

Ron Kucera

Residence - Ron lives with his wife, Summer Allen, in southern Boone County, Missouri

Education - Ron received Bachelors and Masters degrees from the University of Missouri and continued post-graduate studies at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. The primary focus of his studies was on physical geography and surface geology.

Professional Employment - Ron taught physical geography at Schoolcraft College in Michigan, served as a teaching fellow at the University of Michigan and as a visiting professor at the University of Missouri. In Michigan, he worked for a landscape architecture firm performing NEPA studies and at the University of Missouri he served as part of a team analyzing death rates by cause of death for all metropolitan areas and all 3000 counties of the United States.

In 1976 Ron joined the Missouri Department of Natural Resources as a Planner. In 1979 he was appointed by then Governor Teasdale to serve as Deputy Director for Operations for the Department. Since then, and until May of 2005, he served at the Department Deputy Director level for five other Governors of the State of Missouri and was personally involved in the high level management of the agency.

Experience with Key Policy Issues - Ron worked extensively with state and national environmental groups. Several examples are the collaborative efforts to deauthorize Meramec Dam in Missouri and to prepare an executable plan for the disposition of federally acquired property for that project. He also worked extensively with non-governmental organizations involved with land acquisition and holding land for later acquisition by public agencies, including the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for the state park system. He worked very closely with the citizen groups who were committed to the establishment of the Katy Trail, including the Missouri Rail Trail Foundation and the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

Ron led the effort in coordinating with several non-governmental organizations to acquire the 1,100 acres that forms the point at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. This land is now part of the Missouri State Park System and will be restored to a high quality floodplain wetland. He conceived and pushed to secure the creation of the Missouri State Parks Foundation, which is now in existence.

Ron continues to work closely with National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, and Sierra Club in efforts to stop proposed out-of-basin diversion projects on the Upper Missouri River. These projects would adversely impact the Missouri River ecosystem by permanently moving water out of the Missouri River Basin and into the Hudson Bay Basin. He conceived and secured, through working within DNR and the Governor's Office, a Memorandum of Agreement between the Governor of Missouri and the Premier of the Province of Manitoba to create a coalition that will share critical information and coordinate efforts to stop these and other proposed out-of-basin diversions where the diverted water would flow into Canada's Hudson Bay Basin.