

Riverways and State Parks Tangled in 2014 Legislative Session

The struggle over a new general management plan (GMP) for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, which led some legislators from the Ozarks to advocate transfer of the Riverways to the state, became entangled with funding prospects for state parks in the 2014 session of the Missouri General Assembly that ended May 16, to the grave detriment of both.

As reported in the Nov. 2013 *Heritage*, the draft GMP was released for public comment November 8. Overflow crowds attended each of four public meetings, and more than 4,000 people submitted written comments, not including names on petitions and form letters. National Park Service staff are still digesting the comments and probably won't issue a summary until later this year, but Superintendent Bill Black has been writing articles in local Ozark newspapers addressing various contentious issues, in-

cluding motorboat limits, horse trails, gravel bar access, and wilderness—all of which have been sadly misunderstood. A one-page list of bullet points issued early in the process by Voice of the Ozarks falsely portraying the GMP as an effort to curtail use of and access to the Riverways provided the talking points for some local political leaders, who rallied supporters. Much local media also gave prominent play to various distortions.

MPA leaders worked with others in Friends of Ozark Riverways to prepare a citizens guide to the GMP, available on the MPA website: <http://parks.missouri.org/IssuesAction/CurrentRiver.aspx>. In general, the entire spectrum of conservation organizations in Missouri



Bluff along Sinking Creek at Camp Zoe in Current River State Park.

and beyond urged support of the substantial NPS effort to produce a balanced range of alternatives that address very real management issues, and most supported the NPS preferred alternative. We know that there are many people in the Ozarks who also support the plan but chose to remain silent in the face of the unrelenting onslaught of negativity.

When the legislative session began in January the final stages of the GMP comment process were still playing out. The Riverways issue became the subject of three resolutions introduced by legislators from the region, one in the Senate introduced by Sen. Cunningham and two in the House by Reps. Richardson and Cookson, each asking the National Park Service to take "no action" on the GMP and, either explicitly or in discussion during hearings, asking the Interior

MPA Annual Gathering: Nov 7-9

MPA's annual gathering of members and friends will headquarter at Montauk State Park November 7-9, with a field trip on Saturday to Current River State Park and the newly acquired acreage at Camp Zoe, on which development of significant visitor facilities will likely be in progress.

Save the dates and book your cabin or motel room now by calling the Montauk concessionaire at 573-548-2434 and telling them you are with the MPA group. Watch for further details about registration and logistics in the August issue of *Heritage*. We hope to be able to celebrate the publication of the new state park book and have copies available for sale and for signing.

President's Message by Steve Nagle:

The Kids of Summer

"Summer time and the living is easy, fish are jumpin,'" and a state park is nigh. In the last issue of *Heritage* I wrote about "A Park for All Seasons"—Lake of the Ozarks State Park, but you know with the coming of the summer breezes it is hard to beat any of Missouri's state parks and historic sites. Let's take a look at the variety of summer activities and natural wonders waiting for us.

Missouri's state parks bring out the kid in all of us. Many of us have our favorite activities and we know where to go, whether it is hiking, fishing, boating, camping, or natural history and cultural interests. This summer parks are offering several new aquatic trails at Table Rock, Stockton, and Finger Lakes, and seventeen parks have kayaks or canoes available for rent. Missouri State Parks has declared 2014 the Year of the Trail, and the governor encourages all of us to register and complete his 100 Missouri Miles Challenge.

Adding to this list are outstanding educational opportunities for youth and adults such as the **Explorer Program**. During these summer months park visitors can gain a new appreciation for natural and historic settings by participating in this program where they earn explorers patches and stars as visible symbols of their commitment to the living environment. To learn more about this exciting educational challenge just visit mostateparks.com or call 800-334-6946.

Another popular program receiving statewide acclaim is the **State Parks Youth Corps**. Be sure to let your special youths know about this. The program runs from May 1 – December 31 with a 300-hour term of employment at \$7.50 an hour. Young Missourians ages 17-23 may gain valuable work experience and at the same time enjoy an unforgettable life experience working in the outdoors. Google Missouri State Park Youth Corps for more details on the application process.

