



HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Missouri Parks Association
Post Office Box 8531, Kansas City, MO 64114

Volume 40, No. 3

December, 2022

Susan Flader, Editor

Looking for the Milky Way? Try a Missouri State Park.

By Mary Nemecek

Since the beginning, there has been a dependent and magical relationship between humans and the night sky. The stars kept our calendars, guided navigation, and inspired our imagination. For the first time in our existence, however, the night sky is invisible to many. We have allowed light pollution to obscure our view and sever our timeless relationship with the stars.

“Star gazing is one of those things that until a few decades ago was common; people would go to their grandparents’ farm and look for shooting stars or look at the Milky Way. We are losing some part of what it is to be human if we lose contact with the sky,” says Dr. Vayjujeet Gokhale, Professor of Physics at Truman State University in Kirksville, MO and chair of the Missouri Chapter of the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA).



Milky Way over Mark Twain SP

In areas where the night sky has vanished; it can be startling to see what one has been missing. In 1994 an earthquake shook Los Angeles, CA and caused a city-wide blackout. Residents awoke to find the usual orange and white skyglow replaced by millions of stars twinkling overhead and a mysterious dusky cloud. So concerning was this cloud that some residents began calling 911 to report a cosmic object. It was their first view of the Milky Way.

For others, family trips and vacations are planned to find dark areas that allow the stars to shine with the same clarity and brilliance that our ancestors experienced each night. Today the International Dark Sky Association works to preserve and protect dark sites through responsible lighting policies and public education. In 2001 dark-sky advocates founded the International Dark Sky

Places Program to encourage communities, parks and protected areas around the world to protect dark sites. The locations with the most pristine view of the night sky are awarded a Dark Sky Place designation. These include renowned travel spots such as Grand Canyon and Zion National Parks and Craters of the Moon National Monument.

listed as an Urban Night Sky Place. However, there are many more places with skies dark enough to see the Milky Way (on nights without too much moonlight), allowing us to share a view very close to the one that has always been a part of the human experience. Many of these places are in Missouri State Parks, more than fifty of which have SQM scores higher than 21.1.

Missouri State Parks began introducing visitors to the night sky through star gazing programs led by now-retired park employee Eugene Vale. Two years before the August 21, 2017 solar eclipse that would traverse the state and forty-some state parks, Vale researched the eclipse and voluntarily alerted and trained park staff to conduct special programs in their parks.

In 2015 a map was created from satellite data to determine where the darkest skies remain. You can view this map at www.lightpollutionmap.info. A SQM score (Sky Quality Meter) was given to areas. The darkest skies have scores above 21.1 SQM. The darkest locations in Missouri, from the 2015 map, are Current River, Echo Bluff State Park, and trails of the Roger Pryor Backcountry State Parks, all adjacent in Shannon County and each 21.96 SQM. Don Ficken, board member of the Missouri Chapter of IDA, notes that things may have changed some since 2015 but this map still shows us where we can experience our darkest skies.

Currently, Stacy Park, a local park in St. Louis, is the only place in Missouri to have achieved an IDA designation, now

Vale also introduced astronomy enthusiast Matt Kantola, longtime facility head at Grand Gulf State Park, to Don Ficken and MoIDA, on whose board Kantola subsequently served. Kantola became the champion of dark skies in the state park system. He not only presented education programs at his park and elsewhere, but also advocated within the system for changes in lighting to protect the night sky with park staff and officials and encouraged Dark Sky designation for Missouri’s state parks. He worked consistently throughout the park system to bring more awareness to the importance of connecting local communities to the night sky. He made his own park, Grand Gulf, a pioneer in protecting the night sky and became a dark sky ambassador to its visitors. Tragically, Matt passed away on December 4, 2022. He will be greatly missed by so many.

