



Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
EFFECTIVE CITIZEN ACTION SINCE 1969

**SPRING 2023**



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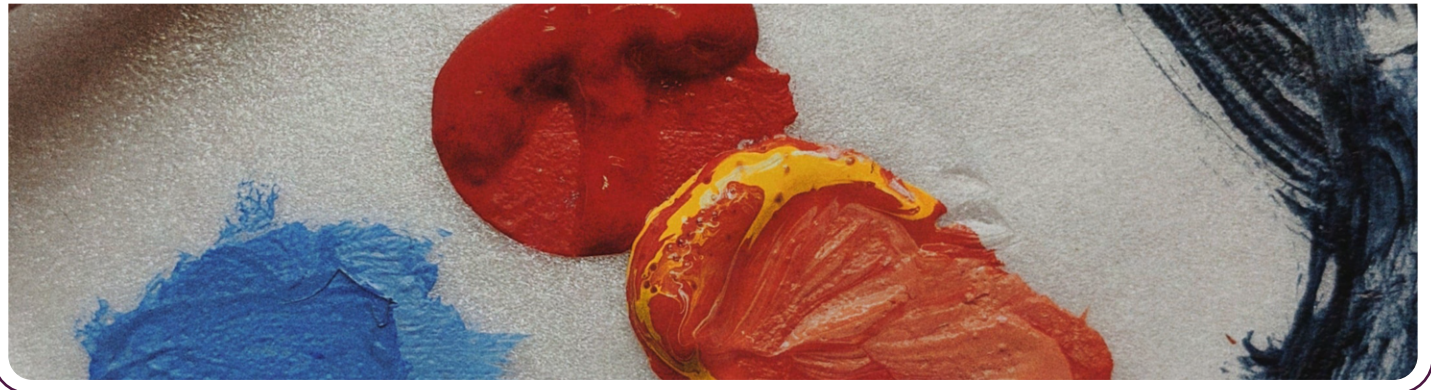
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# Art Exhibition 'Americans Who Tell The Truth' Coming to Missouri

By Dr. Bryan Meyers



In November 2021, an MCE board member Bryan Meyers was traveling in Maine on a family vacation when he noticed a pitch promoting an evening program at the local Stonington Opera House. The community venue was screening a documentary film, *Truth Tellers*, by director Richard Kane and the evening included a live interview with Kane and his film subject, Rob Shetterly. The film provided a very personal glimpse into the origin story of Shetterly's two decade project that has resulted in the creation of the organization: *Americans Who Tell the Truth*. For more than 20 years, the artist has

Meyers was moved by the documentary and the body of work it summarized. The evening in November 2021 led to hours of internet reading about *Americans Who Tell the Truth* and the remarkable paths traveled by Shetterly's portrait subjects. Months later, back in Saint Louis, the idea was pitched to the MCE to sponsor an exhibition and screening of the "Truth Tellers"

been painting portraits of exemplary citizens to draw attention to the work they have achieved and to inspire others to step up and take civic action. In each portrait that Shetterly has produced, there is a head shot of the subject that is interwoven with a quotation from the subject that helps summarize that person's philosophy or contribution. The portraits and quotes serve as a unique ways to highlight the work and words of more than 250 admirable citizens ranging from figures as recognizable as Martin Luther King or Ralph Nader to folks far less famous but certainly worth knowing.

film to a new Missouri audience who might be unaware of this useful work. The MCE leaders agreed, and the initial steps were taken to recommend exemplary citizens of Missouri as potential portrait subjects and to craft some live promotional events in our state to showcase the body of work and the broader accomplishments that it celebrates. The acts of citizenship that lead to inclusion in the *Americans Who Tell the Truth* gallery are broad, but include an impressive array of activism to support social and racial equity and environmental stewardship. The values represented by the portrait subjects resonate well with those embraced by MCE and this opportunity provides an engaging and novel way to reach additional Missourians and urge them to reach for a higher level of citizenship. The fact that this work ties together the arts, history, civics and environmental concerns means that there are hooks to draw in and engage nearly anyone with a healthy curiosity to learn.

