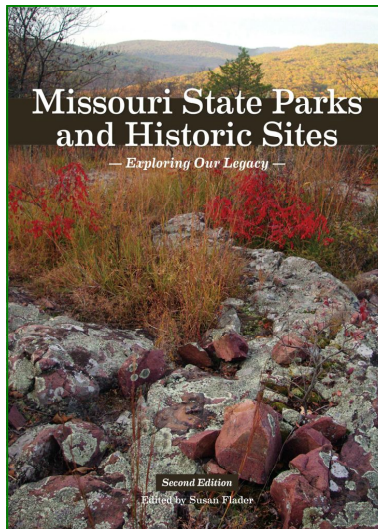


The New State Park Book is Here

The long-awaited complete revision of the state park book has arrived from the printer and will soon be available through numerous outlets. The landmark 1992 edition was widely hailed as setting a new standard for state park literature nationwide, and the new edition is even better.

The book is co-published by Missouri Parks Association and Missouri Life, Inc., edited by Susan Flader, and co-authored by John A. Karel, B.H. Rucker, Susan Flader, R. Roger Pryor, and Charles Callison, all longtime leaders of MPA and deeply knowledgeable about state parks and their role in Missouri. The 416-page large-format book includes essays on all 88 parks and historic sites, including 11 new



parks. More than 500 full-color images by Oliver Schuchard and other talented photographers capture the essence of these special places. Missouri Life art director Sarah Herrera

enhanced the book with her eye for beautiful layout.

The book was conceived at a time of crisis for Missouri parks. It explores the remarkably diverse and interrelated natural and cultural heritage of the state as embodied in its highly regarded system of state parks and historic sites, and to consider the values at stake in the system. The essays along with an historical introduction make the case that the system is the product of the amazing effort and generosity of generations of conservation-minded Missourians, and that this same affection, dedication, and enthusiasm sustains the system to this day.

Hundreds of park system employees and other individuals provided photographs, willingly answered questions, and reviewed drafts of essays, viewing this book as another way of expressing their love for the system. More than 200 individuals contributed to a Kickstarter campaign to help fund the publication of the book, along with major contributions from Pat Jones, Leo and Kay Drey, and the Missouri Parks Association, and other substantial contributions from David and Nancy Bedan, Wayne and Jane Goode, Tom and Margaret Hall, Friends of Arrow Rock, and Magnificent Missouri. Contributions from the L-A-D Foundation, the MPA, the Missouri State Park Foundation, and the Conservation Federation of Missouri are helping to support distribution of books to school libraries throughout the state.

Booker Hall (B.H.) Rucker, 1939-2016

After the state park book was sent to the printer but before the shipment arrived, co-author Booker Rucker passed away suddenly on January 5, 2016. See former state park director John Karel's tribute to him on page 3.

Born in Rolla in 1939 and trained in archaeology, Booker began studying the steam-engine shed at Watkins Woolen Mill in 1963, before it became part of the park system. He conducted archaeological studies at numerous other historic sites before returning to Watkins Mill in 1966 as the first site administrator, overseeing its restoration and development, and remained with Missouri State Parks until his retirement in 2003.

He became chief of historic sites in 1971, and by 1974 he was assistant director of state parks. He supervised numerous other programs, including law enforcement, concessions, interpretation, and recreation over the years, but his heart, soul, and enormous expertise were always in cultural resource management, restoration, and interpretation.

He leaves his wife Elaine, son John, daughter Sarah, and three grandchildren. The family has graciously suggested memorials to MPA, to which Booker was devoted for more than three decades. They may be made through the MPA website or by check payable to MPA and sent to MPA manager Marian Fleischmann, 32875 Mount Hope Rd., California MO 65018.

(See "Park Book" on Page 6)

President's Message by Steve Nagle:

Gathering by the River

"Let's All Gather at the River," one of my favorite old time gospel tunes, was the unsung theme for MPA's annual gathering this past October at magnificent Bennett Spring State Park. The park on the Dallas-Laclede County line was established in 1924, centered on the big spring that flows clear and cool into the Niangua River. My grandparents had a farm that bordered the Niangua, and our MPA gathering brought back vivid memories of this special Ozark riverscape.

