

# director's comment

Picture a clear winter's day with not a cloud in sight – it must mean we are breathing clean, healthy air. How about a crystal clear Ozark stream of sparkling water – it must mean it is clean enough to *drink*. Sounds picture perfect – right? Well, not necessarily. Decades ago, we could see the visual impacts of pollution to our air, land and water quality. Our air quality was so contaminated metropolitan areas once urged people to stay home because the air was unsafe to breathe. The water in our lakes and rivers was littered with trash and pollutants, looking more like murky mug shots than picturesque portraits.



This southwest Missouri stream is impaired by bacteria, ammonia and dissolved oxygen.

It was time to improve our nation's natural resources. In 1970, the national Environmental Protection and Clean Air acts and later the Clean Water Act in 1972 were among the first environmental laws created that built the legal foundation for a healthier America. In 1974, the people in our great state recognized the need to protect and preserve their resources and created the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

During the last 40 years, we have made significant improvements to our state's air, land and water quality. We've properly disposed of nearly 17 million scrap tires in Missouri. With your help, the department has enacted state plans to address poor air quality and reduce emissions from permitted facilities. We've improved water quality by issuing permits to point sources to control the quality and amount of pollutants that enter our waters. Let's not forget how science and technology have developed and improved over time, and have allowed fair and enforceable federal standards to be strengthened. Lab equipment once measured sample constituents in parts per thousand; now we measure parts per billion.

You have joined with us to improve Missouri's natural resources and public health, giving us all great reason to pause and celebrate a successful 40th



anniversary. While we no longer see the dark, polluted skies or the streams lined with waste – we now know that looks can often be deceiving. The department's increased data and monitoring document this fact. Our next set of environmental challenges will include some obstacles we will have to identify, through due diligence, and fix, with sound science. With your help, we will continue to work together to provide all Missourians a healthy environment in which to live, work and recreate.

Sara Parker Pauley  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources

## Missouri Resources

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**Mission Statement**  
The mission of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources is to protect, preserve and enhance Missouri's natural, cultural and energy resources.