



SIERRA CLUB

MISSOURI CHAPTER

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From the Field: My First Lobby Day

By Sejal Rajmani, Grassroots Organizing Intern




It's 5am when I hear the incessant beeping of my alarm clock. Groggily, I crack my eyes open and try to remember why I set my alarm 3 hours earlier than I usually even think about waking up.



That's right. It's Lobby Day. And my first one at that.

For the past month I spent nearly every hour of my internship helping plan and organize our annual Lobby Day at the Capitol in Jefferson City. The work has included everything from emailing legislators to researching bills to meticulously organizing lobbying groups. The bulk of it however has been recruiting Sierra Club members to attend Lobby Day and making phone call after phone call to set up over 120 meetings with legislative offices. And today I'll finally see the outcome of all that work.



And what an outcome it was. When I first started planning Lobby Day I was honestly discouraged about what I'd witnessed in the Missouri legislature. Screaming matches in the Senate. Discriminatory policies considered on the floor. Staff and legislators that didn't even want to listen to their constituents. But the crowd of Sierrans I found at the capitol building that morning was optimistic and eager to make a difference. Together, we spent the next several hours pulling legislators off the floor, meeting staff and elected officials in their offices, and discussing several difficult but important issues like protecting our democracy, private and public water protections, and environmentally responsible investing. Throughout the long day, the enthusiasm and passion of my fellow Sierra Club members was what carried me. I was moved by the way that Missourians from all corners of the state came together to advocate for our shared environment and to show their elected officials just how much they cared. 

While no environmental problem or social justice issue can be fixed by a single lobby day, my first one with the Sierra Club was a reminder that there will always be people who are tirelessly working to protect our planet. So remember to get involved and get out there because we are stronger together. With the power of the people, a sustainable future is possible!



Lobby Day at the Capitol in Jefferson City. From left: Sejal Rajamani, Marisa Frazier, Andy Heaslet, Gretchen Waddell Barwick, Michael Berg & Jenn DeRose.



CHAPTER CHAIR'S COLUMN

Going Deeper: Stronger Together



By Kevin Grooms, Chapter Chair

This spring we observed another Earth Day, and across the state we took time to engage in actions meaningful to each of us, to center the planet and a healthy future. I always appreciate the renewed energy brought on this time of year, and I'm grateful to all the caring folks in Sierra Club who spent a day participating in a clean-up, sowing native plants, hosting a festival, or staging a demonstration.

These Earth Day activities share an essential, common element – collective action – and that's what I love the most about the Sierra Club. The thing that hooked me when I started volunteering for the Sierra Club in 2017 was the way I felt to be a part of something big. It was so good, that I immediately saw myself as more powerful, individually, by my connection to this group.

The news continues to show how critical it is that we unite to fight climate change, as a movement. A recent headline revealed a staggering new analysis, by the global nonprofit InfluenceMap, that revealed from 2016 to 2022, the bulk of global carbon emissions – 80

percent – could be traced to just 57 companies. Fifty-seven!

This researchers emphasize that while our individual actions are important (reduce, reuse, recycle!), we need governmental and regulatory entities to hold corporations accountable to our planet, our future, and our people.

One such government under the heavy influence of fossil fuel special interests is Missouri. Every time we stop dangerous and harmful legislation represents a huge victory, and that's why we've been so fortunate to have Michael Berg as our legislative director. Michael is moving on from his work with the Missouri Chapter after 14 years, but we are fortunate to continue his work with a new organizer to be hired within the year. Thank you to our team of volunteers and staff who continue our fight against fossil fuel interests.

We're incredibly fortunate to have the energy of many other organizers among us, leading the kind of change we wouldn't see if we didn't come together.

Thanks to all of you for your commitment to the Missouri Chapter!

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SPOTLIGHT

Monthly Donor



Debi Pratt

“I consider it a privilege to be a monthly, sustaining member of the Sierra Club, MO Chapter.

It is a small way of showing my appreciation and support of this organization that continues to safeguard the beautiful land, water, & air that my family lovingly calls home!

Welcoming New STL Field Organizer, Mahala Pittman!

HELLO! I'M

MAHALA

STL FIELD ORGANIZER

Environmental Justice is an integral facet to making a better Missouri. I can't wait to work with you!



