

**Originating Committee:** Education and Outdoor Recreation

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**Intended Recipients:** Missouri Department of Conservation and Missouri Council of the Blind

**Implement Permanent Programs for the Visually Impaired and Totally Blind into Nature and Conservation Education Centers**

**WHEREAS**, approximately three-hundred thousand Missourians have visual impairment disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Missouri Council of the Blind, and the Saint Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired have expressed a desire for more permanent programs for the visually impaired and totally blind within Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) nature and education centers; and

**WHEREAS**, while MDC nature areas and education centers offer programs for the visually impaired upon request and have sensory-involved items, they do not consistently provide braille on maps, brochures, or displays in nature areas; and

**WHEREAS**, nature and education center employees express interest in providing more access and programs to the visually impaired; and

**WHEREAS**, MDC nature and education centers across the state provide accessibility for wheelchairs, however, the visually impaired experience less equal opportunity for convenience; and

**WHEREAS**, Missouri Council of the Blind confirmed individuals who are totally blind and some who are visually impaired still learn and use braille; and

**WHEREAS**, if permanent and consistent programs were put in place at nature and education centers, individuals who are visually impaired could equally learn about and enjoy nature through programs and resources MDC has to offer; now therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that the Conservation Federation of Missouri assembled in Osage Beach, Missouri, this 12<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2022, encourages Missouri Department of Conservation to work with the Missouri Council of the Blind to provide permanent programs and accessibility at nature and education centers for individuals who are visually impaired or totally blind that include descriptive language, audio, sensory-involved items, and braille.

Searchable Keywords: nature centers, visually impaired, blind, disability, accessibility

**Expires:** March 12, 2027