

Comments from the director

Support the Teaming With Wildlife initiative

By now most of you have heard about Teaming With Wildlife, the national initiative to extend the existing federal aid programs for sport fish and wildlife restoration to fund broader programs for wildlife-related conservation, education and recreation. Federal legislation will be required to place a small excise tax on certain types of outdoor recreation equipment and wildlife viewing products.

The idea is sound. Just as hunters and anglers have supported conservation through the purchase of firearms, ammunition and fishing equipment, other outdoor users will have the opportunity to "give something back" to the outdoor resources they use and enjoy.

Implementation of Teaming With Wildlife will allow fish and wildlife agencies throughout the country to respond to basic wildlife conservation needs and create public access and wildlife viewing opportunities. Many wildlife agencies are severely strapped for funding, yet they want to respond to the resource and citizen needs in their states. Teaming With Wildlife would make this possible.

The Missouri Department of Conservation strongly supports this effort to improve fish and wildlife conservation in the United States. Our support will help make it happen. Since this is a somewhat

complex and potentially controversial proposal, I encourage you to familiarize yourselves with Teaming With Wildlife. As the public hears more about it, they will be talking with you about it, asking for answers to their questions and concerns. This issue of *Currents* has a special insert on the status of TWW and the Missouri

TWW Coalition. We will continue to keep you updated in future issues.

We currently have an interdivisional task force working on a list of MDC projects that could be funded with new TWW funds. MDC also will make funds available to other agencies, municipalities and organizations through grants for qualifying projects. We are working with the Conservation Federation of Missouri and others on additional projects that could be done outside of MDC. Soon we will

have specific examples of how the new money would be spent to benefit fish, wildlife and the users of the Missouri outdoors.

I encourage you to explain and promote Teaming With Wildlife any way you can. It's yet another way that our Department can be a national leader, providing better conservation for all of the states, as well as in Missouri.

— JERRY CONLEY

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