



# Castlewood State Park Annual Public Meeting

6 p.m. – 7 p.m. September 25, 2024 at Shelter #2

## Welcome – David Meeker

## Staff Introduction and Roles in Park

Jordan Oppolo – Assistant Park Superintendent

Ed Schott – Unit Manager of Lower Meramec Management Unit

## Park Staff:

- Full-time staff: four staff members
  - Maintenance/Grounds Technician
  - Specialized Trades Worker
  - Assistant Park Superintendent
  - Park Superintendent
- Temporary Seasonal Laborers (TSL) – 2068 hours
  - Two to four TSL employees at any given time.
- Volunteers: contributed a total of 1387 hours in 2023

## Previous Year Accomplishments

- Kiefer Creek Project- Repair of creek bank stabilization Kiefer Creek Stewardship and repair, will continue through 2024-2025
- Track chair will be added to park recreational offerings, trail will be portion on the lower Grottpeter.
- Reported stewardship hours for FY24 (June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024) were 1,148.
- Hired and trained two new full-time staff members
  - Specialized Trades Worker
  - Maintenance/Grounds Technician
- New retaining wall built around gazebo at Lone Wolf Trailhead to replace old, failing retaining wall
- Special Use area improvements with the assistance of the Union Sportsmen Alliance, St. Louis Cement Masons Local 527, and the Local 513 – Operating Engineers Journeyman Apprenticeship Training Program.
  - Concrete pad added in field for Special Events



- Old parking spots removed, picnic tables added for visitor use.
- Parking spots consolidated to only be in the Special Event A to allow for a safer experience
- New siding added to Park Maintenance Building and Residence, plan to continue in 2024-2025

### **Future Park Objectives**

- Capital Improvement Project
  - Conceptual Ideas have been done, currently waiting on funding approval
- Small Maintenance and Repair Projects – To be completed by June 15, 2025
  - \$8,000 - Maintenance Building siding and improvements
  - \$6,000 - Gazebo repairs – Lone Wolf Trailhead
- Roof Replacements due to extensive damage on all three roofs from the hail in May 2024
- Managed deer hunt in the December 2024
- Develop Master Trail Plan with Trail Coordinator to guide the development, maintenance and project priorities for the trail system
- Implement inclement weather related trail closures in 2024 – Trails to be closed to cyclists and equestrians when trail conditions are wet to prevent erosion and trail damage
  - Awaiting signage production to implement
- Continued closure of social/unauthorized trails for visitor safety and natural resource protection, as well as trail remediation on areas that need improvement.
- Continued partnership with the Sierra Club, Open Space Council, Union Sportsmen's Alliance, City of Wildwood, and GORC
- Continue process of achieving designation as Urban Night Sky Place
  - This will help Castlewood prevent light pollution and serve as an example to educate land managers and home owners in St. Louis County about light pollution
- Kaes House – 19<sup>th</sup> Century home, located on Cedar Bluff property
  - Working with Cultural Resource department to begin process for documentation and demolition due to location/accessibility issues, safety issues of the building, and a lack of public use for it.

### **Other**

- Hail storm of May 2024 damaged three building roofs, multiple vehicles, skylights, and the solar panel for gate. Still dealing with damages and repairs.
- Severe flash flooding in July 2024 caused major damage throughout park and along trails, caused flooding/leaks in buildings as well as destroyed fencing, and rocks placed in park along roadside.



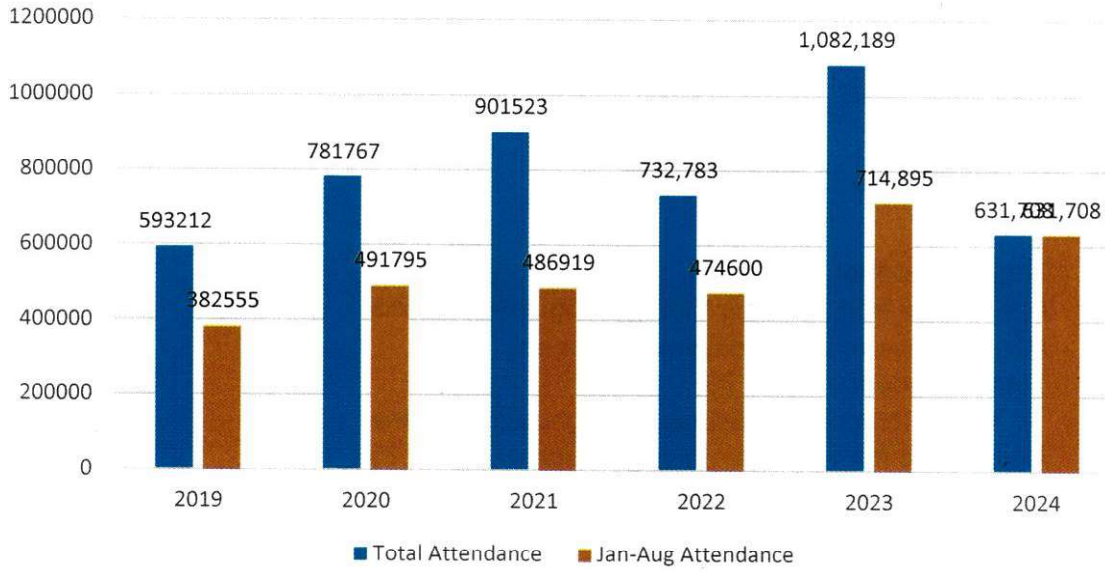
### **Attendance and Overcrowding Management**

- 2019
  - Total attendance – 593,212
  - Attendance from January through August – 382,555
- 2020 – Began active overcrowding management
  - Total attendance – 781,767
    - 93 temporary closures throughout entire year
  - Attendance from January through August – 491,795
    - 80 temporary closures during January through August timeframe
- 2021
  - Total attendance – 901, 523
    - 18 temporary closures throughout entire year
  - Attendance from January through August – 486,919
    - 13 temporary closures during January through August timeframe
- 2022
  - Total attendance- 735,979
    - 7 temporary closures throughout entire year
  - Attendance from January through August – 474,106.
- 2023
  - Total attendance- 1,082,144
    - 3 temporary closures during January through August timeframe
  - Attendance from January through August - 716, 362
- 2024
  - Attendance from January through August – 631,708
    - 2 temporary closures during July through August timeframe





Attendance Figures



Overcrowding Management Figures

