

**Hawn State Park**  
**Informational Meeting – Saturday, September 9, 2023, 3 p.m.**

**Presenter:** Benjamin Bailey, Park Superintendent

- Thank you for coming to the yearly informational meeting at Hawn State Park. We hold these meetings yearly to keep the public informed of what we have been doing to manage the park, future projects, and most of to get feedback and suggestions from you all.

**Park amenities**

- 50 developed campsites: 25 electric, 19 basic, 5 basic walk in sites, 10 Backcountry campsites.
- All sites including backcountry are reservable.
- Special Use Area.
- Two Playgrounds.
- Whispering Pines Trail.
- White Oaks Trail.
- Pickle Creek Trail.
- 3 Connector Trails.

**Staff**

- Ben Bailey- Superintendent
- Chase Foley- Assistant Superintendent
- Billie Tedford- Senior Maintenance Worker
- Two to three seasonal maintenance

**Missouri State Park Mission:** The mission of the state park system is to preserve and interpret the state's most outstanding natural landscapes and cultural landmarks, and to provide outstanding recreational opportunities compatible with those resources.

**Hawn State Park:** Established 1952 by Ste. Genevieve Schoolteacher Helen Coffey Hawn, original acreage was 1,459 acres. Current acreage is 4,956 acres. Our mission at Hawn State Park is to preserve and allow for recreation in some of Missouri's most outstanding natural areas. The park consists primarily of woodland, forest, and glade communities amongst sandstone bluffs and granite creek bottoms. Hawn is bisected by Pickle Creek and River Aux Vases. Granite outcrops are exposed along Pickle Creek where small shu- ins are formed in the narrow valley. The sandy soils at Hawn support a unique environment for plants, including short leaf pine, which is Missouri's only native pine species. Pickle Creek is considered an Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area by Missouri Department of Conservation.

**Hawn State Park** contains four natural areas:

- Lamotte Sandstone Barrens 81 acres.
- Botkin Pinewoods 30 acres.
- Pickle Creek 58 acres.
- Orchid Valley 120 acres.

**Whispering Pines Wild Area** is 1,770 acres and is managed as wilderness.

**Outstanding State Resource Water:** Pickle Creek has this designation due to high water quality and pristine nature.

**Visitation**

- Usually hovers around 100,000+ per year.
- Camping increased around 10%.  
Day use is still increasing but the trailhead counters have a lot to do with that. Normally around 22,000 visitors.

The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is a statewide 1/10 of 1% sales tax that provides funding for Missouri state parks and historic sites and soil and water conservation efforts. The tax is divided equally between the two efforts. Parks rely on the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax to operate and improve the state park system. Funding from the tax accounts for approximately 75% of the park system's budget to operate and improve parks and historic sites.

### **Projects Completed**

- Prescribed burns this past year Headquarters North 50 acres.
  - These ecological burns involve cooperation from park staff from other facilities and region stewardship staff.
- Constructed the trailhead parking area for the new "Spanish Land Grant Trail."
- Installed 2 automatic solar powered gates at the Spanish Land Grant Trailhead for security purposes.
- Poured 24 yards of concrete adding areas to 8 campsites in the campground to alleviate erosion control.
- Added cell phone boosters in the campground at the fee booth and shower house.
- Water tower repair completed getting the water tower up to industry standards having the interior sandblasted and painted. Outside was cleaned and painted, overflow was repaired and new double screen vent installed.
- Installed new outdoor traffic counters at each trail head to get a more accurate count of visitors on the trails.
- Finished the pilot program for backcountry camping and completed an operational change to having the backcountry in the camping section of our reservations system making it easier for campers to make a reservation for a backcountry site.

### **Future Projects**

- Expand recreational opportunities: "Spanish Land Grant Trail."
  - Sierra Club donation from Bob Gestel Trust to hire 3 interns to help with the trail.
  - We are in the construction phase of building the 4.5-mile trail.
  - Construct 3 bridges along the trail.
  - Construct 3 backcountry campsites 1 of which will be a special use site.
- Add concrete to multiple campsites in campground to alleviate erosion.
- Updating the partitions in the shower house.

### **Volunteers**

- Sierra Club East Missouri Group assists with trail building, maintenance.
- Friends of Hawn Association assists with education, events, trail work.
- VIP Campground Hosts assist with campground management.

### **Education/Outreach**

- Farmington Intermediate School Science Classes.
- Ste. Genevieve Elementary school.
- Show Me MO Parks.

### **Regional Update:** Regional Director, Greg Combs

- Gave an update on projects going on in the region and fielded questions.

### **Question:**

- Are there any bonds coming up for improvements in the park?
  - No, not at this time but there are several in the region.
    - St Francois is adding 63 electric sites out of the flood plain.
    - JSI is getting several cabins.
    - Babler SP is upgrading several sites to full hookup.
    - Trail of Tears SP is adding 6 walk-in basic sites and 22 full hookup in their Lake Boutin campground.

- Coiver River SP is upgrading 35 camp sites.
  - Several parks state wide are getting water and waste water system upgrades.
- Are there plans to plant trees back in the campgrounds
  - Yes, a few years back we implemented a hazardous tree policy where we rank our trees in our high use areas from slight risk, moderate, high risk. By doing this we look at all the trees every year and after weather events to assess if they are a hazard. We found that after a few years we lost so many trees that we needed to plant back. The region has the equipment for the parks to use to begin planting back. Many parks are able to purchase trees to plant back but some like Hawn will have to take them from another location in the park and transplant.

**Ranger Update:** Corporal Caleb Davis

- Corporal Davis spoke on how the rangers cover several parks and have worked with local emergency services to assist each other in any incidents that occur in the park.

**Question**

- Is there any talk about charging rescue fees for lost or injured hikers? We have heard of other states and federal parks that do.
  - Not that we know of in Missouri

**Discussion:**

- Concrete pads? Are there any plans to add grass or put concrete between the parking pad and the picnic tables in the campground?
  - Yes, every year we ask for a little bit of money to be in our budget to add concrete in those places.
    - Last year we were able to fix 8 sites and the plan this year is to work on at least another 8 if not more. All depends on how far we can stretch the money each time.
- Cell phone boosters. Are they carrier-based and are there any plans to add WIFI?
  - The cell phone boosters are not carrier-based but they only cover a small area. Unfortunately at this time adding WIFI in the campground is not feasible.