ABOUT ME:

Mahala has been working in movement since 2019. Serving a variety of roles across multiple non-profits. She has a deep rooted passion for grassroots organizing!



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



Thomas Hart Benton

THB Group hosted an Earth Day Cleanup along Brush Creek, a part of the Blue River watershed on April 20th. Seventeen people worked a total of 42 hours and collected 15 bags of trash! This event was an Earth Day collaboration with *The Great Kansas City Cleanup* hosted by the City of Kansas City.



Photo by: Ruanda McFerren

Eastern Missouri Group

Beginning last fall EMG helped create the New Spanish Land Grant Trail at Hawn State Park. This 3.8 mile trail was made possible by a bequest from long-time member, Bob Gestel. EMG worked with park personnel, Friends of Hawn, Mississippi Lime Corporation, REI and AmeriCorp to complete this trail and build two bridges. It opened ahead of schedule on May 4. Special thanks to the Gestel Bequest committee: John Feldmann, George Behrens, Paul Stupperich, Ed Schott and Hawn State Park Site Superintendent Ben Bailey.



Photo by: Kim Gordon from Friends of Hawn

Mid-Missouri Group

MMG's Earth Day Festival booth featured the theme *Vote for the Environment* and included information on recent issues for city, county and state governments. Volunteers offered voter registration, hosted a drawing and were joined by MO State Representatives Adrian Plank and Kathy Steinhoff who have been endorsed for re-election.



Photo by: Carolyn Ampanan

White River Group

On April 17, WRG hosted around twenty people for the presentation "Missouri's Prairies." Brian Edmond spoke about the values of our prairie ecosystems. This event was followed by a hike on Saturday, April 20, to Prairie State Park near Mindenmines. Eight members were treated to a 3 mile hike across the prairie with the park's naturalist, Dana Hoisington.



Photo by: Pam Shaver



OUR COMMUNITIES DEMAND

A JOYFUL VISION

PEOPLE'S PARADE & HEARING



By Jenn DeRose,
Senior Field Organizer

The people have spoken! It's time for Ameren to ditch coal and go renewable!

For a utility that claims to value sustainability, Ameren had a pretty rough Earth Month.

On April 21st, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch dropped a damning, front page investigative story exposing Ameren's Labadie plant as the number one polluter of sulfur dioxide in the country. The investigation found that Labadie caused 4,000 excess deaths between 1999 to 2020. Ameren declined to be interviewed.

The week only got rougher from there for Ameren, when the EPA finalized new rules to reduce air and climate pollution from coal-burning power plants that will likely require Ameren to choose between major retrofits to all 4 units at Labadie or retiring the plant.

And then Ameren had to face the people on Saturday.



Sierra Club and our allies, including the People's Joy Parade, the Ethical Society of St. Louis, Tenants Transforming St. Louis, Green Action WashU, the Green Billikens of St. Louis University, and Labadie

Environmental Organization, organized a joyful People's Parade and People's Hearing to deliver the community's message to Ameren: ditch coal and go clean!

In vibrant, handmade costumes with puppets, windsocks, and signs, community members paraded from Lafayette Park to Ameren Headquarters to demand an end to expensive, polluting coal-burning power plants and present a joyful vision of a renewable energy future - a future where our communities can breathe clean air and everyone can afford their electric bill. We sang songs, danced, and communed with one another as we walked.

The parade concluded at Ameren headquarters, where speakers included Patricia Schuba from Labadie Environmental Organization, Kristian Blackmon from Tenants Transforming St. Louis, Sierra Club volunteers and staffers, and students from Washington University and St. Louis University.

As we face seemingly insurmountable challenges to mitigating catastrophic climate change, ending wars, and preserving our democracy, it is more important than ever before to harness each and every one of our talents and passions to move governments and corporations to protect people and the environment we depend on.

As I said during the parade, "joy and community are forms of resistance." And as brave students and faculty at WashU and dozens of universities across the country have shown us, there is no force stronger than community. When we are united in care and love for one another, and when we have a vision for the future we want to see, we are unstoppable.



If you want to join our clean-energy advocate community, sign up at sc.org/amerenaction.

