



Tri-County Soil and Water Conservation Districts: Stone-Christian-Taney

www.swcd.mo.gov/stone

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THE PARKS, SOILS AND WATER SALES TAX

Supporting state parks & soil and water conservation

What is it? The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is a statewide one-tenth-of-one percent sales tax that provides dedicated funding equally for Missouri state parks and historic sites along with soil and water conservation efforts in Missouri. First approved by voters in 1984 as a constitutional amendment, it now appears on the ballot every 10 years to reaffirm the voters' support of the park system and soil and water conservation efforts.



The tax helps to **safeguard water resources** by educating and incentivizing Missouri landowners to implement practices that improve water infiltration and reduce runoff, improving water quality. The tax helps to **retain valuable topsoil**. Prior to the implementation of the sales tax, Missouri lost soil at a rate of 10.8 tons per acre each year on cropland. That number has been reduced to 4.8 tons per acre each year.



THE PARKS, SOILS & WATER SALES TAX is set to expire in 2028 if not **approved by voters in 2026**. Half of the revenue from the sales tax is used for preserving soil and protecting water resources of Missouri for future generations. The majority of the soil and water portion of the tax is used to assist agricultural landowners through a voluntary cost-share program that provides incentives to implement soil & water conservation practices. The cost-share program is administered by the Department of Natural Resources' Soil and Water Conservation Program through soil and water conservation district boards in each of the 114 counties in Missouri. The program provides partial reimbursement for implementing practices that prevent or control excessive erosion & improve water quality.

SINCE 1984, Missouri farmers have implemented more than 288,000 structural and management conservation practices on cropland, hayland, pastureland and woodlands. Through these efforts, Missouri has stopped more than 193 million tons of soil from eroding, enough to fill the lanes of I-70 from St. Louis to Kansas City over 52 ft. high.

This program provides funding for research and water quality monitoring to identify new methods of soil and water conservation practices that produce the best results. It is a model for the nation. Missouri is envied by other states in that we have a dedicated and voter approved sales tax that is one of a kind which provides steady, reliable support to promote best management practices that keep soil in the field and waterways clean.

State Parks and Historic Sites: The portion of the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax that supports state parks averages \$10 a year per Missourian. Missouri is one of only eight states that does not charge entrance fees into its 93 state parks and historic sites. Other states charge \$10 or more for a one-time visit. The tax enables parks and historic sites to operate, welcoming nearly 20 million visitors and more than one million overnight guests annually. The park system consistently receives a 96% approval rating from guests. The tax helps to provide ongoing maintenance & repair of more than 2,000 structures, 3,500 campsites & 1,000 miles of trails along with campground amenities, a variety of overnight accommodations while also enriching visitor experiences with improvements such as the new Spirit Trail & playground at Knob Noster State Park, new visitor center at Deuschheim State Historic Site & upgrades at Bothwell Lodge and Bennett Spring state parks. The park system ranks in the countries top 4. *Information supplied was provided by Mo. Parks Association & the Missouri Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts.*



Contents:

Pg 1: Parks, Soils & Water Sales Tax

Pg 2: SW-Mo Spring Forage Conference

Pg 3: Nutrient Management-CS Practices

Pg.4- Water-Vital Investment

Page 5: Success in the Field

Page 6: Events

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Quote worth quoting: *“Out of the long list of nature’s gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil.”* ~ Hugh Hammond Bennett

AREA EVENT PROVIDES USEFUL INFORMATION TO PRODUCERS

On behalf of the Spring Forage Conference Planning Committee, we are pleased to invite you to the 42nd annual **Southwest Missouri Spring Forage Conference**. The event will be held Tuesday, February 17th at The Oasis Convention Center on North Glenstone Avenue in Springfield. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m., followed by opening session at 8:45 a.m. With humble beginnings as a small meeting amongst farmers to discuss progressive farming strategies over four decades ago is now one of the grazing communities' most popular educational and networking events.

Each year, our committee works diligently throughout the year to put together an outstanding lineup of speakers to cover a wide range of forage and livestock topics. This year, we are excited to welcome nationally respected **live-stock economist, Dr. Derrell Peel** in an exclusive interview with Missouri's own **Tyne Morgan, host of U.S. Farm Report**. Dr. Peel brings more than three decades of cattle market expertise, known for his ability to cut through the noise to explain real-world trends impacting cattle operations. This session will deliver the practical, Missouri-relevant insight that you can use immediately to help make plans for your operation. With Tyne's sharp, producer-focused interview style, expect this conversation to be very useful and a must-attend session for anyone participating in a forage-based livestock business.

