Designate the Ozark Trail as Missouri’s State Trail

WHEREAS, The Ozark Trail provides one of the premier backcountry trail experiences in the Midwest;

and,

WHEREAS, The Ozark Trail has witnessed a resurgence of enthusiasm, use and support; and,

WHEREAS, In 2011 the Ozark Trail was included as one of two Missouri projects in President Obama’s “America’s Great Outdoors” initiative; and,

WHEREAS, The Ozark Trail is recognized as a National Recreation Trail; and,

WHEREAS, The Ozark Trail currently traverses ten Missouri counties, comprises 364 miles of backcountry trail (with 275 miles of that being connected); and,

WHEREAS, The long-term vision for the Ozark Trail is to extend from St. Louis to the Arkansas border, where it would tie into the Ozark Highlands Trail; and,

WHEREAS, The Ozark Trail connects to some of Missouri’s signature natural features, such as Taum Sauk Mountain (state high point), Mina Sauk Falls (state’s tallest waterfall), Big Spring (largest freshwater spring in North America), Grasshopper Hollow Fen (largest unglaciated fen complex in North America); the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways (the first National Park area to protect a river system), and the rich cultural heritage of the Missouri Ozarks; and,

WHEREAS, The Ozark Trail enjoys a unique partnership between private, state, and federal agencies and organizations; and,

WHEREAS, The Ozark Trail is primarily maintained by the Ozark Trail Association (OTA), a non-profit organization made up almost entirely of volunteers; and,

WHEREAS, Walking, biking and other outdoor exercise promote physical and mental health; and,

WHEREAS, Trail development contributes to conservation and cultural heritage, promotes alternative transportation, promotes quality living, and connects communities to nature and each other:
now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Conservation Federation of Missouri assembled at the Capitol Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City, MO, this 24th day of February, 2013, requests the Missouri General Assembly to pass legislation to formally designate the Ozark Trail as Missouri’s State Trail.