(See “Night Sky“ on Page 2)

("Night Sky " from Page 1)

The work that Matt started has blossomed and currently Thousand Hills, Castlewood and Knob Noster State Parks are leading the way in working toward protecting and darkening the night sky for park visitors. This includes changing security lights that remain on all night to softer, amber color LEDs and replacing lights that do not need to be on all night, such as lights in the shower house, with motion-activated lights. These state parks, along with support from their local communities, are working towards Urban Night Sky designation.

Dana Ripper, director of the Missouri River Bird Observatory, supported Knob Noster's designation: "An Urban Night Sky Place designation will allow Knob Noster State Park to attract even more visitors who will benefit from the conservation of the night sky. We can be sure that park staff will provide meaningful opportunities for visitors to learn about the importance of dark skies to humans and wildlife."

There is another, very exciting opportunity waiting in the wings. IDA has talked to its Missouri chapter about seeking designation for the entire state park system. Currently, it takes a champion at each park to head up the designation effort. Achieving an Urban Dark Sky designation not only requires effort in preparing and submitting the application but it takes a year or more to receive the designation, all the while working with IDA on public outreach and maintaining dark skies. "It's not just about the designation," Ficken says; "it's about a way of life, and we want you to embed this and to be living this. That includes ongoing outreach, keeping track of lighting measurement each year, and helping to embed dark sky values into the culture of the park and all the way up through the system management."

Ficken is excited at the prospect of having Missouri State Parks included in the program, as individual parks or as a system: "This allows Missouri citizens to recognize these parks as valuable at night, not just during the day, and gives citizens a chance to access the night sky and enjoy the parks more fully." As he also points out, "It would bring worldwide recog-

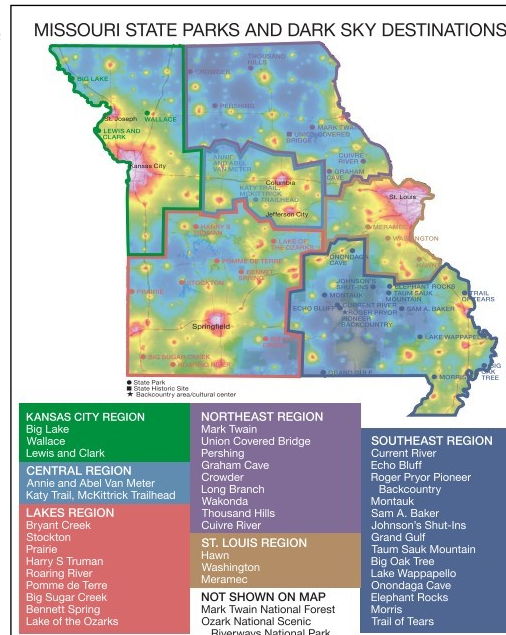
inition to a park system that is already recognized nationally for being great."

So popular has viewing the night sky become, Ficken reports, that libraries have waitlists in the hundreds to check out telescopes. The St. Louis County Library reported a waitlist of 382 people this fall, and the St. Louis City Public Library has more than 170 on its list. Both libraries have requested dozens more telescopes to meet needs.

to start this effort through the parks but then spread to the neighboring towns and cities to improve their lights," says Dr. Gokhale. "There is something to be said about preserving the dark skies in our state and national parks, but that's not where people live. That's where people visit. We also need to take back our night skies where we live."

An example of this is Thousand Hills, which is currently seeking Urban Night Sky designation, but sits on the cusp of the 21.2 SQM rating. With cooperation from the city of Kirksville to reduce light pollution, Thousand Hills could seek further recognition as a Dark Sky Place with one of the most pristine views of the night sky in Missouri. This would set the bar for cooperation between cities and parks toward a goal of reducing light pollution and protecting our night skies.

At home we can take steps such as replacing blue/white LED outdoor lights with more pleasing amber-colored LEDs, using motion sensors to reduce the time a light is on, and making sure light fixtures illuminate the ground in the area intended but not beyond. Dr. Gokhale reminds us, "Dark sky doesn't mean dark ground."



