



Photo Credit: Michael Berg, St. Louis Earth Day

PROTECTING LANDS, AIR, WATER, AND WILDLIFE

Rising to the Challenge: Defending Missouri During the Legislative Session



By Michael Berg,
Political Director

It's no secret that we're in the midst of an all-out assault on our state's wild places, clean air, and clean water. If you're searching for an example, you need look no further than the 2022 Missouri Legislative Session.

Like many before, the legislative session was long, intense, and controversial. While some legislators wasted time arguing about dress codes (specifically, whether overalls were appropriate attire for the Senate), Sierra Club staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to yet again defend the 11 Point State Park from being sold, and thwart attacks on electric vehicle charging stations. Sierrans also united together with our allies to successfully protect a key component of our democracy – the initiative petition, a critical democratic process that

ensures the voice of the people is heard (*see page 4 to learn what the initiative petition means to both the environment and social justice*).

Our staff, lobbyists, and volunteer-led Legislative Committee followed more than 200 bills that would harm our environment and the people of Missouri – many of which we were able to stop. Staff also spent more than 700 hours educating elected officials about critical issues. Yet, some of our hardest work during the session was spent trying to stop a dangerous bill (House Bill 2485) that would weaken protections against hazardous waste and chemical recycling – a deceptively named and environmentally destructive practice that incinerates plastic, does little to no actual recycling, and has been proven to emit dangerous chemicals. Much to our surprise and alarm, House Bill 2485 passed with only two hours left of the legislative session. This decision was particularly disgraceful because it

happened without any discussion on the House floor or even a hearing in any House committee. Though the way the bill passed was completely and wholly undemocratic, we continue to fight against this terrible law.

Despite this loss, Sierra Club was proud to represent Missourians in the Capitol. Our efforts would not have been possible without the community partners and volunteers who provided us with technical advice, guidance, time, and leadership. It is only through your support and membership that we can continue to be a leader in the Capitol – addressing a vast array of environmental and justice issues. Together, we can make change here in Missouri. We won't stop fighting for a healthy, thriving planet for all.

To learn more about how your legislators voted during the 2021–2022 session, visit page 5 to access our legislative scorecard.

CHAPTER CHAIR'S COLUMN

We Have Hope!



By Kevin Grooms,
Chapter Chair

When I joined the Sierra Club five years ago, I could see that times were tough. On the front of Missouri politics, the outlook hasn't been good. Fossil fuel money funding an extremist majority in the statehouse has us collectively girding our loins, year after year. And, as difficult as we think it's about to get, reality can turn out worse than we expected. In one way or another it will still be like this in the coming years.

But, here's the thing about uncertainty for the future – it has two sides. **While unexpected challenges lurk around the corner, we also don't know what victories await us, either. That is why our commitment is always worth it, no matter the circumstances.** The perseverance of our volunteers and staff is the only way we win. And, above all, your continued membership matters.

Hope is a critical piece of any movement. If we are to succeed in our mission, we must achieve it with people power. Perhaps it's no surprise that one of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s



Photo Credit: Natalie Johnson, Lobby Day 2022

quotes has become my North Star for my work with Sierra Club:

“We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”

–Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,
“Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution.” Speech given at the National Cathedral, March 31, 1968.

We at Missouri Chapter are presently looking at the long arc of environmental justice. Through

long-range strategic planning we're exploring new ways to better fund our work and build up our staff, volunteers, and our movement with new intensity.

It may be true that things seem to be getting worse before they get better, but that's just more reason to keep showing up for people and a safe environment. Our work, whatever that looks like for each of us, is important. I believe I'll see the arc bending towards justice.

THE SIERRAN

A biannual publication of the Missouri Sierra Club

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Support Your Passion for a Just and Sustainable World

Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's Missouri Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as the beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.

To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.

