

CONSERVATION

By Bob Temper (April 2003)

Recommendations:

1. Write to the MO Land Reclamation Commission to arrive before May 15th encouraging implementation of strong gravel mining rules to protect land and stream resources in the state.
Mo Land Reclamation Commission
PO Box 176, Jefferson City, Mo 65102
2. Immediately contact your state representative in the Missouri state legislature opposing:
 - a. Senate Bill 36, now on the house floor, which would exempt gravel mining companies from regulations.
 - b. House Joint Resolution 23, which would divert ½ of the conservation sales tax to the public school fund.
3. To find name, address, phone number and email address of your state senator or representative use this internet address:
http://www.senate.state.mo.us/zipcode/leg_lookup.htm

Details:

In the last month Ozark Fly Fishers has been represented by testimony at the Land Reclamation Commission hearing, the House Agriculture Committee hearing, a meeting with the Governors Senior Legislative Policy Advisor, 2 meetings with the fisheries biologists and lobbyist of the Department of Conservation, and a joint meeting with the Director of the Department of Conservation and the Director of the DNR.

The Land Reclamation Commission heard from roughly the same number of presenters for and against the regulations. They will meet in May to vote on the future of regulations. More letters are needed to urge the commission to implement strong measurable regulations to protect the streams while allowing responsible gravel mining.

Gravel mining legislature:

- previously proposed exemption for 74% of gravel mining permit holders was attached to Senate Bill 36 which passed the House Agriculture Committee and is now on the House Floor for consideration.
- Senate Bill 36
 - also requires prohibitive cost benefit analysis by DNR prior to any new regulations
 - prohibits regulations from being any more restrictive than they are currently, thus tying the hands of DNR on new regulations.

House Joint Resolution 23 (HJR23)

- Would divert ½ of the conservation sales tax to the public school fund
- This represents 40% of Department of Conservation Budget but less than 1% of the public school funding.
- Could result in closing educational facilities like Busch Wildlife and Powder Valley

- Would result in curtailment of many current MDC programs like the new trout plan and the small mouth improvement plan.

Bullet points you can use in writing your congressmen about House Joint Resolution 23.

- No \$ received by MDC from the general state revenue
- MDC must live within its fiscal means. Department revenue has grown at a slower rate than general state revenue.
- \$4 billion impact from Missouri wildlife-related expenditures annually
 - \$189 million in state sales tax to the general revenue from this.
 - The 1/8 cent sales tax generates another \$90 million for the MDC
- MDC :
 - Serves every county and maintains infrastructure to support services
 - Serves both rural and urban citizens
 - Provides educational programs, landowner technical assistance, rural volunteer fire fighter training
 - Ensures fish and wildlife are abundant, forests sustainable and waters healthy.
 - Department was created by the citizens who support it through the tax
 - 1,215,000 anglers and 489,000 hunters spend \$1.547 billion annually supporting 41,690 jobs in Missouri.