

Missouri's
Teaming with Wildlife
Newsletter

Issue 1 – November 1996



TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE
a natural investment

A newsletter to convey information to Missourians and answer questions on the "Teaming with Wildlife" funding initiative

What is... Teaming with Wildlife?

For those not familiar with Teaming with Wildlife, it is a proposal for legislation that will create a small tax (from 1/4th to 5 percent) on outdoor-related products (see list below). The money collected will be returned to the states for conservation, recreation and education programs for non-game species. The goal is to protect ALL species of wildlife and provide more opportunities for families and individuals to learn about and enjoy wildlife and the out-of-doors.

TWW is based on two federal programs called the Wildlife Restoration Program (initiated in 1937) and the Sport Fish Restoration Program (initiated in 1950). The 10-11 percent tax paid by hunters and anglers on their equipment has restored populations of once critically low species such as wild turkeys and white-tailed deer, conserved habitat for all species, and provided countless hours of enjoyment for hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

TWW will let everyone have a part in protecting the 2,000 species that are not funded because they are not a game species or endangered or threatened. Not often does something come along that is a win-win for everyone involved, but this funding initiative is!



How will Teaming with Wildlife Benefit Missouri?

Missouri will receive about \$7.5 million annually. Half of this money will be used at the local level for communities, agencies and organizations through cooperative projects and matching grants that meet the criteria for conservation, recreation and education projects. All citizens can benefit from the increased wildlife viewing opportunities, urban wild acres acquisition, education workshops, conservation programs, trails, and research and restoration projects. The economic impact of wildlife-related recreation and other forms of nature-related tourism will be good for local communities. TWW will help protect and enhance the resource base that makes wildlife-related activities popular and enjoyable.

More than 1,300 organizations and businesses have endorsed Teaming with Wildlife, along with 10 governors. See back of page for Missouri's Coalition and how you can join.

Outdoor Products Being Considered...

The following is a DRAFT list of products being considered for a graduated user fee of 1/4% to 5% of the manufacturer's price.

Outdoor recreation equipment (5%): backpacks, sleeping bags, tents, canoes, hiking boots, mountain bikes, camping equipment, scuba gear, climbing equipment, skis

Optical equipment (5%): binoculars, spotting scopes, hand lenses, tripods, window mounts

Photographic equipment (2-3%): film, cameras, lenses

Backyard wildlife products (5%): bird seed, feeders, houses (bird, bat and squirrel), bird baths

Guide books (2.5 - 5%): field identification guides of wildlife and plants, wildlife viewing guides, hiking and paddling guides, audio tapes of wildlife calls, CD-Rom guides to wildlife

Recreational vehicles and sport utility vehicles (1/4% - 1/2%, not to exceed \$100): campers, motor homes, travel trailers, all-terrain

Who Supports Teaming with Wildlife in Missouri?

Missouri's Coalition is growing. If your organization or business isn't listed, why not get out front and become part of the Team?

Organizations

Conservation Federation of Missouri
Missouri Botanical Garden
Missouri Prairie Foundation
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Missouri Audubon Council
Missouri Native Plant Society
Wildlife Society -- MO Chapter
Four Seasons Audubon Society
Association of Missouri Interpreters
Webster Groves Nature Study Society
Audubon Society of Missouri
Mid-Missouri Conservation Society
Ozark Center for Wildlife Research
Columbia Audubon Society
Missouri BA55 Federation
The School of Natural Resources
University of Missouri-Columbia
Kansas City Zoological Gardens
EarthWays
Missouri Herpetological Association
Show Me Chapter, Trout Unlimited
Bridlespur Hunt Club
Tyson Research Center
Wild Canid Survival and Research Center
Gateway Trainet, Inc.
Greenway Network, Inc.
Alliance for a Livable World
St. Louis Audubon Society
Missouri Conservation Agents Association
Open Space Council
Mark Twain Forest Watchers
Missouri Consulting Foresters Association

Businesses

Bass Pro Shops
Big Cedar Lodge
American Rod and Gun
Tracker Marine
Arundale Products, Inc.
Missouri Wildflowers Nursery

Individuals*

Missouri Teachers for Teaming -- 68 teachers have expressed an interest

Patrick Healy

*Note: Individuals are encouraged only as they relate to a group

Frequently asked questions...

Q: How can you call this a "user fee" on outdoor products when many of the customers are not wildlife users?

A: Wildlife is an important part of all outdoor experiences, whether feeding birds in a backyard or canoeing while a hawk soars overhead. In a 1995 survey of outdoor users, 70 percent cited the experience of nature as an important reason for their outdoor activity.

Q: Won't this have an unintended effect of raising retail prices? Is this an efficient way of raising revenue?

A: Market competitiveness should help prevent any substantial retail price increases. All manufacturers are required to pay the tax and therefore it is a level playing field, with everyone's costs affected equally. The intent of the legislation is for the tax to be passed on to consumers to reflect the actual fee applied. Retailers will make the final decision on any mark-ups. We don't anticipate large increases.

Q: Isn't this a hidden fee? Consumers won't know about it.

A: Consumers WILL know about it. Products will carry a tag with a "TWW" logo identifying their contribution. It's essential that consumers/users know about this program, as it creates a strong, highly visible connection between state fish and wildlife agencies, industry and users.

Q: Why should the outdoor recreation industry support TWW?

A: Manufacturers of outdoor recreation products depend on America's natural resources. Without wildlife and wild places to enjoy, there is not much need for the products manufacturers sell. Those that have endorsed TWW cite two key reasons for supporting it: TWW is an investment in a market they cannot afford to see diminished and they believe that "giving something back" is the right thing for a business to do.

Who is your state contact?

For more information on Teaming with Wildlife and/or a copy of the draft legislation, contact Cheryl Riley, Wildlife Diversity Coordinator, 1725 Bunker Hill Road, Jefferson City, MO 65109. Phone: 573-893-8100. Fax: 573-893-8125. E-mail: criley@socketis.net

Look for in your next edition of the Missouri Teaming with Wildlife Newsletter...



What businesses say about Teaming with Wildlife
Specific examples of Teaming with Wildlife projects and programs for Missouri
A Progress Report