Our keynote will also feature **Dr. Peter J Ballerstedt**, presenting '*The Roots of Humanities Future*'. Dr. Ballerstedt is the founder and 'bridge builder' behind Grass Based Health, an organization dedicated to reconnecting people with forage-based agriculture. Dr. Ballerstedt began his career as a forage extension specialist before becoming a globally recognized forage ambassador for Barenbrug. Dr. Ballerstedt is widely known on international speaking circuits as 'Don Pedro The Sodfather of the Ruminati', reflecting his unmatched enthusiasm for advancing sustainable, productive forage-based livestock agriculture. His keynote promises to inspire new thinking and highlight the essential role of ruminant agriculture in shaping a healthier future for people and their environment.

In addition to our keynotes, we will have **20 breakout options** with topics that address relevant obstacles in local livestock/forage production, emerging management practices, novel agricultural technology, sheep and goat production, and much more. There will be an abundance of **trade show exhibitors**, providing an opportunity for attendees to see the latest and greatest products and services available on the market to help improve forage-based livestock operations. **\$55 Fee is due by Feb. 6, 2026. \$65 after Feb. 6th; no registrations past Feb. 13th. No walk-ins.**

We look forward to seeing you on February 17! More info. at: <https://www.springforageconference.com>

DID YOU KNOW: Through the state cost-share programs and through FY2025 —

Missouri farmers have implemented almost 295,000 conservation practices for cropland, hayland, pastureland and woodlands, and saved 194 million tons of soil since 1984.

- ◆ These practices were supported by \$975 million from the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax since 1984.
- ◆ Prior to the passing of this tax in 1984, state parks & soil & water districts were facing cuts in federal & state funds. To offset this funding deficit, entrance fees to state parks were proposed; however, the public was not in favor. At the same time, Missouri had the second highest erosion rate in the nation. Then came the passage of the dedicated tax in 1984 by voters benefiting both state parks & soil & water conservation.

“Where there is an open mind, there will always be a frontier.” ~

Dorothea Brande

“Don't live the same year 75 times and call it a life.” – Robin Sharma

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT FOR ENHANCED FORAGE PRODUCTION



Nutrient Management is the science of amending and/or improving Soil for the production of crops and forages!

Soil provides water, organic matter, air spaces, and minerals for crop growth - the “habitat” for crop roots.

Soil must be the “correct mix” of chemical, physical, and biological components for crop to achieve maximum yield potential.

pH Ranges: **Neutral pH (pH=7.0)** is desired for plant growth; most nutrients are in chemical forms that are available to plants.

Acidic Soils:

slight acidity 6.0 to < 7.0
moderate acidity 5.0 to 6.0
strong acidity < 5.0

Basic Soils:

slight alkalinity > 7.0 to 8.0
moderate alkalinity 8.0 to 9.0
strong alkalinity > 9.0



Range for mineral soils – 3.6 to 10.3 although 11 is possible

Soil and Water offers a Nutrient Management Practice . This practice provides operators an incentive to encourage the adoption of a nutrient management plan which follows recent soil tests. **The incentive is \$20/acre per year** on land not experiencing soil loss. All contracts must be approved between Jan. 1st—April 15th of ea. year. The plan must be developed prior to the application of any nutrients. Then payments will be issued after the growing seasons, after Oct. 31st or after crop is harvested, whichever date is later. For more information and specifics, give us a call at the Stone County office: **417-723-8389**.

Need to establish or strengthen your forage stand in 2026? If eligible due to soil loss, we can help— financially and technically. No cost to you for a field visit and evaluation, but potential dollars to you in helping to re-establish if that’s what is needed. The seeding practice will help cover costs of the fertility, the seed, and the planting. We can provide further details, so reach out to your soil & water conservation district. We will help map out fields for soil testing and provide any additional details. If you have recently cleared your land, we cannot assist in establishing that into permanent pasture unless your endeavors to do so did not succeed. We can elaborate on that more if that is a need.

OTHER COST SHARE PRACTICES: Woodland & Pond Exclusions, Streambank Stabilizations, Grazing Systems, Seeding Practices, Establishing Native Warm Season Grasses, Legumes, One Time Lime Application following a grazing system and Nutrient and Pest Management, Sensitive Areas you may have concerns with and Cover Crops.

EQUIPMENT RENTAL NEEDS: Your local Soil & Water Districts have no-till drills available to rent. In Stone County, we also have a Post Pounder, Sprayer and Weed Wiper along with various fencing tools (t-post driver, ground rod driver, spinning jenny) Reach out for your equipment rental needs to your local County Soil & Water Conservation District.

“The nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself PERIOD.” President Franklin D. Roosevelt

WATER— WATER—WATER: The Vital Component for Livestock



Water is not an expense, water is an investment! (Jim Grace 2018) When it comes to water systems in place for our livestock, whatever the species, we need **FLEXIBILITY**. Water availability affects animal performance. Droughty weather in Missouri is and has become a norm. Cattle markets are at an all time high. We can't afford to hinder performance in those animals we are taking to market. Water deficiency reduces performance more quickly than will any other nutrient (feed or mineral).