The Missouri Parks Association recently sent out our annual appeal asking for support for our **Urban Populations Outreach Program (UPOP)**. This exceptional

program has gained momentum every summer, but it depends on special gifts from MPA members like you. This summer more than seven hundred inner city kids in St. Louis, Kansas City, Columbia and Joplin will get their first opportunity to escape city streets and experience first hand our wondrous state parks and historic sites. The program focuses on elementary and middle school kids, providing them transportation and learning experiences at parks such as Babler, Castlewood, Rock Bridge, Roaring River, Prairie and Katy Trail and at cultural sites like Watkins Mill, First Missouri State Capitol, Scott Joplin Home and the Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio. A cadre of dedicated coordinators implement the program each summer from the

Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center in Joplin, the Anita Gorman Discovery Center in Kansas City, Friends of Rock Bridge State Park in Columbia, and The Green Center in St. Louis.

Opportunities abound this summer for all of us kids! Space does not allow me to brag about all things happening in our Missouri state parks and historic sites, but rest assured summer-

time is made for enjoying our parks. Let's all heed the call.

Did I mention sailing lessons at Stockton Lake State Park?

More than 700 UPOP kids receive their first introduction to state parks each year.



Q&A with Bruce Schuette, Cuivre River State Park

with Mary Barile

Editor's note: Bruce Schuette is retiring June 30 after more than thirty-six years as the naturalist at Cuivre River in Lincoln County northwest of St. Louis, a virtually unparalleled tenure at a single park.

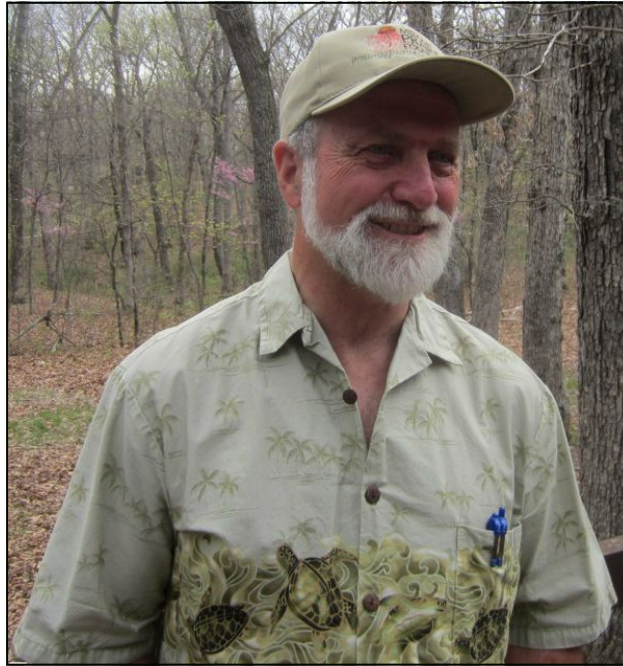
You have been at Cuivre River State Park for a while. What brought you there and why did you stay?

I started with state parks in the summer of 1976 as a seasonal naturalist assigned to Montauk. I decided to do it again the next summer, and they moved me to Cuivre River. I had just graduated from MU with a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries. I really liked the park, so when they created a full-time naturalist position at Cuivre I applied, got the job, and started in January 1978. I met my wife Ann on a hike in the park, and once we got settled in with a family, and with all the interesting things we were finding in the park, all the ecological management we were doing and the results we were seeing, I never really had any desire to move somewhere else. And now, 36 years later, the rest you could say is history.

What makes Cuivre River so special to Missouri?

Protection of the park's resources began in 1934, but only in the past 25-30 years has it become known as one of Missouri's most important natural resource parks. At 6,400 acres it is the system's sixth largest park, and size can matter when providing space for larger populations of flora and fauna that are more viable into the future. It also matters to some species that need large blocks of natural habitat, like the

rare Cerulean Warbler, which is of great conservation concern in the whole eastern U.S. and nests in the park. Cuivre has the largest natural area in northern Missouri (Lincoln Hills, 1,872 acres) and two wild areas.



