

## Veto Session September 10 Critical for State Parks

The annual veto session, when state legislators meet to try to override the governor's vetoes of legislation passed by the General Assembly in the session that ended May 16, is scheduled for September 10 this year. It will be critical for state parks, so it is very important for all Missourians to talk with their legislators.

As reported in the May issue of *Heritage*, the General Assembly on the last day of the session passed eight separate bills containing more than a dozen sales tax exemptions for special business interests—ranging from power companies to fast-food restaurants—that cumulatively could reduce state park revenues from the park sales tax by some \$5 million a year, from now on. Since state parks are utterly dependent on the sales tax for 75 percent of the operating costs of the entire system, this would amount to a reduction of more than 12 percent year after year. State parks are still staggering under a 20 percent reduction in staffing during the economic crisis in 2009—very few positions have been replaced—and a \$400 million backlog in infrastructure rehabilitation and other capital improvement needs that has been mounting for nearly a quarter century, ever since parks lost appropriations from the state's general revenue.

Fortunately, the governor vetoed all the sales tax exemption bills,



*The Current River hills beckon you to MPA's annual gathering November 7-9, headquartered at Montauk but including a full day at Current River State Park, its Camp Zoe addition and the Roger Pryor Backcountry.*

pointing out that that these exemptions would impact not only the sales taxes designated for state parks and soil and water conservation in DNR and the Conservation Department but also the entire state budget. It would also take a big bite from the budgets of most local governments and their park systems, many of which are supported by their own designated sales taxes.

Now comes the September 10 veto session. The Republican party has had a veto-proof majority in the senate but in the house it was one vote short of the two-thirds majority required for an override. That has now changed with the filling of three open house seats in the recent August elections, two of them by Republicans. In the veto session last year, fifteen courageous Republican representatives along with virtually all Democratic members voted

to sustain the governor's veto of a big income tax cut bill for businesses. This year the General Assembly passed a similar tax cut bill earlier in the session, the governor vetoed it, and both houses voted to override the veto, with a lone Democrat joining the Republicans to secure the required two-thirds majority in the House. So education and other vital state services will suffer as a result of tax breaks already given to businesses.

What will happen regarding the sales tax exemptions in the upcoming veto session no one knows. That is why it is so important to let your representative and senator—

regardless of party, but especially if they are Republicans—know your views on these tax exemptions and ask them to sustain the governor's vetoes.

### What you Can Do

Before the September 10 veto session, write, call, or meet with your state senator and representative to express your views on all the sales tax exemptions for special interests that would have such a devastating effect on state parks and other state and local budgets, and ask them to sustain the governor's vetoes.

For contact information: [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov) (use Legislator Lookup in left panel) or call your local public library.

*President's Message by Steve Nagle:*

## A Pilgrimage to Trail of Tears State Park

OSIYO! (Cherokee for greetings!) In March of this year, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation Bill John Baker said: "It was 175 years ago that the final group of our Cherokee ancestors arrived in Tahlequah, Oklahoma after forced removal on the Trail of Tears." To memorialize the anniversary several events were held between then and Labor Day weekend and a proclamation signed proclaiming the day "Cherokee Nation Remembrance Day."

What happened 175 years ago is one of several reasons to visit Trail of Tears State Park. Having Cherokee ancestors, the visit for me, a pilgrimage of sorts, was shamefully past due.

During the winter months of 1838-39, rain, snow and freezing conditions set in along the northern removal route from Tennessee through Kentucky, Illinois and Missouri, trapping several thousand Cherokee men, women, children and elders with detachments on both sides of the ice-choked Mississippi river. Over 4,000 Cherokees lost their lives along this perilous path. The park, which was acquired in 1957 to commemorate the removal and the Cherokee people who died on the Trail of Tears, preserves the site of the northern Mississippi River crossing (Moccasin Springs), a mile of the removal route, and the Bushyhead Memorial.

