

Help Us Cultivate the Next Generation of Conservation Professionals

 Johnny Morris Institute of Fisheries, Wetlands & Aquatic Systems
University of Missouri



Introduction

All living things depend on clean and sustainable sources of water.

To advance the wellness of our watersheds improving all quality of life, three partners established the **Johnny Morris Institute of Fisheries, Wetlands and Aquatic Systems** at the University of Missouri (MU) in March 2023.

The vision of this partnership between the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation (MCHF), Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and MU's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) is to create a national model for public-private partnerships that advance sustainable conservation of fisheries, wetlands and other aquatic systems by integrating areas of study that often have been addressed separately.

Serving as a national center, the Morris Institute will train and cultivate the next generation of conservation professionals, including:

- Provide coursework with an emphasis on research, academics and service
- Ensure conservation career pathway and workforce development with real-world training
- Cultivate national partnerships to collaboratively address water issues
- Conduct key, cutting-edge interdisciplinary research
- Develop and support public policy
- Communicate knowledge gained to reach new conservationists
- Build talent to benefit conservation agencies and organizations nationwide

We need

inspired, educated and trained conservation stewards to bring innovative expertise and research that will be used to work toward a sustainable planet.

Scan to learn more



mochf.org/aquatic-institute

Why do we care?

Clean water and healthy freshwater ecosystems have never been more important to our health, safety and future. Healthy wetlands, aquatic systems, sustainable fish and wildlife populations do not happen by accident. Many plants and animals depend on healthy ecosystems and could become threatened if those water habitats were destroyed.

Help Us Cultivate the Next Generation of Conservation Professionals



Building people

within the Chip and Teresa McGeehan Career Pathways Program

In 2023, Chip McGeehan, a former Missouri Conservation Commissioner, and his wife, Teresa, of southwest Missouri made a significant contribution to the Morris Institute to help the next generation protect crucial natural resources. Through this contribution, the Chip and Teresa McGeehan Career Pathways Program was created to develop conservation professionals, providing them with real-world field experiences and training to prepare them for the workforce.

The cost

To date, more than \$13 million has been pledged from agency partners and private donors. The goal is to build a \$30 million endowment, held by MCHF, allowing for the hiring of an Institute director, professors and operational support, in addition to performing research, informing public policy and establishing scholarships, internships, cooperative programs and fellowships within the Chip and Teresa McGeehan Career Pathways Program.

Join us in continuing the momentum and developing a legacy that will impact water and conservation for years to come. Our future generations and the future of fisheries, wetlands and aquatic systems in Missouri, regionally, nationally and internationally are counting on it.



Campaign Goal:

Build a \$30 million endowment held by MCHF over 8 years

Our Progress:

Over \$13 million from agency partners and private donors

2018

Recognized the need to build upon CAFNR's program at MU to cultivate the future of conservation researchers and leaders

MU, MDC, and MCHF started working on a solution

2019

Institute of Fisheries, Wetlands and Aquatic Sciences concept developed with four major components:

- Faculty and Staff
- Research
- Career Pathways and Workforce Development
- Public Policy

2021

Feasibility study completed Aug. 2021. Confirmed interest and a need to fund an Institute for the future of clean water and conservation

2022

Phase 1 of campaign began Jan. 2022 with the goal of \$10 million

\$5.5 million raised by June 2022 toward phase 1 goal

- \$1 million lead gift from MDC
- \$3 million in-kind from MU
- In-kind faculty from Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units/USGS
- 100% of MCHF Board of Directors financially committed

MDC pledged a \$1.5 million match

MCHF Board member initiated \$250,000 matching gift challenge

2023

Significant pledges from John L. Morris, and Chip and Teresa McGeehan, and other private donors

In March, the Institute was officially established

MU Board of Curators approved the naming of the Morris Institute in Sept after Johnny Morris for his contributions to conservation

The Chip and Teresa McGeehan Career Pathways Program created November 2023 allowing for internships and scholarships to be offered in 2024

Learn more and donate



mochf.org/aquatic-institute or scan the QR code

Help us leave a lasting impact on our most precious natural resource.

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