# Expansion and Work to be Done

By Jared Opsal

We are excited to announce that the Missouri Foundation for Health has awarded us a new grant to expand our work promoting eco-friendly food and farms in the St. Louis region through our Known and Grown program. This grant will allow us to continue and expand our efforts to promote sustainable agriculture and local food systems, while also promoting environmental practices and improving health outcomes of St. Louis area communities.

As you may know, the Missouri Coalition for the Environment has been working for over 50 years to protect and restore the environment in Missouri. Our mission is to educate, organize, and advocate in defense of Missouri's people and their environment, and this grant will allow us to continue that mission in new and exciting ways.

Looking ahead, we will be working to find supporters to help us expand our policy work to include a wider focus on state-level environmental rules and regulations that are currently not receiving the attention they deserve. State regulators are routinely publishing new rules, regulations, and permits for public review and comment that could be improved to protect more people and their environment with focused attention and advocacy. With the help of our staff's expertise we can make a significant difference in this area.

In addition to this, we wish to begin engaging at the local level of government with counties and cities throughout Missouri to advocate for environmentally-minded ordinances and actions. We believe that local governments at the city and county level can play a critical role in addressing the climate crisis and ensuring that environmental justice is considered in their actions.

This work will involve a variety of strategies, including public awareness and education efforts, community organizing, and advocacy. We plan to work closely with local environmental groups, community organizations, and residents to identify areas where we can make the biggest impact. By working together, we can help create more environmentally-friendly communities and protect the health and well-being of all Missourians.

We believe that this work is more important than ever, given the urgent need to address the climate crisis and other environmental challenges facing our state and our planet. The effects of climate change are already being felt in Missouri, from more frequent and severe storms to longer and hotter summers. We must act now to reduce our carbon footprint and protect our environment for future generations.

Furthermore, we also believe that the need for environmental justice must be considered in all of our actions. The most vulnerable populations in our state are often the ones most impacted by environmental pollution and climate change. By prioritizing environmental justice in our work, we can help create a more equitable and sustainable future for all Missourians.

In conclusion, we are grateful for the support of the Missouri Foundation for Health, which will allow us to continue and expand our important work promoting eco-friendly food and farms in the St. Louis region. We also look forward to connecting with current and potential partners to expand our efforts with communities throughout Missouri to advocate for stronger environmental policies and more sustainable communities. Together, we can create a better future for all.



[jump to \(page 6\)](#)  
**Known & Grown Update**

The STL Toxic Waste Alliance recently rounded out our first year of work. As a reminder, the Alliance was created as a partnership between MCE and the grassroots community organization, Just Moms STL. Together, we believe it is every person's right to know the communities in which they live, work, worship, or play are safe and free from hazardous and radioactive wastes. The Alliance aims to inform residents about the contaminants in their neighborhood and ultimately empower citizens to advocate for cleanup and public health protections. We will also work to advance lifesaving policies that protect future generations from further harm. The Alliance's main area of focus this last year has been centered around St. Louis' widespread radioactive weapons waste contamination.

A brief history for those unfamiliar with St. Louis' radioactive legacy. Beginning in 1942, under the secret Manhattan Project, St. Louis-based Mallinckrodt Chemical Works was contracted by the US government to begin processing uranium for the world's first atomic weapon. Subsequently, these new bombs would be dropped on Japan to end World War II. The uranium processing created enough radioactive waste to fill Busch Stadium. From 1942 to 1946 the radioactive waste was stored at the downtown Mallinckrodt location. In 1946, the radioactive waste was moved to a patch of land bordering the northern portion of St. Louis Lambert Airport (SLAPS), where it was stored until 1967 when the federal government sold it to a private company for further processing. This company took up a location slightly north of SLAPS on Latty Avenue in Hazelwood. This site is known as the Hazelwood Interim Storage Site or HISS. In 1973, once the private company, Cotter Corporation, had taken what they could salvage, they illegally dumped the radioactive waste into the West Lake Landfill, which has been under threat by an underground fire in the adjacent section of the landfill since 2010. The fire is estimated to continue to burn or smolder for another decade or longer.

