



# Missouri Sierran

One Earth  One Chance

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Next issue will be Sept. 2010

For the latest updates, visit us on the web: <http://missouri.sierraclub.org>

## IMPRESSIONS FROM COPENHAGEN – Conference on Climate Change

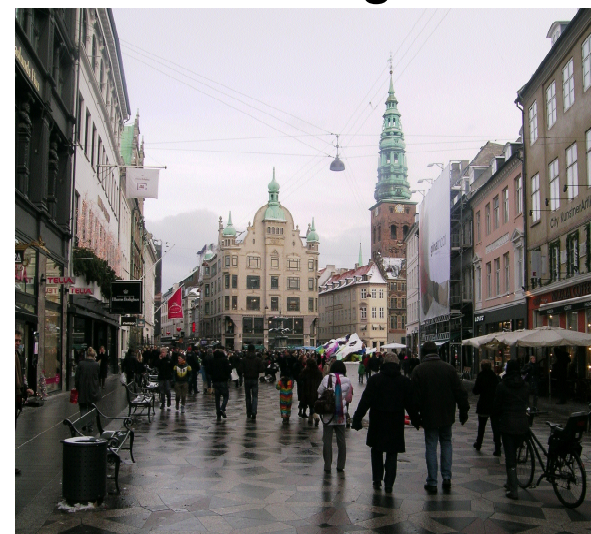
by Frank Loberbaum, Sierra Club delegate to Copenhagen

*First portion written in December 2009*

I am back home a week now and still trying to understand what happened. I am used to attending conferences like the American Institute of Architects or US Green Building Council that are basically educational, networking and party opportunities. The Conference on Climate Change was an educational opportunity but the similarity stops there. This was a working conference attended by people from all over the globe that I believe care. They care first about their own countries' future and I believe they all care about the future of our planet, some more passionately than others. They work all hours of the day

and night. They are bright caring respectful people of all ages. Two thousand concerned youth attended the conference as observers.

Official decisions at the conference are made by consensus. The intent is for representatives of nations from all over the globe, all climates and all stages of development and wealth to sit down and reach agreements by consensus. These agreements are to be for the betterment of the planet regardless of their own personal interests. Can you imagine what would happen if decisions by our senate were made by consensus, every single one of our senators must agree before a bill is to be passed? I can't even make an intelligible response to that question. The process is **Climate**.....continued on page 6



Copenhagen has the longest pedestrian street in the world.  
Photo: Frank Loberbaum

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## Ozark National Scenic Riverways



### What future for the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers?

by Caroline Pufalt

Cleaner, quieter, wilder and safer rivers? ....or ....More ATVs, motorized watercraft, damaged stream banks, noise, contaminated water and loss of wildlife. You help choose! The National Park Service is developing a new management plan for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. That plan will cover the next 20 years and will determine what kind of experience visitors will have on the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers. The Park Service is

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## ANNOUNCEMENT:

### Consider Joining the Missouri Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom), Nominations Sought.

Missouri Chapter is seeking nominations  
for candidates to run for the 2011 ExCom.

#### The ExCom

- Manages the Chapter finances and budget;
- Takes care of Chapter business having to do with office, staff, and correspondence;
- Endorses political candidates after recommendations from the Chapter Political Committee;
- Ensures that the Chapter committees have leadership; and
- Helps set the conservation direction for the Sierra Club in Missouri.

We welcome interest from Missouri Sierrans who are willing to:

1. Attend chapter meetings (4 to 6 per year), and
2. Participate in email and conference call discussions.

Missouri Chapter members who are interested in being a candidate for the chapter executive committee, or nominating another member, should contact:

- Sue King  
7164 Manchester Ave.  
Maplewood, MO 63143  
missouri.chapter@sierraclub.org  
(800) 628-5333 Toll Free  
(314) 644-1011

Nominations will be collected through August 24, 2010. Potential candidates not recommended by the nominating committee may submit petitions through September 13, 2010.

## Save the Date

### Missouri Chapter Campout on October 15-16-17, 2010

We will be camping at Drey Land which borders Sinking Creek, a clear Ozark stream that is a tributary of the Current River. Join us for colorful fall camping, good company, great food all with the background gentle rush of an Ozark stream.

#### Watch for more information soon!

If you want to help us plan the campout, please contact the EMG Office: (314) 644-0890

The *Missouri Sierran* is published twice per year by the Missouri 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 our Chapter Office via E-mail at Missouri.Chapter@sierraclub.org or phone (314) 644-1011 or (800) 628-5333, **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...

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.

All submissions must include name, E-mail or street address, and phone number of the author. Only your name will be printed in the newsletter. If you want your submission returned (including your CD), please include a Self Addressed Stamped Envelope.

## Chapter Executive Committee

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**Michael Berg,** *Electronic Organizer*

**Sue King,** *Finance*

## What happened in the Capitol this spring?

By Ginger Harris, Chapter Legislative Chair

The Sierra Club achieved some of its goals in this year's nutty MO legislative session.

