spring flowers that have appeared there. All welcome. Even if you have never been there. About five miles. Katie Wodell, (636) 240-0675, before 9:00 p.m.

Apr 15 (Fri) – Our annual bluebell hike at St. Francis State Park and great BBQ at C.B. Joe's. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

In order to participate on one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call (415) 977-5630.

In the interests of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.

Apr 16 (Sat) – Join us for an early spring canoe trip in the Meramec River basin. Toni Armstrong & Richard Spener, (314) 434-2072.

Apr 16-17 (Sat-Sun) – Pioneer Forest Trail Days. A hands on event in cooperation with Pioneer Forest, Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the Ozark Trail association. Come and be a part of Missouri's newest wilderness trail, the Brushy Creek Trail in the Roger Pryor Backcountry. Paul Stupperich, (314) 429-4352, or lonebuffalo@earthlink.net. Bob Gestel, (636) 296-8975, or rgestel@sbcglobal.net.

Apr 22 (Fri) – Blue eyed Mary's bloom at Washington State Park on our 7 mile hike. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762, or e-mail Harry Tuthill.

Apr 23 (Sat) – Who can resist the adorableness and sweetness of baby animals? While some offspring totally depend on their parent to care for them, others are born with the ability to care for themselves. Learn about baby animals of Missouri, which habitats the precious darlings prefer, and how parent's nurture and protect them. We will hike 5 miles to check out several Missouri habitats, but I'm not sure where yet. I'm considering Crane Lake in Iron County. Call Christina (nickname critter) at (636) 296-1799, or luvwildlife@lycos.com.

Apr 23 (Sat) – Tour de Sewer II. Wake up and smell the sewage? Join us as we take a morning tour of two wastewater treatment plants operated by the Duckett Creek Sewer District in St. Charles County. One is a 6 Mgal/d (million gallon per day) "oxidation ditch" plant and the other is a new "MBR" (membrane bioreactor) system that produces near drinking water quality effluent. Afterwards we will get our minds out of the gutter and head over to old St. Charles for lunch at a local microbrewery. Jim Rhodes, (314) 821-7758.

Apr 27 (Wed) – Day hike at Matson Hill. This is the newest of the St. Charles County Parks. The trail is undeveloped so let's get out there before the woods gets too overgrown. Three to four miles. Katie Wodell, (636) 240-0675, before 9:00 p.m.

Apr 28 (Thu) – General meeting, swap meet, and special outings presentation at Litzsinger School at 7:30 pm. Bring outdoor gear to sell or swap. You may also pick up some surprising bargains. Ann Eggebrecht, (314) 725-1560.

Apr 29 (Fri) – Wild azalea time at Hawn State Park and Pickle Springs. Buffet lunch at the "Old Brick" House restaurant in St. Genevieve. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

Apr 29-May 1 (Fri-Sun) – "Spring in the Shawnee." We will base camp at the Catholic youth camp, the spectacular 1000 acre Camp Ondessonk at the edge of the Shawnee National Forest. Tent camping or rustic 3 side "treehouse" cabins available and with possible breakfast. Opportunities for a weekend of hiking southern Illinois scenic canyons, biking the Tunnel Hill Trail, touring the Cache River Natural Area, or just time for solitude. Ted Horn, (618) 397-9430 for reservations.

May-Oct: Upstream canoe/kayak explorations on the Current and Jacks Fork rivers. Moderate to strenuous,

one day expeditions organized on a few days notice when conditions allow. Call now for details. Ted Berger, (417) 962-3204.

May 1 (Sun) – Earth Day celebration at the main lower level entrance to the Muny Opera in Forest Park. Please volunteer for a few hours with fellow Sierrans in a lemonade booth or an exhibit booth. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call the office, (314) 644-0890, or Jim Young, (314) 664-9392.