Please note the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is tasked with the cleanup of the downtown and north county (SLAPS, HISS, and Coldwater Creek) sites under the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP). Whereas the West Lake Landfill will be remediated under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs); the Department of Energy, Cotter Corporation, and Republic Services, the current landfill owner.

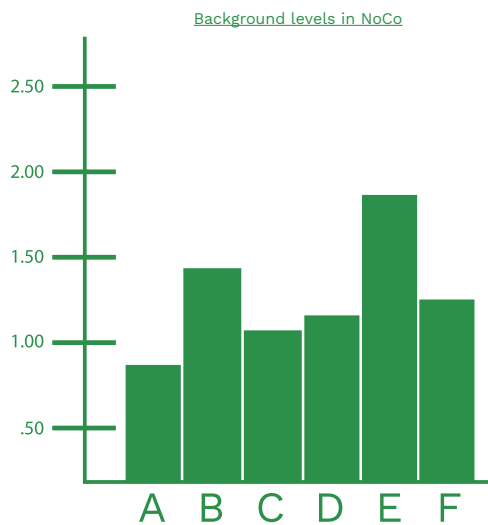
You may recall MCE first broke the news of radioactive weapons waste contamination at Jana Elementary School in Hazelwood, Missouri after submitting a Freedom of Information Act request. Since then, there have been conflicting reports about further contamination inside the school. This confusion, plus accounts of soil movement from Jana to Hazelwood Central High School's football field has led the district to request additional testing of all Hazelwood School District properties by the USACE. Congresswoman Cori Bush and Senator Josh Hawley wrote a joint letter supporting the district's request and urged more transparency from the USACE.

After a game of nuclear hot potato between the USACE and US Department of Energy (DOE) about which agency has the authority to test the other district locations, Senator Hawley introduced the Justice for Jana Elementary Act which would require the USACE to clean up Jana to background levels and test all Hazelwood School District schools for radioactive contaminants. It would also create a fund for schools impacted by Manhattan Project waste to provide financial assistance for testing or the construction of new facilities. Lastly, it would order DOE to review the conflicting test reports.

USACE continues to sample the Coldwater Creek corridor and plans to begin cleanup of Jana Elementary in May 2023.

Both Congresswoman Bush and Senator Hawley continue to support the school district and the community at large. The Alliance remains committed to working with both offices to secure an expeditious, comprehensive cleanup of the north county sites.

## NORTH COUNTY NATURALLY OCCURRING BACKGROUND RADIATION VS USACE NORTH COUNTY CLEANUP LEVELS

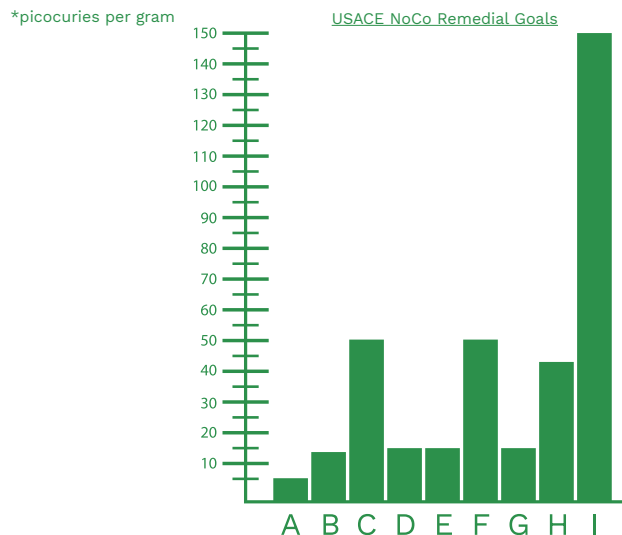


**Surface Soil (0-6 inches):**

- A. Radium-226: 0.95 pCi/g
- B. Thorium-230: 1.49 pCi/g
- C. Uranium-238: 1.08 pCi/g

**Subsurface Soil (below 6 inches):**

- D. Radium-226: 1.15 pCi/g
- E. Thorium-230: 1.83 pCi/g
- F. Uranium-238: 1.27 pCi/g



**Surface Soil:**

- A. Radium-226: 5 pCi/g
- B. Thorium-230: 14 pCi/g
- C. Uranium-238: 50 pCi/g

**Subsurface Soil:**

- D. Radium-226: 15 pCi/g
- E. Thorium-230: 15 pCi/g
- F. Uranium-238: 50 pCi/g

**Subsurface Soil:**

- G. Radium-226: 15 pCi/g
- H. Thorium-230: 15 pCi/g
- I. Uranium-238: 50 pCi/g

“USACE continues to sample the Coldwater Creek corridor and plans to begin cleanup of Jana Elementary in May 2023.



