

## Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Officially Established

We knew it would be happening and had been told to expect October. On October 29 word came from Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Superintendent Chris Collins that the signing of the official establishment document by the Secretary of Interior was likely to occur that day and there would be a small event Monday, Nov. 2 in Ste. Genevieve in front of the J.B. Valle house at which Senator Roy Blunt would be in attendance.

As it happened, October 30, 2020 became the official date of establishment, and Main Street in front of the home of the last colonial commandant Jean Baptiste Valle was closed to traffic Monday morning so the crowd of about one hundred properly masked people, mostly locals, could gather to hear the dignitaries speak from the porch: the superintendent, the mayor, the state representative who had shepherded through the Missouri House the bill to authorize transfer of additional state park properties to the National Park Service, the NPS regional director from Omaha, the superintendent of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Mike Ward, who has been leading the negotiations for transfer of properties to NPS, DNR Director Carol Comer, and of course Senator Blunt.

In her remarks, Director Comer announced for probably the first time in public that the state would be keeping the Felix Valle and Benja-

min Shaw houses, even as they were preparing to transfer their other properties to NPS to join the Bauvais-Amoureux house, which had been transferred earlier. From all indications during informal discussions that followed the event,



*Sen. Blunt speaking from the J.B. Valle House*

that decision, in line with MPA's recommendation that the state retain at least one significant structure for the state historic site, met with strong approval from people in Ste. Genevieve and beyond; they knew how important the state presence had been and understood how vital continuing state ownership and operation would be to a strong and enduring public-private partnership.

Senator Blunt painted his vision of the Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park as "one of the great historic walking parks in America," a model of what happens when the community, the state, and the federal government come together and say "we want to make a commitment here." He paid tribute especially to all the local residents who had worked tirelessly for decades to preserve, restore, and share this unique part of Missouri's and the nation's history.

The senator had been instrumental in securing congressional authorization for the park by its inclusion in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018, signed into law on March 23 that year by President Trump. But the park was still not eligible for its own appropriation; that would have to await a determination by the secretary of Interior that NPS had sufficient properties and cooperative agreements to make a national park feasible. This was the milestone that was formalized by Secretary David Bernhardt on October 30. Senator Blunt, meanwhile, has already been laying the groundwork for a dedicated appropriation.

Big brown highway signs for the 422nd unit of the national park system were installed at Interstate 55's exit 150 several weeks later. The city had already turned over its tourism welcome center across the street from the J.B. Valle house to serve as the visitor center for the new national park and other public and private cooperating sites. And in December Superintendent Collins announced that work had begun on a "foundation document" for planning and management of the new Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park.

MPA leaders have already shared and discussed with Superintendents Collins and Ward, Senator Blunt, and others various MPA reports,

(See "Ste. Genevieve" on Page 3)

*Meet Your Missouri State Parks Team:*

*by Sue Holst*

## Lori Cody, Park/Historic Specialist, Montauk State Park

Missouri State Park is fortunate to have staff who bring 30-40 years of experience to their work every day. The system also benefits from a cohort of new employees who bring a new passion and creativity. An example of this new cohort is Lori Cody, who is serving as a park/historic site specialist II at Montauk State Park. She is responsible both for administrative and clerical duties in the office and for supervising the campground. This flexibility in duties allows her to assist in many aspects of the park operation.

Cody's specialist position is the result of a new initiative by Missouri State Parks to create more opportunities for the next generation. The system has taken advantage of technology and other efficiencies to convert some former administrative positions to specialist positions with requirements that now allow experience to be substituted for education on a year-for-year basis. A special route has been created for the military (E-4 level or above) to qualify. This new opportunity creates entry-level positions with flexibility in duties that can be used as stepping stones to upper management positions, including park superintendent, after adequate training and experience.

Cody's background and education originally took her down a different career path. She was born in the St. Louis area and educated at the University of Oklahoma in Norman and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale with a focus primarily in fine arts, including sculpture and photography. She worked for several magazines and websites and in

advertising for Famous Barr and the Macy Co.

