

**From:** [Soil & Water Conservation Program](#)  
**To:** [DNR.Soil and Water Conservation Districts staff](#)  
**Cc:** [DNR.MGS SWC Staff](#)  
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**Attachments:** [FINAL 2026 Parks Soils and Water Sales Tax Information.pdf](#)

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Good afternoon,

The department's communications team put together the attached informational sheet about the Parks Soils and Water Sales tax. The information includes items such as what is the tax, what it is used for and some historical information. This information can be utilized to address questions that you may encounter about the tax. If you receive questions that you need assistance addressing, please contact your district coordinator. Program staff can assist to answer questions or if needed find someone that can address the question.

Also, if you have any requests for speaking engagements about the tax or looking for someone to speak about the tax, let your coordinator know so we can assist you with making arrangements.

Thank you.

Soil & Water Conservation Program  
Phone 573-751-4932

*We'd like your feedback on the service you received from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Please consider taking a few minutes to complete the department's Customer Satisfaction Survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MoDNRsurvey>. Thank you.*



## **What is the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax?**

- The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is a statewide one-tenth of 1% sales tax providing dedicated funding for Missouri's 93 state parks and historic sites and soil and water conservation efforts.
- The revenue generated by the sales tax are split equally, with half going to support Missouri state parks and historic sites, and half going to soil and water conservation practices.
- State parks and soil conservation benefit all Missourians: Both encourage greater stewardship of their respective natural resources, avoiding overuse, damage or potential depletion.
- The Missouri Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax funds allows for free entry and funds operations at 93 state park and historic sites including maintenance, development and restoration.
- Missouri's Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax also supports conservation practices for landowners to reduce erosion and improve water quality through cost-sharing programs.
- First passed in 1984, Missouri's Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax requires voter approval every 10 years. (It will expire in 2028 if it is not renewed in 2026.)

### **State parks and historic sites**

#### **How is the Missouri State Parks system funded?**

- The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax accounts for 75% of Missouri State Parks' budget. The other 25% comes from other earnings and federal funds.
- In FY24, the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax generated \$68.5 million in funding for state parks.
- On average, the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax costs Missourians approximately \$10 per year. Other states charge that for a one-time visit.

#### **What is the tax used for?**

- Missouri is one of eight states that allows free access into its 93 state parks and historic sites.
- The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax allows staff to provide service directly to visitors by maintaining parks and historic sites, upgrading facilities or assisting guests.
- New initiatives have focused on engaging youth in the wonder of the outdoors, making parks more accessible and providing new programs for veterans and active-duty military.
- The park system works to offer additional services to guests, including:
  - New lodging opportunities.
  - Upgraded campground amenities.
  - Expanded recreational resources.

### What has been done so far?

- Maintain and upgrade the state park system to better serve visitors while protecting resources.
- Includes repairing, renovating and maintaining buildings, restrooms, shelter houses and cabins while also stabilizing and protecting historic structures.
  - Cabin renovations at Montauk State Park.
  - Roof repair at Mark Twain Birthplace State Historic Site.
  - Restoration of CCC shelters.
  - Development of new parks and historic sites: Bryant Creek and Shepherd of the Hills state parks and Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site.

### The response

- More than **20 million** people, including 1.3 million overnight guests, visit Missouri's state park system annually.
- Missouri State Parks consistently receives a **96%** approval rating from guests.
- The park system is consistently ranked among the **top four** in the country.

### Soil and water conservation

- A portion of the Parks, Soils and Water Tax is used for Missouri landowners to install soil and water conservation practices through the state cost-share program.
- 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.

### History of the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax

- Prior to the passing of the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax in 1984, Missouri state parks and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts were facing cuts in federal and state funding.
- 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.
- In 1984, Missouri voters approved a statewide one-tenth of 1% sales tax that provides dedicated funding for Missouri State Parks and historic sites along with soil and water conservation efforts.
- Today, Missouri is one of eight states that allows free access into its 93 state parks and historic sites, and has saved 194 million tons of soil from eroding off Missouri farmland thanks to the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.