May 6 (Fri) – Hawn State Parks azalea time (hopefully). Join us on our 6 mile search for the beautiful pink wild azaleas. We might also go to Pickle Springs Natural Area. Late lunch after. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

May 7 (Sat) – Big Creek canoeing. Catch the wildflowers before spring fades into summer. The required skill level is for class I+ or II. A good portion is protected and runs through Sam A. Baker S.P. We will have dinner at the lodge on the way home. Colin Maag, (314) 721-7397, or Kevin Hunter, (314) 544-5157.

May 7 (Sat) – Azalea hike at Hawn State Park, Pickle Spring and Sillas Dees. See the wild azaleas in all their glory as well as springs, creeks, and interesting rock formations. A total of 4-5 miles. Katie Wodell, (636) 240-0675, before 9:00 p. m.

May 13 (Fri) – 12.5 mile hike around Council Bluff Lake to see what's blooming and look for the beautiful king snake. Bring more lunch since I will be camping there after. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

May 14 (Sat) – Highway cleanup. It should be a beautiful day to soak up some rays, meet new friends, and clean up trash after those raucous late night Mother's Day revelers. Diane DuBois, (314) 721-0594.

May 14 (Sat) – Little Piney canoeing. This class I (with some class II) river is located just on the other side of Rolla. This time of year, we will be able to put in high upstream. This river is interesting enough to hold the interest of someone with canoeing experience or provide a memorable and challenging experience to a beginner. Colin Maag, (314) 721-7397.

May 15 (Sun) – Canoe/kayak trip on a small stream in the Meramec basin. Join us for a beautiful day of paddling before the crowds arrive. Toni Armstrong & Richard Spener, (314) 434-2072.

May 18 (Wed) – Two hikes in Alton, IL. Heartland Prairie has wonderful wild flowers! This time of year we should see wild hyacinth, prairie phlox, and shooting stars. Our second hike will be at John M. Olin Nature Preserve where we will see wild flowers, a water fall and views of the Mighty Miss. Katie Wodell, (636) 240-0675, before 9 p.m.

May 20 (Fri) – Join us on the 10 mile loop or some other trails in Meramec State Park to search for the Yellow Lady Slippers. Stop in Sullivan for Homer's Famous BBQ and sermon after. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

May 21 (Sat) – The wilderness gorge of Lower Rock Creek—aka Dark Hollow—will be our destination. You won't mind a risk of wet feet as we pick our way up the creek on this rewarding canyon hike, will you? Wayne Miller, (314) 569-0094, or millwy@aol.com.

May 21 (Sat) – Huzzah Creek canoeing. We will put in at

Outings Continued

Red Bluff above where the outfitters usually put in. This part of the river usually has very little traffic on it and has lots of little twists and turns. Colin Maag, (314) 721-7397, or Kevin Hunter, (314) 544-5157.

May 22 (Sun) – Tour de Bluff bike ride. Join us on this 15–25 mile bike ride on top and below the Illinois bluffs, overlooking the American Bottoms where history and natural beauty abound. We will have a picnic lunch next to a stone mill on a scenic stream with an arched stone bridge. Mostly flat with some short up hills, but with one long fun down hill. Ted Horn, (618) 397-9430.

May 28–30 (Sat–Mon) – Three day canoe trip on a river to be determined. Call for details. George Behrens, (314) 821-0247 (after 6 p.m. only).

Jun 3 (Fri) – Let's head south to the Chocolate Garage and the 10 mile loop at Goggins Mountain. Cool off in Johnson's Shut-ins after. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

Jun 4 (Sat) – Find lots of "creepy-crawlies" as we test water quality on Fox Creek near Eureka. Help us identify the aquatic insects, test for DO and other chemical parameters, and measure stream flow. We should see a lot of macro invertebrates. Call Leslie Lihou at (314) 726-2140, or Jim Rhodes (314) 821-7758.

Jun 4 (Sat) – Let's hike the mountains of Illinois! Actually, we go up and down the closest thing to them—our river bluffs, and visit other other natural and historical features along the way. We will lunch on top of the bluff, overlooking the American Bottoms and Fort de Chartres. The fort will have it's annual 18th century rendezvous which can be an optional afternoon side trip. Ted Horn, (618) 397-9430.

