



Missouri Wilderness Coalition

Newsletter #11

Winter 2009

Friends of Missouri Wilderness

There has been so much going on since our summer meeting that it's difficult for an all-volunteer organization to keep up. We're doing our best, and our growing network of volunteers is helping move things along.



The Missouri Wilderness Campaign

The main goal of the Coalition is and will continue to be the successful introduction of a Wilderness bill before Congress. Our goal is to have commitment for such a bill by 4/1/09. This may very well prove to be too aggressive, but it is what we are working towards. Consider where we stand: We have our main Washington D.C. contact who continues to work with the Missouri Congressional delegation on Capitol Hill turf; also at the National level we have recently begun working with the Campaign For America's Wilderness group and have great hopes for where that is heading; we have about 35 people who are working as "MWC Leaders" and putting in the extra effort that requires; we are seeing the formation of solid groups of

District Leaders for the three Congressional Districts where our proposed areas are located; we have a network of over 300 supporters; and we have people stepping up left and right to carry out all kinds of jobs - making buttons, adopting the mowild.org website, leading people on outings, writing articles.....we should all be impressed. We can be hopeful for the future of Missouri's wild areas; they've got great people, like you, looking out for them.

Missouri Wilderness in the News

Our Wilderness campaign has had a decent amount of coverage over the last couple of years, but it hasn't all been helpful. At the end of 2008 however, we began to see that our steady, consistently moderate approach is beginning to pay off. A journalist from southern MO started a recent interview with a somewhat negative impression of the campaign, mostly due to mis-information. But our MWC volunteer calmly addressed the journalist's questions and concerns, and what do you know.....things changed by the end of the interview. We will keep up this approach and our proposal will begin to be seen for what it is: a GREAT thing for the future of Missouri that the great majority of citizens can support. With that in mind, here are links to a couple of articles from the year's end: [West Plains Daily Quill on October 23](#) and from The Campaign for America's Wilderness in November: [Smith Creek - An Unexpected Gem in the "Show Me" State](#).

Update: Smith Creek Proposed Wilderness and Mark Twain National Forest's "Southwest Project"

MWC prides itself on it's responsible approach to protecting Missouri's wild lands. Unfortunately even the most reasonable proposals are sometimes opposed by those with agendas that are definitely not reasonable. Imagine if MWC said "turn all of the Mark Twain National Forest to Wilderness". Doesn't sound very reasonable does it? But evidently the converse of that path is what Mark Twain National Forest (MTNF) has chosen to take, ignoring strong comments from MWC supporters, citizens of Missouri, citizens of the USA, and a large cadre of local citizens. In essence, almost all people

asked for out of this project that affects thousands of acres, is that a small portion of the project area that is the northwest extension of the Smith Creek wilderness be left in its undeveloped condition as it has always been. MTNF chose instead to proceed with their plan to develop the Epple Tract, a huge disappointment to all concerned. If you want to get a visual as to one of the many reasons Wilderness designation is so important to our 7 areas, just take a look at the photo from the Epple Tract included here. Smith Creek will survive, and will one day be designated Wilderness, but we will have to achieve that over the opposition of the Forest Service.



Update: Swan Creek Proposed Wilderness "Sorg Allotment"

This MTNF project is taking place in the Swan Creek Proposed Wilderness, where a couple hundred acres of public land along Swan Creek and Math Branch are being set aside for a grazing lease, for one single person's stock. Again MWC took a very conservative approach, and commented that MTNF should leave the area alone and let it revert to wildland. This is the ideal situation, but, assuming MTNF wouldn't actually consider this, we asked that at least the roads to the grazing area be closed off, as there is no need for access to the pasture except through private land. But this too seems like just too much for MTNF, so they ignored us again. Spend a couple of years working with MTNF and you quickly see why a common-sense approach is so difficult with this agency. The Sierra Club and Heartwood have appealed the Decision. We will wait to see how this appeal plays out.

Endorsements and Contributions

MWC is very pleased to announce the 29th and 30th organizations to endorse the citizen's proposal for seven more Wilderness Areas in Missouri: Welcome aboard [Plumbottom Organic Farm](#) and [Ozark Fly Fishers](#)! As always, the full list of endorsements is available on the [MWC website](#).

A huge thanks goes out to Lance Thomas and Michelle Thomas, owners of [Origin Agency](#), who with the help of Joe Krutzsch have designed and created some really cool Missouri Wilderness Coalition buttons. We have the buttons available, and if you are interested in getting one, please send an email or letter to us and we'll get one out to you.



Another huge thanks is in order for Bill Horst, who was brought in by MWC volunteer

Jennifer Ailor to help with MWC's presence on the internet. Bill has completely redesigned the website, and also set up a forum/board for the MWC leaders to use. Make sure you check out the website when you get a chance.

MWC is open to everyone who supports Missouri Wilderness and wild areas, and we appreciate all groups, organizations, and individuals who are working to keep MO wilderness intact for current and future generations.

Until next time....

We still need more good photos of our seven proposed Wilderness Areas. If you have any you would like to contribute for MWC's use, please send us a few via email or cd.

Have a great winter, and let's shoot for some good traction on a bill this spring.

Missouri Wilderness Coalition

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Photos: Bell Mountain Wilderness (banner); Lower Rock Creek Proposed Wilderness in February; New parking lot on the Epple Tract in Smith Creek Proposed Wilderness; MWC Button.

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