But Cody said she had always loved Montauk State Park, which her family had visited many times during her childhood and where she honeymooned with her husband Brian, and had wanted to work there. She worked as a seasonal in the fee booth at Montauk in 2012; then in 2016 she was



*Lori Cody, Park Specialist*

hired as a senior office support assistant at Echo Bluff, and finally in May 2019 she became a park/historic site specialist II at Montauk.

Cody didn't waste any time in making a positive impact on the park. She began a recycling program in the campground, applying for a grant from the local solid waste district and using the \$7,400 to purchase a special trailer for the effort. The local shelter workshop donated bags that campers can hang on their lamp posts to hold the aluminum and #1

and 2 plastic that can be recycled. The park normally has had regular trash pickups on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but with the recycling program, the Wednesday pickup could be eliminated; this saved the park \$1,036 per month during June, July and August. During this timeframe, 1,784 pounds of aluminum were processed, the equivalent of 42,816 cans, for which the park received \$477 that can now be used to expand the recycling program.

For Cody, the program is about more than money. Through her effort, 34 cubic yards of trash per week have been diverted from landfills during the summer months. It also created a positive program for the campers, who have received it very well. As campers arrive, they are given a recycling bag for their lamp post; "this gives the park staff an opportunity to talk to each camper about the recycling program," she said. "It's a lot of work but it's worth it. The campers feel good about recycling and we feel good because we are diverting the trash from the landfill."

Cody is quick to point out that the program has been a group effort with all the park staff and the park hosts assisting. "It's even been a team building experience for the park." She also credited the local solid waste district and shelter workshop for helping them. "A lot of people have been good to us. It would have been impossible alone."

For Cody, she is pleased finally to be working at Montauk, which has always meant so much to her: "I love my job and I'm happy to come to work every day."

### ("Ste. Genevieve" from Page 1)

*Heritage* articles, and resolutions going back to 1989, as well as copies of the state park book, that convey MPA's strong sense of the importance of the Big Common Field as a cultural landscape of surpassing significance for the interpretation of the new national park. The Old Town Archaeological Site in the common field, the only remnant of the original townsite still remaining from the first half-century of Ste. Genevieve's history that was not obliterated by channel changes of the Mississippi River, needs to be in NPS ownership so it can be studied for clues to that critical period. It is straight out from the vertical-log Delassus-Kern house that the state will soon be transferring to NPS. And the Bauvais-Amoureux house fronting on the common field and already transferred from MSP to NPS is the perfect place to interpret the vital importance of African Americans, both enslaved and free, in the life of the community.



*Sen. Blunt and DNR Director Comer with NPS Staff*

MPA extends hearty congratulations to all on the establishment of the new national historical park and stands ready to help in any way.

### New Parks Update

by Kendra Varns Wallis

MPA's annual fall membership meeting was held virtually in October and featured the State of the Parks address by Director Mike Sutherland. During his presentation, Sutherland updated the membership on the status of the new park properties that were acquired during the Nixon administration. In the years since, there have been controversies surrounding the properties (see *Heritage*, September 2017) and the fate of Eleven Point State Park seems to hang in the balance during each legislative session. However, Missouri State Park staff have been busy surveying the properties, performing stewardship activities, developing plans, and seeking public input for conceptual development planning (CDP) for two of the parks. The CDP process is used by state park staff when developing land for a new park and includes a series of public meetings to allow user groups to provide suggestions on the

scope and use patterns of the park. To learn more about the process, visit <https://mostateparks.com/page/55051/conceptual-development-plan-process>

**Bryant Creek State Park** in Douglas County is the furthest along in the CDP process. The final public meeting in December to present the conceptual plan for the property was postponed due to the Covid pandemic. Sutherland stated that this park will be primitive, comparable to Big Sugar Creek State Park in Pineville, MO. Two-thirds of Bryant's 2,917 acres are pristine woodlands that have never been logged; they have mature white oak, black oak, and shortleaf pine, with a biologically rich native understory. Recently, staff discovered through a series of biological surveys that Bryant Creek is the most botanically diverse park in the system with over 930 different plant species, taking the title previously held by Johnson's Shut-Ins.