Jun 5 (Sun) – Canoe trip on Courtois or Huzzah creeks depending on water levels. Canoe rentals might not be available. Call for details. Jonathan Lehmann, (314) 991-3969.

Jun 8 (Wed) – If you haven't gotten out to Valley View to see the pale purple coneflowers, this may be your last chance this year! We will hike about three miles around and through the glades. Along with the pale purples we should see lots of Missouri primrose as well as other flowering plants. Katie Wodell, (636) 240-0675, before 9:00 p.m.

Jun 10 (Fri) – 6–8 mile hike on the Lewis & Clark Trail at Weldon Springs. Maybe someplace new for lunch. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

Jun 11–12 (Sat–Sun) – Experience the beautiful Current River on a 2 day canoe trip from Akers to Round Springs. Some experience desirable. Rental canoes available. Jim Rhodes, (314) 821-7758.

Jun 17 (Fri) – Bike ride to the Lewis & Clark Center in Hartford, IL. Total about 25 miles. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

Jun 17–19 (Fri–Sun) – Missouri 201-rare wild flowers. This will be an overnight adventure to points West. We will visit the savannah at Ha-Ha Tonka and two short hiking trails at Truman Lake to see yellow coneflowers (not gray-headed coneflowers) and western wallflower. Camping probably at Lake Ozark St. Park. Please call before June 15 so we can reserve a campsite. Katie Wodell, (636) 240-0675, before 9:00 p.m.

Jun 24 (Fri) – There are always beautiful flowers at Shaw Nature Reserve. Join us for about a 7 mile hike. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

Jun 25 (Sat) – Inner tubing on the Meramec River. Enjoy the best of many worlds! On a hot summer day take a cool hike and tubing float. We will paddle with the power and control of special tubing paddles, walk on gravel bars and wade upstream as we explore about one mile of Meramec River. We will leisurely float back down through a meandering run under 200 foot high bluffs. Bob Herndon, (314) 961-4811.

Jun 26 (Sun) – Beginner and intermediate canoe clinic. No experience needed. All that is required is a desire to improve your canoeing skills. Equipment provided for tandem instruction. Intermediate solo canoe instruction will be offered depending on interest shown. Must provide own solo canoe. Diane Albright, (314) 729-7629, or George Behrens, (314) 821-0247.

Jun 29 (Wed) – The weather is getting warm now so lets explore The Missouri Botanical Garden where we can duck inside and cool off if we need to. Lunch at the Garden Café after the hike. Katie Wodell, (636) 240-0675, before 9:00 p.m.

Jul 1 (Fri) – Close to home! End to end 7.5 mile hike on the Chubb Trail. Suzanne Smith, (618) 281-4762.

July 2–4 (Sat–Mon) – Fair Saint Louis. This is our most important fund raiser of the year. It's fun and a great opportunity to make new friends in the Sierra Club. Join us for a few hours making and selling fresh lemonade and pretzels and see the Fair, the air shows, or the fireworks. We have several booths that are open all day and need a very large number of volunteers. We also need help on Friday, July 1, to set up the booths, and on Tuesday, July 5, for the take down and clean-up party. If you can help call Jim Young, (314) 664-9392, or the office, (314) 644-0890.

Osage Group

Apr 9 (Sat) – Annual Clean-Up Columbia Day. Volunteers help clean up the city for an hour or two and receive lunch at Twin Lakes. Contact Greg Leonard at (573) 443-8263 or greg.leonard@missouri.sierraclub.org as early as possible if interested.

Apr 13 (Wed) – The days are getting longer, so let's celebrate with an evening bike ride on the MKT trail. Meet at the Stadium Boulevard parking lot and ride for about an hour at a leisurely pace. Contact Greg Leonard at (573) 443-8263 or greg.leonard@missouri.sierraclub.org.

