

## Bill Bryan Named State Park Director

Long-time Missouri environmental advocate Bill Bryan was named by Governor Jay Nixon on September 14 as director of state parks and deputy director of the Department of Natural Resources. This dual role is unprecedented for a Missouri park director, but MPA leaders hope it will provide much needed leadership and coordination at a critical time of both peril and potential opportunity for state parks.

Bryan, age 44, served for nearly two decades in the attorney general's office dealing with environmental issues, many of them involving DNR and state parks. As deputy chief counsel for environmental protection under Attorney General Nixon, he led in efforts to reform



concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), for which he was named Outstanding Public Official of the Year in 1998 by the Sierra Club. In 1999 he co-authored a multi-state brief before the U.S. Su-

preme Court in a seminal Clean Water Act case strengthening the role of citizens in enforcing environmental laws. He was lead attorney on the state's civil litigation against AmerenUE in the wake of the Taum Sauk Reservoir collapse in 2005 that destroyed Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park.

For the first nine months of the Nixon administration, Bryan served as the state's chief information officer for the Office of Administration's Information Technology Services Division. He is expected to begin full time at DNR in early October, taking over as state park director from acting director Dan Paige, who has ably overseen state park operations since Doug Eiken's retirement last May 31, and as DNR

*(See "Bryan" on Page 2)*

## Future Park Funding is Meeting Theme

The funding crisis for state parks and historic sites deepens, affecting staff and operations as well as adding daily to the \$200 million in deferred maintenance and renovation that has been growing for years. MPA is reaching out to build a coalition to help spread awareness of the problem, especially within the state legislature, and is using its annual meeting October 24 at Babler State Park to generate vision and momentum for the effort. Come to share the vision of new state park director Bill Bryan and DNR director Mark Templeton and to share your ideas for helping to develop momentum.

The park funding issue is two-pronged: bringing in sufficient annual revenues to meet day-to-day operating expenses, and acquiring special funds for capital improvements,

mostly maintenance and rehabilitation of existing facilities and infrastructure. Both are in crisis at this time, in spite of the parks and soils sales tax, which was last renewed by the voters in 2006.

Park officials and supporters have known for years that the lines depicting operating revenues and expenses would eventually cross, and that has now come to pass with a vengeance. The day of reckoning was put off by careful management and also by funds from the settlement with AmerenUE following the collapse of the Taum Sauk Reservoir. But the economic collapse of the past year has so reduced sales tax revenues that even the settlement funds can't bridge the gap. The final \$4 million from the settlement will plug only about half of an estimated \$7 million shortfall in

revenue for the current fiscal year, and no one knows how long the economic downturn will last. Already more than 60 full time staff positions have been cut or left unfilled, a number of parks have reduced days and hours, and others may have to be closed for a time.

Meanwhile, the \$200 million backlog of deferred maintenance continues to grow, and park supporters have so far failed to change the entrenched legislative perception that because parks have a dedicated sales tax they do not need help with capital improvements. In fact, the sales tax no longer meets even daily operations, to say nothing of capital improvements. A Joint Committee on Capital Improvements and Leases Oversight met during the summer to

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prioritize projects for any remaining federal stabilization funds, and approved a report September 16 listing about \$1 billion in such projects *without one cent for state parks*.

House Budget Committee chair Allen Ictet had recommended at the committee's initial meeting that the committee not consider any projects from three agencies with their own funding sources—Conservation, State Parks, and Transportation—and that recommendation apparently held despite MPA's having talked with a number of committee members from both parties who indicated their support for considering state park projects. In fact, a committee staffer indicated that no list of state park projects ever came to the staff's attention, despite MPA's having sent a \$75 million list of state park projects to every committee member and then re-submitted the list to the chair prior to the August 1 deadline.

The last chance for parks appears to be a referendum for

a Fifth State Building Fund Bond Issue that would utilize the revenue stream from the impending retirement of the Third State Building Fund Bond Issue of the mid-1980s, of which state parks received approximately ten percent. A joint resolution for such a bond issue limited to institutions of higher education passed the house in the last session and was successfully amended in the Senate Appropriations Committee to include up to \$250 million for other state projects, presumably including state parks. It was withdrawn owing to a threat of a filibuster.

In late June, Governor Nixon wrote legislators to say he was considering calling them into special session to consider a bond package for capital

improvements in time to take advantage of a federal economic stimulus incentive of up to 35 percent of the interest payments on such bonds. Unfortunately, a number of Republican legislators who had supported the bond issue during the previous legislative session backed away from the idea after receiving the governor's letter, and there has been no further word of a special session. Representative Chris Kelly, who shepherded the bond issue measure through the legislature last session, has said he plans to reintroduce it in the coming session.

Come to the annual meeting for an update on these issues and a discussion of future prospects for state parks. In addition to hearing from the



*The Kern-Delassus House, with the largest floor plan of any vertical log French colonial house in Ste. Genevieve, sits forlorn with holes in its roof, its sagging porches removed, and its back wall caving in sixteen years after it came to the historic site in Ste. Genevieve.*

new park leaders, the meeting will feature a panel discussion with representatives from the park division, MPA, the Missouri General Assembly (including Representative Kelly), and the Conservation Federation. MPA encourages attendance also by members of organizations who may help to form a broad coalition for state parks and historic sites at this critical juncture.

*("Bryan" from Page 1)*

deputy director from Joe Bindbeutel, who was transferred to a new position in state government.