Cuivre River State Park Naturalist Bruce Schuette.

In glaciated northern Missouri many natural communities are very rare because of the geologic history of the region or because of habitat destruction and alteration. Within the park's extensive woodlands are islands of limestone glades, karst topography, an Ozark border headwaters creek, and savanna and prairie remnants. This diversity of natural communities has accounted for a wonderful diversity of flora and fauna. More than 4,000 different species have been recorded in the park in the last 36 years, including over 710 native vascular plants, 180+ lichens, 175 birds, and 1,400+ beetles. Thirty species are of state conservation concern, two are new to science, ten are known from no other location in Missouri, and many are at the very edge of their range. Without extensive research

into the natural resources of the park we wouldn't even know about many of these treasures.

Tell us about your work on the trails there. How do you decide what to interpret along a trail? What's your favorite?

For most groups you want a trail that isn't too long, about a mile is often ideal. A wooded trail may have a good wildflower display in the spring, while a trail in the prairie will have better wildflowers in the summer or impressively tall grasses in the fall. As with all programs, you want to have a theme for a hike with stops to illustrate it, but people are likely to see and ask about other things, so the more familiar you are with those possibilities the better you can work those 'teachable moments' into the theme.

It's difficult to pick out a favorite trail. When I started in the park there were few trails, no trail signage or maps and no real trail system. Over the years I've laid out most of our eleven trails and done signage, maintenance and tours, so almost every trail has unique features and special memories for me. The best trails to hike are: Blazing Star, Frenchman's Bluff, Big Sugar Creek, Lone Spring, North Loop of Cuivre River, and parts of the Lakeside Trail, as well as the short Prairie, Mossy Hill, and Turkey and Hamilton Hollow trails.

Could you describe the amphitheater? Why was it built? What kinds of presentations take place there?

The amphitheater is located in the campground, though everyone is welcome at programs. I've been in-

("Schuette" from Page 3)

involved with presenting or scheduling seasonal naturalists' programs from May to October every summer since 1977. But we didn't have the amphitheater until 1980. Before that we would hang a piece of plywood on the water tower, set the projector on a stump and plug it into the pump-house. People had to bring their own chairs or blankets. The amphitheater was a huge improvement: big screen, projector stand, benches and a beautiful wooded setting. Our amphitheater was the prototype for others in the system ever since.

Cuivre River State Park has prairie areas. What kind of work does it take to keep a prairie healthy?

We are very fortunate to have remnants of original prairie in the park, because Missouri has lost over 99.5% of its original prairie. Prairies are fire-dependent natural communities, so prescribed burns are critical to their restoration. Cuivre's Sac Prairie was the first ever to be prescribed-burned for ecological purposes in a Missouri state park, in 1976. The other remnants here came under fire management by the early 1980s. Since then, portions of the park prairies have been burned most years. The rejuvenating effect of burns on these natural communities is amazing. One of our prairies has a large stand of rattlesnake master, a very high quality plant of native grasslands, and we have species not seen in the St. Louis region in decades even though

they were reported historically.

It is also critical to keep after invasive species (both native and non-native), which can very quickly threaten the native prairie species. Recognizing the problem sooner rather than later and beginning control efforts is extremely important. Keeping brush and trees from taking over grasslands, especially after so many years without burns before our management began, is also a challenge. Besides burns, we have also used occasional brush-hogging or cutting to battle invading trees. We have also been working to bring back savanna habitat—prairie groundcover with open-grown trees—using basically the same techniques as for prairies. In Missouri, existing savannas are even rarer than prairie.

What is your favorite Cuivre River story (or stories)?

There are so many stories from doing programs, talking to visitors, doing the management. It is very rewarding when people comment about learning something they never knew, or kids' eyes light up when they touch a snake for the first time. I remember a nature hike on Frenchman's Bluff decades ago when a father asked his daughter to 'be careful where you step because this is a state park and we don't want to do

anything to hurt nature here.' His interest in teaching his daughter to appreciate and protect nature has stayed with me all these years.