Parade Photo credits: Jenn DeRose, Sara Edgar, Ed Smith

FOR CLEAN ENERGY



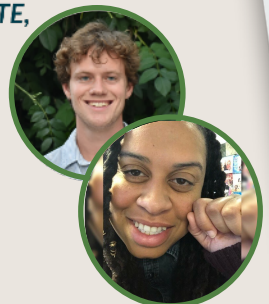
OF A RENEWABLE FUTURE



FOR ALL

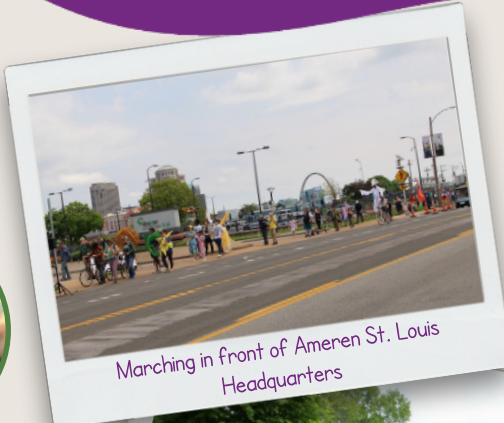
“ Coal-fired power plants have no place in today's world and as a young citizen of Earth, I have made it my mission to take down fossil fuels. *DIVEST, DISASSOCIATE, and DECARBONIZE.*

- **AIDAN LEWIS,**
PRESIDENT OF GREEN ACTION WASHU



“ We out here celebrating our future... this is not for just us. It's for our kids. It's for our babies. It's for those that are gonna come after us.

- **KRISTIAN BLACKMON,**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TENANTS TRANSFORMING STL



Marching in front of Ameren St. Louis Headquarters



Participants dressed in a variety of colorful costumes, including native flowers, insects and wildlife.





BRYANT CREEK



ELEVEN POINT



SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS

PUBLIC LANDS VICTORY

Saving Our State Parks: Three Newest State Parks Protected



By Marisa Fraizer, Senior Field Organizer

After years of advocacy efforts by members of the Missouri Sierra Club, we have won the protection of Eleven Point, Bryant Creek, and Shepherd of the Hills State Parks!

Thanks to your advocacy, we turned the tide towards protecting our newest Missouri State Parks. In 2022, Sierra Club members attended the opening ceremony at Bryant Creek State Park.

The win of protection of Eleven Point State Park was also announced in 2022. In 2023, Sierra Club members attended the first open house at Eleven Point State Park. In 2024, Missouri State Parks hosted a second open house that coincided with the total solar eclipse. More than 200 attendees joined to learn about the park opening process and celebrate the eclipse.

The Eleven Point State Park expands the size and diversity of unfragmented forest along the river, benefiting important migratory bird populations and reducing erosion and nutrient input into the river. This in turn improves water quality, protects aquatic resources and provides for public enjoyment of the land.

Furthermore, the White River Group continues to host glade and wildflower restoration outings at Shepherd of the Hills State Park- we have hosted 8 events since the park's protection in 2019, and we remain committed to the process to open this park.

It is important for us to stay engaged throughout the conceptual development plan process to keep these parks wild and encourage restoration of the native ecosystems within them!

2024 Legislative Update



*By Michael Berg,
Political Director*

The 2024 legislative session was a huge success for the Missouri Sierra Club. Industry, monopoly utilities and industrial agricultural groups lobbied hard for dangerous anti-environmental legislation that never passed. We successfully mobilized early to completely stop bills that would put our water quality and wetlands in peril by narrowing the definition of the "waters of the state". As part of a broad coalition, the Sierra Club defended our initiative petition process. We helped defeat multiple

pieces of legislation designed to increase fossil fuel consumption and a proposal to give giant energy intensive bitcoin mining operations a wish list of unfair advantages.

Unfortunately Missouri will now have a regulatory sandbox, which grants case by case evasions of regulation to businesses, but three years of lobbying efforts by the Sierra Club yielded important environmental protections to this process.



On April 8, several Missouri State Parks hosted events for the public to experience solar eclipse totality, including Eleven Point State Park. MO Sierra Club received shoutouts for our work to conserve and protect this beautiful park!