We supported 5 **energy** bills, and got the first one passed:

- o "PACE": "Property Assessed Clean Energy" authorizes local jurisdictions to create bond commissions to provide up-front financing for energy-efficiency and renewable energy work on one's home or business. Building owners save enough in utility bills to afford to pay back the loan over time in the form of a property tax assessment. If the owner moves away, the remainder of the loan acts as a lien on the property which subsequent owners also repay over time.
- o "LEED Silver": "Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design" (a building certification system developed by the US Green Building Council) or a similar green building system would be used to measure the life-cycle savings projected for all new or extensively rehabbed buildings over 5,000 sq.ft. funded by the state government. If using "LEED Silver" or Home Builders Associations's "2 Green

Globes" standards would not achieve net savings over the life of the building, the state would be allowed to use conventional design.

- o Statewide Building Energy codes would establish a minimum level of energy-smart construction practices for all homes and commercial buildings in the state.

Both "PACE" and "LEED Silver" were combined into an "environmental" omnibus bill along with some other good measures, but also with "Audit Privilege." It appeared this bill could pass through both houses until Senator Lager amended a number of unacceptable measures onto it, ultimately killing HB 1871. However, in the last week of the session, our lobbyist Kyna Iman was able to get "PACE" amended onto HB 1692, which passed on the final day of the session. "LEED Silver" did not, but since it involves state-funded buildings, it could be implemented by Governor Nixon on a voluntary basis. To become law, however, LEED Silver and other energy efficiency bills will have to wait till next year. The Sierra Club has already begun a project to educate local officials on the benefits of a statewide building energy code.

*Legislative Session....continued on page 7*

# Urban Agriculture – What’s happening in your town?

by Ginger Harris, Chapter Conservation Chair

The recipe: Mix the growing interest in healthy lifestyles with the growing concerns about global climate change and species extinction, heat it up in the “Great Recession,” and throw in a dash of the Slow Foods movement, and you have the perfect conditions for urban agriculture.

An Urban Agriculture Committee (ne “Urban Gardening”) began in the Eastern Missouri Group last fall, intended as an ad hoc committee to co-host (with the St. Louis Green Building Council) an educational program on “Urban Agriculture & Edible Landscapes.”

Some members, wanting to make the committee permanent, are developing two niche programs:

- (1) spreading know-how and equipment to preserve summer-grown food for year-round consumption, initially by developing solar food dehydrators for use by community gardeners;
- (2) helping to create farmers markets supplied by local residents in neighborhoods that aren’t well-supplied by grocery stores with fresh fruits and vegetables, preferably organically grown.

One of our members, Leslie Lihou, is currently enrolled in a 9-month work-study program learning about soil structure, how to take soil samples for testing nutrients, techniques for growing organic food, preparing it for, and selling it at, 2 farmers markets. She does this along with about 30 other “farmie” apprentices at EarthDance farm in North St. Louis County, the oldest organic farm west of the Mississippi. “Class” includes 8 hours of

field labor and 2 hours of information/field inspection sessions per week, plus trips to other organic farms, and presentations on individual plants by each apprentice. Leslie reports they practice some no-till farming, with minimal disturbance to soil structure. To avoid using pesticides, they cover rows of arugula, broccoli and cabbage with cloth that lets in light and water but provides a barrier to cabbage moths and flea beetles. EarthDance has an e-newsletter and website:

[http://www.earthdancefarms.org/Home\\_Page.html](http://www.earthdancefarms.org/Home_Page.html)

Some other organizations in St. Louis that focus on creating a healthy food system:

Gateway Greening provides technical assistance to community gardens and operates its own organic farm on city land near downtown. Community gardens seem to raise property values in neighborhoods where they’re established, so the city has an incentive to provide land and promote local organic gardening. <http://www.gatewaygreening.org/index.asp>

St. Louis University’s Fresh Gatherings is a student-run cafeteria and training center for dietitians and chefs. The staff and students prepare meals with local produce including some from its own garden. The cafeteria uses recyclable and compostable utensils and plates. They offer on-site classes in food cultivation for some St. Louis city schools and lead a health education program in an inner-suburban school district raising vegetables and chickens. <http://www.slu.edu/x19799.xml>

St. Louis’ Healthy Youth Partnership held a Food Summit in March as part of its effort to reduce childhood obesity.

<http://healthyyouthpartnership.org/site/>.

One visiting speaker represented KC Healthy Kids, which works with Greater

Kansas City’s Food Policy Coalition. It shouldn’t be a surprise that a state representative from Kansas City, Jason Holsman, introduced a bill to encourage urban farm cooperatives, vertical farming, and sustainable living communities in Missouri. It’s expected to pass with bi-partisan support.

## – Why organic?

The growing market for locally-grown and healthful food includes an increasing demand for organically-grown food. Part of this market demand is the desire to avoid food grown with pesticides and herbicides. Unfortunately, up till now, genetically-engineered (GE) food has typically included pesticides inside all parts of the plant structure, and is typically sprayed with herbicides that the plants have been engineered to tolerate. European researchers have found toxicity in the livers and kidneys of rats fed Monsanto’s GE corn, but we don’t yet know the effects on humans of long-term consumption of these artificial forms of food, because the U.S. government conducts no independent testing of GE crops before they’re approved, and does little to track their consequences afterwards. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/13/AR2010041301509\\_5.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/13/AR2010041301509_5.html)

We’re left to conjecture based on limited animal studies and experiences with other forms of artificial foods such as trans fats.