Dark skies aren't limited to just a human experience but are a vital part of the cycle of all life. "The inability to see stars at night because of light pollution is a symptom of the problem and not the problem itself," says Dr. Gokhale. "There is environmental and ecological damage done by blue/white light. Most living species have evolved to interpret blue/white light as daytime. Once you start introducing this artificial light, especially blue/white light, you are messing with those natural rhythms that have existed for not thousands but millions of years," he says, explaining that "Migratory birds evolved to understand directions. Most birds are migratory and most of those migrate at night. It was a mystery—at night how do birds know which way to go? There is increasing research now that some birds know the stars in the sky and that fixed star, the North Star. Sky glow can confuse birds. They lose their way, and a lost bird is often a dead bird."

Connecting Missourians with the night sky also brings more education and solutions for the problems of light pollution that plague wildlife. "The key is

Galileo said, "I've loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night." Stargazing at a dark, unpolluted night sky is one part of our human heritage that remains unchanged and connects us to generations thousands of years past.

For more about Missouri dark skies, <https://darkskymissouri.org/>.

George Kastler, 1943-2022

by Director David Kelly

George Kastler, longtime Chief Naturalist in MSP, passed away December 29. He was a role model for state park employees, especially those who started out as interpreters for the park system. George was instrumental in starting our nationally recognized seasonal interpretive training and helped recruit seasonal interpreters, many of whom spent their entire careers with state parks. George is one of the first people I met when I started with parks. I remember his friendly nature, encouragement and willingness to help out in any situation. He will be missed by all who knew him.

President's Message: Celebrating MPA's 40th

by Larry Larson

What would make my wife Hendra and me travel across Missouri from Carl Junction to Ste. Geneviève? We were on our way to join the 40th Anniversary celebration of the Missouri Parks Association. Thankfully, our trip to Ste. Geneviève was reasonably short compared to the 40 years we were celebrating.

Never one to make a long story short, I'm going to veer off path a bit. State Parks have been around since the first parks were acquired about 1924. By 1928, the state had fourteen parks including two historic sites and the system continued to grow.

Hendra was visiting family this past summer and while looking at some old family photos they found a state park brochure from the early 1950s. Twenty-five parks and historic sites were listed, affording "scenic beauty and historic significance. The parks contain a variety of scenery including giant springs, high hills, and deep valleys, caves, swift flowing streams and forested areas. Material improvements have been made in such a way as to not sully Nature's pristine handiwork." The brochure also covered costs, stating there are "no charges except for special privileges which create additional operating or maintenance costs." There were—and still are—no charges for admission, picnicking, or for use of the nature trails. Camping was 50 cents per day; cabins, hotel rooms, and meals: "reasonable rates."

The park system's long tradition of preserving, protecting, and interpreting our great natural and cultural resources, along with quality recreational experiences, for free, with affordable rates for extra services, perennially pushes up against the budgets for operations. It was out of a particularly severe financial crisis in the early 1980s, with the park budget slashed to only half of what it had been, that the Missouri Parks Association was born forty years ago with a strong advocacy mission. It would be "an independent citizens organization dedicated to the protection, enhancement, and interpretation of Missouri state parks and historic sites."

With that mission, MPA immediately became a leader in an effort to secure more stable funding for state parks. In

our very first legislative session, we won passage of a referendum on a Parks and Soils Sales Tax; we then forged key partnerships to help educate Missourians and encourage their "YES" votes for the tax on a statewide ballot in 1984. The tax had to be renewed every ten years, so many of us remember gathering signatures for initiative petitions at Walmart entrances, street corners, and county fairs as we greeted citizens and encouraged them to sign and join us in supporting our wonderful parks. The task became a little less daunting after our big, beautiful state park book was finally published in 1992 and more people, including legislators, began to appreciate what jewels we have in Missouri.



