

SOIL AND WATER *Resources*

June 2016

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This publication is produced by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Soil and Water Conservation Program. Funds for this publication are provided by Missouri's Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.

Soil and Water Districts Commission Holds June Meeting in Columbia

The Missouri Soil and Water Districts Commission held its June 8 meeting at the Missouri Department of Conservation Regional Office at 3500 E. Gans Road in Columbia. This was the first meeting for newly appointed commissioners Tim Martin and Glen Cope.

The commission voted on requests from soil and water conservation districts and heard updates about the state fiscal year 2016 cost-share to landowners, the budget for fiscal year 2017, the results of the Envirothon held at Lincoln University's Carver Farm in Jefferson City, an update about the University of Missouri's Soil Health Assessment Center, and more information about requests for State Water Plan research funding and a water quality monitoring study from the U.S. Geological Survey.

The state water plan is to be developed and maintained on a periodic cycle; it is a long-range, comprehensive statewide plan for the use of surface water and groundwater resources of the state. The requested funding would determine agriculture water demands such as irrigation, livestock, normal vs. drought conditions, and model water usage through 2060.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has maintained a statewide monitoring ambient water quality monitoring network since 1969. The current network includes 71 stream water quality monitoring stations throughout the state. In 2008, USGS proposed a two-phase project to analyze network data. Phase 1 was completed in 2010, which described water quality and long-term trends for select parameters at six of the 71 water quality monitoring stations. The Phase 2 part of the proposed project will comprehensively analyze water quality data from all the different network stations that have sufficient data, which is 10 years or more of data.



The Soil and Water Districts Commission met June 8 at the Missouri Department of Conservation Regional Office in Columbia. Pictured are commissioners Glen Cope, H. Ralph Gaw (vice-chair), Gary Vandiver (chair), Tim Martin and Jeff Lance.

This information would help the Soil and Water Conservation Program with evaluating how successful the conservation practices are in reducing soil erosion and protecting and improving the state's water resources. The commissioners also heard reports from Ex-officio members and partners attending from the Missouri Departments of Natural Resources, Conservation, and Agriculture, University of Missouri Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

The next Soil and Water Districts Commission meeting is scheduled on Aug. 17 at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia.

Benefits of the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax

What do Missouri farmers, state park visitors, outdoor enthusiasts have in common with all Missouri citizens? They all benefit from the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.

This one-tenth-of-one-percent sales tax supports state parks and soil and water conservation efforts. Consistent funding from the tax has allowed the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to maintain and upgrade Missouri's state parks, to serve the needs of visitors and protect resources.

The soil and water side of the tax promotes farming practices that help keep soil on the fields, conserving the productivity of working lands and preventing soil and other substances from running off fields and potentially polluting Missouri's waterways.

"All life depends on healthy, productive soil and clean, abundant water," said Sara Parker Pauley, director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. "We depend on high quality water for drinking and healthy land for agriculture and industrial purposes that drive our state's economy while putting food on the table for our families."

In 1984, Missouri became the first state in the nation to pass a Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax, and since then, this initiative has been renewed overwhelmingly three times, Missourians deeply value the outdoors and our natural resources, and their continued commitment to this effort has made our state a national leader in soil conservation.

By partnering with local communities and landowners, Missouri has gone from being the second highest soil eroding state to being among the best states in the nation for reducing erosion. To date, more than 177 million tons of soil have been prevented from eroding into our streams, rivers and lakes.

Additionally, the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax continues to be a vital funding source for our nationally recognized system of 88 state parks and historic sites. Over the years, while other states have closed parks and charged entrance fees, Missouri State Parks continue to be open and free to all, reaching record attendance in 2015 with 19.2 million visitors.

The accomplishments made possible through the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax - reduced erosion, provided cleaner water and state parks that are among the best in the nation - have been a remarkable success story for Missouri.

So who benefits? Anyone who visits Missouri's state parks and historic sites, makes a living from Missouri's land, drinks water or consumes Missouri-grown products. In short, every Missourian enjoys the benefits of the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.

Constitutional Amendment 1 Ballot Language

The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax comes up for a vote on the Nov. 8 general election, according to the Missouri Secretary of State. The official ballot title is Constitutional Amendment 1.

[Proposed by Article IV, Section 47(c), Missouri Constitution (SJR 1, 2005)]

Official Ballot Title:

Shall Missouri continue for 10 years the one-tenth of one percent sales/use tax that is used for soil and water conservation and for state parks and historic sites, and resubmit this tax to the voters for approval in 10 years?

The measure continues and does not increase the existing sales and use tax of one-tenth of one percent for 10 years. The measure would continue to generate approximately \$90 million annually for soil and water conservation and operation of the state park system.

Fair Ballot Language:

A "yes" vote will continue for 10 years the one-tenth of one percent sales/use tax that is used for soil and water conservation and for state parks and historic sites. This will be resubmitted to the voters for approval in 10 years. A "no" vote will not continue this sales/use tax.

If passed, this measure will not increase or decrease taxes.

Missouri Resources Magazine Features Soil and Water Articles

Missouri Resources magazine is published quarterly by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to inform readers about important natural resource issues and how they are being addressed.