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SNAPSHOTS FROM AROUND THE STATE

Local Group Highlights

The Missouri Chapter of the Sierra Club is supported by 4 volunteer-led groups across the state. We invite you to learn more about what your local group is doing and to review our bonus Sierran content by visiting: [SC.Org/MOSierran2022](https://www.sierraclub.org/SC.Org/MOSierran2022).



MID-MISSOURI GROUP (MMG)
The Osage Group has a new name! MMG has adopted a 1/4 mile section of the Columbia Bear Creek Trail for invasive species removal and trail maintenance. Here, member Christian Sasse removes invasive honeysuckle. Photo Credit: Carolyn Amparan



THOMAS HART BENTON GROUP (THB)
Members enjoying an outing near the Missouri River at Weston Bend State Park. Photo Credit: Mike Hurd



EASTERN MISSOURI GROUP (EMG)
Volunteers continued the tradition of squeezing lemonade to fundraise for Sierra Club efforts with the return of St. Louis Earth Day. Photo Credit: Caitlin Zera



WHITE RIVER GROUP (WRG)
WRG members attended a tree grafting workshop with regenerative tree farmer, Richard Herman. Members learned effective eco-friendly techniques to grow food while enhancing pollinator habitat. Photo Credit: Marisa Frazier

Learn more about our work & how you can get involved!

There are many ways to get involved with the Missouri Sierra Club. Reach out to learn more about where your passion for the environment can fit in!

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ACTING FOR JUSTICE, Organizing for Democracy

FEATURED ARTICLE

By Ashton Kuehnel, Grassroots Organizer



Attacks on our democracy? Our Chapter is fighting back! For more than 100 years, Missouri voters from across the political spectrum have used the initiative petition process to influence policy. The historic process involves gathering a number of signatures across the state to put an issue on the ballot before voters. As a result, community members are able to make decisions directly on policy to guide legislators. However, during the 2022 legislative session, more than 20 bills were introduced with the intention of upending the process, intentionally making it more difficult for Missourians to propose and pass ballot initiatives altogether. In response, the Missouri Chapter successfully organized with other interest groups to defend the initiative petition, safeguarding it for the time-being.

For decades, Sierrans have utilized initiative petition campaigns to effect pro-environmental change. The process has been used to renew the popular Parks, Water, and Soil tax – a statewide one-tenth-of-one percent sales tax that provides funding for Missouri state parks and soil and water conservation efforts. It has also been used to pass a more sustainable renewable energy standard – a measure that requires utility companies to gradually increase their usage of renewable energy annually while minimizing rate increases. Both of these campaigns, if left in the hands of the political majority, may have failed.

However, it is more than just the environmental movement that utilizes the initiative petition process. In recent years, the process has been used to do a tremendous amount of social good, including raising the minimum wage, expanding medicaid, and passing statewide ethics reform. **Sadly, the same groups that are attacking the fight for increasing minimum wage, the movement for black lives, and freedom of reproductive choice are the same groups attacking environmental protections nationwide. This is why we must stand together to protect our freedoms, our lives, and our planet.** Today, the Sierra Club recognizes that the environmental movement is deeply connected to the broader social justice movement, and it is only by working together that we can transform our society and save our planet. In 2022, the Missouri Chapter successfully organized with a cross partisan, cross issue Missouri coalition to protect our people's power to make decisions and stop initiative petition attacks. Through online campaigns as well as a co-hosted lobby day, the coalition was able to protect our freedom to make decisions through the ballot.

Unfortunately, more attacks on the initiative petition process are inevitable. For that reason, we remain committed to its defense while collaborating closely with our partners and allies for social



Photo Credit: Missouri Voter Protection Coalition, Initiative Petition Lobbying Event

justice. We recognize that in order to have transformative action on climate, conservation, and justice for all, we all must have access to participate in a fair democratic process. The initiative petition process is one of our most powerful tools in our democracy toolkit that enables us to push for policy solutions by the people, for the people.

For more information on Sierra Club, Missouri Chapter, Democracy efforts, we invite you to get involved!

