

**Originating Committee:** Public and Private Lands Committee

**Author:** Shirley Wolverson

**Intended Recipient:** Missouri Governor, Director of Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Director of Missouri State Parks, and Missouri General Assembly

### **Support the Rock Island Trail**

**WHEREAS**, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources on December 17, 2019, signed an Interim Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Ameren Missouri, paving the way for the future railbanking of 144 miles of the former Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad corridor, which stretches from Windsor to Beaufort, Missouri; and

**WHEREAS**, the Interim Trail Use Agreement ensures the preservation of the former railroad corridor for future transportation use and facilitates the eventual donation of the property to the Department for recreational trail use; and

**WHEREAS**, said corridor would add to the existing Rock Island Spur of Katy Trail State Park to provide a cross-state trail experience for bicyclists, hikers and equestrian users to enjoy nature, explore a part of rural Missouri history, and have a healthy and enjoyable recreational experience; and

**WHEREAS**, communities, companies and individuals want to partner with Missouri State Parks to develop the Rock Island Trail and make it safe and operational; and

**WHEREAS**, public officials including mayors from Stover, Versailles, Owensville, and Gerald as well as administrators and aldermen from Windsor, Pleasant Hill, Belle and Union have urged support for the trail that would bring value to their towns in terms of tourism and revenue much like the benefits brought by the Katy Trail; and

**WHEREAS**, funding for the development of the trail over the short and long term would be in the province, scope and exigency of public/private partnerships currently being explored by the Missouri State Park Foundation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources is still considering whether to accept Ameren's donation of the 144-mile stretch of the former Rock Island Rail Line; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED** that the Conservation Federation of Missouri assembled at the Capitol Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City, MO, this 8th day of March 2020 supports the acceptance of the Rock Island Corridor enabling Missouri State Parks to enjoy this once-in-history chance to support development of this cross-state multi-use trail asset and experience similar to the Katy Trail; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Conservation Federation of Missouri urges Missouri decision makers to accept the Rock Island Corridor donation knowing the power of rails-to-trails in Missouri as exemplified by the long-term development of the Katy Trail, generating millions of dollars in annual revenue for the state. The Rock Island Trail has the potential to expand these benefits to the Missouri public by creating new tourism and economic development opportunities.

Searchable Keywords: Rock Island Trail, Ameren, Katy Trail, Missouri State Parks Foundation, Missouri State Parks, Missouri Department of Natural Resources

**Expires** March 8, 2025