The area historically was a camping ground for farmers waiting for their grain to be ground at the mill. In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps built the dining lodge, cabins, trails, roads, shelters and the beautiful arched stone bridge across Spring Branch. Since then the park has become a premier rainbow and brown trout fishing destination. Also featured are twelve miles of hiking trails: Natural Tunnel, Savanna Ridge, Whistle, Spring, and the tree-shaded Bridge Trail. For hiking, fly-fishing, canoeing or camping, Bennett Spring is the perfect place to gather.

MPA members met at Bennett Spring on Friday, October 16, what turned out to be a perfect clear autumn day. We travelled by vans to Ha Ha Tonka for a hike and boat excursion along the Niangua Arm of Lake of the Ozarks. The park naturalist also led a hike to River Cave, where we discussed "problem-solving" where summer flooding and road gravel had eroded the sink hole and plugged a cave.

Friday evening back at the dining lodge we gathered for a happy hour and presentation by Patrick Overton, MPA's first resident Poet in the Park and an update by Susan Flader on the fully revised park book.

About 65 members and guests were on hand Saturday morning for a welcome by park manager J.D. Muschany and the always-informative "State of the Parks" address by State Park Director Bill Bryan. DNR

director Sarah Parker Pauley, CFM vice president Ron Coleman, and MPA's legislative liaison Ginger Steinmetz shared their observations on the past legislative session as well as an update on planning and strategies for renewal of the Parks & Soils Tax in 2016.

Following lunch, state park staff led a field trip to the south side of Lake of the Ozarks State Park, the first time many of us had ever seen the Ft. Leonard Wood Recreation Area, set aside for active duty and retired military veterans. We topped off outing with a visit to the Coakley Hollow Fen Natural area.

All those who filled the CCC dining lodge Saturday evening experienced Ozark dining at its best. DNR director Pauley gave an excellent briefing on the natural resource damage program that is remediating and compensating the public for damages from centuries of lead mining in Missouri. The program was capped by State Senator Michael Parson from Hickory County, who provided strong leadership in support of state park funding in the last

legislative session and who understands the value to local economies provided by Missouri's system of state parks. Susan Flader and I were pleased to present the senator with a framed picture of the CCC Bridge at Bennett Spring. We look forward to his continued support in 2016.



Above: MPA President Steve Nagle (left) presents Senator Mike Parson a framed picture of the CCC Bridge at Bennett Spring in his district. Right: MPA members explored flood damage at River Cave in Ha Ha Tonka State Park.



We are ready to face the challenges ahead for 2016 with renewed hope and resolution. May the spirit of this New Year fill your heart with serenity and peace, and I hope to see us all outdoors enjoying our Missouri state parks and historic sites. Stay tuned for good things to come.

Booker Rucker: A Tribute *by John A. Karel*

During his long tenure with the state parks and historic sites agency, Booker Rucker became the single most knowledgeable person regarding the cultural legacies embodied in our park system. Even after retirement in 2003, his deep reservoir of expertise, judgment and guidance continued to serve old and new state employees, administrators, fellow conservationists, and public officials, up to and including several governors who called upon Booker more than once for counsel.

A commanding resource knowledge and steel-trap retentive mind, coupled with his extensive bonds of friendship, collegial respect, and personal affection throughout the agency and beyond, rendered Booker the institutional memory for the agency. And not just memory; he was also in some ways the *cultural conscience* for state parks, and to a significant degree for state government as a whole.

But tremendous knowledge and memory alone do not explain Booker's unique stature in the park system, or the profound sense of personal loss so many of us now feel in his absence.

The basic foundation for his status was his steadfast leadership over many years in developing the state historic sites into full partners in the overall park system. Booker demanded the very highest standards of integrity in restoration and interpretation of cultural resources; and then demanded, and got, the respect for those sites that they deserve. In the process of distilling the three-part mission of Missouri



State Parks, it was Booker's voice, persuasive and uncompromising, which ensured that cultural resources were incorporated into full partnership with natural and recreational values. That three-way balance remains an essential strength of the system to this day. No other state system of historic sites, or federal for that matter, has a better reputation for authenticity than Missouri's, and the primary author of that reputation was Booker Rucker.

As a deeply-rooted, multi-generational native son of this state, Booker's keen interest extended to every aspect of Missouri's legacy—every region, period, ethnic group, and social theme. That breadth of interest and commitment helped to ensure that our overall system of sites became more broadly inclusive, and it continues to improve as plans that Booker helped to envision come to be fulfilled.