### NORTH COUNTY / JANA ELEMENTARY

The Alliance has discovered that the contamination levels that trigger a cleanup under the USACE North County Record of Decision (ROD) are sometimes far greater than what we would find to naturally occur in the environment, or what is called background radiation levels. Meaning, if the contamination doesn't meet their remedial goals, USACE can leave this contamination on a property even if it exists on the surface. We would like to see these levels lowered and have been in talks with our federally elected officials on what it takes to amend the ROD. We believe that no amount of radioactive weapons waste should be allowed to be left behind in our communities.

### MISSOURI HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 21 & 22

Missouri Representatives Tricia Byrnes and Richard West introduced HCR 21 & HCR 22 which “urges a joint investigation to determine any monetary compensation for contamination from radioactive waste and requests the Missouri Congressional delegation to expand the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act.” A hearing was held on March 7. MCE was fortunate to be able to provide bus transportation to Jefferson City for those that wanted to share their experience and personal testimony with the committee. By our count, over 50 people provided testimony in support of the resolutions. These resolutions brought groups together from across the region for the first time in history to rally around the need for medical monitoring and compensation for those that have been harmed by the radioactive weapons waste in our communities. It was a humbling and deeply moving experience that I will not soon forget. We are hopeful they will pass out of committee once legislators return from their spring break. Please stay tuned.

### WEST LAKE LANDFILL

The PRPs completed the Design Investigation or sampling on and around the landfill complex to characterize the extent of contamination. The results indicate the radioactive contamination has been discovered far beyond the originally known contaminated areas, including off-site in the ditches running along St. Charles Rock Road. The EPA is evaluating the Design Investigation Report and anticipates the cleanup will begin in March of 2024. We're glad to hear the PRPs have completed the Design Investigation and have a better understanding of where the radioactive waste is located in and around the landfill complex. Fully characterizing the site is something the community has been requesting for many years. Seeing a timeline emerge gives us hope that we are one step closer to finally getting a shovel in the ground. Having said that, however, it is quite disheartening, albeit not surprising, to learn about the off-site contamination. This further points to citizens being unwittingly exposed to this deadly waste for decades.

MCE has also rejoined the Community Advisory Group Technical Committee for the West Lake Landfill Superfund Site.

### CANVASSING

Last summer volunteers helped hand-deliver potentially lifesaving information to over 1044 homes along Coldwater Creek. We are incredibly grateful for all the volunteers that helped make this happen. We truly cannot do this important work without you. We plan to continue canvassing efforts as we enter into the warmer spring and summer months. Please be sure to sign up to volunteer on our website and stay tuned for calls to action on our STL Toxic Waste Alliance Facebook page.



By Nicki Morgan

Known & Grown STL is a program of MCE that works to build a resilient and equitable food system in the St Louis foodshed (150 miles radius around STL). The program currently works with almost 60 approved farmers. Our farmers are committed to protecting our environment, treating animals humanely, providing fresh, nutritious food to consumers, and building a more resilient food system for all of us. These farmers are audited by Farm Specialist, Chris Wimmer to ensure they meet the standards for our program: refraining from the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers; animal confinement; prophylactic use of antibiotics, as well as growth hormones; and measures to prevent drift on cropland and pastures.

Our work is multifaceted. We seek, vet, and promote local farmers who not only meet our minimum standards, but are committed to environmentally-conscious practices. We assist these farmers in adopting new conservation practices and improving current practices. We educate consumers on why it's important to know your farmers, where your food comes from, and how your food is grown. We assist our farmers in reaching new markets by connecting them to local farmers markets, grocers, and wholesalers. Our overarching goal is to assist our farmers in eliminating barriers to success whether that be economic or environmental in nature.

