

Missouri Wilderness Coalition

Newsletter #3

May 2007

Since our last mailing, many new friends have “signed up”, and so we will make this message as self-explanatory for “new-to-the-listers” as we can.

There has been a tremendous response to our proposal for permanent legislative protection for the seven “sensitive areas” on the Mark Twain National Forest (with part of one, Big Spring, extending onto the Ozark National Scenic Riverways). The following groups have formally endorsed the proposal, along with an ever-lengthening list of individuals, including you:

1. Cedar Creek Landowners Association
2. Columbia Audubon Society
3. Conservation Federation of Missouri
4. East Ozarks Audubon Society
5. Missouri Chapter, Sierra Club
6. Missouri Parks Association
7. Missouri Wilderness Coalition
8. St. Louis Audubon Society

The following groups have been presented the proposal, and we expect to hear from them in the near future:

1. Audubon Missouri
2. Heartwood
3. L-A-D Foundation
4. Missouri Coalition for the Environment
5. Missouri Forest Alliance
6. Ozark Society
7. Webster Groves Nature Study Society

Other groups not listed here will definitely be approached soon as well.

Response has been not only positive, but also enthusiastic. For example, the Cedar Creek Landowners Association, near the Smith Creek Wilderness in Boone and Calloway Counties, has launched vigorously into organizing local support and has already met with some staff of their congressional delegation.

On another front, a mix of groups coordinated by Jim Scheff of the Missouri Forest Alliance met recently in Rolla and came to a consensus regarding support for the MWC proposal. This group also reminds us to endorse the modest positive adjustments already proposed by the Forest Service itself for correcting the boundaries of the existing Wildernesses on the Mark Twain, and to further investigate the wildland values of several additional areas for potential future action. MWC supports these ideas and will work with Jim and his colleagues.

In the meantime, the pace of the campaign for the 7 MWC areas has picked up. We need to work on our strategy to alert our delegation, and win their support. All of us can work together on our two U.S. Senators, Kit Bond and Claire McCaskill. We will need both of them if we expect to pass a law. In addition, we each have a Representative in Congress. Special attention will need to be addressed to these Representatives in whose districts our areas are located:

Smith Creek	9 th District	Kenny Hulshoff
Swan Creek	7 th District	Roy Blunt
Big Spring	8 th District	Jo Ann Emerson
Lower Rock Creek	8 th District	Jo Ann Emerson
North Fork	8 th District	Jo Ann Emerson
Spring Creek	8 th District	Jo Ann Emerson
Van East Mountain	8 th District	Jo Ann Emerson

You can see how important Representative Emerson will be to our campaign. We need to organize and build support throughout southeast Missouri if we expect to gain her endorsement. Similarly for southwest Missouri and Roy Blunt, and for mid and northeast Missouri for Kenny Hulshoff. The other Representatives in St. Louis and Kansas City can also play helpful roles and we need their support as well.

Our priorities right now are:

1. to spread the good word about the proposal, and gain additional endorsements from friends and organizations;
2. to get out and visit as many of these wonderful areas as we can. The more we know about them the more we will love them, and also the more credibility we will have when questions are raised about boundaries and conditions; and
3. to prepare for a gathering sometime this summer where we can exchange information and plan strategy for our legislative push. Smaller gatherings in local and regional areas can be organized now to help prepare us for a statewide meeting.

We need not expect any of this to be very easy, or convenient, but it can be done, and it can also be great fun if we all work together.

Thanks for your support – we look forward to working with you on this important campaign.

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