

The State Park System Returns to the Current River

When Governor Arthur Hyde and his new game and fish commissioner Frank Wielandy began

searching in 1924 for sites to purchase for Missouri's first state parks, they looked especially at the

beautiful springs and riparian forests along the Current and other Ozark rivers. By the end of the year they had acquired Round Spring and Big Spring on the Current, Alley Spring on the Jack's Fork, and Bennett Spring on the Niangua. But forty-six years later all but Bennett among the state's earliest "crown jewels" were transferred to the National Park Service as part of the deal that created the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.



A restored Alton Club Lodge is envisioned as a central focus of a new state park along the Current River.

Since then many park lovers have yearned for state parks to return to the middle Current River. Now that is about to happen, after Governor Blunt in July blessed the transfer of the former Alton

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MPA to Celebrate 25th Anniversary at Arrow Rock

The Missouri Parks Association, founded in fall 1982, will celebrate its 25th anniversary at the first historic site in the state park system, Arrow Rock, during September 28-30. In fact, the anniversary dinner will be served at the Arrow Rock Tavern, which was built by John Huston in 1834 and has been serving meals continually ever since. The tavern, near the start of the old Santa Fe Trail, was refurnished in 1912 by the Daughters of the American Revolution, who encouraged the state to purchase the structure in 1923 before any other state park land had yet been acquired.

Though the highway sign says Arrow Rock's population is 79, it annually hosts more than 150,000 visitors and last year was named one of a Dozen Distinctive Destinations in the United States by the National

Trust for Historic Preservation. But today the community feels gravely threatened by a proposed 4,800-hog CAFO (Confined Animal Feeding Operation) just two miles west. So MPA returns to Arrow Rock both for nostalgia and for business.

Early arrivals may learn about another recent controversy, the dumping of sediment from the construction of a chute through the Jameson Island Unit of the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in the Missouri River just upstream from Arrow Rock by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Troy Gordon of Friends of Big Muddy will lead us past the town to the river on the new Lewis and Clark Trail of Discovery beginning at 3pm Friday.

(See "Anniversary" on Page 4)

MPA President's Message

Hats Off to Employees of the Year (And All the Others, Too)*by Terry Whaley*

Have you ever been to a state park and wondered ...Who fixes the plumbing, electric, and sewer? Who built that cool trail with the stone steps.....Who figures out what goes onto all those interpretive signs? ...Who handles the 90,000 invoices processed every year by the park division?

Well, the backbone of the organization is an outstanding group of professional park employees who are loaded with initiative, workmanship, and creative problem-solving when it comes to operational challenges in your parks.

MPA is honored to present four awards each year to state park employees in recognition of their continued dedication to your state park system. Without the front line, back stage, boots on the ground, and visionary park employees who know their jobs and our park system inside and out we would not have one of the top-ranked state park systems in the country. So, whether behind the scenes, in the office, or at the bottom of a cave—thank these dedicated professionals on your next park visit.

In March it was my pleasure to present this year's awards—a plaque, an engraved clock and a check—to four employees before their peers assembled at a park division conference at Lake of the Ozarks:



MPA Award Winners (left to right): *Kim Burfield, Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, Facility Manager Award, Mary Stieferman, Central Office, Central Office Award, Terry Whaley, MPA President, Brian Stith, Eastern Parks District, Field Award, Gary Plymell, Ha Ha Tonka State Park, Maintenance Award.*

Brian Stith, field operations coordinator for the St. Louis Area Office in the Eastern Parks District, was recognized as field employee of the year for his leadership in organizing the multi-partner "Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival." He was also honored for his problem-solving abilities and his willingness to oversee issues not only in St. Louis but throughout the eastern district while others were pre-occupied with Johnson's Shut-Ins cleanup and redevelopment.

