

**Originating Committee:** Public/Private Lands

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**Intended Recipients:** Missouri Department of Conservation, University of Missouri Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service

### **Awareness for the Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program**

**WHEREAS**, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the Conservation Federation of Missouri support and participate in efforts focused on Recruiting, Retaining, and Reactivating (R3) hunters and anglers in the State of Missouri; and

**WHEREAS**, growing the number of hunters and anglers creates steady revenue that supports conservation efforts through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson) Act, the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (Dingell-Johnson) Act, and permit sales in Missouri; and

**WHEREAS**, steady support for conservation efforts positively impacts those involved in wildlife-related recreation and outdoor activities along with the preservation of wildlife and natural resources within Missouri; and

**WHEREAS**, providing quality hunting and fishing opportunities for those targeted by MDC's R3 efforts increases the chance for overall success of the R3 efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, nature viewing is a popular pursuit, and may be an entry-level activity for other interests such as hunting and fishing; and

**WHEREAS**, MDC's existing Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program (MRAP) provides quality hunting land, fishing locations, and nature viewing opportunities accessible to the public; and

**WHEREAS**, MRAP incentivizes private landowners to open up their land to public use for hunting, fishing, and nature viewing; and

**WHEREAS**, MRAP is financially stable through the Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP); and

**WHEREAS**, according to MDC, inability to grow the amount of enrolled acreage beyond the current 52 enrolled properties is one of the greatest challenges MRAP faces; and

**WHEREAS**, the main cause of the challenge, according to MDC, is lack of landowner awareness regarding MRAP and its benefits to enrolled landowners; and

**WHEREAS**, some Missourians who might use MRAP properties for hunting, fishing, and nature viewing may be unaware of its existence and benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, MDC's outreach to landowners and potential users is limited to its online and printed information and media releases; and

**WHEREAS**, an awareness initiative targeted at both private landowners and those who would benefit from using MRAP properties would likely contribute to overall growth of the program in size and usage; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Conservation Federation of Missouri assembled in Osage Beach, Missouri, this 25th day of February, 2023, urges the Missouri Department of Conservation to promote and expand the Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program through increasing public awareness and media visibility among landowners and land users, and by making informational materials available to supporting conservation organizations, such as the Conservation Federation of Missouri through its members and affiliates, to expand hunting, fishing, nature viewing, and other outdoor recreation opportunities in Missouri; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Conservation Federation of Missouri urges the Missouri Department of Conservation to work with partner organizations, including University of Missouri Extension and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, to increase awareness of the Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program among landowners and land users.

**Searchable Keywords:** Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program (MRAP), Landowner, Public access, Hunting, Fishing, Nature viewing, Anglers, VPA-HIP, Recruit, Retain, Reactivate, R3

**Expires:** February 25, 2028