Bryan will be assisted in his state park role by Dan Paige, who will continue as deputy director. Paige has been with state parks for 35 years, starting as a seasonal naturalist. He served as assistant or superintendent at five different state parks, then as field operations supervisor for the Eastern Parks District before advancing to deputy director of operations. He will have greatly enlarged responsibilities, as his position is apparently being merged with

that of deputy director for administration Wynonna McClammer, who retired in June after 32 years with the park division. She served as assistant superintendent at Lake of the Ozarks and superintendent of Castlewood as well as in the outdoor recreation grants and special events programs in the parks division headquarters before her promotion to deputy.

MPA leaders have been deeply concerned about the financial stringencies that have resulted in the loss of key positions in top leadership as well as in the professional ranks of the parks division and the parent

DNR, to say nothing of the incredible backlog of deferred capital improvements, but they were heartened by a sense of renewed momentum and vision for parks at a meeting September 16 with DNR director Mark Templeton, Bill Bryan and other officials. Templeton, Bryan and Dan Paige will be at MPA's annual meeting at Babler State Park on October 24 to share their vision. As many members as possible should try to attend the annual meeting this year, to meet the new team responsible for managing the park system and to assure them of MPA support at this difficult time.

## MPA 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting at Babler State Park, October 24-25, 2009

Plan now to participate in MPA's annual meeting at the visitor center in Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park, 800 Guy Park Drive, Wildwood, MO 63005. Lodging is available at Wildwood Hotel, 2801 Fountain Place in the new Wildwood Town Center, at a special rate of \$119.95 including breakfast. To reserve a room call 636-733-9100 or go to [www.wildwoodhotel.net](http://www.wildwoodhotel.net) and let them know you are with MPA. You may also reserve a campsite at Babler by calling toll-free 877-422-6766 or online at [www.mostparks.com](http://www.mostparks.com), or you may find other accommodations in the Chesterfield-Eureka area on-line.

We also encourage attendance from members of other organizations who may help form a coalition to support state parks at this crucial time.

### Saturday, October 24

- 7:30am** Continental breakfast and registration, Babler park visitor center  
**9:00am** Welcome and introduction to the park: MPA Pres. Terry Whaley; Jeff Robinson, Park Superintendent  
**9:15am** State of the Parks address and discussion: Bill Bryan, Director of State Parks  
**10:15** Break  
**10:30** Panel: Park Funding—Challenge and Response  
 The panel will include Dan Paige, Deputy Director DSP; Dave Murphy, Executive Director, Conservation Federation of Missouri; state legislators including Rep. Chris Kelly; and others.  
**12n** Lunch and program, Babler  
**1:00pm** Depart in vans for Babler Education Center, Route 66 State Park, and La Barque Creek Watershed to view facilities, investigate park issues, and visit a future park site not yet open to the public  
**5:30pm** Reception in Babler visitor center  
**6:00pm** Annual dinner: emcee, MPA President Terry Whaley; speaker, Mark Templeton, Director DNR

### Sunday, October 25

- 8:00am** Continental Breakfast, Babler visitor center  
**8:30am** Annual meeting of MPA members, Babler visitor center  
**9:30am** Meeting of MPA board of directors (all are welcome to stay)  
**12noon** Adjourn

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### Registration Form

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$25 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cont. breakfast Sat N/C \_\_\_\_\_ persons

Lunch Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$10 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$25 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cont. breakfast Sunday N/C \_\_\_\_\_ persons \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$60 or \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to **Missouri Parks Association** and mail with form by Friday, October 16 to Eleanor Hoefle, MPA treasurer, 1234 Hoyt Dr., St. Louis, MO 63137. For questions or late registration please contact Eleanor Hoefle at 314-869-6534.



## Youngsters Conquer the Katy

*By Heather Pabst, UPOP KC Coordinator*

Twenty-one eighth graders courageously rode 240 miles across the state of Missouri on the Katy Trail this summer with the support of MPA's Urban Populations Outreach Project. It was the most ambitious event ever for UPOP and gave the kids an amazing and rewarding experience. From Clinton to St. Charles, the Kansas City cyclists of all skill levels from Scuola Vita Nuova Charter School, their teacher, and a parent, led by Kendra Varns of the parks division, biked and camped in record June heat and met success at the finish line.

Training began back in November when the students spent evenings and weekend mornings building endurance for their long ride and learning bike safety and repair. As the ride drew closer, the group worked harder and harder until finally they were in the vans to Clinton. For many of them, this was a brand new experience. Some had learned to ride a bike for the first time, and most had never been camping before, let alone so far away from their homes and families for an entire week. They set up camp each evening after the day's grueling ride, got up at 5 am and took it down again, and took turns volunteering for other duties with the Katy Trail Ride's staff.



The first two days were likely the hardest and certainly the longest at 61 miles on Monday and 64 Tuesday. Having never seen the trail before, the students didn't know what to expect. Traveling with the group for support, I asked for their thoughts at their mid-morning SAG stop on the first day and many replied "painful." The next day, when asked what was the biggest challenge, everyone answered the heat, and so it remained all week. But they did not let that get in the way. Even when some adult riders had to quit due to heat or exhaustion, after

being asked not to go on for their safety, the kids still wanted to finish the day's ride. They became a community and supported and encouraged one another through all their challenges. The group learned

they could accomplish anything they wanted, even if they thought it impossible.

All week other riders were curious and astonished about the kids, asking them where they were from and what they thought about the ride. Those who finished in the lead on the last day clapped and cheered as the others rode in. As they sat on the lawn by the river at St. Charles, the joy and relief on their faces said it all. Everybody had a big smile. Although it may not have been anything like what they suspected, the trip was more than just successful. It was a lifetime experience that they will not forget.



October 2009

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