While the market for organic food is increasing, organic farms are being threatened by contamination from GE crops. Organic and other non-GE farmers have had to go to court to protect their farms from contamination. Three such cases involve rice, alfalfa and sugar

*Urban Agriculture...continued on page 7*

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*ONSR...continued from page 1*

seeking input from the public.

The Sierra Club and other concerned citizens have identified four major problems which need to be address in the plan:

1. Overdevelopment and motorized intrusion: too many unauthorized access points for motorized access along the river resulting in damaged and unsightly river banks, wildlife habitat loss, degraded recreational opportunities for those seeking a quiet river journey.
2. Commercial horse over-use: horseback riding is permitted in the park but the numbers have been out of control - so much so that horse waste has at times contaminated the river so that it is unsafe

for whole body contact.

3. Scenic easements: these are voluntary agreements which permit controlled development in private lands along the river. Unfortunately these agreements are not always honored.
4. Over-crowding: The Ozark National Scenic Riverways was established in 1964. Since then the rivers have become more motorized, more crowded and more polluted.

Wilderness opportunity - the plan offers the chance to consider Wilderness protection for a 3536 acre area along the river near, but not including, Big Springs. This wild and undeveloped land can gain protection if it is eventually designated as a federal Wilderness

area. The Ozark National Scenic Riverways plan can recommend Wilderness status for the area called Big Spring Wilderness.

What you can do: Ask the Park Service to send you information about the developing management plan. See: [www.nps.gov/ozar](http://www.nps.gov/ozar). Click on links for management plan and public input. Email or write the Park Service about your concerns for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

For more information, contact the

Missouri Chapter of the Sierra Club,  
7164 Manchester Ave  
Maplewood, MO 63143

Email: [missouri.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:missouri.chapter@sierraclub.org)  
Also see [www.friendsofozarkriverways.org](http://www.friendsofozarkriverways.org)

# Let's use the 2010 Elections to promote a clean energy economy

By John Hickey, Political Chair of the Missouri Chapter of the Sierra Club



Caroline Pufalt and Diane Albright making phone calls  
Photo: Cheryl Hammond

According to the most recent federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate in Missouri is 9.6%. Behind this statistic are thousands of workers struggling to pay their bills and keep food on the table. At the same time, 85% of the electricity we use in Missouri is generated by burning coal, contributing to global climate change

What are our state legislators doing to address this twin crisis? Unfortunately, too many of them are playing partisan games instead of taking care of the people's business. Missouri representatives passed HCR 46 by a margin of 112 to 41. This resolution opposes the recent courageous, scientifically-based finding by the Environmental Protection Agency that greenhouse gases are a threat to public health and the welfare of current and future generations. It also opposes the landmark Waxman-Markey bill, the American Clean Energy Act of 2009, which is supported by the Sierra Club, claiming that action on climate change will mean fewer jobs in Missouri.

Of course, the vast majority of scientists agree that climate change is real and dangerous, so on that point the legislators are clearly wrong. But I want to focus on the jobs argument, because these legislators are wrong here as well. In fact, Missouri is full of examples of clean energy jobs. Look at the ABB plant in Jefferson City, where four hundred workers make transformers for wind generators. Look at the CG Power Systems plant in Franklin County, where workers also make transformers for wind generators, and which is expanding its factory and hiring over 100 new workers. Smith Electric Vehicles has begun assembly of battery-powered delivery vans in Platte County near the Kansas City Airport. The Ford plant in Claycomo is assembling hybrid

vehicles, and recently added a third shift to keep up with demand.

All of these plants are putting Missourians to work in the clean energy economy. All of these plants are also part of international corporations who can put manufacturing facilities anywhere. What message is our State House sending to these businesses when the majority of the representatives vote for a measure denying global warming? Instead of embracing the clean energy economy, and generating new jobs and prosperity here, our legislators are

**Biomass**....continued from page 8

records this telling comment from the survey: "Logging debris from past timber sales is probably not economically recoverable."

In short, they'll be cutting trees.

## **Biomass and Prop C**

Liberty Green's Farley told the Perryville audience that the plant will make renewable energy to comply with Proposition C, the Renewable Energy Standard passed by Missouri's voters in 2008. Prop C requires the three investor-owned utilities, AmerenUE, Kansas City Power & Light, and Empire District Electric, to use renewable electricity to make up 2% of their sales by next year and 15% by 2021. If Liberty Green's plant were certified as a renewable energy facility by the Department of Natural Resources, it could sell "renewable energy credits" to the utilities that they could use to comply with Prop C. Each credit represents one megawatt-hour of renewably generated electricity.