**Ozark Mountain State Park** in Taney County adds significant cultural and natural resources to the state park system, including several high knobs, glades, hardwood forest, and a long-closed one-room schoolhouse. According to the presentation in October 2019 at the first CDP meeting, Ozark Mountain harbors 742 plant species, seven of them rare, and 53 species of breeding birds. Since then, a team of AmeriCorps volunteers assisted state park staff removing invasive species from the property. Due to the Covid pandemic, the CDP process was on hold until this fall, when regrettably the second planning meeting scheduled for November had to be postponed last minute over concerns about the recent surge.

**Jay Nixon State Park** in Reynolds County near Taum Sauk Mountain and Johnson's Shut-Ins State Parks and the Ozark Trail is currently slated to be managed as part of the Johnson's Shut-Ins management unit. While it is not currently going through the CDP process and there are no plans for development, park officials have been doing natural resource stewardship work and just recently started to fix a lake dam on the property. Since the tract has no public access by road, MPA favors returning it to Taum Sauk State Park for which it was initially acquired and providing trail access by a spur from the nearby Ozark Trail.

With the political issues surrounding the parks and a global pandemic to deal with, staff have faced many hurdles in recent years. MPA appreciates the planning efforts and stewardship activities MSP staff have accomplished to this point. We will continue to update our membership through *Heritage* and periodic emails on the planning, development and openings of these new parks.



## Eleven Point State Park on Trial

by Shirley Wolverson

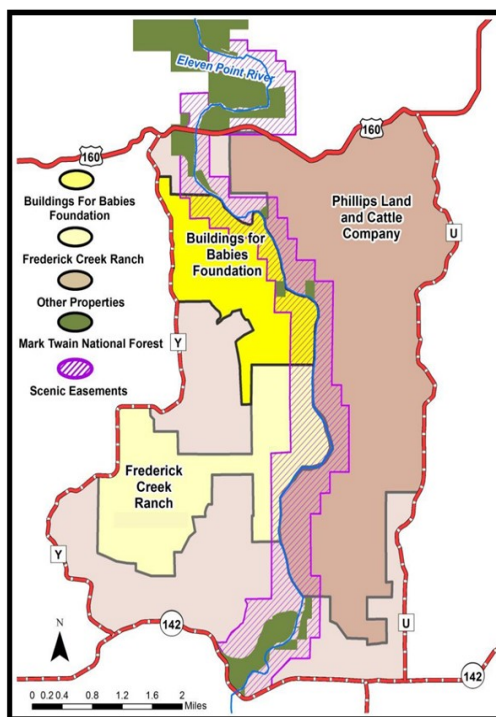
Between scheduled stops in Tennessee and Shannon County, I decided to visit the new Eleven Point State Park that was on trial August 4, 2020 in Oregon County. Ken McCarty, Director of Natural Resources Management for Missouri State Parks (MSP), had testified expertly during most of the day-long trial according to reports, and we in MPA felt the law was on our side.

But it was now the end of September, and the week before, on September 22, 2020, Judge Steven Privette of the 37th Judicial Circuit had issued his decision in the trial *Van McGibney et al. vs. Missouri Department of Natural Resources* and “hereby directed [DNR] to divest itself of ownership of those lands located within the bounds of the Wild and Scenic Easement.” The Missouri Parks Association immediately prepared a resolution and sent it to Governor Parson, Attorney General Schmitt, DNR Director Comer, and MSP Director Sutherland encouraging them to protect this state park property, the integrity of the whole system, and the interests of all of the citizens of the state by appealing the judgement of the court. MPA collaborated with Conservation Federation of Missouri and others to spread the word, and many phone calls and letters went out to encourage the appeal.