NOTE: Sierra Club has **not endorsed** in the 80th District.

Thanks to your help, these beautiful spaces are protected now and into the future! This is a big step forward, and also is a win towards our 30x30 Campaign for Nature Goal!

The 30x30 movement is a grassroots-led push to protect 30% of lands and waters in the United States by 2030 to meet the challenge of climate change and provide space for wildlife and communities to thrive. Check out the MO Sierra Club's digital toolkit to learn how you can help save 30% of Missouri's lands by 2030.

Letters to the Editor are a great way to make your voice heard, spread awareness and encourage action. Find tips for writing a compelling letter in the 30X30 initiative in the toolkit.



Access the digital toolkit today!
sc.org/30x30toolkit



State Park Photos by: Marisa Fraizer



Our success this year has been due to the efforts of our legislative committee and the hundreds of members who attended our lobby day and in-district meetings and wrote and called their legislators. We are especially in debt to committee Chair Frances Klahr, John Madras, Henry Robertson and Peter Schneeberger who all provided crucial testimony opposing dangerous legislation.



Sierrans from the White River Group participate in Lobby Day at Jefferson City. Photo credits: Gretchen Waddell Barwick.

HOW WE SAVED OVER 8,000 ACRES OF MISSOURI STATE PARKS!

OH NO!



Former Governor Jay Nixon purchased four Missouri properties with the intention of turning them into state parks. When the next Governor took office, political opponents threatened to sell off these parks to private interests.

GO!

The Missouri Sierra Club was quick to act! Over 150 Sierra Club members attended our Lobby Days in Jefferson City and 200 Sierra Club members attended in-district meetings with local legislators.



FIGHT!



We collectively created public pressure through more than 4,000 letters, conversations, phone calls, emails and media coverage urging the state to protect the parks. We recruited 12 organizations to sign onto a letter of support for Eleven Point State Park.

WIN!

Together we achieved a monumental win of more than 8,000 acres of newly protected wild and scenic treasured public lands!