Knowledge, leadership, vision--these all play a role in our esteem for Booker. But the hollowness in our hearts at his absence derives most of all from his deep and warm personal charm. Was there ever a more affable storyteller? A more engaging conversationalist? A more insightful interpreter? I can say that I knew of none. If there was some

aspect of Missouri history or regional culture that perhaps you had considered not all that interesting, that was only because you had not yet had a proper discussion of that topic with Booker.

All of these gifts Booker harnessed in the cause of his state, his agency, and his friends.

At the birth of the Missouri Parks Association, no one understood more clearly the need, or was more enthusiastic in giving his time and effort to help MPA get underway. Likewise, no one better understood the importance of the Parks and Soils Sales Tax, or worked harder for its passage and subsequent renewals.

Booker mentored or advised many of us over the years, and had a unique understanding and affection for the agency and its people. He genuinely cared about his fellow staff. That nurturing helped sustain many through difficult periods of professional and also personal crisis.

Booker's contributions to the new edition of our state park book, *Missouri's State Parks and Historic Sites: Exploring Our Legacy*, were fundamental. His spirit is deeply embedded in that text; and we can take much consolation in knowing that before he left us, he saw, enjoyed, and approved the advance copy of that book.

We will sorely miss Booker Rucker, his counsel, and his friendship. But, as fellow citizens and as friends, we are richer for his life, and for having known him. And so is the state of Missouri.

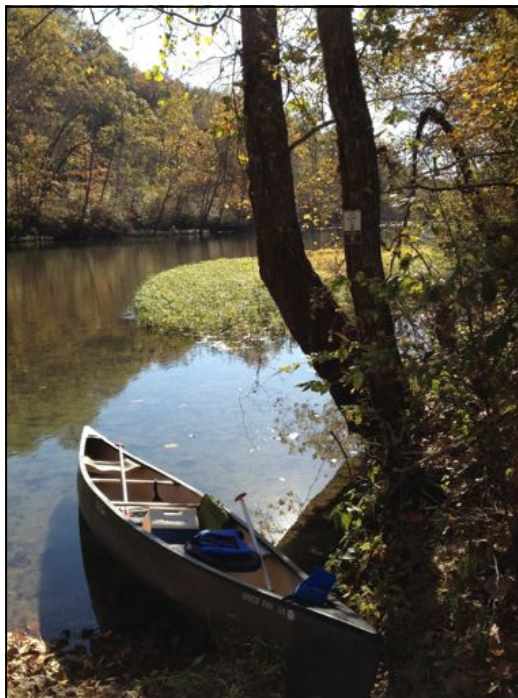
Promise and Perils of New Parks

Stymied for years by inadequate funding to keep up with infrastructure rehabilitation or new parkland for Missouri's growing population, the state has finally found a source of non-state funding for some new parks and parkland restoration. It comes through the federal program known as Superfund, intended to provide compensation for natural resource damage sustained as a result of mining or other polluting industrial activity. But this ray of promise for the park system has come with peril as well, as a result of public controversy triggered by the proposed acquisition of new parkland, especially along the Eleven Point National Scenic River (photo) in Oregon County.

In 1980 Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, or Superfund), which holds polluters responsible not only for cleaning up the contamination but for compensating the public for its loss of natural resources. For Missouri, which for many years was the leading lead producer in the world, funds provided through the Superfund law would prove to be very substantial. In the last quarter century, for example, St. Joe State Park and Missouri Mines State Historic Site, on land donated to the state in 1975 by the St. Joe Minerals Corp. after the local lead mines played out, have benefitted from more than \$20 million in tailings cleanup and stabilization of a highly vulnerable dam holding back millions of tons of waste.

With the prospect of increased natural resource damage (NRD) settlements with industry through CERCLA, the state in 2004 established a Missouri Trustee Council to help select and oversee NRD projects under the law, which provides that the monies must be used to restore, replace, and acquire natural resources equivalent to those damaged. The trustees of the council include the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Forest Service, and the director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the parent agency of the state park system.

The DNR director had been designated in 1988 by Gov. John Ashcroft to represent the state's interest under the law.



