

CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK

PREAMBLE & MISSION STATEMENT

July 2021

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

Located in southern St. Louis County, Castlewood State Park embraces the dissected wooded hills and limestone bluffs carved out by the Meramec River. Throughout the park, visitors will experience woodlands, bottomland forest, and stream communities associated with the Meramec River Basin, along with evidence of cultural modifications significant to the area's history.

The Meramec River riparian corridor had a long history of human involvement extending back thousands of years to the earliest Native American occupation of the valley, through the first European settlers, and to the mining of its valuable gravel and sand. During the early 1900's, visitors traveled by trail to the Castlewood area for canoeing, sunning, and swimming along the Meramec River. From 1915 to 1940, thousands of weekend visitors would flock to the area driving the development of hotels, clubhouses, stores, boathouses, and bathhouses. A grand staircase, which still exists today, guided visitors to the resort area. The area known as Lincoln Beach was the premier attraction and is being preserved today as Castlewood State Park.

The creation of the park was in part a response to concerns in the 1970s that suburban sprawl emanating from St. Louis would soon overwhelm all open space in the vicinity, and in particular, the beautiful bluffs and bottomland forest nearest the river. This concern resulted in creation of a number of parks, under jurisdiction of various agencies that brought major reaches of the river into public ownership as a part of a linked greenway concept. Castlewood State Park, named for the stately wooded bluffs along the river that resemble medieval European castles, was the first park acquired by the Missouri State Park system to function as an urban open space preserve.

The park is made up of three separate tracts: Castlewood (Lincoln Beach), Cedar Bluff, and Rock Hollow.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of Castlewood State Park is to protect and preserve the Meramec River's natural communities and cultural resources while providing recreational opportunities and resource interpretation in a uniquely undeveloped setting in the midst of a growing metropolitan area.