



LEGISLATIVE *Platform* 2025

MISSOURI PARK & RECREATION
ASSOCIATION

STATE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES



Building Healthy Individuals and Communities

- **OBESITY** 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. MPRA supports the adoption of statute revisions that would allow local parks and recreation departments to increase recreational opportunities for its citizens, regardless of income level.
- **SMOKING** MPRA has endorsed initiatives to create smoke-free environments for all citizens. We support the general efforts to increase the 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 & 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. MPRA supports legislation similar to the Anti-Drug Act of 1988, promoting community services and partnerships designed to target alcohol and drug abuse prevention through education, training, and recreation projects.
- **FUNDING** The state should lead in developing policies, practices, and funding infrastructure to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles that best utilize existing parks and recreation facilities. We recommend support for making parks and recreation agencies eligible for all state-funded programs targeting youth and adults for healthy physical activities, life skills development, environmental education, and crime prevention/intervention.



Trails

- Access to safe, well-maintained community connections is a priority for Missouri's citizens. State, local, and federal lands feature thousands of miles of multi-use trails. In 2013-14, Missouri was named the "Best Trails State" by American Trails, reflecting the efforts to develop major trail systems, including Katy Trail State Park. Such systems, including the Rock Island corridors, contribute significantly to local economies, support conservation, promote alternative transportation, and connect communities to nature and each other. MPRA supports initiatives that enable local and state agencies to develop and promote trail connections and accessibility across Missouri.



Tax Initiatives

- Missouri's municipalities and counties rely on sales taxes, property taxes, special use taxes, and internet use 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 counties' parks are funded and the benefits they provide to all citizens. MPRA urges the Missouri General Assembly to respect the voice of local voters by requiring that sales taxes collected from online sales be apportioned exactly the same as sales taxes collected locally within Missouri.



Funding Initiatives

- MPRA supports increased funding for Missouri State Parks and trails. 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. MPRA does not support using the state-authorized parks and stormwater sales tax to construct, renovate, or maintain professional sports stadiums.



Environmental Stewardship

- The State of Missouri should help support and implement practices statewide that protect and enhance human life, preserve the environment, and conserve valuable natural resources. MPRA encourages positive action on environmental issues. 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 the constitutional mandate under which the Commission carries out its mission. MPRA recognizes, supports, and defends the public ownership of lands used for public recreation. Any disposal of such lands for use(s) other than public recreation should be cautiously considered and approved by a public vote.



Parks as Safe Havens

- Missouri citizens have long regarded their public parks as "safe havens." Public parks and recreation agencies have always endeavored to remove any condition in their parks that might pose a threat or danger to their parks' patrons and providers, including sexual predators, drugs, bullying or other harassment, and illegal weapons. MPRA continues to vigorously support legislation that grants political subdivisions the authority to ban or remove any condition or activity in their public parks that poses a potential danger to park user groups, park and recreation employees, contractors, volunteers, and individuals.



Regulation of Local Parks and Recreation Agencies

- Missouri communities are diverse, from urban to rural and everything in between, and require tailored approaches for effective and efficient governance. The tremendous variety of activities, facilities, and populations makes the task of statewide regulations on unique local issues unnecessarily expensive and burdensome for local officials seeking local control.



Workforce Development

- Parks and recreation agencies throughout the state hire thousands of employees on a part-time/seasonal basis, many under the age of 20 who have little to no work experience or skills. Workforce development is critical for state growth, and parks and recreation agencies are poised to aid with this effort. MPRA supports funding initiatives and legislation that encourage economic growth through workplace development programs.

This is MPRA . . .

Founded in 1959, the Missouri Park and Recreation Association serves as the voice for parks and recreation issues in Missouri at the local, state, and national levels. This nonprofit association's members work to provide opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all Missouri citizens. MPRA members are dedicated to promoting public awareness of the contribution of parks, recreation, and open spaces that encourage healthy, balanced individuals and communities.

The association works to educate for the growth and improve the quality and accessibility of urban, suburban, and rural parks, open spaces and recreational lands, facilities, and programs. It promotes research and dissemination of best practices in parks, conservation, health and wellness, recreation, and leisure issues. MPRA strives to maintain high standards of professional ethics and practices while promoting continuing education opportunities for its membership. The association encourages the support of college and university curricula to enhance research and ensure a stream of qualified and skilled future professionals.

MPRA cooperates with public, private, and volunteer agencies to ensure the provision of quality park, recreation, and conservation programs. MPRA is governed by a board of directors elected by its general membership. It maintains an office with full-time staff in Jefferson City. MPRA is an affiliate member of the National Recreation and Park Association.

MISSION STATEMENT

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



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