One of the biggest barriers our farmers currently face is lack of access to proper storage and transportation for their products. Thanks to a generous donation of \$xxx,000 from the Missouri Foundation for Health, we are able to expand our outreach and address these specific barriers. Resources from this grant will allow us to purchase a vehicle that will be used to assist our farmers in eliminating those barriers, gaining them access to new markets in the STL community, and supporting local businesses as they develop new relationships with small-scale farmers.

To facilitate this work, we are partnering with City Greens Market to host workshops for our farmers to address best practices for post-harvest handling of specialty crops and working with wholesale buyers. This training will better prepare our farmers for success in accessing new markets. To improve wholesale relationships, we are working with buyers in the STL community to create a standardized guide that will include basic information such as contact information, hours of business, receiving instructions, specialty item requests, packaging preferences, etc. This will cut down on unnecessary communications and allow farmers to find buyers that best fit their needs.

Our bulk ordering program is another way for us to support our farmers. By working as a community, our farmers can place a single order for items they would otherwise order individually or not be able to order at all. This often drives down the cost of specific items and dramatically reduces the cost of shipping. Most recently, # farmers participated in a bulk order of potatoes for spring planting. This saved the farmers an average of \$\$\$. An additional barrier we are working to address is the lack of organically grown grains for animal feed. Most organic feed is found in small quantities at unsustainable prices, if found at all. Farm Specialist Chris Wimmer is working to source organic feed in bulk to supply many of our farmers with a cost-effective product so that they no longer have to rely on conventionally-grown non-GMO grains. This would be a big win for our community.





## Remembering David Lobbig

On January 1, 2023, we lost our very dear friend and a longtime supporter, David Lobbig. He sat on the Board of Directors for MCE for over 20 years, as well as the Board Development, Policy, and Fundraising and Development Committees; and the Smart Growth Action Team. He served as Board President from 2010 to 2016, stepping down from the Board in June 2022.

As the Missouri History Museum's Curator of Environmental Life, David was able to combine his background and interest in both the art and the environment. He educated the general public on the significance of environmental factors in the history of the region through the exhibits he curated. Within his career, David was acquainted with academics, writers, artists, elected officials, and area residents—some of whom supported the work, special events, and projects of MCE.

In 2014, David gave a TedX presentation titled “Baby Teeth Stopped the Bomb: What will you do?” It was about a citizens' group's—the Greater St. Louis Citizen's Committee for Nuclear Information—efforts to collect and survey baby teeth, which led to the cessation of governments testing nuclear bombs. The baby teeth were analyzed for deposits of the radioactive substance, strontium 90, in the human body. To conclude the presentation, David provided a list of organizations in which to get involved, including MCE, as well as a list of other resources to stay abreast on the latest in environmental issues and information.

David always made time for people and conversation—both in person and via email. He was known for being patient, attentive, thoughtful, thorough, and an eloquent communicator. He used these skills with MCE to problem-solve, assist with the hiring of staff, inform the Board, and keep the Coalition moving forward. As the chair of the Policy Committee, David collected background information, invited local speakers or stakeholders, and directed discussions on environmental issues in depth so the Committee could make recommendations to the full board on whether to pursue litigation, support legislations, or take a position on specific issues.

*David's fellow board members created this poem in honor of his years with MCE when he stepped down as the Board President in 2016.*

*David was a  
Litter pickin'  
Trail hikin'  
Water protectin'  
Speech makin'  
Pumpkin carvin'  
Dog lovin'  
Tree plantin'  
Wood fire buildin'  
Artifact acquirin'  
Collection curatin'  
Archive contributin'  
Stream floatin'  
Committee chairin'  
Chili cookin'  
Award givin'  
Bunny huggin'  
Memo writin'  
President of the Board retirin' kind of guy*

The legacy of David lives on, and some of his colleagues and friends have shared kind words in tribute to him. MCE member and volunteer, Fran Vinnecombe, said “Aw crap!!! I know there was so much more he wanted to do!” upon learning of his passing. Jean Ponzi, MCE Member and Green Resources Manager for EarthWays Center, compiled several tributes and graciously shared them with MCE.