Prop C counts "dedicated crops grown for energy production...plant residues" and "clean and untreated wood such as pallets" as renewable energy sources. However, it also says, "Renewable energy facilities shall not cause undue adverse air, water, or land use impacts, including impacts associated with the gathering of generation feedstocks." That gives DNR the power to deny any facility certification as a renewable energy project, or even to ban an entire technology, if it causes unsustainable logging or excessive pollution.

Greenwashing — the claim that some technology or business practice is "green" even though it isn't — is a hazard we must constantly be on the alert for. It looks like that's what we have in the case of biomass combustion for electricity. It isn't green, renewable or sustainable. At the Perryville debate Farley even conceded Dr. Sammons's point that it isn't carbon-neutral. I guess he doesn't get what sustainability is all about.

telling the world that we in Missouri would rather just stick our head in the sand.

The Center for American Progress issued a report outlining the impact on Missouri of a Green Economic Recovery Program. This report estimates that a \$1.8 billion investment program would generate over 43,000 new jobs to retrofit buildings, expand mass transit, modernize the power grid, and increase freight rail. Our state representatives should be debat-

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**Legislative Session**....continued from page 7

- o The legislature failed to increase permit fees charged by Department of Natural Resources to adequately monitor and regulate water quality. But opponents may have won a Pyrrhic victory, because there is now a possibility that the federal EPA will take over the regulation of water quality in Missouri.
- o The legislature failed to protect night skies from unnecessary lighting, especially in sensitive areas.

Two **bills we opposed** did pass:

- o HCR 46 to pressure the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to rescind its endangerment finding on greenhouse gases, and pressure Congress not to pass "cap and trade."
- o Part of SB 795 that adds methane from animal wastes as eligible under Prop C. This will dilute Prop C's requirement to invest in solar, wind, and other specified renewable sources.

## **What I've learned about legislative strategy:**

- o Begin talking with your legislators early on, via email, phone, and town hall meetings.
- o Contact Sierra Club's Legislative Chair and join our Legislative Alert email list if you want more information about bills.
- o Be clear on the concepts you support or oppose, and why.
- o Talk with legislators about these concepts, rather than about bill numbers, because the concepts are often shuffled from one omnibus bill to another, and are rarely enacted as originally written or numbered.

If you'd like to receive our emailed legislative alerts, go to <https://tioga.sierraclub.org/lists/sub/?listname=OZARK-LEGISLATIVE-ALERTS>, and sign up. If you'd like to help us decide what bills to support or oppose, please email me at [gingerharris@charter.net](mailto:gingerharris@charter.net).

# A Community Engaged to Save Our Bottoms!

by Amy Bonsall, Labadie Community Organization

“An engaged community is an unstoppable natural resource” is the by-line on Labadie Environmental Organization (LEO) website, [www.leomo.info](http://www.leomo.info).

LEO was formed in September of 2009 after a member of our local book club became aware of AmerenUE's plans to site a Coal Combustion Waste (CCW) landfill in a flood plain in the Missouri River bottoms next to their Labadie plant, over 400 acres, eventually to reach a height of 100 feet.

Book club members knew little about coal ash, and since then we have learned that many people are blissfully unaware of the toxic residuals from burning coal. Already active in environmental causes, our soon to be President Ginger Gambaro took the bull by the horns and began amassing information and making contacts. Before we knew it, LEO had its first public information session in front of 65 interested members of the community in a local church basement, with one County Commissioner in attendance, and the Campaign to Save Our Bottoms was launched.

AmerenUE then called their own public meeting and we doubt it was a coincidence. LEO made sure word was spreading; through word of mouth, flyers, e-mails and our fledg-



ling website, we succeeded in getting 250+ members of the community to show up on a cold, rainy night in October. Barraged by participants armed with a list of “Questions You May Want to Ask Ameren Tonight”

AmerenUE representatives were found to be more often than not vague and paternalistic in their responses, some caught downright flat footed.

*Save Our Bottoms...continued on page 6*

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## Say “No” to a Casino Complex at the Confluence

by Becky Denney

In late April the Eastern Missouri Group sent a letter to the Missouri Gaming Commission urging them to deny a gaming permit to North County Development, L.L.C. for the 377 acres on the floodplain immediately south of the Confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers in Spanish Lake. The proposed complex consisting of a casino, convention center, hotel, 18-hole golf course, wind turbines and over 8000 parking spaces will be on property adjacent to a conservation area – the Columbia Bottom Conservation Area.

The Columbia Bottom Conservation Area was itself built at a cost of 25 million dollars. The Conservation Area includes some roads and infrastructure. The fields are farmed but grain and crops are left for birds and wildlife. Man has intruded into the floodplain already but the sloughs and wetlands are still there. They still nurture the wildlife such as fish, and turtles. A shorebird flying the 8000 miles from the Arctic Circle to South America can still find shelter and a natural stopover for replenishment. When Columbia Bottom Conservation Area is flooded, much will be renewed and there will be little human built debris to wash downstream.

But the casino complex if built next door will

require extensive buildup from the floodplain and additional infrastructure. Instead of wetlands and farmlands to absorb the flood waters, there will be additional storm water runoff. Instead of habitat for millions of migratory waterfowl, eagles and other wildlife, there will be buildings, pavement and bright lights.