Kimberly Burfield, who was newly arrived as natural resource manager at Johnson's Shut-Ins when park superintendent Jerry Toops and his family were swept away in the deluge of the Taum Sauk Reservoir failure in December 2005, was recognized for her ability to step into the breach and work with many different people and agencies during an especially difficult time. When Toops took a leave of absence from the park system, Kim was promoted to facility head, the category in which she was recognized. Her positive outlook, her devotion and passion for her job, and her caring attitude and understanding of people have inspired her staff during the reconstruction of the park.

Gary Plymell, maintenance worker at Ha Ha Tonka, was recognized in the maintenance and construction category for his outstanding performance in his daily work and on several special projects. He utilized his resourcefulness and fabrication expertise to build a seawall on the shoreline of Lake of the Ozarks and to build two ingenious cave gates—he designed a cable and pulley system to raise and lower more than five tons of steel in and out of a forty-foot sinkhole at River Cave.

Mary Stieferman, fiscal and administrative manager in the Financial and Information Resource Management Program, was honored as State Park Employee of the Year in the central office category. She was recognized for her ability to interpret all the changes brought on by new laws, regulations and policies and for improving the process of tracking budgets for facilities, districts and programs. Faced with staff turnover, she restructured the section to improve efficiency by cross training employees and building a sense of teamwork.

Conservationists Cooperate for Modest Legislative Success

by Dave Bedan

Conservationists were generally encouraged by the outcome of our 2007 legislative efforts. We managed to sidetrack the bad bills and passed several good ones.

Our success in a challenging legislative environment was the result of many groups and individuals working together. MPA joined a new Missouri Conservation and Environmental Alliance (MCEA) — along with Missouri Votes Conservation (MVC), the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, and Audubon Missouri — to jointly engage a team of hard-working lobbyists, Kyna Iman and Irl Scissors. The Conservation Federation and the Sierra Club also worked closely with MCEA, facilitated by Mark Fogal of MVC. It became obvious that we need more of this kind of cooperative effort in order to make the voice of conservation heard in Jefferson City.

For threatened state parks, the most significant bill sidetracked was SB 364, an effort by the governor, legislative leadership, and the Missouri Farm Bureau to drastically weaken control of the factory “farms” known as confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) by stripping local governments of their authority to pass health ordinances that could control their impact (see *Heritage*, March 2007, regarding proposed CAFOs near Arrow Rock, Battle of Athens, and Roaring River). The bill faced strong opposition in the Senate as a result of effective citizen action, and was declared “dead” in that chamber in April. In the last month of the session some House members tried to amend the language from SB 364 onto various agriculture

bills. In the end, none of the bills with the offending language even got a vote. But neither did a parallel effort to prevent CAFOs from locating within five miles of any state park or historic site. Instead, the legislature talked about establishing an interim group to study the CAFO issue.

Another bad bill sidetracked was the perennial attempt to weaken the rules governing sand and gravel mining in Missouri streams—such as the Meramec along which there are four state parks. The bill was heard in committee and was amended onto a few other pieces of legislation, but none passed. On a parallel track, conservationists have been working with the issue's key backers, especially Representative Loehner (R-Koeltztown), to pursue other solutions that would address landowners' concerns regarding soil erosion and anglers' and conservationists' concerns about the deterioration of rivers and streams due to gravel mining operations.

The most significant measure passed was the “Easy Connect” Act for Homeowners, the full text of which was amended onto SB54, dealing with renewable energy standards for electric power generators. The “easy connect” provision removes most of the major obstacles facing consumers who want to install windmills, solar panels or other small renewable energy sources, and establishes net metering in Missouri. Unfortunately, the bill to which it was attached, though grounded in a good idea to encourage utility companies to generate substantial portions of the electricity they sell from renewable sources, set such low tar-

gets—4 percent by 2012, 8 percent by 2015 and 11 percent by 2020—that many rural electric cooperatives already meet the 2020 goal. Moreover, there is no accountability mechanism by which companies are penalized if they do not meet even these very low standards, and the act may be used as an excuse not to take further action. Its only saving grace is “easy connect.”