We travelled to the park on a recent Saturday in early August to attend the annual public information meeting and discuss plans and projects presented by park manager Denise Dowling and staff. We had an opportunity to explore the park and sample the trails: the nine-mile Peewah Trail, three-mile Sheppard Point, two-mile Lake Trail, and an easy half-mile nature trail. The park is laced with very steep and rugged drainages and the river hills and bluffs make for outstanding hikes. We visited Lake Boutin, the campground, and the visitor center. Now encompassing 3,415 acres in Cape Girardeau County, Trail of Tears State Park is a true gem in the emerald necklace that makes up our state park system.

Denise reported that attendance at the park is

slightly down from last year, perhaps owing to the harsh winter. Projects in the offing include repair of campfire grills and lamp posts, and construction of a new restroom for the visitor center, with new electrical and sewer lines and a parking lot. Attendees and staff discussed strategies for prescribed burns to eradicate invasive plant species and encourage native species.



*Kids look out over the Mississippi River at Trail of Tears State Park.*

Interpretive Resource Coordinator Steve Schell says the native woodlands in the park now appear much as they did to the Cherokee. Many creative ideas for the park, as well as information on budgeting and operations, are provided in a draft business plan, which serves as an excellent guide for park development and operations.

The last major addition to park facilities was completion and dedication of the visitor center in 1988. It provides an array of orientation and information in addition to interpretive exhibits and programs. According to the park manager, this is the only such center along the entire northern removal route other than the beginning and ending points in Cherokee, North Carolina, and Tahlequah, Oklahoma. The park also contains Woodland period archaeology sites that are listed on the Natural Register. Affiliation with the National Park Service and the supporting Trail of Tears Association benefits the park from associated research and cost share grants.

On a warm August day I hiked through the woods down to the area of the historic river crossing and pondered the scene. It must have taken a miracle and a collective dauntless spirit to survive the long trail only to face the crossing, enduring unimaginable hardships and an icy river with scant blankets, worn clothing, many even barefoot, heading against their will to an unknown destination. Today the Cherokee Nation lives and thrives again, and Missouri's Trail of Tears State Park preserves an important part of this enduring story.

To learn more about the park and the history of the Trail of Tears go to: <http://mostateparks.com/park/trail-tears-state-park>.

## MPA 32nd Annual Gathering at Montauk, November 7-9, 2014

Stay at the park motel, a cabin, or the campground at Montauk State Park with meals and meetings at the dining lodge. Enjoy insider tours of Montauk, the new Current River State Park and its Camp Zoe addition, currently in the early stages of development, and the Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry. All are welcome and some activities for kids.

Rooms at the motel (\$69/night) are being held for MPA until October 15: phone 573-548-2434 and say you are with MPA; you may also inquire about cabins. Campsites may be reserved on-line: [www.mostateparks.com](http://www.mostateparks.com).

### Friday, November 7

- 2:00pm** Leave lodge at Montauk with Park Superintendent Doug Rusk, naturalist Steve Bost and other park staff for insider tour of the park, including campgrounds, cabins, trout facilities and a hike through the natural area.
- 5:30pm** Registration and happy hour at dining lodge or Searcy building (across the road from each other).
- 6:30pm** Buffet dinner at lodge, followed by short program and possible candlelight tour of the mill.

### Saturday, November 8

- 7:00am** Continental breakfast at lodge or on your own; registration at breakfast.
- 8:00am** Depart in vans for Current River State Park
- 9am** Welcome and introduction to the park at the gymnasium: MPA President Steve Nagle and Jim Newberry, park superintendent.
- 9:30am** State of the Parks Address and discussion: Bill Bryan, Director of State Parks; Report on Ozark National Scenic Riverways: Bill Black, Superintendent (invited). Other presentations and discussion.
- 12:00n** Box lunch at Current River State Park
- 12:45pm** Depart in vans for tour of Camp Zoe addition
- 3:00pm** Tour Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry
- 4:30pm** Depart for return to Montauk
- 5:30pm** Happy hour with Ozark music, dinner and program at Montauk lodge; we hope to have the new state park book available for launch and signing.