WillofthepeopleMo.com

2021/2022 LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

HOW DO YOUR LEGISLATORS MEASURE?

The Legislative Scorecard details the voting record of all Missouri General Assembly members on critical environmental issues during the 2021 & 2022 legislative sessions. Much of the work concerning bills and amendments is done in committee and many important bills never make it to the House or Senate floor for a vote. The scorecard is a tool to understand your legislators performance on these bills.



Scan for the scorecard!

Read bill descriptions and votes



See how your legislators voted





100%

The Honor Roll

REPRESENTATIVES

- Ashley Bland Manlove
- Ingrid Burnett
- Michael Burton
- Doug Clemons
- Jo Doll
- Michael Johnson
- Patty Lewis
- Tracy McCreery
- Wiley Price IV
- Crystal Quade
- David Tyson Smith
- Martha Stevens
- Annette Turnbaugh
- Sarah Unsicker
- Bridget Walsh Moore
- Emily Weber

SENATORS

- Lauren Arthur
- Angela Walton Mosley
- Jill Schupp



Photo Credit: Carolyn Amparan, Climate and Clean Energy Rally at City Hall in Columbia

ADVANCING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Kansas City Leads the Way with Ambitious Climate Action Plan



By Billy Davies,
Conservation Program
Coordinator

Kansas City, Missouri is poised to have one of the most ambitious climate action plans in the state! Climate action plans are strategic frameworks driven by communities to mitigate impacts and adapt to climate change. With support from Sierra Club staff and members, Kansas City's plan is expected to be a model for other cities and counties across Missouri and Kansas. The plan covers bike lanes, solar panels, electrified public transit, and more. It also ensures affordable, energy efficient housing, and expanding access to green spaces. The central goal is to ensure a thriving and carbon neutral Kansas City by 2040,

with an emphasis on undoing past harms caused by systemic racism and environmental injustice.

The plan's adoption has only been possible given the thousands of hours by dedicated volunteers, Chapter leaders, allies, and new Sierra Club staff in Kansas City over two years. With their support, we have brought the region closer to delivering a climate action plan that is community-made and community-driven while reshaping best practices in local government to ensure people's voices and community needs are put first. However, not everyone is interested in seeing the status quo changed. Right now, polluters and those seeking to profit at the expense of community and environmental health are lobbying behind closed doors to undo the

progress we have made. Now, more than ever, elected leaders need to hear from Missourians to take action to protect our health, our communities, and our planet. We at Sierra Club are committed to the continued fight and are optimistic that we will succeed.

Want your city to make a climate plan? Check out our toolkit at sierraclub.org/clean-energy-toolkit.

ADVANCING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

What is an IRP and Why Should I Care?



By Kane Sheek, Community
Organizer

An integrated resource plan (IRP) can be described as a roadmap for how a utility will meet the anticipated power demands of its users in a reliable, cost-effective manner. This year, three of Missouri's largest utility providers - Ameren (St. Louis area), Evergy (Kansas City area), and Springfield City Utilities (Springfield) - are updating their IRPs, making plans for the future. Public input is critical when developing these plans as it provides Missourians a platform to

demand clean energy. We have the ability to put pressure on these companies to demand a transition away from dirty fossil fuels and towards a clean and renewable energy future. Missouri Sierra Club has helped get the word out as well as sent our own demands, calling for firm commitments to a just transition away from coal and towards safe, healthy, renewable energy sources like wind, storage, and solar. Be sure to stay connected with the Missouri Chapter to learn more about when plans such as IRPs become available to comment on and how you can get involved in the process.

Save the Date!
October 14 - 15, 2022
Springfield, MO

Rivers Conference

This conference will focus on issues and opportunities to protect our Ozarks streams, including public access, dam removal, agriculture, and climate change.