When it comes to cattle, they will come to water 2-5 times daily and drink for 1-4 minutes at a time. They can drink at a rate of about 2 gallons per minute. The consumption rate depends upon the animal. Avg. maintenance for beef cattle is 8-12 gallons per head per day compared to a milking cow at 20-25 gallons per day. Sheep and goats, about 2-3 gallons per day and a horse 8-12 gallons per day. Water requirements based on age will also affect the amount needed per lb. of dry matter intake as does the state of production. When lactating, intake will increase about 3 gal. per gal. of milk produced.

Daily water consumption will vary based too on the temperature. Consumption could be 3 times higher on a 100 degree day compared to a 50 degree day. Rather than 8-12 gallons per head / day for beef cow, they may need 20-25 gallons, same with horses and 3-4 gallons in hot weather for small ruminants. When grazing high endophyte infested fescue, an animals body temperature increases. Grant it, the moisture content of their forage will vary but will offer some to meet their requirements.

The distance to water also matters. Cattle with water within 600—800 ft. will drink more often than those walking greater than 1000 feet to water. You want the water sources close to your animals within that 600-800 ft. range. When laying out a rotational grazing system, considering the distance to water is important. Placement of water assists in more uniform forage utilization. Yes, certainly grazing animals can make the walk to get to their water source, but their time spent grazing is more productive. You have more acceptable moderate grazing when water distance is no further than 800', then utilization drops off beyond this distance. When 800' or less, cattle may tend to drink individually, away from the herd mentality of lets all go to water at the same time.; especially when the line of sight is where they can see each other. When traveling longer distances to water or when they can't see their herdmates, they tend to drink as a group. One should have tank space for 10% of the herd and have flow rate sufficient enough to water the entire herd in 20 minutes.

WATER IS THE MOST LIMITING FACTOR IN GRAZING DISTRIBUTION AND MAINTAINING FLEXIBILITY OF A GRAZING SYSTEM

To have a successful grazing system, you must be able to deliver adequate amounts of quality drinking water at the right location. You will have improved grazing distribution and more uniform manure distribution. Do avoid low, wet areas or areas where runoff water concentrates. Choose well drained soil, higher ground and no shade. You can have a mix of permanent and portable water tanks. **Goal: The animal gets a good drink then gets back out to pasture to graze.**

Management Decides If the Livestock's Water Needs are Met!

Management Determines:

- The distance livestock have to travel to water
- How much room the livestock have available to get a drink
- The quality of the water the livestock drink, at least to some degree.
- The temperature range of the water the livestock drink, at least to some degree. Intake reduces if too hot or cold, hot being worse.
- If the livestock can reach the water to drink normally
- If the livestock drinking area becomes a resource concern or not.

If you are interested in implementing a cost share practice that will move you from a continuous grazing system to allow you to move and give rest to pastures, while utilizing smaller paddocks and placing permanent watering tanks, of your choosing, in support of those paddocks, reach out to your Soil & Water District office. We will gladly look at a potential layout or help design a layout that meets your production needs for forage & water. If you have limited watering points and or if you have non-sufficient ponds or prefer to avoid ponds altogether, then lets have a conversation. Plan today for tomorrow. Build in some drought resiliency on your farm.



Success in the Field Using Conservation Practices

We recognize the problems landowners encounter with stream stability issues. Eroding banks, property loss, excessive gravel and flood debris are just some of the challenges faced when maintaining property with streams. Finding affordable ways to protect their land with practical and effective stabilization methods can also be a challenge.

We hope that if you are a landowner experiencing any of the above, that you would reach out to us about the practice we can offer in addressing streambank degradation and the assistance available to you.

The SWCD District works with an engineer who designs the practice after meeting with the landowner. There are no up front costs to you for these services only at time of installing. The most effective component used has been MoDot Type 4 Ditchliner Rock greater than 12 inches in size. Its this quality of rock that holds & has proven successful. On-site gravel filled is used. Very seldom is gravel needed from an off-site source. Installed under Nationwide Permit 13. The maximum amount of cost share back to the operator is \$50,000. Limited to one streambank stabilization per fiscal year (July—June).

BELOW: Map shows a piece of land with 120.65 acres that has been divided into #13 paddocks. Installed were #4 permanent water tanks. There is a lane in the middle with interior cross fencing coming off that. The well is up at the barn and near electric.

State Cost Share pays 75% on the state average cost of the components for Well, Tanks and Fence. There are caps that apply based on grazing acres served. Staff can work with you on a layout and give you the estimates for what you would receive back in financial assistance to install a best management practice such as with a rotational grazing system.