As I drove west on State Road 142 in Oregon County, I searched for signs of the park. At the bridge over the Eleven Point was a weather-worn sign for “The Narrows.” The hike to the river was a great way to stretch my legs after the drive. Blue Spring, Morgan Spring, the Thomasson Mill Site,

and the Mark Twain National Forest (MTNF) campsite by the river testified to the natural and historical significance of this area just downstream from the state park.

Now needing to hurry to beat the early sunset, I doubled back to SR 142, turned west and then north on the first road, County Road Y,



*Eleven Point River and Scenic Easement along seven miles of park property. MDNR Property Acquisition Proposal, 2015*

which I knew would lead past the park to the Highway 160 crossing over the Eleven Point near the upriver end of the state park.

After crossing Frederick Creek, I saw blue signs to my right and a gate with a frame house and some outbuildings; it had to be the Frederick Creek Ranch (see map). Surrounding the buildings were fields; I understand that while the lawsuit has been pending for more than four years the fields continue to be mowed and the fences and buildings must be maintained.

After pausing to admire the view I continued north on Y to the main entrance to Eleven Point State Park. The park is still closed pending the outcome of the lawsuit. Up the hill I could see the distinctive “giraffe” sandstone Pigman Ranch house, where the Beatles stayed after their 1964 St. Louis concert, which I had at-

tended as a pre-teen (Buildings for Babies on the map). Although I know it takes MSP a number of years to go through the conceptual development process and open a park, it was still disappointing that this wonderful tract of land had been stuck in limbo due to the lawsuit and I could not get past the locked gate.

So, I continued toward the junction at Highway 160 just west of Riverton, which like Alton at Highway 19 is known for its river outfitters that provide canoes for floating the Eleven Point. The MTNF put-in here would be readily accessible for state park visitors to use for day floats past the park on the beautiful wild and scenic river! The nine-mile float would end at the MTNF take-out near the Route 142 bridge below the Narrows. Contrary to the judge’s reason for ordering divestment, it seemed obvious to me that park visitors would be encouraged to float the river from and to the current designate MTNF access points. MSP is best positioned to protect the river frontage and to restore the scenic easement from its current overgrown and grazed status to a more natural and primitive state protected from development.



*Pigman House*

Soon after I returned home, Attorney General Schmitt on October 7 filed a notice of appeal on behalf of DNR to the Southern District Court of Appeals in Springfield (new case number SD36846). The Record of Appeal, which consisted of the court filings and a transcript from the trial, was filed as of January 4, 2021. DNR must file its brief to set out its arguments, and back them up with case authority, by March 6, 2021.

Among the points of appeal that the DNR's brief will likely cover are:

- The trial court incorrectly decided the nature of the case (a “non-contested case” in an action brought as a “declaratory judgment”).
- DNR was not arbitrary and capricious in acquiring the Eleven Point State Park.
- DNR does have discretion to manage or restrict access to the Eleven Point State Park in compliance with the Federal Wild and Scenic River Easement.
- The court violated the separation of powers of the executive branch by ordering DNR to sell approximately 625 acres of land.
- The Plaintiff does not have standing or a right to bring the lawsuit against DNR under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- “Public use” does not mean the actual physical presence and access by the public through the Scenic River Easement portions of the park.
- The trial court was wrong in its application of the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and its interpretation of the easement to the facts in this case.

It is our hope that DNR wins the appeal. We will keep you informed through *Heritage*, emails and social media.

## Park Briefs

**Bollinger Mill State Historic Site** won the jackpot as the official commemorative stamp for the Missouri Bicentennial of statehood (1821-2021). George Frederick Bollinger built the original log dam and mill on his Spanish land grant along the Whitewater River in Cape Girardeau County in the 1790s. He served in all four territorial assemblies and rose to president pro tem of the senate after statehood. Bollinger rebuilt the mill on a substantial limestone foundation in the early 1820s; that mill was burned by Union troops during the Civil War and rebuilt on the old stone foundation in 1867 by Solomon Burford, along with the Burfordville covered bridge, both of which still stand.