Our goal along with all the groups that are part of the Save The Confluence effort was to get a real outpouring before May 1 to show the Gaming Commission that there is strong public opinion against this development. That date was chosen because it was also the due date for proposal submissions from prospective casino operators to the Gaming Commission for the 13th casino license that will become available on July 1, 2010.

On May 18 we learned of an exciting break-through in our campaign: the Post-Dispatch reported that St. Louis County Executive Dooley opposes the casino complex. In his letter of May 13 to the Missouri Gaming Commission he said he listened to North County residents and opposes the development of a sixth St. Louis casino at the confluence location. He wrote, “The environmental concerns relating to the wetlands and

conservation area adjacent to this site, as well as the challenges posed by constructing such a project in the floodway and in proximity to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, have led me to this decision.”

Evidently, every time Executive Dooley goes to North County he hears a complaint about building a casino at the Confluence. Whereas, the River City Casino which opened this spring in south St. Louis County seemed to meet with wide support and was built on a reclaimed industrial site.

Your opinion is important. Please write a short note to the Missouri Gaming Commission to show that public opinion is indeed against extensive, expensive buildup in a floodplain.

Leann McCarthy  
Missouri Gaming Commission  
3417 Knipp Drive  
P.O. Box 1847  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
[leann.mccarthy@mgc.dps.mo.gov](mailto:leann.mccarthy@mgc.dps.mo.gov)

And, please thank St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley for opposing the casino complex at the confluence by phone (314) 615-7016 or e-mail [cdooley@stlouisco.com](mailto:cdooley@stlouisco.com).

*Climate.....continued from page 1*

seriously flawed and must and will be reviewed prior to the next conference in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2010.

There are six official UN meetings going on often simultaneously during the two weeks, many into the wee hours of the night and they are:

- 1) COP 15 - the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP), signatories to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Treaty (192 countries)
- 2) CMP 5 - the 5th Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (189 countries)
- 3 - 4) Two Ad Hoc groups that have been assigned tasks by the Cop or CMP
- 5 - 6) Two technical groups that have been assigned tasks by the COP or CMP

In addition there are 135 side events (presentations by various businesses, groups or governments) and 200 exhibits. There are 5000 media representatives documenting everything that moves or might move.

A daily program is handed out as you enter the center. It is daily because it changes daily. Monitors are placed throughout the center that show scrolling updates on additions/changes to the schedule that was updated and printed early that morning. There are also people outside picketing and kids running around the conference center dressed up in Polar bear outfits singing clever songs to Christmas carol tunes. At 6:00 p.m. daily an attractive young Asian woman named Hilda dressed like a mermaid allegedly emerges from the depths of the ocean to award the Fossil of the Day Award to a chorus of boos from onlookers called NGO's. Naturally, Arnold Schwarzenegger walks by. Mandela is in another room chatting with Hillary. Get the picture? Total Chaos.

There were ambitious expectations for this conference. It was hoped that developed and developing nations would establish future emission goals that would slow down and then stop global warming soon. It was hoped that mechanisms for sharing wealth and technology with the developing and least developed countries would be established. It was hoped that the countries most ravaged by climate change would gain assistance for adaptation. It was hoped that a legally binding agreement would be forged. Bold actions from ALL parties to satisfy these hopes were not realized.

I do think there were some positive outcomes from the conference

- 🌍 All parties acknowledged that climate change is real and we need to act.
- 🌍 Honest open discussions between parties took place.
- 🌍 Some developing countries established emission goals.
- 🌍 China agreed to some form of inspection/verification, exact form yet to be determined.
- 🌍 30 billion was pledged over the next three years to assist the poorest countries needing assistance for adaptation due to climate change.

The Copenhagen Accord (CA) was only "noted" by the conference. The CA has been agreed to by countries that are responsible for over 50% of worldwide CO2 emissions. The CA may develop into a meaningful agreement, and then it may not. In its absence the conference would have ended in total failure.

Don't forget that the Kyoto Protocol was presented in 1997 and did not take effect until 2005. It is still the only legally binding agreement by the UNFCCC. The U.S. agreed to the Kyoto Protocol at the 1997 conference, only to have the U.S. congress retract the offer. Only 39 of the 189 countries under the Kyoto Protocol have any tangible responsibilities under the protocol, many of which are not living up to their commitments. Under the Kyoto Protocol there are not any meaningful consequences for not living up to their commitment. The developing nations not only create the most green house gases (GHG) annually but are predicted to have the greatest annual growth in GHG emissions as well. They have no responsibilities under the Kyoto Protocol.

I think some progress, although minimal, has been made at Copenhagen in 2009, certainly not as much as we had hoped. I think our planet is eager for a major country to step up and take the leadership role in the battle against climate change. I believe the present administration in Washington is ready and able to accept that role if it has the support of our legislature and our people. With strong support maybe the U.S. can provide that leadership role at COP 16 in Cancun in December 2010.

