New support for Current River campaign

8,000 citizens join Environment Missouri to save Current River

This summer, as the National Park Service worked to finalize their new plan to better manage the Current River, Environment Missouri mobilized thousands of citizens and scores of businesses to press the agency for bold reforms.

Missourians from all walks of life joined the fight, sending thousands of comments to the Park Service, publishing opinion pieces in news outlets across the state and meeting with state leaders face-to-face, urging them to weigh in with the Park Service as they fine-tune the restoration plan.

Twenty Environment Missouri members even joined our staff for a float trip down the Current River, giving participants a first-hand glimpse of everything at stake.

Our river gem in danger

The Current River lies at the heart of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Missouri’s largest national park. Torn up trails and unauthorized roads are degrading water quality and threatening its delicate ecosystem. In response, Environment Missouri is calling for the Park Service to release a plan that will close the illegal roads, rehabilitate the damaged land, clean up the water, and establish a new wilderness area at Big Spring.

100 businesses join campaign

Over the last few months, we’ve also taken this message to businesses near the Current River, many of which depend on tourism associated with the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. In 2010 alone, more than 1.3 million visitors spent over $63 million and supported nearly 900 jobs. One hundred of these businesses signed a letter from Environment Missouri urging National Park Director Jonathan Jarvis to crack down on the many problems facing the Current. “We are thrilled that leaders in the business community have joined forces with thousands of Missourians for the Current River,” said Sarah MacFarland, Environment Missouri field associate. “At this critical time for the Ozark Riverways, it is one more strong step that can help us tip the balance in favor of Missouri’s river gem.”

more online

To read more about our plan to restore the Current River and our efforts to build support for other state waterways, visit our website at: www.EnvironmentMissouri.org
To our members

After two exciting years of working with members like you, this will be my last letter as your State Advocate. While I am moving on to pursue a graduate degree, I will remain a friend and supporter of Environment Missouri.

I’m proud of what we’ve accomplished. Together, we passed a bill to protect funds for State Parks, defeated a proposal to close 23 St. Louis County parks, won the first ever limits on mercury pollution from power plants, and made a huge push to restore the Current River.

There’s still a lot of work to be done to protect our air, water and cherished open spaces, but I’m pleased to be leaving the organization and its programs in very capable hands, including our dynamic new state advocate Stuart Keating.

Thank you again for your membership and support.

Ted Mathys
State Advocate

Recent action

Attack on the Current River defeated

In the waning days of the 2012 legislative session, Environment Missouri and key allies beat back a reckless proposal in the Statehouse that called on the National Park Service to abandon plans to restore and better manage the Current River.

Environment Missouri responded to the bill by mobilizing more than 500 members to call and write their state representatives, testifying in Jefferson City and lobbying lawmakers to abandon the legislation. Thankfully, our state leaders responded, and the proposal was defeated.

“At a time when the Current is suffering from torn up trails, illegal roads and ATVs, this was an embarrassing assault,” said Stuart Keating, advocate for Environment Missouri. “These legislators were playing politics with our river.”

Legislators rename Missouri ‘Great Rivers State’

In May, to honor beloved rivers from the Jacks Fork to the Meramec, state lawmakers voted to re-coin Missouri “The Great Rivers State.” And, as a member of the Missouri Conservation and Environmental Alliance, Environment Missouri supported this legislation.

This new name reminds Missourians to value rivers and streams across the state and work to ensure they stay healthy and scenic for future generations. With this in mind, Environment Missouri and its sister organizations across the country are pushing the Environmental Protection Agency to restore Clean Water Act protections to up to 66 percent of Missouri’s streams, which feed our rivers.

“From the state’s great rivers—the Mississippi, the Missouri and the Meramec—to our wild Ozark streams, Missouri’s river resources are among the best in the nation,” said Sarah MacFarland, state associate for Environment Missouri. “Environment Missouri was pleased to see our leaders honor these natural treasures.”

Environment Missouri mobilized members to support management and restoration plans for Current River (pictured).
Sen. McCaskill votes to limit mercury pollution

Life-saving pollution limits finalized
This winter, with the strong support of Environment Missouri, the Environmental Protection Agency finalized the first-ever nationwide limits on mercury pollution and other toxic air emissions from power plants.

