

White River *Currents*

Sierra Club White River Group

March, 2008

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Kids Guide to the Outdoors

Richard Louv's recent book *Last Child in the Woods* has been a wakeup call for everyone concerned about conservation and the preservation of natural areas. Many of us can trace the roots of our strong support for the environment to experiences we had as children camping, canoeing or hiking with our friends and families. Louv documents the significant lack of such experiences in the lives of many of our younger generation, raising serious concern about the future of environmentalism in the US.

In response to this, WRG leadership is considering an exciting new project designed to encourage our young people and their families to spend more time outdoors visiting local public lands and parks, but we will need your help to make this work. If you'd like to share information about your favorite park or conservation area, if you have publishing or writing skills, or just a couple of hours to volunteer for one of the many other tasks involved in this project, we could use your help.

Members interested in working on this project are cordially invited to attend the **Kid's Guide kick-off meeting at 5:30 May 13** at the Nature Center before the regular monthly WRG program at 7 p.m. Can't attend the meeting but would like to help? Contact Carla at carlatklein@sbcglobal.net or 417-866-1554.

Outings and events. For more information about the following events, please contact Jennifer Ailor at jailor65721@yahoo.com or at 417-581-4018.

Ozark Underground Lab. WRG visited this internationally famous site on March 29th, but we would like to schedule a second visit for those who missed the first trip. The Lab is in Tumbling Creek Cave, home to rare and endangered species. Specially arranged tours, which include a two-mile above ground hike and several hours in the cave are lead by Tom Aley, the hydrologist who has operated the lab since 1973. The cost is \$16. Call Cynthia at 581-8318. For more info, go to www.ozarkundergroundlab.com.

April 26: Volunteer at the Nature Center In appreciation for the meeting rooms that are made available to us each month, we'd like to thank the Nature Center by helping the staff and Center volunteers remove invasive species from glades and woods. We'll be joining them at the Center on Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m. and working until noon.

June 14: Rain Garden Workday, Hike and Picnic. Our rain garden at the Valley Water Mill Park in north Springfield will need some tender love and care by the beginning of summer. We are planning a workday beginning at 9 a.m., followed by a hike around the lake and lunch at the Lakeside Pavilion. Master Gardeners seeking volunteer hours are welcome to join in the fun.

Like to Support WRG?

WRG is seeking the donation of a display board in good condition and suitable for tabling events and a projector for use with PowerPoint presentations.

You can also support your group by providing your email address when you renew your membership so newsletters can be sent electronically.

If you would like to make a donation, you may do so in one of two ways. Contributions or gifts made to White River Group are not tax deductible; they support our effective citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. For a tax-deductible gift, make your check payable to the Sierra Club Foundation. For more information on making donations or gifts to WRG, contact Mary at 725-9268 or emlore8@aol.com

Upcoming Programs: Programs are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center at 7 p.m. unless otherwise indicated. Come early and enjoy refreshments and conversation at 6:30.

April 15 – "A More Sustainable Springfield". We'll join the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society for a presentation on sustainability presented by Dan Chiles, Springfield City Councilman. Sustainability is the new buzzword in municipal vocabularies but is an old concept to conservation groups who have long worked to see it applied in our communities. Dan will share his vision for a more sustainable Springfield.

May 13 – "The Case for More Wilderness". Recent efforts by Missouri forest activists to win wilderness designation for more of the Mark Twain National Forest have met with considerable resistance, including the editorial staff of the Springfield News-Leader. Join us for a second look at this very important proposal, which includes the Swan Creek Roadless Area near Springfield, presented by long-time activist and head of the Missouri Forest Alliance, Jim Scheff.

June 10 – "Missouri Master Naturalist Program". Join us in June to learn more about this exciting new volunteer program. The president of the first class of Springfield Master Naturalists, Bob Ranney, will describe the program, its mission and how its volunteers make a difference in our area. Bob has a B.S. in fish and wildlife management from Iowa State University and M.A. in public administration and is a long-time resident of the Ozarks, where he enjoys fishing and floating and building cedar canoes.

From the Chair...Cynthia Andre

In its first full year as a reorganized group, the White River Group has presented 10 informative and entertaining programs for its membership and forged two significant coalitions—one with other local environmental groups and another with individuals, businesses and agencies supporting green building. We've also partnered with the Watershed Committee and others to establish a rain garden in Springfield's new Valley Water Mill Park.

In addition, a number of the group's members have spent many hours monitoring and volunteering with local committees and boards in an effort to increase the group's understanding and influence on local issues—including air quality, conservation of water and other natural resources and the preservation of natural areas.

This year we are exploring a new, very vital project (see "Kid's Guide"), and we encourage our members to get involved early on. We think it'll be a lot of fun in addition to meeting an important need for the youth in our community.

And there are many other ways you can help your local group grow. Any of the group leaders (look for the name tags at meetings) would be glad to talk with you about how you might become more involved with your group.

Sierra Club White River Group
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