



Column For Week of: **November 17, 2008**

[Website](#) | [Email Me](#) | [Biography](#) | [Newsroom](#)

## **Making Sure Your Voice is Heard on Sport Permit Changes**

The Department of Conservation recently announced that there are some proposed drastic changes to the permit system for hunting and fishing. The changes, which will become effective July 1, 2009, will affect youth, seniors, college students, landowners, general residents, non-residents and special-permit purchasers. As a sportsman myself, I want to make sure that everyone in Missouri has an opportunity to enjoy the many outdoor recreation opportunities in our state. Conservation officials say that the changes are aimed at simplifying the permit structure, making age and hunter education requirements more consistent, and encouraging greater participation by young outdoors people. However, I have been receiving a lot of calls from confused or unhappy citizens in the 16<sup>th</sup> District. I want to let you know about some of these changes and give you the opportunity to provide feedback to the department.

The ideas for these permit changes came from the Conservation Department's Regulations Committee, not the Legislature. The Conservation Commission conducted a yearlong review of sport permit regulations, and then approved the final draft of the proposed changes at their October 31 meeting.

The new regulations will eliminate youth deer and turkey hunting permits. Instead, there will be youth pricing for regular deer and turkey hunting permits—50 percent of the adult price for hunters 15 and younger. There will also be youth pricing for the

annual Trout Permit, which is required to catch and keep trout outside Missouri's four trout parks.

The Commission also chose to allow nonresident college, university and technical school students to buy resident hunting and fishing permits. This is instead of asking these out-of-state residing students going to Missouri schools to pay for out-of-state permits.

Hunter-education requirements have also changed for all mentors, including landowners. Hunters who are not hunter-education certified have to be in the presence of a properly licensed adult. Mentors born before Jan. 1, 1967, are exempt from the requirement to complete hunter-education training. The minimum-age requirement for hunting mentors is now 18.

Seniors will also be affected by the changes. The Conservation Commission voted to phase out exemptions for senior citizens and replace them with one-time purchase "forever" permits. The new Senior Fish Forever Permit will be a life permit to take fish, frogs, mussels, clams, turtles, crayfish and live bait. The Senior Hunt Forever Permit will entitle holders to hunt small game for life. A Senior Hunt and Fish Forever Permit will combine the privileges into one official document. The new Senior Hunt or Fish Forever permits will cost \$24 if purchased between the ages of 60 and 63, and \$12 if purchased at age 64 or older. A Senior Hunt and Fish Forever Permit will cost \$40 for buyers age 60 through 63 and \$20 for those 64 and older.

The Conservation Commission also proposed to:

- Raise hunting and fishing permit prices, effective July 1, 2009.
- Create a landowner registry for those qualified for free landowner permits.
- Raise the minimum acreage to be qualified for no-cost deer or turkey permits from five to 80 contiguous acres. Owners of at least five contiguous acres will still be allowed to hunt small game and fish on their land without permits.

The Department of Conservation is welcoming comments from the public on these changes. In order to make sure your voice is heard you will need to comment before **December 16, 2008**. An online comment form is available at <http://mdc.mo.gov/regs/permitcomment.htm>. You can also mail in your written comment (please include your name and address) to David Erickson, PO Box 180, Jefferson City,

MO 65102. All comments received before the end of the 30 day public comment period will be sent to the Conservation Commission for their review and consideration.

Missouri has rich and diverse outdoor resources that are available to hunters and fishers throughout our state. I want to make sure that these different permit regulations are clear, and that you have the opportunity to have your voice heard on the changes. For more information on the changes, visit [www.mdc.mo.gov](http://www.mdc.mo.gov) or call (573) 751-4115.

### **Contact Me**

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to call me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2108. You can also write to at the address listed below.

#### **Contact Information**

**Capitol Office**  
State Capitol Building  
Room 427  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**Website:**  
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/barnitz>

**Phone Number:**  
573.751.2108  
**Fax:**  
573.526.0573