



White River *Currents*

Sierra Club White River Group...December 2008

www.missouri.sierraclub.org/wrg

Kid's Guide to the Ozarks Outdoors

Thanks to all the volunteers on the Kid's Guide Project, we are right on track to meet our goals. We were thrilled to receive a \$10,500. grant from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks and a \$2500. donation from the Missouri Sierra Club Chapter, but we will still need some additional funding to meet our budget. Any gift, no matter the size would be a great help!

The majority of the park write-ups have been completed. We are working with Springfield Public Schools to coordinate a backyard activities section, enabling the guide to be used in 5th grade classrooms as well as at home. We have secured a printer and are on target for our Earth Day launch date of April 18th 2009.

We will shortly be working with our partnering organizations to identify events and opportunities for distribution. For more information or to make a donation please contact Carla Klein at carlatklein@sbcglobal.net.

From the Chair

Population as a cause of many environmental problems is rivaled, if not surpassed, by increasing consumption. China, for example, has added 80 million new homes in spite of greatly reducing their birth rate. Emulating First World lifestyles, the Chinese have also greatly increased their use of coal, oil, metals, meat, wood, fish and agricultural chemicals.

This growth has been fueled by profits from exports to the U.S. and other countries. The exports are cost competitive, in part, because of China's very lax environmental regulations. As a result, China is experiencing serious problems with water quality/quantity, air quality, declining forests and soil degradation. While it's stopped logging its own forests, it is now contributing to deforestation elsewhere, and it is the world's largest exporter of ozone-depleting air pollutants, sulfur oxides and 12% of the world's CO₂.

We can no longer export our environmental problems (and jobs) without repercussions, and we can no longer move to a new land when we've depleted or polluted ours. Perhaps it's time to seriously examine our lifestyles and make some real changes. It is, after all, our lifestyles Third World countries are emulating.

(For more information on societies and sustainability read Jared Diamond's *Collapse*.)

Upcoming Programs

Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Come early to enjoy refreshments and conversation.

Jan. 13: Wind & Solar Applications for Homes

One key component in a sustainable lifestyle is access to clean renewal energy sources to power our homes. Geothermal energy has been tapped already to heat and cool some homes in Springfield, but what about solar and wind applications for homes in our area? Carla Klein, former Director of the Sierra Club Chapter in Missouri and now a sales representative of The Energy Savings Store will discuss a number of affordable solar and wind options, including, among others, solar sheets, hot water heaters and small vertical wind turbines suitable for homes and other buildings. She'll also discuss methods for calculating the "return on investment", i.e. years to recovering the initial investment. (Program courtesy of Ozarks Green Building Coalition's speakers bureau at www.ozarksgreenbuilding.com.)

Feb.10: Living Off the Grid

Most of us are already trying to lower our carbon footprint and reduce our use of natural resources, but is it really possible to live sustainably in the Ozarks? Our February program will challenge your ideas of what's possible as our speaker, Richard Hermann, shares his experiences living off the grid—without benefit of wind or solar energy—and without running water. He draws on an extensive history of work with sustainable living projects in numerous foreign countries, including service as a Peace Corps volunteer in Africa.

March 17: Revisiting Nuclear Power

Recent scientific reports indicate global warming is accelerating. The latest report suggests that even an abrupt change in business as usual would result in CO₂ levels as high as 550 ppm, while scientist recommend no more than 350 ppm. Meanwhile, our population and per capita use of electricity are both increasing. To meet our energy needs and avoid costly regulation of CO₂, leaders are reconsidering nuclear power—long off the table because of both cost and risks. While nuclear power generation doesn't emit CO₂, is it the best option for the environment? To answer this question, we'll join the Audubon Society for a joint program on nuclear energy. Our speaker, Mark Haim has been a sustainability advocate and educator for nearly 35 years and is Chair of Missourians for Safe Energy.

Outings

For details and dates, contact outings chair Jennifer Ailor at 581-4018 or jailor65721@yahoo.com. The Sierra Club requires you to register for outings and to sign a waiver of liability.

Mon, Dec 29

Hercules Glade Wilderness

Nearest City: Gainesville

Weather permitting, we'll hike several hours starting at the fire tower.

Thu, Jan 1

New Year's Day Hike

Nearest City: Springfield or Ozark

Get off to a good start in 2009 with a New Year's Day hike in either Mark Twain National Forest southeast of Ozark or Little Sac Woods north of Springfield.

Sat, Jan 10 - Sun, 11

Joint Outing with Wilderness Adventurers

Nearest City: Akers Ferry

Weather permitting, Wilderness Adventurers is tentatively planning a winter float on the Current River Jan. 10-11 or Jan. 24-25. If there's enough interest among Sierrans, we may join them.

Sat, Feb 7

Trail Building on the Buffalo River

Nearest City: Yellville

Ken Smith, retired Forest Service trailbuilder, is scheduling volunteer work days in February to work on the new trail along the lower Buffalo River east of Highway 65. We typically meet at 9:30 a.m. at a designated spot in Arkansas and work until 3:30 or 4 p.m.

Sat, Mar 21 - Sun, 22

Explore the Buffalo River

Nearest City: Yellville

Hike during the day and camp (tent or cabin) at Buffalo Point on the lower part of the Buffalo River.

Interested in outings for children? Call TJ Wyatt at 818-3809.



A Short Walk Through Little Sac Woods

Sierra Club outings don't have to be strenuous, hours away or weekend-long events. And Springfield is blessed with many short hiking opportunities only minutes away.

Take Little Sac Woods, for example. It's an MDC property only 10 miles north of Springfield and a few miles west towards Walnut Grove. On December 7, David Keene, Peter Engel and Jennifer Ailor took a brisk hike through this 772-acre property, which is largely forested but has some old fields, wildlife food plots, small ponds and a savanna/glade under restoration. The trails are well marked and easy walking, there are 7.3 miles of them if you're inclined "to do it all."

We hiked for about 90 minutes and then returned to Springfield for a cup of coffee and a pastry at Panera. Thanks, Peter, for the treat!

With the economic downturn, your donations count more than ever!

If you would like to help support the group's many worthwhile projects, make your check payable to the Sierra Club White River Group and mail it to **Mary Lorenz**, PO Box 2355, Nixa, MO, 65714.

Contribution or gifts to Sierra Club's White River Group are **not tax deductible**; they support our effective citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts.

To make a **tax-deductible gift**, please contact Mary at 417-735-9268 or emlore8@aol.com.

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