



# CONSERVING SOIL AND WATER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

## The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax

The Soil and Water Conservation Program works to conserve Missouri's soil and water for future generations. The program includes several voluntary programs that provide agricultural landowners with incentives for using soil and water conservation practices.

### About the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax

• The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is a statewide one-tenth-of-one percent sales tax that provides funding for Missouri state parks and historic sites and soil and water conservation efforts. The tax is divided equally between the two efforts.



• The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax was first approved by voters in 1984, and has since been reapproved by voters three times. In 1988, 1996 and 2006, the tax was renewed by more than two-thirds majority of Missouri voters.

- The Soil and Water Conservation Program is funded by the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.
- The portion of the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax that supports soil and water conservation averages about \$7 a year per Missourian.
- The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is placed on the ballot every 10 years to reaffirm the voter's support of the park system and soil and water conservation efforts. The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is set to expire if not renewed by voters in 2016.



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## BEFORE THE PARKS, SOILS AND WATER SALES TAX



• In the 1930s, Americans realized how devastating soil erosion could be as the Dust Bowl swept across the nation, relocating an estimated 300 million

tons of soil. Missouri had the highest rate of erosion in the nation, which led to the creation of the Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Districts in 1943.

• In 1982, Missouri was losing soil at a rate of 10.8 tons per acre each year on cultivated cropland.

## SOIL EROSION IN MISSOURI

• Due to the efforts of the Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Program, Missouri has saved more than 177 million tons of soil over the past 30 years.

• Of Missouri's 44.6 million acres of land, 14.8 million are considered cropland. With almost half of Missouri's cropland soil classified as highly erodible, controlling and minimizing erosion is a significant challenge for Missouri's farmers.

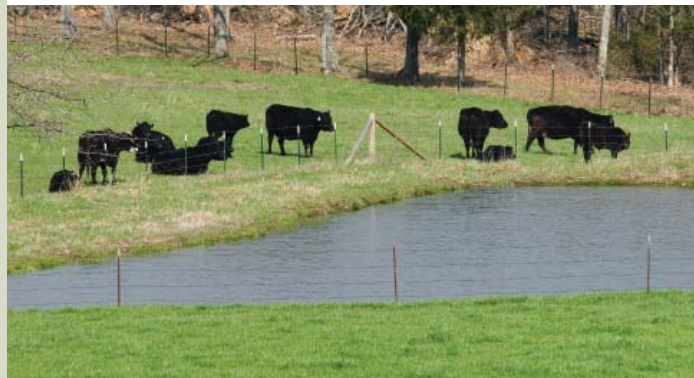
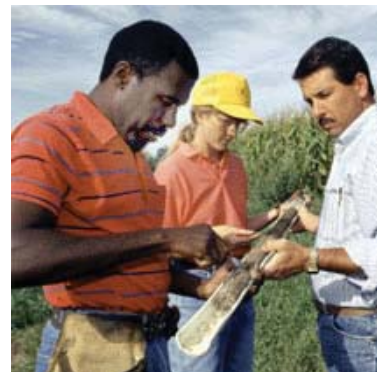
• Erosion can cause problems by washing away the productive topsoil, which adversely affects local and national food supplies and economies.

• Soil erosion caused by stormwater runoff carries fertilizers away from the fields and into the waterways. The soil entering the waterway can cause water quality problems that continue far downstream.

• Eroded soil settling along the shores and beds of streams, lakes and rivers can lead to the destruction of valuable aquatic habitat such as fish spawning areas.

• Soil and contaminated water entering drinking water supply systems each year can increase water treatment costs, which raises utility bills for Missouri households.

• Revenues from the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax have resulted in Missouri having the greatest soil erosion reduction rate of any other state with more than 10 million acres of cultivated cropland.



## HOW WE HELP

• The Department of Natural Resources has provided over \$660 million to Missouri agricultural landowners to implement more than 220,000 conservation practices using revenues from the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.

• **Grants to Districts:** Each of the 114 soil and water conservation districts in Missouri receive district grants. These grants are used by local district boards to fund technical assistance for landowners and provide information and educational programs.

• **Cost-Share Program:** This program shares the cost of implementing conservation practices between the state and landowners. It provides partial reimbursement of the cost for the installation of soil and water conservation practices that prevent or control excessive erosion and improve water quality. These practices include buffers, grazing systems, cover crops and sediment basins.

• **Research and Monitoring:** The program provides funding for research and water quality monitoring. These efforts identify new methods for soil and water conservation practices that produce the best results for preventing erosion and protecting water quality.

## PUBLIC INPUT



• The Soil and Water Districts Commission holds meetings, usually six times a year, that are open to the public. The commission develops statewide policies in accordance with their Soil and Water District's

input and helps local landowners with their soil and water conservation efforts.

• County Soil and Water District Boards usually hold monthly meetings that are open to the public.