

**Meeting Report:  
Missouri Wilderness Strategy Meeting**

July 21, 2007

Conservation Federation of Missouri – Jefferson City  
11:00am to 2:30pm

Attendees:

David Bedan – Missouri Audubon  
Jim Bensman – Heartwood  
Ron Coleman – Missouri Parks Association  
Bill Fordyce – Missouri Whitewater Association  
Richard Guyette – Missouri Dendrochronologist  
John Karel – Missouri Wilderness Coalition, L-A-D Foundation  
Joe Krutzsch – Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
Angel Kruzen – Missouri Water Sentinels  
Kat Logan Smith – Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
Danny McMurphy – Ozark Trail Association, Motrails  
Scott Merritt – Missouri Wilderness Coalition  
Ken Midkiff – Sierra Club  
Dave Murphy – Conservation Federation of Missouri  
Dave Ostlund – Missouri Park and Recreation Association  
Bill Shansay – Cedar Creek Landowners  
Paul Stupperich – Sierra Club  
Duane and Judy Woltjen – Ozark Society  
Carrie Yonley – Cedar Creek Landowners

I. Welcome and Introduction

Our meeting began with a warm welcome from Dave Murphy, Director of the Conservation Federation, at their Jefferson City offices. Dave even set the tone with a quote from Sigurd Olson's The Singing Wilderness.

II. History of Issues and Areas

Following introductions, John Karel provided a brief summary of the history of the wilderness issue in Missouri and how the seven areas of our current proposal came to be identified and nominated. Dave Bedan displayed some of the very early campaign materials from those efforts. The key point here is that these seven areas have been recognized since the 1970's, and have been given special treatment ever since. Formal Wilderness designation will thus not conflict with competing resource uses such as timber, mining, and roads; or with the primary recreation values for which they are treasured today.

III. The Proposal

Then Scott Merritt discussed the Proposal itself, with a display of maps and photos, and an early draft of a data package being put together at the request of Senator

Bond's staff. Everyone agreed that this package was a priority, and that once it is completed it should be distributed as broadly as possible. Scott emphasized that we are still looking for good photos of all the areas and encouraged people to send in their best. Kat Logan-Smith suggested a photo contest to generate interest and photos; everyone agreed that was a great idea.

It was also mentioned that Jim Scheff has been active in developing more information tools. He has produced a PowerPoint program which emphasizes the forest practices aspect of the Mark Twain, and Kat has some copies available which were distributed. Jim is also planning to produce a tabloid-format information piece that should be very helpful.

#### IV. Building More Support

A general discussion followed regarding ideas for building more support in Missouri, especially in the areas represented by the two congressmen and one congresswoman in whose districts our wilderness areas are located:

##### 9<sup>th</sup> District – Representative Kenny Hulshoff – Smith Creek:

Carrie Yonley reported on the activities of the local support groups. She mentioned the efforts to work with Callaway County officials and from there to convince Representative Hulshoff. Some progress is being made and efforts will continue. Local landowner support is strong and that is a huge plus factor.

##### 7<sup>th</sup> District – Representative Roy Blunt – Swan Creek:

There was much discussion of the various groups and individuals whom we might approach. We have a base already with the Ozark Society, Ozark Greenways, local Sierra Club and Audubon groups, and others. Ron Coleman expressed some willingness, in conjunction with Dave Murphy, to organize a meeting in Springfield of some of the key potential supporters, who could then carry the message to Representative Blunt. Everyone agreed that this would be our best next move in this area.

There was some discussion at this time about potential conflicts with other groups. Most such conflicts have already been accommodated since the areas have been more or less protected since the 1970's. Competing commercial uses such as timber, grazing, mining, and road building should be largely resolved already. The new fact sheets will clarify this. Also, wilderness-related recreation has been long underway and is well-established. We do want to exert ourselves to ensure that equestrian groups understand the compatibility of wilderness with horse recreation, especially at Swan Creek, and Scott Merritt has initiated contact with one such organization.

One recreation group that requires special attention is the mountain biker fraternity. This activity is not allowed in Wilderness and where there are now trails and usage patterns established, alternate routes and trail options need to be developed and promoted. Scott Merritt, Greg Iffrig, and John Roth of the Ozark Trail Association are working diligently to offer meaningful alternatives and to seek cooperation with these recreationists. We are optimistic about their efforts. Danny McMurphy invited a wilderness spokesperson to attend and address the upcoming Missouri Trails Summit on the weekend of October 26/27. We will accept this important invitation.

8<sup>th</sup> District – Representative Jo Ann Emerson – Big Spring, Lower Rock Creek, North Fork, Spring Creek, and Van East Mountain:

This district has five of our seven areas, and thus Representative Emerson is a key figure in the fate of our proposal. Again, numerous suggestions were discussed about people with whom we should speak and seek support. We have a modest base now with the East Ozarks Audubon Society in Farmington, The Ozark Society group in Cape Girardeau, and others, but this base need to be broadened dramatically if we hope to win Jo Ann's support, or even her neutrality. Angel Krusen offered a lengthy list of potential contacts, and everyone encouraged her to pursue those. Dave Murphy indicated the strength of Federation affiliates in southeast Missouri, and offered to seek their support, which could make a big difference. Dave will give this further thought and be in touch soon.

V. Coalition Function/Budget

Frequent communications are key to a successful coalition, and we will all strive to maintain that. The budget needs some further thought, but in the meantime, incidental expenses have already been incurred and absorbed by several of the volunteers. This is not sustainable indefinitely, and everyone was encouraged to make donations to the MWC at its address in Boss, MO. Duane Woltjen, who came from Arkansas to represent the support of the four-state Ozark Society, volunteered to seek a grant from that group for \$1000. Nobody will hold Duane to that, but the generosity of this proposal gave everybody at the meeting a big lift. Thanks Duane!

VI. Next Steps

Although she could not attend the meeting in person, Rindy O'Brien of Washington D.C. provided a very thoughtful and helpful analysis of our political situation and a prescription for how to proceed. As the former legislative aid to Senator Thomas Eagleton who helped pass our previous legislation, and as former staff at The Wilderness Society, Rindy knows whereof she speaks. We attach her report here and consider it to be our basic blueprint for action. Please review it closely.

VII. Conclusion

The meeting concluded with inspirational words from several of our participants, and our mutual pledges to see this mission through to its successful conclusion. We know we have a large task ahead, and we are already behind the calendar compared to where we would like to be, but if we work together with a will, and hold to our resolve, we are confident that this Conservation Legacy will eventually be secured for future generations of Missourians.