### Sunday, November 9

- 7:30am** Continental breakfast at Searcy building
- 8:30am** Annual meeting of members: Searcy building (includes UPOP discussion)
- 9:30am** Meeting of MPA board of directors (all are welcome to attend)
- 12noon** Adjourn

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### Registration Form

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Flat Registration Fee (all meals) \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$60 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Montauk Tour Friday (free) \_\_\_\_\_ persons

*Or, Individual Meals & Regis:*

Dinner Friday \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$17 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Continental breakfast Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$6 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

Dinner Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$18 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Continental breakfast Sunday \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$6 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Registration (breaks, receps, etc) \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$10 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to **Missouri Parks Association** and mail with form **by October 22** to Melissa Hope, MPA treasurer, 7115 Route M, Jefferson City MO 65101. For questions or late registration email Melissa: [m4hope@gmail.com](mailto:m4hope@gmail.com). Registration is also available on-line at MPA website: <http://parks.missouri.org/>.



August 2014

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*Veto Session September 10 Critical for State Parks  
MPA Annual Meeting Set for Montauk State Park*

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## Park Briefs

**Rock Bridge.** Parkside Estates development, which park officials consider to be the most dense subdivision directly adjacent to a state park in Missouri, was approved by the Columbia city council in June subject to a 15 percent limit on impervious surfaces that initially had no controls and now has at least some. Even before council approval, contractors had begun moving dirt, enough to cause serious mudflows into the park during a rain event; DNR issued two citations, and developers have apparently now come into compliance and are installing sewer and water lines. Meanwhile, Great Rivers Environmental Law Center filed suit against the city and the developers on behalf of two residents and Friends of Rock Bridge State Park; their requested restraining order to stop work was not granted, but the case is still pending.

Supporters of the park are deeply disturbed that the city council approved a residential zoning classification that is directly contrary to a recent "Columbia Imagined" map that shows the clear intent to protect the park from such development. The city is now in the midst of a two-year review of zoning codes and subdivision regulations by a Denver-based consultant, Clarion Associates, which has proposed a new set of zoning districts and uses—now open for public comment until September 15. See draft at [www.gocolumbiamo.com/community.development/](http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/community.development/).

**Park supporters urge all who care about the park and want to prevent such dense development along its other borders to submit comments asking that the zoning codes in the area comport with the Columbia Imagined map. Submit comments to Tim Teddy at [ttteddy@gocolumbiamo.com](mailto:ttteddy@gocolumbiamo.com) by September 15.**

**Rock Island.** A gigantic loop trail combining the Katy Trail along the Missouri River and the Rock Island line through the Ozarks with an eastern connection from Washington to Union may be in the works, though if it comes to pass it will have been and will continue to be a long time coming. Ameren subsidiary Missouri Central

Railroad this summer announced a competitive bid process for sale of its Rock Island rail bed from St. Louis to Pleasant Hill. Two decades ago, when the Southern Pacific announced its intent to abandon the line, DNR filed a formal request with the federal ICC to secure it for a trail. But Ameren acquired it for possible use for coal trains. Now a consortium of organizations and local communities interested in development of a trail have joined forces with the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and other partners to submit a bid that, if it is selected, could lead to the long-inactive rail bed being donated to Missouri State Parks.

In any case, Ameren is now finalizing arrangements to transfer the western portion of the line, from Windsor to Pleasant Hill, to DNR for the Rock Island Trail State Park, the long-sought trail link to Kansas City. With no maintenance on the line or its many bridges and tunnels for decades, development of a trail would be expensive and would require a host of creative partnerships over still more decades. Stay tuned.

**Arrow Rock and Confluence.** MPA played a key role in breaking a logjam in the Missouri Clean Water Commission and rallying support for hydrologic and biotic restoration along the Missouri River, beginning with an Army Corps of Engineers project at Jameson Island adjacent to Arrow Rock State Historic Site (see *Heritage*, August 2012). The Jameson project in cooperation with the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was completed this summer and will give Arrow Rock a better connection with the river than it has had in the last half century, with interpretive trails from town out into the refuge and to the river. The Corps' next major proposed restoration project is at Cora Island, another unit of the Big Muddy Refuge just upstream from Edward "Ted" and Pat Jones Confluence Point State Park, for which MPA again helped to rally support this summer, and there will likely be more such projects to come.