

The Protection of the Columbia Bottom Conservation Area

1 WHEREAS Columbia Bottom Conservation Area (CBCA), located on the south shore of the Missouri
2 River at its confluence with the Mississippi River, covers 4,318 acres with 6.5 miles of river frontage, a
3 110 acre island, and at least 900 acres of wetland and 1,000 acres of bottomland forest;
4 AND WHEREAS the CBCA is within the Missouri/Mississippi River Confluence Conservation
5 Opportunity Area as designated by the Missouri Department of Conservation;
6 AND WHEREAS the CBCA is included in the Great Rivers Confluence Important Bird Area, as
7 designated through Audubon Missouri under an international bird conservation program designed to
8 identify, monitor, and conserve areas that are the most important to migrating and breeding birds;
9 AND WHEREAS at least 240 bird species have been observed at the CBCA, with 12 of those species
10 listed in the Missouri Department of Conservation Species & Communities of Conservation Concern
11 Checklist for 2009 (which includes five State Endangered species), an additional five species are listed
12 Yellow on the 2007 Audubon Watchlist, and eight more species are included in the National Audubon
13 Common Birds in Decline Report from 2007;
14 AND WHEREAS the Missouri/Mississippi River Confluence is a key point in the Mississippi River
15 Flyway, one of four migratory bird Flyways in this hemisphere, and it is used by nearly 330 bird species
16 (one-third of all species in North America), including 40% of the Continent's ducks, geese, swan and
17 wading bird species;
18 AND WHEREAS over \$25 million has been invested in the habitat restoration of the CBCA, including
19 support from many area corporations, foundations and individuals, including Commerce Bank, the
20 Enterprise Holdings Foundation, Great Rivers Greenway, the Monsanto Fund, and Southwest Bank;
21 AND WHEREAS a 375 acre casino, convention center, and golf course complex, including 4,000

22 surface level parking spaces and a 4,000 space parking garage, has been proposed for construction on
23 the Mississippi River, nearly adjacent to and immediately south of the CBCA, and the St. Louis County
24 Council approved a rezoning request on November 2, 2009 for this proposal, without a public vote;
25 AND WHEREAS intensive commercial or industrial activity that generates noise and light pollution has
26 been shown to impact breeding activity of birds and reduce bird diversity at nearby sites by 15% to 30%;
27 AND WHEREAS an estimated 70 million birds are poisoned each year from pesticides in the United
28 States, and the expected large increase in herbicide and pesticide use, especially with regard to the
29 proposed golf course, in close proximity to the CBCA will lead to the death of many birds and other
30 wildlife through direct ingestion or consumption of contaminated prey;
31 AND WHEREAS an estimated 1 billion birds die each year in North American due to collision with
32 glass windows and panels, and the expected placement of many thousands of reflective or transparent
33 windows and glass panels within the Mississippi River Flyway and nearly adjacent to the CBCA will
34 result in the injury or death of large numbers of migrating birds;
35 AND WHEREAS the construction of a 30 foot high infill platform in the floodway for the proposed
36 casino and entertainment complex in the Mississippi River floodplain raises many questions concerning
37 the hydrological dynamics of the river at flood stage, such as pushing excess water into downstream
38 communities including the St. Louis Riverfront;
39 AND WHEREAS large-scale impervious development will create the potential for significant releases
40 of contaminated water runoff into the Mississippi River, affecting its fish, wildlife, and thousands of St.
41 Louis residents whose drinking water comes through an intake directly downstream of the casino site;
42 AND WHEREAS the availability of parks, green space, and recreational opportunities in a community
43 are critical to attracting a highly qualified, professional workforce, and communities which eliminate
44 green space have to struggle with ‘disamenity compensation’—premium pay to draw excellent
45 workers—putting our entire community at an economic and competitive disadvantage as compared to
46 other urban communities with extensive green space and wildlife watching opportunities;
47 AND WHEREAS tourism is the highest grossing economic activity in the United States, and nature

48 tourism is a significant and growing interest of both international and national travelers, with more than
49 \$122 billion spent on wildlife recreation in 2006 alone, contributing to millions of jobs in industry and
50 business and millions of dollars to local, state, and federal tax revenues, and this proposed development
51 could have a devastating effect on economic development associated with nature tourism in the region;
52 AND WHEREAS any large commercial development project in the area is in conflict with the *Spanish*
53 *Lake Community Area Study*, incorporated into the St. Louis County General Plan by the St. Louis
54 County Council in April 1999 and that specifically states the, “The St. Louis County Planning
55 Commission is hereby directed to avoid higher density rezoning in those portions of Spanish Lake which
56 currently are low density or adjacent to agricultural or park lands (north and east);”
57 AND WHEREAS a diverse coalition of organizations and individuals have repeatedly voiced their
58 opposition to the casino proposal and the rezoning decision, including the Confluence Partnership,
59 Mississippi Valley Duck Hunters Association, Audubon Missouri, the Missouri Coalition
60 for the Environment, St. Louis Audubon Society, Sierra Club-Eastern Missouri Group;
61 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conservation Federation of Missouri assembled at
62 the Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark, MO, this 28th day of February, 2010 expresses its support to
63 protect the Columbia Bottom Conservation Area.