MPA at Felix Vallé, Larry on Right

MPA continues to educate and advocate on matters that affect the system as a whole as well as particular parks, in addition to supporting our Underserved Populations Outreach Program (UPOP, f. 2000) to help youngsters experience our parks and our Seniors to Parks Program (f. 2015). In this 40th year, we have begun a new small grant program benefiting parks directly and through park friends groups.

We came together in Ste. Geneviève October 15th and 16th to celebrate at our 40th Annual Gathering. Saturday, we met at the Ste. Geneviève Community Center with opening remarks by MPA President Terry Whaley. We received a superb State of the State Parks presentation by Director David Kelly, who provided a highly informative overview of where state parks are and where we are going. It looks to be a very busy and exciting future. Kelly was followed by MPA co-founder and board member Susan Flader, who regaled us with great insight and humor on the accomplishments and lessons of our first 40 years. The only thing missing from the morn-

ing session was more time to hear more.

After a box lunch, we descended on Ste. Geneviève for behind-the-scenes tours of the Green Tree Tavern, which was among those donated by MSP to the new Ste. Geneviève National Historical Park, and the Felix Vallé House State Historic Site. This was not the first time some of Missouri's finest resources became the nucleus of a new national park; three of the crown jewels from the earliest days of the park system—Big, Round, and Alley Springs—were transferred to the Ozark National Scenic Riverways (est. 1964). We had a wonderful afternoon immersing ourselves in the deep history of this early French settlement. A big thank you to our guides. We then retired to the lovingly restored historic Lalumondiere and Boyer Houses for a happy hour hosted by the owner, former state park director and MPA co-founder John Karel. The recurring theme here -- not enough time for all. Then back to the Felix Vallé House for dinner under a big tent with a 40th Anniversary cake. It was the perfect way to top off the day.

On Sunday morning, we met at the Community Center for our annual meeting of members. Originally, we planned to meet at the open shelter at Hawn State Park, but as it was chilly, we went for warmth. I want to thank everyone in attendance for their discussion and ideas. One of those ideas has already been implemented! We now have a QR code that we will be adding to all our documents. During our annual election of board members and officers, I became your new president, so a little bit about me. Most all of you know me as Larry; that may be an alias for Lorence which I only use for legal matters, the first day of school, or a new job. Elected president? Nope; still Larry. My other nickname Prairie Larry just won't work for MPA. I taught school for a while but most of you know me from my thirty-plus years working for State Parks, many of which were spent at Prairie State Park, where I now volunteer as a retiree! I look forward to serving you as we support Missouri State Parks.

We then traveled to Hawn State Park, another of our park system's crown jewels, where we enjoyed a refreshing hike along Pickle Creek. What a way to close out the weekend! Our smiles lasted all the way back across the state.

State of the Parks

by Kendra Varns Wallis

A highlight of MPA's gathering each year is the State of the State Parks address, delivered this year by Director David Kelly. Members were awestruck to hear about all the positive projects and programs underway in the parks. Forty years ago, state parks were in a dire financial crisis; the situation today is vastly changed. The current state of the park system overall is very strong with a laser focus on the mission to preserve and interpret the state's most outstanding natural landscapes and cultural landmarks and provide outstanding recreational opportunities compatible with those resources.

2023 Capital Improvements and Revenue Bond Projects.

There is a total of \$187.5 million in 2023 capital improvement funds on the books. As MPA has previously reported (see *Heritage* December 2021) Missouri State Parks is undertaking 28 projects to be funded by \$60 million in revenue bonds at 22 different parks across the state. Luckily the bonds were purchased in a year when interest rates were lower! Projects have begun with Johnson's Shut-Ins, Onondaga Cave, Montauk and Roaring River State Parks followed by Big Lake, Current River, Echo Bluff, Lewis and Clark, Table Rock, Wakonda, Watkins Mill and Weston Bend, and others in the next few years. The funds will be used primarily for camping and lodging facilities that will bring revenue needed to repay the bonds while satisfying a growing demand.