A celebration of life was held in honor of David on Sunday, April 2, 2023.

On Monday, April 17, 2023, the staff of the Missouri History Museum partnered with MCE for a day of service in David's Honor at Greenwood Cemetery. Over 60 of David's colleagues committed to this ongoing service project to restore one St. Louis's most historic cemeteries for African Americans. Notable burials include Harriet Robinson Scott—wife of Dred Scott and Freedom Suit Plaintiff; and Charleton Hunt Tandy—Civil Rights Advocate, attorney, and US Marshall.

David's absence is a great loss to his family, to all of us at MCE, and to the planet. He will be missed by many.

# MCE POLICY REPORT

By Melissa Vatterott

2023 is a big year for policy work. On the federal level, it is a Farm Bill year. This means we are working to pass a new Farm Bill by September 30th that better supports farmers of color and beginning farmers, incentivizes practices that reduce our impacts on climate change and build resilience on farms, and builds up local food systems so consumers can eat locally-grown, chemical free food like the food from Known and Grown farmers. On the state level, MCE has been busy during the Missouri Legislative session and will continue to be busy after session to work with legislators on a multitude of issues. These issues address protecting Missourians from the public health and environmental harms from hazardous waste, mining operations, and industrial agriculture waste. We are also busy trying to protect our initiative petition process - the process that created Missouri's renewable energy standard and can facilitate a multitude of good policies supported by the public majority. Lastly, we continue to advocate for innovative strategies to support small-scale fruit and vegetable farmers, especially in Missouri's communities with limited food access so that we can grow the next generation of farmers and healthy food for those in need.

We need you to join in these efforts. Your legislators are more likely to advance policies on behalf of Missouri's people and their environment if they hear how these ideas impact you and are important to you. Below is a deeper dive into MCE's policy priorities.

## **The 2023 Farm Bill**

The Farm Bill is not created according to the famous "Schoolhouse Rock" cartoon many of us know and love. It is created by the House and Senate Agriculture Committees after reviewing several bills introduced for consideration to be included in the often 400+ page final farm bill package. These bills are called "marker bills," which are like draft pages of a book called the Farm Bill. MCE is advocating for several marker bills right now to make it into the final Farm Bill and they are outlined below:

### **Agriculture Resilience Act**

Increased frequency of extreme weather events are creating additional challenges for farmers to thrive and for consistent production of food. The ARA is a farmer-driven, science-based roadmap for reaching net-zero emissions from our nation's agriculture industry and for supporting farmers in adapting to the impacts of climate change like flooding and drought.

### **Crop Insurance Reform**

We are working to improve crop insurance so that it serves the diversity of American agriculture - farmers of color, fruit and vegetable farmers, organic farmers, and others. We also are advocating to ensure crop insurance promotes natural resource stewardship, so that the land is more resilient in the face of extreme weather events.. Lastly, we hope the Farm Bill will level the playing field for family farmers through efficient use of taxpayer dollars in the crop insurance program. Information about official marker bills on crop insurance will be on our website once they are filed.

### **Credit Reform**

As stated above, farming is hard with the unpredictability of weather impacting planting and harvesting as well as the total volume of crops that survives through the growing season. Small and mid-sized farmers, beginning farmers, and farmers of color face additional challenges, particularly accessing credit to start their farms, expand, and thrive. We are advocating for the 2023 Farm Bill to alleviate these challenges by improving government accountability to borrowers and creating new programs to increase access to financing for these farmers. Information about official marker bills on credit will be on our website once they are filed.

### **Local Foods**

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the fragility of our national food system while showing the rewards from the 2018 Farm Bill's investments in local and regional food systems and supply chains. Projects funded through the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) helped ensure the necessary relationships between farmers and buyers and the infrastructure to process and transport local products were in place to fill critical supply chain gaps. The additional federal pandemic recovery and response initiatives also supported small and mid-sized farms in feeding those who needed it most at a time when grocery shelves were not always stocked. Through the pandemic, we have still seen that many producers lack access to these opportunities because of insufficient infrastructure for processing, aggregation, and distribution. As such, we are advocating for Congress to leverage the 2023 Farm Bill to apply what we've learned from the pandemic and create long lasting investments for our communities and our local food producers. Official marker bills supporting local food markets and local food infrastructure will be on our website as they are officially filed.