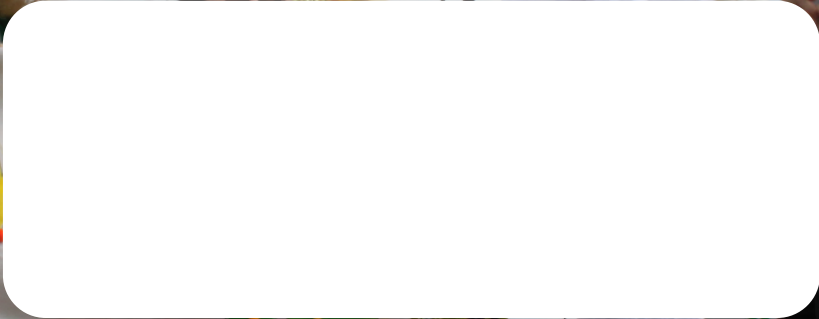
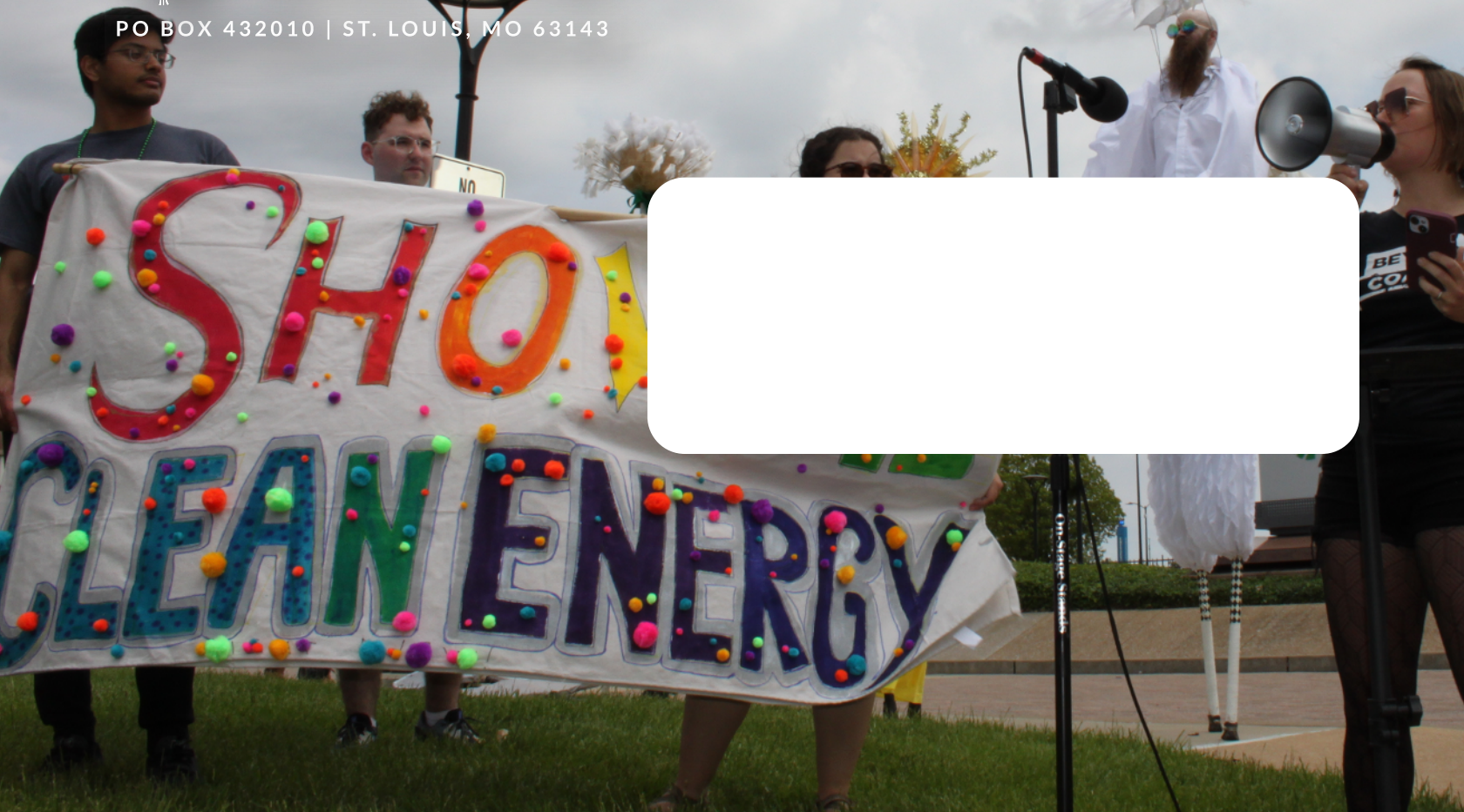




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MISSOURI CHAPTER

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Clean Energy & Climate Justice

Missouri Cities Showing World a Clean Energy Future Is Possible

For decades, status quo state politicians enabled by wealthy polluters in the fossil fuel industry said that a clean energy future “isn’t possible.” Even as Missouri communities impacted by a worsening climate crisis demanded action, we were brushed off by climate denying “leaders.” But our communities saw past the lie and knew that healthy communities free of pollution and a more just future powered by clean energy was not only possible, but essential. **We’ve continued to take the fight to polluters and win for our cities and towns.** Now, thanks to Missourians’ dedicated effort, we have historic tools to make this clean energy future a reality in Missouri.

In 2022, we won a down payment for this future through the **Inflation Reduction Act**, the nation’s largest ever single investment in environmental sustainability, climate justice, and clean energy. Missouri cities already are benefiting from the IRA. The Sierra Club supported the state's Solar for All grant which awarded **\$156 million just this spring** to fund our just transition to a healthier, clean energy future for all. Now we are developing action plans to support our communities, from making policies to reducing utility bills and indoor air pollution to giving free solar installations to low-income households. **But to make this happen, your cities and counties need you.** Sierra Club Missouri Chapter has the tools and resources and connections to help you support your community as much as you are comfortable with. It’s time for us to roll up our sleeves and lean into winning the future Missouri deserves. Let’s do this!



Kevin Grooms with Sierra Club’s “float” car at the Juneteenth KC 2024 Cultural Parade.



Billy Davies with Grand Marshall of the Parade, Marjorie Williams.