### ***Five Months Later***

May 2010. To date 110 nations have expressed support for the Copenhagen Accord, much more than anticipated at the conclusion of the conference. I included all the detail about the conference to communi-

cate the difficulties encountered by the UN process. Many countries, including the U.S., have expressed concern about the ability of the UNFCCC to provide the mechanism for reaching an agreement. Other forums such as the G20 bloc and the 17-nation Major Economies Forum (MEF) could be useful platforms for negotiations, but the UN is the only forum that has international buy-in. The members of MEF are responsible for 90% of global CO2 emissions. Without strong U.S. support, if not leadership, a global agreement will be difficult to achieve. With the current political climate in the U.S. it is not likely that support for Climate Change actions will take place in the near future.

At this difficult time in the evolution of our planet it is critical that we voice our support for programs and actions that support the battle against climate change. Please continue to do your important work for our children.

I would like to thank the Chapter for their financial support for my expenses at the conference. I will be happy to meet with your group to further share my experiences in Copenhagen. Please contact me at [florberbaum@arconstl.com](mailto:florberbaum@arconstl.com).

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*Save Our Bottoms.....continued from page 5*

In early 2010, LEO member Steve Gambaro was approached by AmerenUE officials at a public hearing concerning AmerenUE's proposed rate increases, and AmerenUE suggested a meeting. The meeting happened in March and we believe AmerenUE had to come away wondering about the wisdom of placing a toxic landfill in a floodplain around this community. To name some of those in attendance: a pediatric physician passionate about the damaging effects of heavy metals on human health, an engineer, two lawyers, one 30 year resident of the community who said "I've been here longer than Ameren has!", and a good old boy who made it plain spokenly clear that we know Ameren can't guarantee the safety of the landfill, and there is no way we are going to allow it. "We are not going away" he said. The plant manager, the landfill project manager, the operations vice president and the environmental vice president did not succeed in assuaging our concerns. Not one bit. We believe we raised theirs though, as high as a 500 year flood.

We have not succeeded yet in stopping AmerenUE from damaging our Missouri River Bottoms and potentially polluting the drinking water of the millions of downstream residents but this I can tell you, we are not going away.

Please contact us at [www.leomo.info](http://www.leomo.info) to help and sign our on-line petition.

Missouri is one of only 9 states without such a statewide code.

Our high-priority **transportation** goals were partly achieved without legislation:

- o "Complete Streets" bill would require MoDOT and local highway departments to fully consider needs of pedestrians, disabled persons, bicyclists and transit users in its plans and projects.
- o Transit funding: increase state subsidies for public transit agencies throughout the state, to help re-balance MoDOT's policy of investing almost exclusively in highways.

Ever since a mandate for "Complete Streets" was introduced into the legislature a few years ago, MoDOT has been able to quietly scuttle it. Last fall the Missouri Bicycle & Pedestrian Federation (MBPF) asked MoDOT if it planned to do the same this year, and was pleased to be offered a compromise: citizens would nominate projects throughout the state that needed to accommodate pedestrians, disabled persons, bicyclists and transit users; MoDOT & MBPF would jointly pick the 50 best proposals and implement them within 5 years, thus limiting costs to a predictable amount; bill sponsor, Rep.

Sutherland, would submit a House Concurrent Resolution (HCR 67), thus a recommendation, not mandate, to MoDOT and local highway depts. HCR 67 did not pass, but the goal is already being implemented.

Due to state budget difficulties, transit funding did not look promising. Meanwhile, the jurisdiction that had experienced the deepest cuts in transit service last year (St. Louis) was able to win a tax increase at the ballot box in April to restore service. We will address this issue again next year.

Although not a priority bill, we're pleased that Rep. Holsman's "Urban and vertical farming" bill passed, since it will help the "local food" movement, i.e. nutritious food without long-distance transportation.

Our **Public Lands** goal was to:

- o Add state park capital improvements to anticipated state bonds for education, but due to budget difficulties, the legislature did not approve any capital improvement bond issue this year. So deferred maintenance at state parks will have to wait till next year.

We and our allies won some goals to reduce **Pollution**:

- o We were able to keep yard waste out of

landfills to reduce production and escape of methane, a highly intensive greenhouse gas. Current state law forbids yard waste in landfills. Landfill operators who wanted to allow yard waste in order to generate and sell methane were unable to enact such language. They will probably try again next year, and we will continue to oppose it because methane escaping from landfills is not well controlled.

- o We defeated a bill defining "Nuclear" as "renewable" under Prop C.
- o We defeated subsidies and privileges for factory farms or CAFOs (Confined Animal Feeding Operations).
- o We defeated "Audit Privilege" which releases companies from fines and disclosure if they secretly report pollution events to Department of Natural Resources.
- o We defeated some bad billboard bills, but were unable to pass 2 good ones that would have prohibited digital, tri-vision and projection billboards, and require MoDOT to charge billboard fees to cover the cost of removal when a highway is widened.

beets. Rice farmers in Arkansas won a \$48 million settlement against Bayer Corp. Alfalfa farmers won a temporary moratorium on the planting of Monsanto's GE alfalfa. The judge in the sugar beet case urged farmers not to plant Monsanto's GE seeds, and is considering a permanent injunction.