### **Strengthening Local Processing Act**

The Strengthening Local Processing Act creates a national roadmap for sustained investment in small and very small meat processing plants, as most of our nation's processing facilities are not set up to meet the needs of small-scale, pasture-raised livestock producers whose customers expect to purchase meat from the actual animals these producers raised. SLPA will ensure the 2023 Farm Bill continues the historic pandemic-response investment in small meat processing plants that is creating a more resilient and diversified food processing system and reducing logistical complexity for farmers.



## **Federal Action for Radioactive Waste Cleanup in North St. Louis County**

Senator Hawley introduced the Justice for Jana Elementary Act in February, requiring the clean up of Jana Elementary School which was found to have radioactive contamination in the fall of 2022. Jana Elementary is positioned next to Coldwater Creek, known to have radioactive contamination. The bill also orders the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to test all other Hazelwood School District properties for contamination. You can learn more about the contamination found at Jana Elementary on our website.

## **Priorities for the Missouri Legislature: 2023 and Onward**

MCE recognizes that whatever activities we do on the land - building homes, extracting minerals, applying fertilizer - has an impact on Missouri's people and the safety of air, water, and soil in our state. As such, we have been focused on supporting small-scale farmers who are growing nutritious food for their communities as well as advocating for better protections from the harms posed by various industry activities. An outline of our priorities are below.

### **Hazardous Waste**

We are approaching 80 years since the nuclear bomb waste from the Manhattan Project has been allowed to plague the neighborhoods of North St. Louis County. We cannot continue to allow our children to be collateral damage of World War II. We must band together to demand a safe, healthy environment to live, work, and play in. MCE is working with legislators to create policies that ensure more notice to residents of their risk of exposure to radioactive materials and to ensure the Department of Natural Resources is notified when projects in this area may disturb soil and water, risking movement of radioactive materials.

### **Mining**

MCE believes Missouri must embrace effective safe mining practices for the health and safety of mining workers, the surrounding communities, and future generations. Visit our website to read MCE's Mining Policy Position and fact sheets on the harms of mining cobalt, Rare Earth Elements (REEs), and silica sand. If Missouri wants to leverage the mineral reserves in our state, we must do so in a manner that acknowledges risks and minimizes impacts on our social, economic, and environmental well-being through safe and responsible mining practices.

### **Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations**

CAFO waste is a danger to our public and environmental health, whether the waste from CAFOs is handled on-site or taken by a third party. There is insufficient regulation in Missouri on third-party recipients of CAFO waste. Because of the health risks associated with the waste from CAFOs, it is critical that we close these loopholes. Such gaps in the law put our communities and our natural environment at risk. Therefore, we need to understand who is handling CAFO waste and how they handle it. You can learn all about the harms from CAFOs on our website, which includes fact sheets, a map of CAFOs in Missouri, and a CAFO Action Toolkit.

### **Specialty Crop Production and Healthy Soils**

How and where our food is grown has an impact on our health and the environment. Small-scale agriculture production can be more intentional about those impacts and often work to improve soil health and long term productivity of the land without the use of chemicals. MCE recognizes the importance of supporting small-scale fruit and vegetable farmers in Missouri - for their contributions to building soil health and resilience in the face of climate change as well as for their contributions to feeding fellow Missourians. As such, we have been advocating for a tax incentive for small-scale specialty crop farmers - those who grow fruits and vegetables - that grow in low income communities with limited healthy food access or "food deserts." We are also advocating for more support for farmers to improve water quality and soil health, not just protect it from further degradation.



# SUSTAINABLE FASHION

By Audrey Friesen

Choosing sustainable fashion over fast fashion is a small but meaningful contribution toward the fight for climate security. Sustainable fashion aims to achieve a carbon-neutral fashion industry built on ecological integrity and equality. Slow fashion – made-to-order clothing – reduces waste and overproduction.