Another bill of more direct interest to MPA that finally passed this year was the so-called “Friends” bill, which authorizes the DNR Park Division to enter into cooperative agreements with private non-profits such as friends groups or MPA for the benefit of parks, with provisions for reimbursing costs of facilities or staff support. It is also now a class-A felony to distribute illegal drugs within 1000 feet of any park (but, under current Missouri law, it is perfectly legal to apply CAFO manure up to 50 feet from a park campground, a major concern at Battle of Athens).

The next step in building cooperative efforts among conservation organizations will be the **2007 Missouri Environmental Summit** scheduled for Saturday, November 3 in Columbia, at which we will lay groundwork for the 2008 legislative session. The successful effort on the Easy Connect Act began at last year's Environmental Summit. MPA members are invited to participate, so mark your calendars now for November 3 and check MVC's website: <http://www.movotesconservation.org>.

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Then at 5:30 pm we will meet for a reception and tour of the Lawless Farmstead on Highway 41 just south of Arrow Rock, newly restored by the Friends of Arrow Rock. This citizens group, founded in 1959, has an extraordinary record of accomplishment in restoring buildings, leading tours, and promoting the historic values of the town, in partnership with the Division of State Parks, and it is now leading the defense of Arrow Rock from degradation by an intrusion of modern industrial society, the CAFO.

After hearing State Park Director Doug Eiken's annual "State of the Parks" address at a plenary session in the Visitor Center Saturday morning, a panel will consider the broader topic of "Threats to the Parks," with a special focus on what is happening at Arrow Rock. Since the discussion in MPA's March 2007 *Heritage*, the State Park Advisory Board in July voted a resolution expressing concern about CAFO threats to parks and asking DNR Director Doyle Childers, the governor and legislative leaders to find a solution to protect the parks. A public meeting about the Arrow Rock CAFO the same night made it appear that the permit *would* be issued, despite citizen concern, leading Whitney Kerr of Arrow Rock to announce that when the permit is issued he and others intend to file suit. We will likely learn more at the panel.

The field trip Saturday afternoon will take us to the new Missouri's American Indian Cultural

Center at Van Meter State Park, as well as archaeological sites there, followed by a visit to Sappington Cemetery, burying place of vanquished leaders of Missouri's Boonslick Democracy. A special feature will be a reception hosted by Day and Whitney Kerr at their beautiful antebellum home, Prairie Park, once the home of William Sappington. Then comes MPA's 25th anniversary dinner at the Arrow Rock Tavern, at which Attorney General Jay Nixon has been invited to speak.

All members are invited to stay for the MPA membership and board meetings Sunday morning and a post-conference visit to Boone's Lick State Historic Site on the way home. Or, spend some time visiting more of the sites in Arrow Rock. You won't want to miss this meeting, so put it on your calendar and make your reservations now.



A Big House ceremonial carving was made in June for the museum at Van Meter by Mike Watkins of the Delaware Nation (left). The twelve eyebrows represent the twelve steps to heaven.

MPA 25th ANNIVERSARY MEETING IN ARROW ROCK

SEPT 28-30, 2007

Plan now to attend MPA's silver anniversary meeting September 28-30 at Missouri's first state historic site. with visits also to other revered Boonslick sites: Van Meter State Park and its new American Indian Cultural Center, Sappington Cemetery, Prairie Park, and the Boonslick State Historic Site. The meeting will headquarter at the SHS visitor center in Arrow Rock (660-837-3330). Make your own reservations for lodging at B&Bs: Bunny's (660-837-3352), DownOver (660-837-3268), Borgman's (660-837-3231), or check www.arrowrock.org; there are also motels in Marshall and Boonville (we suggest the Comfort Inn at I-70 & Hwy 5 in Boonville, 660-882-5317) and a state park campground at Arrow Rock (877-422-6766) .