Of the several natural resource damage (NRD) settlements reached over the years with firms that operated in Missouri, the most substantial was the 2009 bankruptcy case involving the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO), which operated in Missouri's southeast and southwest lead belts during the 19th and 20th centuries. Under the settlement, ASARCO agreed to pay more than \$80 million to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for remediation of hazards in the damaged sites to public health standards.

The firm also agreed to pay \$61 million to compensate the public for loss of natural resource values; this would be done through projects to be selected by the Trustee Council for land acquisition and ecosystem restoration either on the damaged sites or elsewhere in the same ecoregion, wherever the most cost-effective projects could be mounted. The Trustee Council held dozens of community and stakeholder meetings to find potentially available lands and restoration projects and review draft plans of both ecoregions

encompassing the damaged lands, then adopted plans for the 18-county ecoregion of southwest Missouri in 2012 and for the 20-county southeast region in 2014.

In southwest Missouri, where EPA remediation was completed sooner, land acquisition and restoration projects have proceeded without controversy. But in the southeast, where EPA remediation is more complex and time-consuming, restoration projects on damaged sites have been held up awaiting completion of EPA clean-up, while proposals elsewhere in the region, for land acquisition and restoration to compensate the public for the loss of natural resource values, have moved ahead. Several acquisitions, including additions to Taum Sauk and Johnson's Shut-Ins State Parks in Reynolds County, have been well regarded, but a proposed new park along the Eleven Point River has raised a firestorm.

When word got out in late summer that the state was considering purchase of thousands of acres along the Eleven Point River for a new state park, the Oregon County Commission and many citizens objected to any more public land in the county, which already has more than a hundred thousand acres of national forest land and fears loss of property tax revenue. Public officials in St. Francois, Madison, Iron, and nearby counties also opposed a new park in Oregon County, saying the money should be spent in or near the areas where the damage occurred. MPA and other conservation organizations, while not opposing new parkland, emphasized the need to maintain the undeveloped integrity of the scenic easement corridor along the river (see *Heritage*, September 2015). Many expressed concern about the veil of secrecy shrouding the proposed land purchases, while some welcomed the additional parkland and pointed to the potentially significant economic return to Oregon County.

In the atmosphere of controversy, House Speaker Todd Richardson appointed an Interim Investigative Committee on Park Creation, chaired by Rep. Jay

Barnes (R-Jefferson City), which met November 2 to hear from DNR Director Sara Parker Pauley, plus the presiding commissioner of Oregon County, a Reynolds County timber firm concerned mostly about the new park at Camp Zoe in Shannon County, and MPA. Rep. Barnes indicated he did not think DNR could legally acquire parkland as far from the damaged sites as

Oregon County under the ASARCO settlement agreement, though Director Pauley disagreed; she reviewed the CERCLA authority and the Trustee Council public meetings and plans, and assured the group that there were funds set aside for restoration projects in the damaged areas, but they could not begin

until EPA completed its work on those sites. She also explained that NRD (damages) funds are not technically state revenue—they are in a trust fund in the federal treasury and stand appropriated for designated purposes under CERCLA. It was also clear that many members were disturbed by the apparent secrecy, and that some thought the state had enough parkland already. Several members referred to bills they or others intended to introduce regarding DNR land purchases.

Likely in response to recent controversies over both the proposed park on the Eleven Point and the state's acqui-

sition and development of Camp Zoe as the new Echo Bluff State Park (see *Heritage*, July 2015), several bills have already been filed in the current legislative session. Identical bills (HB1782 and HB2187) by Reps. Barnes and Robert Ross (R-Yukon) would mandate the sale at public auction of any property acquired by DNR in Oregon County. Sen. Cun-



Looking east across proposed parkland toward the Eleven Point valley.

ningham (R-Rogersville) has introduced a bill (SB 682) that would require a public hearing and public notice of at least sixty days prior to acquisition of any land by any department, and another (SB 683) that would remove the ordinary tax-exemption from any DNR land. Yet another by Sen. Brown (R-Rolla) would require any contributions to DNR or money received from concessions or resale items to be deposited to the state's general revenue (where it could presumably be diverted to other departments), rather than to the State Park Earnings Fund.