As soon as the new pollution standards were finalized, the coal lobby and their allies in Congress went on the offensive, proposing numerous provisions to defund the EPA's mercury cleanup plans and, in certain cases, stop the new pollution limits outright.

One powerful attempt came from Sen. James Inhofe (Okla.), who created a bold bill that would have not only blocked the new standards, but would have prevented the EPA from ever instituting mercury pollution limits in the future.

Responding quickly to this attempt, Environment Missouri identified Sen. Claire McCaskill as a critical vote in this pollution standards debate. In June, we rallied our supporters to call, write and email Sen. McCaskill in advance of the vote. We also published an opinion piece in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Our efforts in lobbying Sen. McCaskill were successful, and the legislation was defeated in the Senate.

The battle will likely continue
As the election season heats up and powerful polluters and lobbyists line the pockets of members of Congress, similar attacks on air pollution limits are likely to continue.

But for the sake of the environment and the health of all Missourians, we’ll be there to push back. Missouri’s power plants emit more mercury than plants in 46 other states, and Ameren’s Labadie Power Station is the second-worst mercury polluting plant in the nation. The new mercury standards will slash pollution from these plants by 90 percent—a monumental victory we’re determined to achieve.

A victory for public health
In addition to being an important environmental victory, the mercury rule was a victory for public health. After mercury is released into the air as a byproduct of coal-fired power plants, it settles into our waterways and concentrates in the fish that end up on our dinner plates. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that can cause learning disabilities and developmental disorders in children and can be particularly dangerous to women who are pregnant or nursing and their babies.

Environment Missouri and Environment America, our national federation, were instrumental in influencing the EPA to come out with these strong new standards. We released a series of reports on the public health risks of mercury pollution.

We also lobbied our elected officials and built a strong coalition of public health workers, environmental advocates and anglers. Along with our national allies, we delivered more than 900,000 positive comments to the EPA. This was the largest volume of comments that the organization has ever received on a pollution rule.

Green Future Fund
A new way to honor supporters
Environment Missouri is proud to announce the establishment of our Green Future Fund.

The Green Future Fund will honor a special group of our donors: those who are ensuring a greener future by remembering Environment Missouri or our sister group, Environment Missouri Research & Policy Center, in their wills, life insurance policies or retirement accounts.

These legacy donors are helping to ensure that Environment Missouri will continue to flourish—protection the places we love and the values we share for years to come.

“We appreciate all of our supporters,” said Environment Missouri’s Ted Mathys. “But, I feel a special gratitude toward those members who have the vision and generosity to plan a gift that will protect our state's environment beyond their own lifetimes.”

Establishing a legacy gift also offers donors a few advantages. Some supporters wish they could give more, but can’t right now. Including Environment Missouri in your estate plan costs nothing today, while ensuring support for our mission in the future. Legacy gifts may also offer tax benefits. Your professional advisor can help you determine any tax advantage.

As a Green Future Fund donor, with your permission, we'll recognize your gift in our annual report and other publications, helping to inspire other members to make their own legacy gifts. Of course, you may also choose to give anonymously. Either way, any specific details you choose to provide about your gift will remain confidential.

If you’d like to become a member of the Green Future Fund, or if you have questions, call our planned giving coordinator, Marilyn Tesaura, at 1-800-841-7299 or plannedgiving@EnvironmentMissouri.org.
In April 2011, President Obama proposed much-needed clean water guidelines to protect the rivers and streams that feed and clean Missouri’s lakes and rivers, including the Current, Mississippi and Meramec. More than half of these waterways are vulnerable to toxic pollution and development, thanks to two polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions.

Long-overdue protections have yet to be finalized, due to partisan politics and polluters like ExxonMobil and Big Agriculture, which in July launched a major campaign to stop the proposed guidelines.

To counter their efforts, Environment Missouri and Environment America pounded the pavement across the country, building support for waterway protections.

Despite three separate attempts to block the Obama Administration’s efforts in Congress, our efforts are paying off. We demonstrated enough public support this summer to help convince leadership in the Senate to stop one of the dirty water bills from even coming up.