May 14 (Sat) – Spring bike ride on the Katy Trail. Ride to McBaine and back followed by lunch at a local restaurant. Contact Greg Leonard at (573) 443-8263 or greg.leonard@missouri.sierraclub.org.

Jun 3 (Sat) – Hiking at Clark's Hill/Norton State Historic Site near Taos, followed by dinner at a local restaurant. Contact Greg Leonard at 573-443-8263 or greg.leonard@missouri.sierraclub.org.

Spring Canoe Trips – If interested in spring canoe trips, email Tom Moran at cavecreekfarm@yahoo.com to get on our canoe trip list.

Thomas Hart Benton Group

<http://missouri.sierraclub.org/thb/outings>

Apr. 2 (Sat) – Wild Edible Class along Little Blue Trace, Independence. Enjoy this leisurely stroll as we learn about

wild edibles and holistic health practices. Patty Brown (816) 737-2804.

April 9 (Sat) – Compass Class, Shawnee Mission Park, KS. Learn compass basics using an easy orienteering course at Shawnee Mission Park. Eileen McManus, 816-523-7823, eileenm@planetkc.com

Apr. 15–17 (Fri–Sun) – Car Camping at Blanchard Springs State Park Mountain View, AR. Get your fill of Bluegrass music during the opening weekend at the Ozark Folk Center State Park. Sign up by April 8. Dave Patton, (816) 461-6091 dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org, Bob Wilshire, (913) 384-6645, bob.wilshire@kansas.sierraclub.org

Apr. 23–24 (Sat–Sun) – Beginner's Backpack at Clinton Lake, KS. This short 4.5 mile loop is located at the Woodridge Primitive Area. The trail passes through wooded hills and fields with good views of the lake. Eileen McManus, 816-523-7823, eileenm@planetkc.com

Apr. 30 (Sat) – Day trip to Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, Strong City, KS. This new addition to the National Park system offers a variety of activities: 1881 ranch house tours, hiking trails, prairie bus tours, and more. Bob Wilshire, (913) 384-6645, bob.wilshire@kansas.sierraclub.org

May 1 (Sun) – Hidden Valley Preservation, Kansas City. Join us for a lopping good time as we whack down some of the invasive honeysuckle that threatens the lovely native spring wildflowers. Doris Sherrick, (816) 779-6708, dsherrick@missouri.sierraclub.org

May 7 (Sat) – GPS 101, Shawnee Mission Park, Lenexa, KS. Just the basics on how to use GPS. Dave Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org, Bob Wilshire (913) 384-6645, bob.wilshire@kansas.sierraclub.org

May 14–15 (Sat–Sun) – Buffalo River Float Trip, AR. Join us as we float a section of the Buffalo River, designated as our nation's first National Scenic River. We will haul all gear with us and spend one night along the river. Deadline for sign up and deposit for this trip is April 22. Melody Gross, (816) 985-2364, melody.gross@missouri.sierraclub.org

May 21 (Sat) – Maifest in Hermann. Ride the train or meet us there. Deutschheim State Historic Site tour, wine tasting and dinner. Ginger Kohler, (660) 886-8870, gingerk@missouri.sierraclub.org

Jun. 4 (Sat) – Dayhiking the Eddy-Ballentine Trail, Kansas City. We'll celebrate National Trails Day by hiking this short but rugged trail with its namesake, Bill Eddy. Dave Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org

Jun. 5 (Sun) – Spring Bike Ride to Powell Gardens, Kingsville. Join us on an easy 25-mile ride through rolling hills from Blue Springs. A return shuttle for riders and bikes will be provided. Paul Gross, (816) 228-6563, paul.gross@missouri.sierraclub.org

Jun. 10–12 (Fri–Sun) – Car camping, Camdenton, with day hiking at nearby Ha Ha Tonka State Park. Ginger Kohler, (660) 886-8870, gingerk@missouri.sierraclub.org

Trail of Tears Group

None submitted.

White River Group

None submitted.