Fast Fashion – coined in the 1990s – explodes consumerism by overproducing cheap clothing. Using poorly-made garments allows retailers to perpetuate a cycle of waste. The EPA reports that Americans generate more than 16 million tons of textile waste per year. Roughly 700,000 tons are sent overseas, and 2.5 million are recycled. Three million tons are incinerated releasing air pollutants like carbon dioxide. That leaves 10 million tons sent to landfills per year.

A large amount of this clothing waste ends up in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch covers an estimated surface area of 1.6 million square kilometers, an area twice the size of Texas or three times the size of France.

Fast Fashion uses synthetic materials like polyester and nylon which are sourced from petroleum – a fossil fuel. Synthetic materials use an estimated 342 million barrels of oil per year. Extracting petroleum is detrimental to the environment and continues to damage our ecosystem. Over time, plastic products shed smaller particles through natural weathering, creating microplastics, defined as five millimeters in size or smaller. Around 35 percent of microplastics in the oceans are believed to originate from the washing of synthetic textiles,” says Javier Mateo-Sagasta, the water quality coordinator with the International Water Management Institute. There is no existing technology that can remove these microplastics from the ecosystem.

Toxic contaminants accumulate on the surface of plastic materials as a result of prolonged exposure to seawater. When marine organisms ingest plastic debris, these contaminants enter their digestive systems, and over time accumulate in the food web.

Sustainable clothing starts at the source and continues through to the end of use. While many textiles used in fast fashion are sourced from fossil fuels, sustainable fashion uses eco-friendly materials. Popular materials include organic cotton, bamboo, hemp, wool, and even recycled polyester.

Unlike petroleum-based materials, eco-friendly materials decompose naturally. Shopping sustainably will benefit not only the environment but can also be an affordable alternative. Mass-produced cheap clothing will fall apart after one season of use; whereas, sustainable clothing is meant to last. The initial purchase of fast fashion is cheaper but compounds to much more than a high-quality sustainable alternative.

Roughly 15% of used clothing in the United States gets reused or recycled. The other 85% is either incinerated or sent to landfills. Consider buying items second-hand. Retailers like Goodwill, Savers, and Salvation Army are all affordable alternatives to buying new. Antique stores and vintage resellers curate their collections. Providing unique pre-loved items for the consumer.



# NOW OPEN

Missouri Coalition for the Environment's new online retail store supports sustainable fashion. In collaboration with Spring (formerly Teespring), MCE launched items within the Conscious Collection. These items include organic cotton and recycled materials.

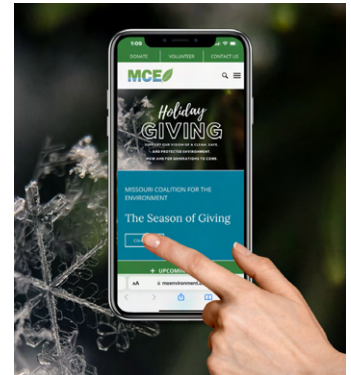
All profits go towards our environmental justice and climate crisis work.

Visit [moenvironment.org](http://moenvironment.org) to purchase



## WINTER APPEAL RESULTS

Thank you for your generous support this holiday season. We raised \$41,048.53 in support of our mission to educate, organize, and advocate in defense of Missouri's people and their environment. That's a 60% increase over 2021's year-end appeal.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 22** — Earth Day at Forest Park

**May 24** — Chats for Change: Kansas City

**July** — Annual Members Meeting

**August** — Americans Who Tell The Truth

For more information, visit [www.moenvironment.org](http://www.moenvironment.org)

## OUR MISSION

To educate, organize, and advocate in defense of Missouri's people and their environment.

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## OUR VISION

The people of Missouri, regardless of race, income, or geography, live in and demand a clean, safe, and protected environment, now and for generations to come.

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Carmen Harris, Membership and Volunteer Manager  
Jim Karpowicz, Community Outreach Specialist  
Rae Miller, Known & Grown Manager  
Makenna Nickens, Community Outreach Specialist  
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Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
725 Kingsland Ave. Suite 100  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
(314) 727-0600  
[moenviron@moenvironment.org](mailto:moenviron@moenvironment.org)

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