[http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/feb09/battle\\_against\\_gm\\_sugar\\_beets.php](http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/feb09/battle_against_gm_sugar_beets.php)

Even the GE farmers are finding the expected economic "benefits" of GE seeds to be elusive due to the spread of herbicide-resistant weeds, and the fact that prices of GE seeds have sky-rocketed, while their maximum yields have not increased.

### **- What about "bee colony collapse?"**

The 4-year-old crisis of disappearing honeybees is deepening. A new study shows U.S. honeybees' pollen and hives laden with pesticides, so pesticides are attracting scrutiny now, specifically crops "coated" with neonicotinoid pesticides. A study published March 19 in the scientific journal PLOS (Public Library of Science) found about 3 out of 5 pollen and wax samples from 23 states had at least one systemic pesticide – a chemical designed to spread throughout all parts of a plant.

EPA officials say they're aware and "very seriously concerned" about problems involving

pesticides and bees, but have so far refused to act. So the Sierra Club is now targeting Congress. Sierran Laurel Hopwood says "we know that banning nicotine pesticides saved the bees in Italy, France, Slovenia and other places." An urban St. Louis bee keeper told me she hasn't experienced bee colony collapse. Possibly because her bees don't feed on pesticide-treated seeds and farm crops?

### **- and how about hungry countries?**

For the above reasons, we should oppose the Global Food Security Act (S.384), co-sponsored by Senators Casey and Lugar until the bill is made technology-neutral. S.384 is intended to reform foreign food aid programs, but section 202 of the bill mandates GE crops for this federal funding. It's inappropriate for taxpayers' money to be steered to just one highly controversial technology (GE crops) dominated by two or three companies. It will not solve world hunger. (USAID has spent millions of dollars on developing GE crops over the past two decades, with not one success story to show for all the expenditures.) And thus it undermines the good intentions behind the bill's focus on hunger.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/04/16/v-fullstory/1582612/study-echoes-warnings-of-evolving.html>

ing what is the most efficient, cost-effective way to create good jobs and build a low-carbon economy, and stop wasting time on stunts designed to score partisan political points.

Fortunately, we Missourians have an opportunity to inject some sanity into the political process here, and get serious about attracting more clean energy jobs here. Because of term limits, over 50 of our 163 state representatives will be term-limited and unable to run for re-election. It will be another 8 years until we have such a big turn-over in our Legislature, so let's not miss this chance.

We Sierra Club members must evaluate the new set of candidates to decide which ones have a serious plan to build a clean energy economy and put Missourians back to work. Let's weed out the candidates who instead deny scientific evidence in order to advance a partisan political agenda. But we need membership involvement to do this. Participate in the candidate screening process organized by your local Sierra Club group. Participate in interviewing the candidates. Then volunteer to help elect these candidates.

We have the most influence as voters when there is no incumbent in a race. Let's use this opportunity. Let's change the focus of our Legislature from partisan political games to rebuilding our economy for the 21st Century.

# Biomass Burning: When Renewable Energy Isn't Renewable

By Henry Robertson

There are lots of things you can burn to make electricity: coal, gas, oil, trash, old tires — and our forests.

An Indiana company called Liberty Green Renewables and a Houston financial firm, Macquarie Group, have set up a joint venture called LC Biomass Missouri to build a 32 megawatt wood-burning power plant in Perryville. At a public forum on April 7, Perryville residents were treated to a debate between Jack Farley, a partner in Liberty Green, and Dr. Bill Sammons, a Massachusetts pediatrician who's on a national crusade against biomass burners. Michael Berg, the Missouri Sierra Club's online organizer, was there.

Farley promised a clean, sustainable operation with state-of-the-art pollution controls that would create 100 construction jobs, 25 permanent jobs, 40 ancillary jobs, new revenue for the forest products industry, property and sales tax revenues, and power for 23,000 homes. It would burn clean wood from the trimming of trees, invasive species and road clearing; limbs and rotten wood; waste from sawmills; and urban wood waste (pallets, discarded furniture, construction and demolition waste).

Dr. Sammons argued that biomass burning is more polluting than coal and is not carbon-neutral on any meaningful time scale. It produces more CO<sub>2</sub> than coal per unit of energy because wood is a less concentrated energy source. Though lower in sulfur than coal, it creates more nitrogen oxides and, worst of all, fine particulates, which can burrow deep into the lungs. Air permits, however strict, still allow plants to pollute. The industry is driven by federal subsidies; a tax credit of \$10 per megawatt-hour is available for plants that start construction this year and come on line by the end of 2013.

Biomass is generally regarded as a renewable energy source, one answer to global warming. There's no one silver bullet solution to climate change. Instead there's "silver buckshot," and environmentalists find many kinds of renewable energy to support (and oppose — even wind and solar projects).

