

Henry County SWCD Scholarship

Objective: The Henry County SWCD Scholarship provides financial assistance to students wishing to pursue a degree in an Agriculture course of study at a properly accredited College or University or Trade School.

Amount: One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded

Eligibility: This scholarship is for students who attended an approved program of study in Missouri (as stated in Missouri statute, RSMO 167.031 - includes public, private, and home school) and from Henry County. Applicants must be in their senior year of high school. They must major in an agricultural related field. Applicants must plan to attend, a college or university, or trade school that is properly accredited by national or regional accrediting bodies, or their equivalence. Financial need will not be a factor in selection.

Applications: Applications for 2025-2026 scholarships must be emailed or postmarked by February 2, 2026. The scholarship application form is available on the Henry County SWCD web site (Henry County | Missouri Soil and Water (mosoilandwater.land)) or by contacting Jayme Kepley or Bobbi Farmer 1306 N. 2nd St. Clinton, MO 64735; 660-885-5567 ext. 3, or Jayme.Kepley@swcd.mo.gov or Bobbi.Farmer@swcd.mo.gov.

Each Application Must Include:

1. High School Transcript.
2. Brief Autobiography- must be typed and include: biography of self and life experiences that have influenced your personal growth & what education means to you in meeting your future goals.
3. Two current letters of recommendations.
4. Winners will be asked to provide a picture with Bio for publication and attend the annual banquet in March.

Scholarship Background:

In the 1930s, as the Dust Bowl swept across the nation relocating an estimated 300 million tons of soil, Americans realized the devastating effects of soil erosion. Legislation began to take shape to better manage and conserve the nation's soil. Despite these actions, Missouri was still plagued with high erosion rates.

Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Districts

The State Soil and Water Districts Commission was created in 1943 to administer the soil and water conservation districts and formulate policies and general programs for the saving of Missouri soil and water through the county soil and water conservation districts. Missouri joined the movement to localize soil and water efforts when Harrison County formed the first soil and water conservation district in 1944. In 1996, Washington County became the last of Missouri's 114 counties to organize as a district.

The Soil and Water Conservation Program carries out the policies of the Soil and Water Districts Commission following the Soil and Water Districts Law (Chapter 278, RSMo). The program promotes good farming techniques that help keep soil on the fields, our waters clean and conserves the productivity of Missouri's working lands.

Each soil and water conservation district is governed by a board of five supervisors, responsible for all district actions and employees. Four supervisors on each board are resident county agricultural landowners or their legal representative elected to serve four-year terms. The fifth is a representative from University of Missouri Extension.

In 1982, Missouri was losing soil at a rate of 10.9 tons per acre each year on cropland, one of the highest rates of erosion in the nation. In order to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality as well as support Missouri state parks, Missouri voters passed a one-tenth-of-one-percent sales tax in 1984, now called the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax. The tax funds are divided equally between the Department of Natural Resources Soil and Water Conservation Program and Missouri State Parks. Slightly more than two-thirds of Missouri voters renewed the tax in 1988 and 1996, and 70.8 percent voted in favor in 2006. In 2016, all 114 counties approved the sales tax renewal resulting in the highest approval to date at 80.1 percent.

Missouri's soil and water program is a role model for the nation. Other states envy Missouri for its dedicated tax and support of soil and water conservation. Since 1982, Missouri's soil erosion rate dropped more than any other state with more than 10 million acres of cropland. It is estimated that more than 179 million tons of soil have been saved since passage of the sales tax.

The sales tax provides financial incentives that share the cost between the farmer and the state of implementing the installation of soil and water conservation practices that prevent or control excessive soil erosion and protect water quality.

Missouri has come a long way since the sales tax was first approved in 1984; however, there is still work to be completed. Issues affecting soil health, soil erosion, and water quality can have detrimental effects on Missouri's natural resources and agricultural productivity. Research and water quality monitoring can help verify that soil and water conservation practices are working as intended. With your continued support, we can help make Missouri an even better place to live, work and enjoy the outdoors.