**Bicentennial commemorative events** will occur throughout 2021, many of them organized locally but coordinated by the State Historical Society of Missouri. We do not yet know when the Missouri stamp will be issued and available for purchase; the 200th anniversary of statehood is August 10. Visit the official website: [missouri2021.org](http://missouri2021.org).

### **Great American Outdoors Act Signed into Law.**

In the June issue of *Heritage*, MPA reported that the act, widely hailed as the most important conservation legislation in the past half century, passed the U.S. Senate in a strongly bipartisan 73-25 vote. The bill moved to the House of Representatives and on July 22<sup>nd</sup> this landmark legislation passed by a vote of 310-107. On August 4<sup>th</sup>, the President signed the act, ensuring full and permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund as well as establishing the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund to support deferred maintenance and infrastructure rehabilitation in national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, BLM lands, and the Bureau of Indian Education. Thank you for contacting your congressional representatives asking for their support to get this legislation passed!

(See “Park Briefs” on Page 6)



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Eleven Point State Park on Trial*

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## ("Briefs" from Page 5)

**Riverpointe Development.** The City of St. Charles is in the process of developing Riverpointe, an entertainment and business district just south of the I-70 bridge over the Missouri River along Bangert Island that will include 122 acres of mixed-use development, virtually all of it on landfill behind a mile-long, 20-foot-high wall. MPA and other conservation groups are concerned about the environmental impact the development will have by walling off more floodplain at a pinch point that is already prone to flooding.

In addition to disrupting riparian ecosystems, the proposed development involves moving more than a mile of **Katy Trail State Park**, popular with bicyclists and walkers, to the top of the wall overlooking the new commercial development. The development would destroy the natural character of the land along this part of the trail and disrupt the delicate fauna and flora of the wetland ecosystem along Bangert Island. MPA and other conservation groups are urging the Corps of Engineers to deny the permit and asking St. Charles officials to explore other options, such as moving the development back away from the river and out of the wetlands and floodplain.

**Nathan and Olive Boone Homestead SHS.** On Saturday, August

15<sup>th</sup>, the Nathan Boone Homestead in Ash Grove was renamed the Nathan and Olive Boone Homestead. The name change honors the contributions of pioneer Olive Boone, Na-



than's wife, who managed the homestead and raised fourteen children on the southwest Missouri frontier during a time when women had no legal rights. When Nathan was away from home on military service much of the first ten years the family lived there, it was Olive who was responsible for maintaining the homestead and caring for the extended family. The name change was advocated by park staff and by Women's Foundation, which also funded several new interpretive panels at the site. Last year, Women's Foundation partnered with MSP to honor the contributions of Annie Van Meter to Missouri by changing the name of the park along the Missouri River in Saline County to Annie and Abel Van Meter State Park. In 1932, "Miss Annie" Van Meter deeded 369 acres to the state of Missouri in memory of her husband, Abel.

**Michelle Soenksen Wins National Award.** The senior naturalist and resource interpreter at Sam A. Baker State Park received the 2020 Master Front-line Interpreter Award from the National Association for Interpretation during its virtual annual conference in November. Michelle has interpreted Missouri's most outstanding natural landscapes and cultural landmarks at four state parks during the past twenty years and excelled in mentoring numerous other interpreters. The award, one of only two in the nation, is presented to an NAI member who has demonstrated a mastery of interpretive techniques, program development, and design of creative projects.

**Rock Island Trail.** The fundraising campaign for the Rock Island Trail, "Connections: The Next Step," continues, led by the Missouri State Parks Foundation. The campaign's first goal is \$9.8 million needed for the state to take title to the property before the property will be transferred to the department to help cover initial development, security, and management costs. Bob Foster has recently been hired as the new executive director of the Missouri State Parks Foundation to work on the fundraising effort. Donations can be made directly through the MSPF website [missouristateparksfoundation.org](http://missouristateparksfoundation.org).