What I'm concerned with here is "woody biomass," but the forms of biomass range from algae to corn stalks to pig poop. We want all the solutions we can get, but sometimes I fear we've sold our soul by reducing the abundant diversity of nature to a single generic energy resource called biomass.

## Is biomass renewable?

An energy source can be renewable because it's self-renewing like wind and solar or

because it is a fuel that we use no faster than it can be replenished, in which case it is carbon-neutral even if burning it releases carbon. The biomass you burn one season grows back the next, absorbing the carbon the first season's burning released.

Well, that all depends on the rate of harvest. If you feed it a whole tree, a biomass plant can burn in minutes what it will take nature decades or centuries to replace. Forests can be logged sustainably, as Leo Drey has shown with his Pioneer Forest, but you won't get much electricity that way. And biomass burners only convert 20% of the energy latent in the wood into electricity.

A sustainable fuel supply for a biomass burner would require a large area. One possible alternative is biomass energy plantations of fast-growing willows or poplars. Such plantations will never have the biodiversity or carbon storage capacity of natural forests.

Any way you do it, you'll have to send trucks to pick up the fuel and deliver it to the plant. The result is more pollution, including CO<sub>2</sub>, from diesel and gasoline that has to be added to the pollution from the plant itself when the environmental accounting is done. The collection problem also puts a crimp in biomass finances; it just doesn't pay to gather fuel beyond a radius of 50 miles or so. That's why biomass power plants are small, rarely more than 50 megawatts compared to hundreds of MW or even several thousand for coal-fired plants.

If they would burn in a year only the tree trimmings or logging debris that grows back in a year, then biomass burners would be carbon-neutral. They'd also be a vanishingly insignificant energy source.

Liberty Green would be competing for wood with "secondary" markets like furniture makers. It has an advantage in the form of the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), a federal subsidy for growers and providers of energy crops. Sawmills and lumber yards are getting taxpayer money to supply the likes of Liberty Green. BCAP is driving up the price of lumber nationwide, costing jobs and threatening to drive small forest product companies out of business. Wood chips sell for \$28 a ton, says Missouri forest guardian Hank Dorst; with BCAP they can fetch \$45 a ton.

## Ecology meets economics

Is it worth it? Biomass burning claims to have advantages over old ways of doing business. It creates energy, keeps sawmill waste and urban wood waste out of landfills, and removes forest thinnings that clog up the woods, slowing regeneration and posing a fire hazard.

Dorst estimates the biomass supply available to Liberty Green at one-third sawmill residue, one-third forest residue and one-third urban wood waste. But there's another game in town, and it might play out differently.

The Missouri Forest Products Association (MFPA) issued a report in January about its "Woody Biomass Technology Demonstration Project." MFPA plans to build two small (2 MW) pilot plants in Salem and Ava, two of 15 towns that are losing the electricity formerly supplied by Sho-Me Power, a rural electric cooperative.

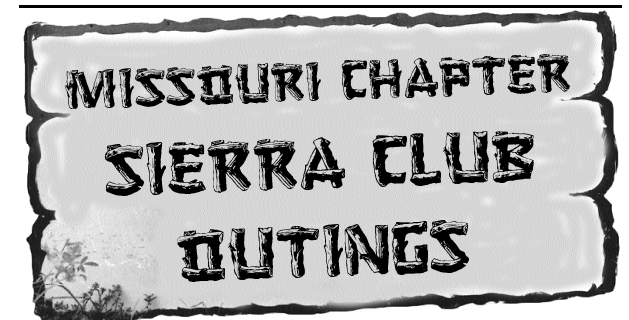
MFPA sees three feedstocks: small-tree thinning (that's logging), timber harvest residue (logging debris) and mill residue (sawdust and chips). Urban wood waste doesn't make the cut, probably because transportation accounts for 60–70% of the delivered price of woody biomass, restricting the supply area to a radius of 25–50 miles.

MFPA envisions this mode of operation: "A biomass harvesting crew of four, operating a feller-buncher, grapple skidder and in-woods chipper..." A feller-buncher is a vehicle that cuts small trees at the base and gathers several of them like a bunch of flowers. A skidder drags trees to a landing to be loaded onto trucks. Roundwood (tree trunks) will be the dominant feedstock, followed by chips hauled out of the woods in chip vans. The "van" pictured in the report looks more like a semi to me.

The report summarizes the results of a survey by MFPA of small logging companies in the region. Most of them are interested in the opportunity, but they'd prefer taking out roundwood instead of chips because in-woods chipping equipment requires a bigger investment.

As for the timber residue the biomass boosters promise to clean up, the MFPA

*Biomass.....continued on page 4*



**Find our outings on the web:**

**Eastern Missouri Group**

[missouri.sierraclub.org/emg/outings.aspx](http://missouri.sierraclub.org/emg/outings.aspx)

**Osage Group**

[missouri.sierraclub.org/osage](http://missouri.sierraclub.org/osage)

**Thomas Hart Benton Group**

[missouri.sierraclub.org/thb/outings](http://missouri.sierraclub.org/thb/outings)

**White River Group**

[missouri.sierraclub.org/wrg](http://missouri.sierraclub.org/wrg)