

Robert L. Ziehmer

Educational Experience

Master of Science in Wildlife Management, May 1993, University of Missouri-Columbia

Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Management, December 1989,
University of Missouri-Columbia

Professional Experience

Senior Director of Conservation – Bass Pro Shops (August 2016 to Present)

Providing direction to advance established conservation pillars of protecting wildlife and habitat, connecting new audiences to the outdoors, and advocating for sportsmen's rights and the outdoors. Developing advocacy, outreach, and communication strategies. Serving as a liaison with various state and federal agencies and non-governmental groups to encourage advancement of projects, policy, and regulations advancing conservation and protecting our outdoor heritage.

Director – Missouri Department of Conservation (November 2009 to July 2016)

Providing oversight of \$185 million dollar annual expenditure plan and for approximately 1,450 full-time salaried employees and up to 500 hourly employees. Providing overall direction to administrative functions, forest/fish/wildlife research and management, law enforcement, public information and outreach, conservation education, habitat protection, personnel management, strategic and operational planning, legal and legislative matters, internal auditing and land acquisition. Serving as a member of the Governor's Cabinet. Facilitating development of the Department's annual expenditure plan consistent with policies, priorities, and established goals. Serving as the Department's liaison with a variety of government and non-government entities. Promoting understanding of and support for conservation services by giving public presentations, engaging with the media, and serving as a member of state and national level boards and committees.

Select Accomplishments:

- *Led efforts to restore elk, prairie chickens, alligator gar, pallid sturgeon, and American burying beetle.
- *Developed and led efforts to implement vacancy management plan (i.e., decreased 174 staff; modified select services; closed 11 field offices).
- *Developed and implemented clear priorities for Department's standing committees (i.e., regulations; realty; capital improvements/information technology).
- *Led efforts to create Department's strategic plan.
- *Constructed annual expenditure plans in new method, allowing more full understanding of how staff, funds, and equipment are allocated.
- *Improved Department's business practices.

- *Led efforts to enhance communications and outreach to more fully engage citizens (e.g., Missouri’s conservation curriculum “Discover Nature” is now taught in all public school districts).
- *Implemented approach to health insurance that kept program viable, beneficial to Commission and staff, while controlling costs.
- *Ensured Missouri remained a national leader in forest, fish, and wildlife research and management (ensuring services—such as hatcheries, shooting ranges, nature centers, wetlands, tree nursery—were provided in efficient and effective manner).

Assistant Director - Missouri Department of Conservation (April 2005 to November 2009)

Serving as Department’s lead liaison with state legislature and executive branch to ensure agency interests are represented. Coordinating development of legislative proposals and public policy matters intended to enhance conservation services and facilitate Department operations. Developing internal and external communication strategies for agency level issues. Providing administrative oversight and guidance of Administrative Services Division and Design and Development Division. Supervising development of annual agency expenditure/budget plan to advance priorities of Commission-approved strategic plans. Serving as Chair of Department’s Realty Committee. Developing and implementing Department level processes. Serving as Department liaison with various state and federal agencies, county governments, and non-governmental groups to encourage development and oversight of policy, regulations, and legislation. Crafting language for publications, interviews, speeches, legislative testimonies, and public meetings. Serving as Director’s representative on the Department of Natural Resources’ Land Reclamation Commission. Served on the Department’s Regulations Committee. Served as Interim Executive Director of the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation.

Select Accomplishments:

- *Protection of Commission’s constitutional authority and dedicated funding source from legislative challenges.
- *Led efforts to reorganize Design and Development Division enhancing communications and providing efficiencies within and among the division’s diverse workforce.
- *Led efforts to create more transparency and understanding, by implementing process changes and creation of new reporting formats (bi-weekly reports, monthly reports, mid-year reporting and adjustments, annual Commission Expenditure/Budget Plan), of Department’s financial arena.
- *Implemented steps creating enhanced accountability in the areas of project development, tracking, and reporting associated with capital improvement activities.
- *Established Realty Committee process utilized to ensure appropriate review of potential land acquisitions, easements, and disposals.

Assistant to Director – Missouri Department of Conservation (July 2003 to April 2005)

Serving as Department’s lead liaison with state legislature and executive branch to ensure agency interests are represented in proposed legislation and environmental regulations. Providing advice and counsel to Director and Commission on legislative issues and governmental regulations. Serving as Department liaison with various state and federal agencies, county governments, and non-governmental groups to encourage development and oversight of policy, regulations, and legislation. Assisting with coordination of issue management efforts within Department and division levels to obtain information, develop positive strategies, and communicate a single position/policy. Crafting language for publications, interviews, speeches, legislative testimonies, and public meetings. Coordinating activities associated with the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation’s Stream Stewardship Trust Fund program.

Select Accomplishments:

- *Established enhanced educational and outreach efforts with state legislature and Missouri county governments.
- *Assisted with development of Department's strategic plan—*The Next Generation of Conservation*.
- *Ensured legislative support of Department's annual spending authorization and priority legislation (e.g., Share-the-Harvest expansion, conservation license plates, emergency vehicle classification for agents), while preventing passage of bills that would negatively impact Department and its mission.

Governmental Relations Specialist – Missouri Department of Conservation (September 2002 to June 2003)

Serving as Department liaison with state legislature. Working to encourage development and oversight of positions, policies, regulations, and legislation within state and federal governments and non-government interest groups that provide agency benefits. Coordinating issue management activities and representing the Department on agency level topics. Developing strategies and communicating Department positions. Serving as liaison to the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation and government agencies in the arena of Department-related program development and implementation.

Select Accomplishments:

- *Led successful efforts, following November 2002 elections and resulting replacement of Missouri's Governor and high turnover of legislators due to term limits, to establish and maintain relationships with members of the Governor's Office, Executive Branch agencies, and members of the General Assembly.
- *Ensured passage of legislative priorities, while preventing passage of bills that would negatively impact agency.

Policy Specialist – Missouri Department of Conservation (September 1996 to September 2002)

Working to develop Department policies and procedures. Working to develop agreements with other state and federal agencies and private groups to benefit the Department's mission. Securing needed state and federal development permits for Department activities. Providing coordination and technical liaison assistance to Department divisions. Representing Department's interest during development of state and federal regulatory programs. Working with regional staff to gather information allowing development of agency responses and positions. Representing the Department on environmental issues. Serving as liaison to regional staff regarding environmental, policy, and regulatory issues. Working to encourage, stimulate, and develop state and federal programs that expand forest, fish, and wildlife benefits. Representing Department on state and national level issues. Serving as liaison to legislators and other state and federal agencies. Serving on inter/intra-agency committees and task forces.

Select Accomplishments:

- *Co-Chaired State Chronic Wasting Disease Task Force, leading efforts among representatives of diverse stakeholder interests to establish appropriate regulations and create a state contingency plan.
- *Developed vision, obtained needed support from federal regulators and diverse stakeholder groups, and coordinated implementation of actions to establish the nation's first in-lieu-fee stream mitigation program—Stream Stewardship Trust Fund.
- *Led intra-agency efforts to revise the *Missouri Wildlife Code* resulting in creation of Chapters 11 and 12.