

# GOVERNOR'S 100 MISSOURI MILES CHALLENGE

by Tom Uhlenbrock

**H**iking the Whispering Pines Trail in Hawn State Park or floating the Akers-to-Pulltite section of the Current River are always rewarding experiences.

But now the two outings offer a bonus. Together, they total 20 miles in the outdoors and would represent a fifth of the goal in the Governor's 100 Missouri Miles Challenge.

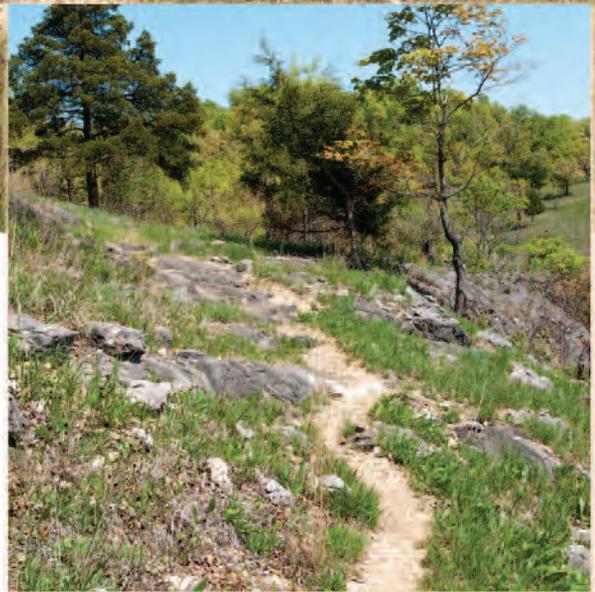
Gov. Jay Nixon and First Lady Georganne Nixon have posted the challenge for all Missourians to follow them and complete 100 miles of physical activity by the end of the year. You can hike, run, paddle, pedal or roll on any of Missouri's trails, parkways or streams.

The Nixons are avid promoters of the beauty found in the diverse landscapes of Missouri. The governor visited all 87 state parks and historic sites, and says touring the parks, prairies, rivers and trails is an enjoyable way to combat two growing epidemics – obesity and what sociologists call “nature deficit disorder.”

“In the digital age, these outdoor traditions are more important than ever – for the sake of our heritage, and our health,” Nixon said in remarks kicking off the challenge. “Think about it: You can spend hundreds of dollars on the latest Xbox, iPad or flat-screen television, or you can turn off the gadgets, get off the couch, walk out the door and have fun in the real world, for free.”

“Outdoor activities aren't just fun, they're good for you. Even a small amount of physical activity on a regular basis can have a big impact on your overall health and well-being.”

Nixon pointed out that Missouri recently was named the “Best Trails State” by American Trails, a national, nonprofit organization work-



DNR photos by Scott Myers

**(Above) Missouri State Parks has more than 230 trails in 58 parks and historic sites totaling nearly 1,000 miles.**

**(Inset) Visitors to Missouri State Parks have a variety of trail options for all ages and activity levels to enjoy.**



DNR photo by Scott Myers



DNR photo by Tom Uhlenbrock

ing on behalf of the nation’s hiking, biking and riding trails. The award is presented every two years to the state that has made tremendous contributions to promote and improve its trail system.

The state park system has more than 230 trails in 58 parks and historic sites. A guide to all of them, Trails of Missouri State Parks, is available at [mostateparks.com](http://mostateparks.com) and helps visitors choose a hiking trail based on their needs and skill levels.

“Missouri has an outstanding system of trails that can accommodate a wide variety of activities ranging from a short walk to a hike through the wilderness,” the governor said. “I encourage all Missouri families to get out there and take advantage of this incredible resource found right here in the Show-Me State.”

**T**o join the Nixons in recording 100 Missouri Miles, participants can register for the challenge at [100missourimiles.com](http://100missourimiles.com). After signing up, you can log on to record your own miles with each individual outing. Up-to-date totals for the Nixons are listed on the site.

Missourians also can connect with the challenge through Facebook at [facebook.com/100MoMiles](http://facebook.com/100MoMiles), and through Twitter at [twitter.com/100MoMiles](http://twitter.com/100MoMiles).

The governor noted that trails not only are free, fun and good for you, they also add to the state economy. A recent study showed that the Katy Trail alone generates nearly \$18.5 million a year in economic impact

for the state and supports hundreds of jobs. The Governor’s 100 Missouri Miles Challenge is a partnership with Missouri State Parks, a division of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources; the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services; and the Missouri Division of Tourism.

“Over the coming weeks and months, we will travel 100 Missouri Miles, on back-country hiking trails and bike paths, on suburban greenways and city parks, through dense wilderness and tall prairie grass,” Nixon said.

“Whether you’re up for hiking across the state on the Katy Trail, or walking around a local park – we want everyone to participate.” ☀️

*Tom Uhlenbrock is a writer for Missouri State Parks, a division of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.*

**(Above) Participants can run, walk, bike, paddle, or roll to complete their “100 Missouri Miles” of physical activity by the end of the year.**

**(Above right) Gov. Jay Nixon and First Lady Georganne Nixon launched the 100 Missouri Miles Challenge in June to encourage Missourians to enjoy the outdoors.**

**(Below) Scenic trails, such as Swimming Deer Trail at St. Francois State Park, helped Missouri win recognition as “Best Trails State,” by American Trails.**

DNR photo by Scott Myers

