

Missouri Park and Recreation Association's Mission . . .

"To advocate the quality of life through effective use of parks and recreation opportunities, education and resources."

- MPRA works to ensure the growth and improve the quality and accessibility of urban and rural parks, open spaces and recreational lands, facilities, and programs. It promotes research and information dissemination on park, conservation, health and wellness, recreation, and leisure issues.
- MPRA strives to maintain high standards of professional ethics and practices, promoting continuing education for its membership. The association encourages the support of college and university curricula to enhance research and assure a well-trained stream of future professionals.
- MPRA cooperates with public, private, and volunteer agencies to assure provision of quality park, recreation and conservation programs.

"Missourians visit their local parks an average of 29 times per year."

"9 in 10 Missourians agree parks and recreation are important government services."

"75% of Missourians support increased local spending for parks & recreation agencies."

MPRA Officers

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Terry Rynard.....	Kansas City
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Missouri Park & Recreation Association



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Sources: National Recreation and Park Association, 2016, "Americans' Engagement in Parks;" www.TheBestLife.com, 2016, Missouri Department of Tourism.



STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
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BUILDING HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

Obesity -Throughout Missouri there is an epidemic of obesity and associated health issues in both children and adults. A physically active lifestyle is critical to disease prevention and good health. Public parks and recreation facilities offer low cost opportunities for citizens of every age, ability, and income level to increase their level of physical activity, improve nutrition, and better connect with the natural environment, thereby preventing chronic and costly health problems. *"52% of people who visit park/recreation facilities do so to exercise."*

Smoking - MPRA has endorsed initiatives to create smoke-free environments for all citizens and support the increase of tobacco tax, currently the lowest in the nation, which would encourage smoking cessation. Additionally, **we support the use of the increased tax revenue to be used for programs that promote healthy and active lifestyles.**

Alcohol and Drug Abuse - Alcohol and drug use is widespread and ranks as one of the nation's most serious health problems. The problem should be addressed at the individual, community, state and national levels, working together to lessen the demand for alcohol and other drugs. **MPRA stands ready to cooperate fully to assist our communities to promote a drug-free society.**

Funding - The state should take the lead in developing policies, practices and funding infrastructure to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles that best utilize parks and recreation facilities that currently exist. **We recommend support for making parks and recreation agencies eligible for all state programs targeting youth and adults for healthy physical activities, development of life skills, environmental education, and crime prevention/intervention programs.**

Health

Crime Prevention

Transportation

TRAILS

Access to safe, well-maintained community connections is a priority for Missouri's citizens. In 2013-14, Missouri was named the "Best Trails State" by American Trails, reflecting the efforts put into the development of major trail systems, including Katy Trail State Park. Such systems, soon to include the Rock Island corridors, contributes significantly to local economies, support conservation, promote alternative transportation, connecting communities to nature and to each other.

MPRA supports initiatives that enable local and state agencies to develop and promote trail connections across Missouri. "Walking is the #1 preferred form of exercise for Americans"

FUNDING FOR TOURISM

Communities across Missouri benefit from visitors who not only learn about all there is to offer in the state, but who also contribute significantly to the local economy.

VISITORS

The robust marketing of tourism opportunities is critical to drawing those visitors to every part of Missouri, and the Dept. of Tourism is the logical source of those efforts. **MPRA supports to restoration of funding to the Missouri Dept. of Tourism, returning to 2016 levels. "Tourism in Missouri generated \$1.4 billion in local and state tax revenue in FY2016."**

RECREATIONAL USE LIABILITY

MRS 537.347 grants a release from liability for landowners outside corporate limits who allow access across their property for recreational use. Because many recreational activities utilize property that is actually within corporate city limits, it would be appropriate to extend that release to all private landowners. **MPRA recommends that MRS 537.348(3)A be revised to confer these benefits to land owners in cities, municipalities, towns, and villages in this state.**

Conservation

TAX INITIATIVES

Missouri's cities rely upon sales taxes for general fund and park fund operations and capital improvements. **MPRA recommends that any changes to the Missouri Tax Code take into account how cities and parks are funded and the benefits they provide to all citizens.**

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The State of Missouri should help take the lead in supporting and implementing practices statewide, which protect human life, preserve the environment, and conserve valuable natural resources. Municipal, county, and state parks and recreation departments assist in promoting a commitment to clean air, water, the wise use of our natural resources, and stewardship of public and private lands. **We oppose any changes to the makeup of the Conservation Commission or to the process by which the Commission is appointed. We oppose any attempts to infringe on constitutional mandate under which the Commission carries out its mission.**

BONDING INITIATIVES

MPRA supports a comprehensive bonding package that provides increased funding for Missouri state parks and trails, along with its higher education institutions. Parks and trails provide an enriched quality of life for all Missourians regardless of geography or socioeconomic status. Modernized, state-of-the-art facilities prepare Missouri students for real world experiences and allow for a seamless transition into the workplace. Support for such initiatives will enhance the lives of all Missouri citizens. MPRA encourages elected officials to consider the specific differences between capital expenditures and maintenance when considering bonding decisions.

EMPLOYMENT

Additional priorities can be found at www.mopark.org: Parks as Safe Havens, Americans with Disabilities Act and Inclusion, Support for Higher Education, and Therapeutic Recreation Specialist Included as Qualified Health Care Professionals.

www.mopark.org