New action to restore the Current River

Restoration plan nears release
Each year, more than 1.3 million people travel to the Current River to float, swim and fish among some of Missouri’s most stunning scenery. But deteriorating water quality, torn up trails and illegal access roads continue to degrade the river, even placing it on a list of the nation’s 10 most threatened waters.

For two years, Environment Missouri has been pressuring the National Park Service to adopt a bold new plan to address these serious threats and begin restoring the Current River. Finally, the agency is doubling down on a new plan to restore and manage our river jewel.

The draft plan, soon to be released, will guide the river for the next 20 years. As of press time, the document had reached its final steps, awaiting review in Washington, D.C.

Environment Missouri urges reform
As the plan moves forward, Environment Missouri is joining allied groups around the state to continue its campaign for the most comprehensive plan possible.

Working with a broad coalition of like-minded groups and concerned citizens, we’ve mobilized more than 5,000 Missourians to urge strong action from National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis; rallied more than 75 small businesses to support the campaign; and garnered media attention in news outlets from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch to KOMU Channel 8, in Columbia. Finally, in March, we traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with Director Jarvis and make our case in person.

This summer, as the Park Service puts finishing touches on the plan, we’ll be redoubling our efforts, speaking to more than 15,000 Missourians, uniting them behind our campaign, and strengthening our call for a strong plan to the National Park Service.

“We can’t let the Current River—the jewel of the Ozarks—continue on this dangerous course of degradation,” said Ted Mathys, advocate for Environment Missouri. “It’s time for reform, and a strong new management plan can restore the Current for decades to come.”

The Current River draws 1.3 million people every year.
To our members

This is not only an election year; it’s a historic year: 2012 marks the 40th anniversary of the Clean Water Act.

As a kid growing up in Ohio, I first learned of the importance of clean water when I heard about how the Cuyahoga River had once burst into flames from pollution. And, while we’ve made significant progress in cleaning up Missouri’s waterways, there’s much more to be done.

Polluter-backed loopholes in the Clean Water Act now leave countless streams that feed Missouri’s great rivers at risk. And as the Obama administration moves ahead with a new clean water plan this year, they’re being attacked by polluters and their cronies in Congress. Which means it’s time for us to push back.

With your support, my staff and I are mobilizing elected officials, small businesses, and activists to help us protect our waters. None of this would be possible without your passion and support. Thanks, as always, for standing with us.

Ted Mathys
Advocate

Recent action

Missouri elected officials join fight for clean water

The Meramec River, and up to 66 percent of all the streams in Missouri, are at risk of dumping and development, thanks to gaping, polluter-backed loopholes in the Clean Water Act. Thankfully, at the urging of Environment Missouri and sister organizations around the country, President Obama and the EPA took a major step this spring to prevent more pollution in our waters. But already, the coal industry, and their allies in Congress are trying to take this clean water victory off the books.

To close the loopholes and protect Missouri’s waters for good, we’re pressing our elected officials to stand up for our most cherished waterways, from the Missouri River to our wild Ozark streams.

To date, 31 officials—from the Mayor of University City to state senators and representatives—have endorsed Environment Missouri’s letter to President Obama, urging his administration to forge ahead in the face of polluter opposition.

Local foods bill advances in Jefferson City

An Environment Missouri-backed bill to spur local agriculture advanced in the Capitol this legislative session, representing an encouraging step forward for sustainable farming.

The legislation, for which Environment Missouri has testified in favor, creates sustainable urban agriculture zones in our cities to bring the production of food closer to home, reduce pollution and give local farmers a chance to compete with Big Ag. In the coming months, Environment Missouri will continue pushing lawmakers in the House of Representatives to act on this legislation.

“This bill is needed now more than ever, as factory farms continue to pollute our air and water,” said Sarah MacFarland, state associate for Environment Missouri. “It’s past time we grow our food in ways that protect our environment, not hurt it.”

How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment Missouri or the Environment Missouri Research & Policy Center.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMissouri.org.
Every Missouri county hit by extreme weather

**EPA moves to cut carbon pollution from power plants**
On March 27, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed limits on carbon pollution from new power plants. If passed, they will be the first nationwide limits on the largest single source of the carbon pollution that fuels global warming.

As scientists, doctors and other experts have been warning us for years, cutting carbon pollution is critical because global warming brings everything from dirtier air and more deadly heat waves, to more devastating floods and extreme weather.

**In the Path of the Storm**
In the weeks before the EPA’s historic announcement, Environment Missouri released a report documenting why action to cut carbon pollution and tackle global warming is needed. The report, “In the Path of the Storm,” found that every county in Missouri has been hit by at least one recent weather-related disaster in the last five years.

In fact, Webster County is one of only 10 counties in the nation that has been hit by ten weather related disasters in the last five years. And the extreme flooding of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers in 2011—which led to the demolition of the Birds Point levee and caused the inundation of 200 square miles of farmland in Missouri—destroyed dozens of homes, and caused at least $25 million in damages.

The report also documented the latest science warning that global warming could lead to certain extreme weather events becoming even more common in the future.

**Mobilizing Missourians for carbon pollution limits**
Unfortunately, the real battle began after the EPA’s announcement, as utilities, coal companies and other corporate polluters began spending millions to convince the Obama administration to weaken or abandon the standards altogether.

Environment Missouri is working with our national federation to build an unprecedented wave of public support for the new carbon pollution standards. Given that global warming will likely fuel even more extreme weather in the future, there’s no time to waste.

To view an interactive map of Missouri’s weather related disasters on a county-by-county basis, and to take action to help us push for carbon pollution limits on power plants, check out our website at www.EnvironmentMissouri.org.

“Our research is a stark reminder that extreme weather is happening,” said Environment Missouri Advocate Ted Mathys. “It’s causing damage to Missouri, and global warming increases the likelihood of more extreme weather in the future.”

For our part, Environment Missouri led a citizen team to lobby on a bill that would boost sustainable agriculture and urban farming. Other groups in the alliance lobbied on bills to protect our drinking water, increase monitoring of coal ash waste, establish environmentally-sensitive cleaning policies in Missouri’s schools, provide adequate funding for our state parks, increase energy efficiency in power plants, and more.

“The energy and determination of Missourians to protect the places they love, and advance the values they hold dear, is palpable during lobby day,” said Ted Mathys, advocate with Environment Missouri. “We are excited and emboldened by the progress we made this year.”
Anyone who’s biked the Katy Trail or stood atop the bluffs at Ha Ha Tonka knows the power of Missouri’s state parks. But with increasing diversions and exemptions from the state parks sales tax over the years, and a loss of general funding from the state, our parks now face $200 million in critically-needed upgrades.

Last year Environment Missouri and our allies won protections in the Legislature for the State Parks Earnings Fund, to prevent this cornerstone fund from being raided for other purposes.

This legislative session, we built on that accomplishment, pressing for a bill to further protect the interest on this fund, ensuring that our parks get the resources they deserve. At time of press, the bill has passed the House of Representatives and is being considered in the Senate.