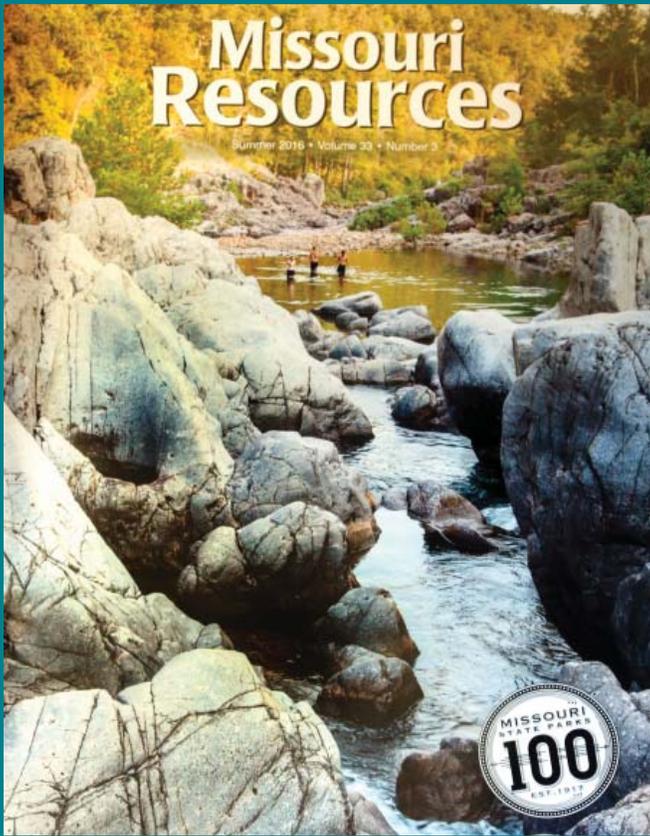
Missouri Resources is free to Missouri residents by subscribing online at dnr.mo.gov/magazine/subscription.htm. Out-of-state subscriptions cost \$4.50 per year or \$8 for two years.

Back issues related to soil and water conservation include:

There's No Place Like Home - Winter 2016

An article about Pembroke Hill High School winning the 2015 NCF-Envirothon is featured in the Winter 2016 issue of *Missouri Resources* magazine available online at dnr.mo.gov/magazine/docs/mr-winter-2016.pdf

There's No Place Like Home is a four-page article chronicling the events that took place as Missouri hosted the week-long national Envirothon competition. Missouri Envirothon co-chair Judy Stinson wrote the article. dnr.mo.gov/magazine/docs/mr-winter-2016.pdf



On page 6 of the Summer 2016 *Missouri Resources* is the article *Support for Success: Missouri's Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax*, about how Missourians have supported Missouri state parks, improved water quality and reduced soil erosion. Read the entire article online at on.mo.gov/28KG65c.

Back issues of *Missouri Resources* magazine are available online at on.mo.gov/1TuZr9T.

Soil and Water Quality - Summer 2014

dnr.mo.gov/magazine/docs/mr-winter-2016.pdf

A Plan for the Future - Summer 2014

dnr.mo.gov/magazine/docs/mr-summer-14.pdf

Perennial Winner Takes Missouri Envirothon - Summer 2014

dnr.mo.gov/magazine/docs/mr-summer-14.pdf

Career Connection: Allan Clarke: On the Front Lines of Soil Conservation - Spring/Summer 2011

dnr.mo.gov/magazine/2011-summer.pdf

Helping Farmers Conserve Soil and Water - Summer 2009

dnr.mo.gov/magazine/2009-summer.pdf

Teachers Notebook - Soil Sense - Winter 2002-2003

dnr.mo.gov/magazine/2002-03-winter.pdf

Dawn of the Envirothon - Winter 1998-1999

dnr.mo.gov/magazine/1998-99-winter.pdf

NRCS Funding Available for Water-Quality Stations that Measure Effectiveness of Conservation Systems on Farms

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is making \$2 million available to interested farmers to help install voluntary edge-of-field monitoring stations on agricultural land in eight states, including Missouri.

"Edge-of-field water quality monitoring provides quantifiable data that supports voluntary-based conservation efforts aimed at reducing the movement of sediment and nutrients off Missouri farms," State Conservationist J.R. Flores said.

Through edge-of-field monitoring, NRCS works with farmers and conservation partners, such as universities and non-governmental organizations, to monitor the amount of nutrients and sediment in water runoff from a field.

The data from different conservation systems, and from fields with no conservation systems in place, are evaluated to judge effectiveness of the systems. Conservation practices typically evaluated include cover crops, no till, irrigation water management, and practices to reduce and trap nutrients and sediment.

Monitoring stations enable NRCS to measure at the edge of farm fields rather than try to estimate conservation effects from in-stream measurements that are subject to influences outside of the farmer's control. Edge-of-field monitoring, combined with instream monitoring, can provide a more thorough picture of improvements within a watershed.

NRCS first introduced edge-of-field monitoring in 2011. Since then 14 stations have been in operation in Missouri. Generally, they have shown that conservation practices work best when they are part of an overall system.

They also show the importance of having live plants growing during the winter. Flores said the stations have been showing that winter cash crops or cover crops reduce runoff by an average of 30 percent

Funding is available on a voluntary basis to farmers in 103 Missouri watersheds, which pays for the costs of installing, maintaining and monitoring the stations for up to nine years. Farmers can check with the NRCS office in their county to see if they are eligible. The results of data collected will be for farmers' use and for use by the conservation partners responsible for monitoring.

Farmers interested in applying for financial assistance should submit applications by July 8 to their local NRCS office.

To locate an NRCS service center near you, visit the "contact us" section of the website at 1.usa.gov/28Nr3MW, or look in the telephone directory under, "U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture."



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This publication is produced by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Soil and Water Conservation Program. Funds for this publication are provided by Missouri's Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.

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