A "visioning exercise" has begun for Babler State Park's planned 2025 work on the old lodge that was accepted back after years of use by the Division of Youth Services and, although in good shape, it needs renovation prior to use. Another \$8 million in Land and Water Conservation (LWCF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds will be used along with the bonds for projects bringing the total to \$68 million.

Appropriations from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds contained \$40 million for 42 water and wastewater projects in state parks and planning has begun. FY 2023 appropriations also contained \$79.5 million for capital improvement projects.

The FY 2024 DNR budget request includes the furniture, fixtures, and equipment that will be needed for the new revenue bond facilities, as well as additional capital improvement funds for statewide renovation and new construction at Shepherd of the Hills State Park (Phase I) and a splash pad at Big Lake State Park to replace the aging pool. A large Trails, Roads and Parking package will include a deck for the Route 66 SP bridge over the Meramec River, a partnership with Great Rivers Greenway and the Missouri State Parks Foun-



Director David Kelly

ation, for its 100th anniversary in 2026. Always in the budget are windows, roofs, buildings, campgrounds, day use areas, lodges, and other items that require continuing maintenance and repair due to aging and use. A more accurate list of these items is being compiled for reference by the legislature during budget negotiations.

Rock Island Corridor. Coming off a devastating end-of-session zeroing out of \$71 million in ARPA funds to begin construction of the Rock Island Trail (see *Heritage*, July 2022), Director Kelly had some positive news about the corridor. The city of Owensville was awarded a \$500,000 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant from the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission. The grant is for local development of the former Rock Island rail bed into a walking and biking trail inside the city limits. The city agreed to contribute up to \$100,000 in local funding for the project, which will pay for materials and labor for constructing approximately 2.4 miles. The cities of Belle and Eldon received Recreational Trail Program (RTP) Grants to develop

the corridor within city limits. RTP is an assistance program of the US Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, and the cities are responsible for a minimum 20 percent match.

Thousand Hills State Park Trails

Project. The ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Carolyn Bagley Harding Trail, attended by Governor Parson, took place in October. This trail completes phase two of the Forest Lake Area Trail System (FLATS) at Thousand Hill SP and includes the installation of a half-mile-long, paved walking and bicycling trail that connects Campground 1 to the park office and extends down to the existing Forest Lake Trail in Camp-ground 2. An anonymous donor gave \$250,000 to complete the project. The same donor, who once lived in the area, previously donated \$250,000 to assist in building a new seawall and boat docks completed in 2019. The new trail provides direct access to the day-use area, creating a safer experience for visitors.

Conceptual Development Process.

Conceptual development plans (CDPs) guide the future use and development at each state park and historic site. There are five phases of the CDP process: data gathering, drafting, public feedback, finalizing the plan, and implementation. Shepherd of the Hills State Park near Branson, formerly Ozark Mountain State Park—renamed during the CDP process based on public feedback—is in the final CDP stages. The final CDP, a video of the meeting, and the surveys are available on the CDP page at mstateparks.com.

Owing to its complexity, the Rock Island Corridor has been undergoing a unique series of community engagement meetings that continue while the master plan is being developed. In addition to planning for new parks, some existing parks—currently including Finger Lakes, Ha Ha Tonka, Elephant Rocks, and the Pershing Boyhood SHS—undergo the same process. Scott Joplin House SHS, also in the process of reviewing its CDP, unfortunately experienced a break-in two weeks prior to our gathering. The perpetrator did

significant damage including broken windows and artifacts. The house is closed for extensive work before it reopens in February 2023.

Bronco Fund and Learn2 Climb.

Missouri State Parks received a \$20,000 grant from the Bronco Wild Fund for its very first introductory outdoor rock-climbing program at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park this fall. Participants learned the basics of outdoor rock-climbing safety and technique from a certified instructor and then had the opportunity to try it out on the impressive rock formations at Johnson's Shut-Ins. Also, MSP is working with Beta Fund to assess five climbing areas in the system, and a new official climbing route is under development at Washington State Park.