A 2025 Completed Project



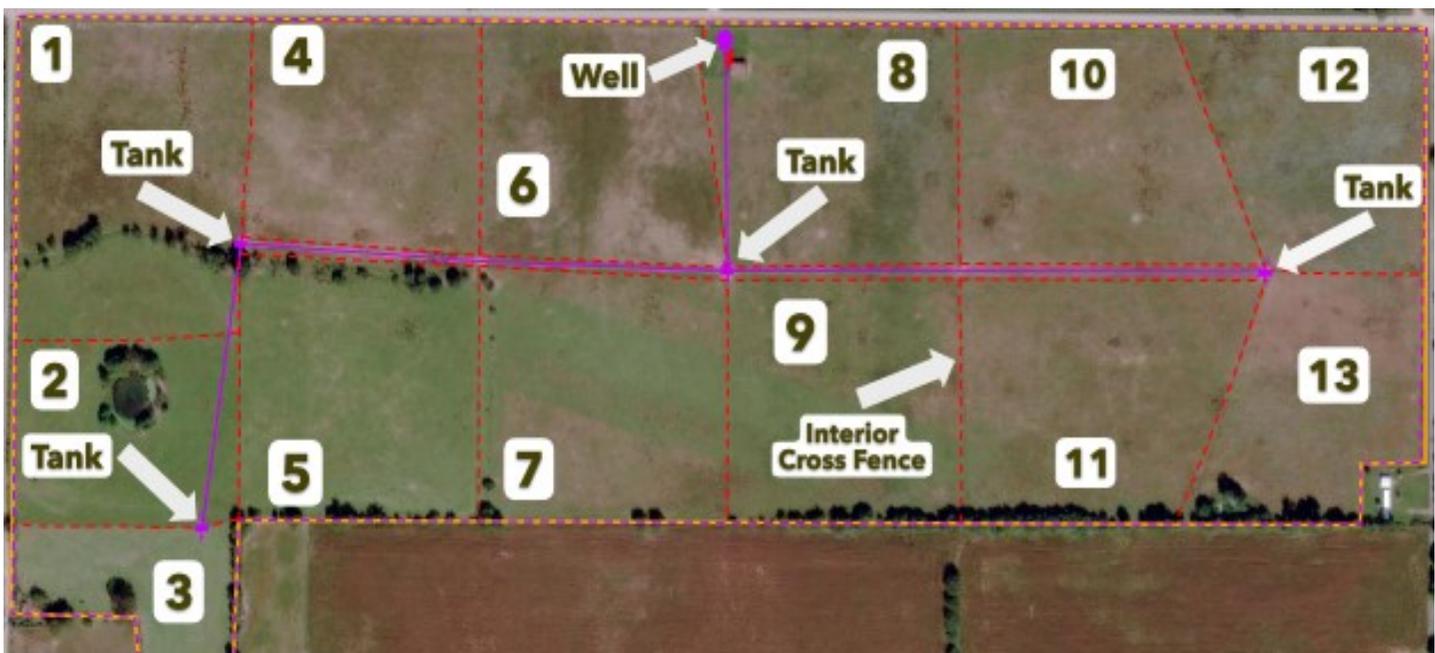
BEFORE PICTURE OF THE ONE ABOVE-DIFF.VIEW



ERODING BANK FOR REPAIR



Another successful project in 2025



TRI-COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Upcoming Events

Let us know if you want to be removed from our mailing lists or if someone needs added

- ◆ **1-26-25 thru 2-5-26** Stone Co. SWCD hosting the 9th annual "Life on the Farm" Photo Contest on our FB page. Like our FB page! Stone County Soil and Water Conservation District.
- ◆ **2-5-26** Stone Co. Livestock & Forage Conference: Crane, Mo
- ◆ **2-17-26** 42nd SW-Mo Spring Forage Conference at OASIS Convention Center. www.springforageconference.com
- ◆ **3-3-26** The Christian Co. Livestock & Forage Conference to be held at OTC Campus in Ozark, Mo.
- ◆ **2/1—2/20/26** SWCD County Board elections are held across the state in each county.
- ◆ **2026 Pesticide Applicator Training:** Reach out to Stone Co. Extension Center 417-357-6812 for schedules
- ◆ **4-17-26** Livestock Water System Development Workshop in Fair Grove, MO. Information-call us 417-723-8389
- ◆ **4-15-26** Sign up deadline for Nutrient Management thru Stone Co. Soil & Water. 417-723-8389
- ◆ **2026 Grazing School Schedule** Coming Out Soon. Visit your Soil & Water office, anytime, to discuss various practices or to make a field visit to look at your resource concerns; all services are voluntary.