Recently we have been getting many compliments on how good the woodlands look from doing the prescribed burns. Last summer one of the best botanists in the state, who was in the park for the first time, said he thought we had some of the best-looking woodlands he had seen. I thought maybe he was just being nice, but several weeks later I saw his wife who said he was so impressed by the park that he called to tell her before he even got home. It means a lot that the results of this restoration are being noted and appreciated by experts and non-experts alike.

What do people need to do to ensure Cuivre River State Park remains a treasure for all of us?

The most critical need is to maintain a strong commitment to actually carrying out the natural resource management goals and objectives for the park. The continued use of prescribed burns has been a great tool for restoring and maintaining fire-dependent prairies, savannas, glades and extensive woodlands. No longer part of a large functioning wild landscape, the park is now an isolated island, and these treasured rare natural communities must be provided the factors needed to maintain them. It is also absolutely necessary to control invasive exotic species like garlic mustard, bush honeysuckle and others. Several decades of aggressive control efforts have paid benefits. However, even one or two years without continuing these efforts will cause serious damage and degradation of resources as well as waste decades of effort.

Our mission is to preserve and interpret the finest examples of Missouri's natural landscapes. Because interpreting these landscapes depends on preserving them for people to experience, what can be more important than to maintain the programs and actions needed to protect our park's natural resources?



Prairie Blazing Star and Rattlesnake Master bloom at Cuivre River State Park.

("Riverways" from Page 1)

Department to negotiate the transfer of the Riverways to the state. In advocating transfer to the state they were following the lead of US Congressman Jason Smith of Salem, who had already introduced a bill in the US House.

MPA leaders testified in opposition to the resolutions, pointing out that no one was advocating reducing the number of visitors; that trails or accesses to be closed were unauthorized in the first place but that NPS was proposing to design new ones; that annual spending by ONSR visitors, nearly ninety percent of which is non-local, amounts to some \$65 million a year, an amount that would surely be significantly reduced if the Riverways ceased to be a national park; that transfer of the Riverways to the state (which is highly unlikely to happen in any case) would starve all the other state parks to come up with some \$8 million in annual operating costs for ONSR plus an additional \$32 million in deferred maintenance. And finally, that national parks are overwhelmingly popular with the American people across the political spectrum, and that by far the best course is for all of us to work together *with the ONSR* to find solutions to problems that we all—including the National Park Service—recognize.

Legislators from the region were so adamant about the issue they even persuaded the House Budget Committee to support a \$6 million appropriation to state parks from "surplus funds" to operate the Riverways. And they backed it up with \$1E (for estimated—meaning, in this case, whatever it takes) from the Park Sales Tax. This effort was strongly opposed by MPA and other organizations. There was a long and heated debate in committee late one night featuring Democrats Chris Kelly (Columbia) and

Jill Schupp (St. Louis) against Ozark Republicans led by Rep. Robert Ross, after which the committee voted on nearly straight party lines to uphold the appropriation. A similar debate and result occurred on the floor of the House.

Then the Senate Appropriations Committee deleted both funding measures, mostly because senators didn't approve of either surplus appropriations or open-ended estimates. The full Senate followed suit, despite the fact that it had earlier voted on nearly straight party lines to approve the Senate resolution asking for transfer of the Riverways to the state. In conference committee, the two houses split the difference, deleting the \$6 million, since there was nearly no chance for surplus funds anyway by that time, but leaving the \$1 E—which could potentially be even worse for parks.

Meanwhile, a \$600 million bonding bill (SB 723) for maintenance and repair of state facilities sponsored by Senator Mike Parson (R-Bolivar), was being quietly discussed behind closed doors by Senate and House leadership to reach a compromise that could pass the Senate without triggering a filibuster. A compromise was reached and the bill passed the Senate. A resolution accompanied SB 723 that included a list of each of over three hundred projects, including a \$30 million item for renovations to state parks that apparently was included at the request of Senator Parson, and this resolution also passed the Senate. The word was that the bonding bill and the list would go to the House as a package, and if the House tried to make any changes the measure would not be reconsidered by the Senate.