Year to Volunteer at Mark Twain State Park.

Year to Volunteer is an RV-centric volunteer organization that rallies volunteers from all over the country to help improve parks and communities. This fall the group visited Mark Twain SP; projects included reroofing the nature center, rebuilding a deck and building a privacy fence at the park residence, repairing trail bridges, staining a kiosk at Union Covered Bridge SHS, and much more. By the end of their stay, they completed 21 items on the staff's list of needed improvements!

Cultural and Natural Resource Stewardship. Missouri State Parks continues to be active on the stewardship front with a focus on restoration of glades at Shepherd of the Hills SP, prescribed fires at parks throughout the state, invasive species control, and baseline survey for flora and fauna at the new parks. In addition to the Natural Resource Stewardship tracker (see *Heritage* Dec 2021), state parks introduced a Cultural Resource tracker in July, to track activity hours and projects monthly. Collections management, historic building maintenance, and historic cemetery maintenance are some of the categories tracked. The data from both trackers can be populated into a dashboard so legislators and the public can see areas of work progress.

What you can do. The cooperative efforts of Missouri State Parks and MPA over the last forty years have been invaluable in promoting, protecting, and educating the public about our state

park system. Your support, membership, and financial contributions have been integral to that success. As we look to the future, there are many ways that each of us and MPA as a whole can support the state park system. Showing up and participating in public meetings, CDP comment periods, and in fundraising efforts for park projects, and advocating to your legislators are just some of the ways we can help! MPA will continue to update our membership through *Heritage* and periodic emails when opportunities arise for support!

Silica Mine Threat at Hawn State Park: Update

by Shirley Wolverson

The July 2022 *Heritage* reviewed the issues surrounding a silica sand mining and processing operation proposed by Nexgen Silica LLC opposite the entrance road to Hawn State Park from Highway 32 in Ste. Genevieve County. The proposed mine poses a threat to Hawn and its natural areas as well as nearby Hickory Canyons Natural Area and Horton Farm Conservation Area managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation.

After the Missouri Mining Commission (MMC), staffed by MoDNR, on June 30 issued Nexgen's requested land reclamation permit—the first step in the mine permitting process—Operation Sand, a group of neighboring landowners formed to fight the mine, filed a complaint with Missouri's Administrative Hearing Commission (AHC). On November 15, the AHC issued its recommendation "that the MMC reverse its decision to issue a permit to Nexgen Silica, LLC, because it was issued unlawfully in that Nexgen did not comply with the requirement to list all known property owners on its application and to list a source granting it a legal right to mine the area in its mine plan." The MMC is scheduled to meet on January 5, 2023, to decide whether to rescind the permit.

Meanwhile, in a lawsuit filed by Nexgen against the Ste. Genevieve County Commission, the County Health Commission, and the individual commissioners seeking injunctive relief from a new county ordinance with setbacks that would prevent a mine at the site, subpoenas and requests for production of documents and response to inter-

rogatories have been issued and depositions taken, but no trial date has been set.

Nexgen applied for a water permit, the second required permit, and the Draft Missouri State Operating Permit MOG491545 generated many public comments. The MoDNR regional office, in a letter dated December 27, 2022, claimed many comments were outside the scope of the Missouri Clean Water Law, that the case was not made to issue a site-specific permit, and that the general permit is "protective of surface water quality, aquatic life, and downstream surface water uses." MoDNR declined to hold a public meeting on the water permit. Nexgen has not yet applied for an air pollution control permit—the third step. At this point the county ordinance continues to be the most restrictive legal document in place.