Friday, September 28

- Arrive at Arrow Rock in the afternoon to walk the town
- 3:00 pm** Hike the Lewis and Clark Trail of Discovery to the Missouri River with Troy Gordon, Friends of Big Muddy; meet at trail parking area (north on 2nd St. to end).
- 5:30 pm** Reception, tour and dinner at newly restored Lawless Farmstead (across Hwy. 41 from road to SHS Visitor Center)

Saturday, September 29

- 8:00 am** Registration: Arrow Rock SHS Visitor Center/Museum
- 8:45 am** Welcome: Kathy Borgman, Friends of Arrow Rock; Richard Forry, DSP
- 9:00 am** State of the Parks Address and Discussion (Doug Eiken, Director of State Parks)
- 10:00 am** Panel: Threats to the Parks (John Karel, MPA, moderator; Ken McCarty and Kim Dillon, DSP; Whitney Kerr, Friends of Arrow Rock)
- 12:00 pm** Depart for Van Meter in vans (box lunch along the way)
- 1:00 pm** Visit Missouri's American Indian Cultural Center, archaeological sites (Utz and Old Fort), and natural area boardwalk with park interpreters
- 3:00 pm** Depart Van Meter for Sappington Cemetery and other sites; return to Arrow Rock
- 5:30 pm** Depart from AR Visitor Center parking area to caravan to Prairie Park Reception, hosted by Day and Whitney Kerr
- 7:00 pm** Anniversary Dinner, Arrow Rock (Huston) Tavern; Invited speaker, Attorney General Jay Nixon

Sunday, September 30

- 8:30 am** MPA Annual Members Meeting: SHS Visitor Center
- 9:30 am** Meeting of the Board of Directors (All are welcome to stay)
- 12:00 n** Adjourn Meeting; lunch on your own
- 1:00 pm** Depart for Boone's Lick State Historic Site

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Registration Fee	___ persons	@ \$20	\$ _____
Dinner (Fri)	___ persons	@ \$15	\$ _____
Box Lunch (Sat.)	___ persons	@ \$10	\$ _____
Dinner (Sat.)	___ persons	@ \$20	\$ _____
Total Enclosed _____			\$ _____

Make check payable to **Missouri Parks Association** and mail with form by September 15 to Eleanor Hoefle, MPA Asst. Treasurer, 1234 Hoyt Dr., St. Louis, MO 63137. **Please register in advance.** For questions or late registration call Eleanor Hoefle, 314-869-6534; or Carol Grove at 573-445-4504.

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Club property on the Current just upstream from Round Spring from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to the State Park System. Negotiations are in progress for transfer of the club buildings plus over 800 forested acres west of Highway 19 for a new state park with frontage on the river.

The property, including a lodge and about twenty other rustic wood structures built in the 1930s as a corporate retreat for the Alton Box Board Company, was operated in recent years by MDC as the Presley Education Center, and beloved by many who stayed there. But when MDC sought to tear down the buildings and start over with new construction, historic preservationists and river lovers protested that the buildings were rare survivals of a type of rustic private retreat once common along Ozark streams. And besides, they were on property under scenic easement to the National Park Service and thus could not legally be replaced. To prove their point they

nominated the Alton Club to the National Register of Historic Places and won approval by the Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation after several tense hearings.

The plan is to restore, utilize and interpret the club as in its heyday. "It will be a very special place, unlike any other in the park system," says State Park Director Doug Eiken. The cost for restoration and improved infrastructure is estimated at some \$7 million—money the park division does not have, so it will have to be raised privately or from special sources. This is likely the next project for the fledgling Missouri State Park Foundation, which is nearing completion of its effort to raise matching funds for addition of a hiking/biking structure to the current Highway 63 bridge to link the Katy Trail to Jefferson City.

In addition to offering complementary programs and facilities not now provided by the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, the new park will be the staging area and

hub for managing the network of trails in the vicinity, especially those along the Current River and in the 61,000-acre Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry just east of Highway 19 from the Alton Club tract.

The park division intends to hold public meetings this fall to gather ideas for general management and conceptual development plans it hopes to complete by January, so that fundraising can begin. MPA will participate and we encourage members to get involved as well.



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Return Service Requested

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MPA To Celebrate 25th Anniversary*

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