In the last week of the session the bonding bill (SB 723) was taken up by the House, which approved it in amended form; but the Senate

refused to concur with the change, so the House rescinded the amendment and approved the original bill, which is now on the governor's desk. The resolution outlining projects, however, was never taken up by the House, so it did not pass. With no supporting resolution to designate what projects are to be funded, many special interest groups, park supporters included, will be talking with budget and appropriations committee members next session to assure that their projects are in the list to receive some of those much-needed funds.

In the chaotic final hours of the legislative session, yet another potentially devastating act unfolded affecting state park funding, this one not reported until the governor called attention to it nearly two weeks after the session ended. On that final Friday, the General Assembly passed eight separate bills containing more than a dozen special sales tax exemptions for special interests that would result in reduction of state and local revenues by more than \$776 million annually. As the governor put it: "From the special breaks for fast food restaurants to power companies, the only thing these giveaways have in common is that they were not accounted for in either the state budget or in the budgets of the cities, counties, and fire districts they would affect." For state parks, it is estimated that the Park Sales Tax collections that must cover at least three-quarters of the operating costs of the entire system would be reduced by some \$5 million, or more than 12 percent a year.

Fortunately, the governor may veto bills and exercise a line-item veto over items in the budget, and park supporters will be asking him to exercise his veto on matters that affect the wellbeing of our state park system. Of course, any bills

(See "Riverways" on Page 6)



May 2014

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLUMBIA, MO
PERMIT #338

Post Office Box 30036
Columbia, MO 65205

Return Service Requested

*Riverways and State Parks Tangled in Legislature
Q & A with Bruce Schuette*

<http://parks.missouri.org>

Ozzie Overby

Dr. Osmund (Ozzie) Overby, 82, an internationally known architectural historian, leader of the movement for historic preservation in Missouri, and esteemed member of the MPA board of directors passed away June 1 in Columbia.

Born in Minneapolis of Norwegian heritage, he earned a BA in mathematics and philosophy at St. Olaf College, served during the Korean War as a military band musician, and then earned an MA in architecture and a PhD in Art History from Yale before eventually coming to the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he taught until 1998. He was the longtime editor of the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians and served for several years as editor-in-chief of the Buildings of the United States, a sixty-volume series. His own volume in that series, on the buildings of Missouri, will appear posthumously

with the dedicated assistance of several of his students.

Ozzie was the key leader of the historic preservation movement in Missouri for decades, having founded and served repeatedly as president of the Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation and taught many of the professionals who have been working in this state and elsewhere. He served on the MPA board from 1995 to 2001. He had a special fondness for Ste. Genevieve and had planned to write a book about its architecture before his productive years were cut short by his lengthy struggle with Parkinson's disease.

Ozzie was a wonderful person, soft-spoken, humble, generous, and incredibly knowledgeable and wise. He leaves his wife of sixty years, Barbara, and three children. The family suggests donations to the Columbia Civic Orchestra, PO Box 7119, Columbia MO 65205.

("Riverways" from Page 5)

the governor vetoes are subject to being overridden in the September veto session, so parks supporters will also want to talk with legislators to ask them to sustain the vetoes.

What will happen remains to be seen, but the strange politics of the 2014 legislative session, in which the struggle over the Ozark National Scenic Riverways and funding for the state park system became hopelessly entangled, we may hope will never be repeated.

What you Can Do

Write or email Governor Nixon **by June 20** thanking him for his strong support of our state park system and of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways and asking him to:

- veto all bills providing for special interest exemptions to state and local sales taxes
- line-item veto the \$1E appropriation from the Parks Sales Tax Fund for a state takeover of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.
- sign SB 723, the bonding bill.

Contact your representative and senator to ask for their support of any of the governor's vetoes of these measures.