

Fishing Ethics

Missouri anglers have lots of public lakes, ponds, rivers and streams to choose from. However, the state's trout waters, in particular, are limited and can get crowded. To make everyone's experience more enjoyable wherever you fish, practice the following guidelines.

Respect Your Fellow Anglers

- Know and follow Missouri's fishing regulations.
- Don't wade in front of others and allow space for backcasting.
- Give priority to disabled anglers in areas accessible to them.
- Don't throw rocks or disturb the water.
- Minimize noise—avoid loud music or yelling.
- Observe Missouri's [Guidelines for Handling and Releasing Fish](#).



Trout Opener at Bennett Spring State Park
David Stonner

Respect Private Property

- Most of Missouri's streams run through private land, but many landowners are happy to accommodate respectful anglers.
- Safeguard landowner goodwill. Never trespass, and always ask permission before floating or wading through private property.

[Learn more about trespassing.](#)

Respect the Environment

- Don't litter! Put bait containers, cigarette butts, and fishing line, all of which can harm wildlife and degrade others' outdoor experience, into the trash.
- Use only designated trails and parking areas.
- Don't shuffle your feet in the water to stimulate fish to feed.



DON'T LITTER!

Trash can harm wildlife and ruin the outdoor experience for other people. Take bait containers, cigarette butts, fishing line, and other trash with you and put them in a trash can.

Protect Missouri's Sport Fisheries

Missouri's fish are healthy and free of most diseases. To ensure that they remain that way and to keep our streams free of aquatic nuisance species, please follow these guidelines:

- Do not release live or dead fish obtained from outside the state into Missouri waters. Consult an MDC fisheries biologist before stocking any fish from any source, and be aware that importation of trout into Missouri is strictly regulated.
- Thoroughly clean boots, waders, boats, trailers and fishing tackle between uses. Do not transfer mud, aquatic plants, water or fish parts from one body of water to another.
- Report any fish kills, dying or diseased fish, or water pollution to a MDC fisheries biologist, or call the department's Environmental Health Unit at 573-815-7900.