

# MDC: 3.5 tons of trash removed from Ste. Genevieve County sinkhole cave

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Missouri Stream Team (MST) was able to remove 250 tires and other debris from the area during the one-day cleanup. Missouri Department of Conservation photo

**News from the region:** [Southeast](#)

**By:** Josh Hartwig 12/17/2021

**STE. GENEVIEVE, Mo.** – Fifty Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) workers, Eagle Scouts, cavers with Meramec Valley Grotto (MVG), and community members recently joined forces with Missouri Stream Team (MST) to remove 3.5 tons of garbage from a sinkhole cave in Ste. Genevieve County.

MST is a working partnership of citizens who are concerned about Missouri Streams, and MDC recognizes and supports the group's passion for river conservation.

Jason Crites, MDC Fisheries Management Biologist, said the area contains an extensive karst system – or multifaceted landscape – where the dissolving bedrock has formed sinking streams, sinkholes, springs, caves, and other distinctive topographies.

He said many of this system's openings allow water to enter the ground and flow towards the surface streams, which in this case has a negative impact on the environment.

"There was a large amount of trash in the walk-in entrance and throughout the cave," said Alex Litsch with MST. "Vertically trained cavers worked around the top of the 60-foot pit to hoist trash out of the cave, and volunteers were on the surface and in the cave moving trash to a dumpster."

With the added help of the volunteers, MST was able to remove 250 tires and other debris from the area during the one-day cleanup.

To date, including past cleanups at the site, Litsch said MST has removed nearly 500 tires and two 10-foot-by-5-foot-by-3-foot trailers filled with roughly 2 tons of additional litter.

"Dumping trash and other refuse in sinkholes and caves will ultimately end up in our waterways," Crites added. "I encourage people to refrain from dumping, especially in these locations."

Crites recommends notifying MST or MVG for assistance if a trash sinkhole or cave is discovered in your area.

To get involved with future cleanups, visit Missouri Stream Team online [here](#) [↗](#).