THE OZARK SOCIETY
CONSERVATION EDUCATION RECREATION

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Photo Credit: Sara Edgar, Particia Schuba of Labadie Environmental Organization (LEO) stands in front of the Labadie Coal Plant

PROTECTING LANDS, AIR, WATER, AND WILDLIFE

Demanding Accountability from our Dept. of Natural Resources



By Rajiv Ravulapati,
Executive Committee
Member

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR) is failing at its core mission by allowing utilities and industry to avoid accountability and let polluters harm our health. On May 24th the Missouri Beyond Coal Team, Labadie Environmental Organization (LEO), and the Washington University Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic showed power together in testifying against a deeply flawed general permit proposal that would pollute Missouri waters without consequence.

MoDNR proposed what's called a "general permit" to regulate various types of contaminated waste sites, regardless of the waste type. The

permit also applies to regulating coal ash, a harmful byproduct of burning coal. Though it is the MoDNR's responsibility to protect both Missouri's environment and human health, the Sierra Club was dismayed by the permit's language which is weak and vague, lacks the protections required for such dangerous waste, violates federal law, and places polluters ahead of the health of Missouri waters and people.

In response to situations when so much is at stake, we do what we do best: organize. Rapidly, we coordinated a hard and fast campaign that included:

- 438 residents taking action, including 419 online comments and 19 Missourians testifying virtually at MoDNR's public hearing;
- Media coverage in over 10 news

outlets across Missouri to raise awareness about the permit;

- Collaboration with over 20 other organizations to oppose the permit, collectively raising our voices in opposition; and
- Submission of detailed comments to MoDNR, calling for the withdrawal of the permit with strong reasoning provided by Washington University Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic.

While at the time of publication we are still uncertain of the permit's outcome, we are grateful to our partners and action-takers for going above and beyond to bring attention to this issue and call for the permit to be withdrawn. If approved, we will not back down. Like many issues before, our organization is committed to the long fight to ensure our Missouri waterways and our people are protected.

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Get Outside! Outings Return



Matt Self
OUTINGS LEADER

" I got involved in the Outings just this past December, when I joined a hike at Shaw Nature Reserve last minute. The group was incredibly welcoming and I immediately felt like a part of something. A few months later, the Outings leaders announced that were holding an outings leader training. Although I don't think of myself as a leader, I knew that this was a perfect opportunity to start giving back to the Club. I'm really excited to explore more of this beautiful state and to show more people, especially young people, everything that's out there. "

View upcoming outings happening around the state on the sierraclub.org/missouri/calendar.



Photo credit: Jill Miller

Photo Credit: Mike Hurd, Thomas Hart Benton Outing

GETTING OUTDOORS

ROGER PRYOR BACKCOUNTRY



By John Feldmann, EMG Trails Chair

The Missouri Sierra Club Trails Committee has been supporting the building and maintenance of hiking trails for a number of years - a wonderful volunteer opportunity for our members and supporters to get involved. One of our favorite trail events this year was spent performing four days of maintenance in Roger Pryor backcountry.

The backcountry is a huge expanse of land owned by the L.A.D. Foundation with a couple of hiking trails that are open to the public. Within the backcountry, our Chapter volunteers maintain approximately 12.5 miles of the Blair Creek section of Ozark Trail, the 16 mile Brushy Creek Trail, and the 2.5 mile Laxton connector trail between the Ozark Trail and Brushy Creek Trail. With support from the L.A.D. Foundation and MoDNR State Parks, our team tackles the removal of fallen trees, removes destructive invasive species, and ensures the trail is properly marked for you and your family to enjoy.

“

I love doing trail work in Roger Pryor Pioneer Forest backcountry. It is a large remote area with excellent forested trails and with Blair Creek along much of the Ozark Trail. The trail crews have a great time hiking the trails in an effort to help keep them in usable shape. I enjoy the opportunity to be outside and perform a needed task for the backpackers traversing these trails.

-John Feldmann

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The backcountry is a special place that we encourage you to check out. Want to do more? Contact us to learn how you can volunteer at one of our next events!

Want more Sierran News? Scan for our bonus content!

