

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All Missourians depend upon shared natural resources of soil, water, plants, animals, and air for food, fiber, energy and recreation. Enjoying the bounty from these resources carries with it an obligation to also share in their conservation and protection for future generations. Although many local, state and federal agencies and other organizations are charged with these responsibilities, more than 90 percent of Missouri land is privately owned or managed. Thus, encouraging and supporting good land stewardship by private landowners and operators should be a vital part of any conservation effort.

There are many assistance programs aiding natural resource conservation efforts, but before the Missouri Conservation Assistance Guide (GUIDE), there was no one source of information about them. Even individuals who work daily with these programs can find it difficult to keep up with everything offered by so many organizations, and the frequent changes that occur. The GUIDE arose out of a need by state and federal agencies to assist Missouri landowners, agricultural producers, and land managers in finding the information they need to be good land stewards.

This GUIDE is intended to be a starting place for practicing good natural resource stewardship. It is a quick overview of available programs, practices, and sources of assistance. Before making any land management decisions, you will need to visit in person with the agency and/or organization identified to help you develop your final plan.

Efforts of this magnitude are the work of many. The original concept and prototype were developed by Bob Schroepel, MDC. Later, MDC personnel worked with an inter-agency group to refine and publish the initial printed version. Steve Hopper, Past President of the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, provided encouragement and insight from an agricultural producer's point of view as well as obtaining a technical and financial commitment from many of Missouri's natural resource partners. Various individuals within the Natural Resources Conservation Service produced an alpha version that was later field-tested. In 1999, the Missouri Watershed Information Network (MoWIN) stepped forward offering leadership in producing both printed and electronic versions of the GUIDE.

However, as in most successful efforts, there are a few that deserve special mention. Jan Dellamano and Kirk Keller of MDC provided invaluable assistance. Jan has supported the project since its inception, and he has put in untold hours of time and personal effort in seeing it through to completion. His commitment and enthusiasm for the project was an inspiration for the others. Kirk Keller completed all of the computer software programming to build and maintain the database behind the GUIDE. Jim Reese, MU-O&E prepared the hardcopy for printing.

The Internet version will be available soon at the (MoWIN) website: <http://outreach.missouri.edu/mowin>.

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