A few weeks after the hearing, Governor Nixon travelled to the southeastern lead belt to tour several restoration projects proposed by local interests. He assured local officials that he was interested in their projects, that he would ask EPA to speed up its lead cleanups in the area so restoration could begin, that they could help by getting the other trustees behind

their projects, and that he was directing DNR to identify and expedite efforts to restore lead-damaged lands. But he did not back away from the proposed park in Oregon County, calling it an "outstanding opportunity." Meanwhile, DNR has secured options or contracts on several parcels totaling more than 4,000 acres along the Eleven Point, including a ranch where the Beatles stayed during their first American tour in 1964, for a new state park, and the

Missouri Trustee Council has approved DNR's proposed land acquisition and restoration projects there. MPA anticipates a rocky road in the legislative session just beginning.

This has been a very unfortunate episode. State parks have normally been acquired with the support of local citizens and officials and occasionally with the financial help of local units of government. The proposed new park has considerable merit and may, if it comes to pass, become more appreciated over time.

Park Briefs

Emory Melton of Cassville, longtime esteemed state senator, avid historian, park lover, and staunch advocate for Roaring River, where the lodge is named for him, died December 26 at age 92.

Echo Bluff was announced in November as the name for the new park on the Camp Zoe tract, which is expected to open in July.

The **Rock Island Trail** from the Katy at Windsor 47.5 miles west to Pleasant Hill is set to open by the end of 2016. In late October the federal Surface Transportation Board approved the donation of the 144-mile segment from Windsor east to Beaufort to MSP from Ameren.

December floods, exceeding record levels in some places, affected more than twenty state parks along the big rivers, the Meramec, and other streams,

with major cleanup required but fortunately relatively little major facility damage.

Edward D. "Ted" Jones, donor of the Katy Trail, was the 45th inductee into the Hall of Famous Missourians. His wife Pat, MPA honorary board member and former president, was present for the unveiling of his bust at a ceremony in October.



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MPA Honors Park Employees

MPA honored five state park staffers as Employees of the Year at an MPA-sponsored dinner during a state park staff conference October 28 at Lake of the Ozarks. Plaques and checks were presented by MPA vice president Deb Schnack and director Nonie McClammer.

Bennett Spring park manager **J.D. Muschany**, who just retired after 40 years service in multiple parks, won the facility head category for his exemplary oversight of major upgrades to his park and his significant contributions to parks throughout the Ozarks District and elsewhere.

Dwayne Bostick, at Onondaga Cave, won the maintenance category for his uncanny ability and willingness to solve problems on the fly, his willingness to help other staff, and his selflessness in volunteering on his own time

during any unexpected event.

Amanda Counce was honored for her passion as an historic interpreter at Watkins Mill and her skill, as a Certified Interpretive Trainer, in teaching dozens of others at the annual MSP Interpreter School.

Financial and Information Resource Manager **Brad Armstrong** won the central office category for his knowledge, diplomacy, and tact when communicating with co-workers both in his previous position in the time-keeping section and in his new role.

Cpl. Brandon Bartz was honored for his heroic effort to climb 140 feet up a treacherous rock wall at Castlewood State Park to rescue a severely injured female who had fallen 65 feet during a suicide attempt and keep her alive, calm and breathing for more than two hours, supported only by a small tree, until they could be extricated to safety. For his bravery, he was also named national Park Ranger of the Year by ServiceWear



("Park Book" from Page 1)

Park Book Available

Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites: Exploring Our Legacy will be introduced at a launch party Monday, February 1, from 5-7pm at Broadway Brewery, 816 E. Broadway in Columbia. Refreshments will be available, and contributors to Kickstarter will be able to pick up their copies and get them signed, if desired, by editor Susan Flader and photographer Oliver Schuchard. Copies will also be available for sale at a special price.

The book is currently available on the Missouri Life website, www.missourilife.com (retail \$49.99 + shipping) and soon will be on the MPA website, <http://parks.missouri.org>, where it will be available to MPA members at a special price. Shipping is estimated at about \$10 within Missouri, so an even better deal will be to pick one up at one of many special park events or conservation-related conferences at which MPA will sell the book. Books bought through MPA provide a greater return for our mission and programs.

MPA members may also order the book by check for \$50 (book + shipping within Missouri) payable to Missouri Parks Association and sent to MPA manager Marian Fleischmann, 32875 Mount Hope Rd., California MO 65018. Look for it also at most state park visitor centers and at many bookstores. If your favorite bookstore doesn't carry it, please encourage them to do so.