Independent of other concerned parties, Friends of Hawn Association executed a legally binding agreement with Nexgen by which Nexgen agreed to increase the surety bond amount from the statutorily required amount of \$61,500.00 to \$200,000.00 prior to removing any overburden from the site, further restrict the hours during which blasting would occur, further abate noise pollution through the construction and maintenance of an earthen berm at least 30 feet in height between the facility and Highway 32, and address light pollution through the use of outdoor lighting fixtures that are designed and positioned to prevent glare and light pollution. This agreement pertains only to the land reclamation permit issued by MoDNR that is currently being recommended for rescission by the AHC; it does not preclude Friends of Hawn from further involvement in the permitting process or from legal challenges as it deems appropriate.

In short, the mining threat at Hawn is stymied at present but not over.

Please refer to the July 22, 2022, edition of *Heritage* for background information and contact information for Operation Sand, who will continue with their attorney to fight to prevent the construction of this mine in their backyards and near the Hawn State Park front entrance road.



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December 2022

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Bryant Creek State Park is Open

By Kendra Varns Wallis

Bryant Creek State Park opened to the public on September 23rd. Senator Karla Eslinger cut the ribbon with Reps. Travis Smith and Don Mayhew, and all three spoke of their excitement for the opening of Missouri's newest park.

Visitors to the park will experience the magnificence of the Ozarks in the long ridgetop views across deep forested hollows and the crystal waters of Bryant Creek, which borders the park to the north. A primary focus of the park is to restore, rehabilitate and preserve the forested watershed in order to protect the surface and groundwater flow into the creek.

Located in southern Douglas County, near Ava, the park is home to a diverse range of natural communities and ecosystems, including glades, fens, forests and riparian zones, which support a rich array of native plants. Two-thirds of Bryant's 2,917 acres are pristine woodlands that have never been logged. The mature white oak, black oak, and shortleaf pine (Missouri's only native pine species) provide significant wildlife habitat, especially for migratory birds. The park is also home to at least sixty kinds of mosses, liverworts and hornworts. In all, Bryant Creek contains 940 different species of plants, nearly a third of Missouri's total known species of flora, making it the most botanically diverse park in the system, surpassing Johnson's Shut-ins, which had long held

that honor. As it happened, it was Paul Nelson, author of *The Terrestrial Natural Communities of Missouri*, who was contracted by MSP in retirement to con-



Rep. Smith, Sen. Eslinger, Rep. Mayhew

duct the botanical survey of the new park that confirmed the new title, just as it had been Nelson, early in his career as chief of natural history for the park system, who had conducted the surveys that confirmed Johnson's Shut-ins as the most botanically diverse state park.

The park is still in the development phase, with the first phase complete. Two trails and an accessible overlook, vault toilet and finished parking area are available for public use in the north half of the park. In the FY 2023 budget, the state legislature appropriated \$600,000 for phase two, which will include devel-

opment of the south day use area, multi-use trails, and hiking-only trail network expansion. In phase three, a camping area with fire rings and picnic tables will be established for tent camping.

The Court Has Spoken: Eleven Point State Park Wins

by Shirley Wolverson

Your patience and persistence paid off! On November 1, 2022, the Missouri Supreme Court denied the application from the original petitioners to transfer the case, so the Court of Appeals judgment of August 26, 2022, that reversed the Circuit Court decision of September 22, 2020, to require Missouri State Parks to divest itself of the deeded easement lands in Eleven Point SP will stand. State parks staff can now proceed with public conceptual development plan meetings for this long-sought state park. Many of you heeded our pleas for years to ask your representative and senator not to authorize the sale of the park, and the bills failed to pass. No such bills have been pre-filed for the coming session, so it looks as if you along with the Missouri Appellate and Supreme Courts got the message across that they can't sell our state parks!

David Shorr, 1955-2022

Former DNR Director David Shorr (1993-1997) died unexpectedly Dec.26. An accomplished attorney in environmental and water law and an advocate for state parks, he oversaw recovery from the 1993 and 1995 floods and hired Doug Eiken as MSP director.