

CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK

PREAMBLE & MISSION STATEMENT

March 2022

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 train 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 resource interpretation and recreational opportunities in a uniquely undeveloped setting in the midst of a growing metropolitan area.

**CASTLEWOOD
STATE PARK**

PREAMBLE & MISSION STATEMENT


March 2022

APPROVED BY:




David Kelly
Director, Missouri State Parks

5/9/22
Date



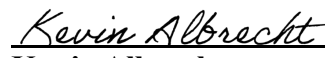
Terry Bruns
Program Director, Planning and Development

03/28/2022
Date




Greg Combs
Director, Eastern Region

Date




Kevin Albrecht
Deputy Regional Director, Eastern Region

04-25-2022
Date



Ed Schott
Park Superintendent/Lower Meramec Management Unit

4/10/2022
Date



David Meeker
Park Superintendent

3.29.2022
Date

CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

March 2022

Location: St. Louis County
Established: 1974
Size: 1,818.77 Acres

MISSION STATEMENT

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

INTRODUCTION

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 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. A citizen conservation group, the Open Space Council of St. Louis, helped the state acquire the land now known as Castlewood State Park in 1974. The park is a centerpiece of the Meramec River Recreation Association (MRRA), established in 1975 for the protection and preservation of the Meramec River corridor.

The park contributes greatly to the goal of MRRA and the Great River Greenways in establishing a greenbelt along more than 100 miles of the lower Meramec River with public and private recreation facilities and interconnecting trail systems.

SITE GOALS

- Preserve the natural and cultural resources located within the park's boundaries;
- Provide recreational opportunities and public use facilities compatible with the park's mission, resources, and public needs;
- Provide adequate orientation and interpretive facilities to enhance visitor experience; and
- Provide administrative support facilities to ensure successful operation and maintenance of the park.

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

- Pre-European landscape and wildlife in the Meramec River valley area;
- Pre-European/Native-American history and activity in the area;
- Natural resources/management;
- 18th/19th century European settler's history and activity;
- Late 19th and 20th century resorts, hotels, dance clubs, and bootlegging during prohibition; and
- Leave No Trace principles and public safety.

SITE STRUCTURES

Castlewood State Park encompasses seventeen structures, five of which are considered historic*. None of the structures are on the National Register of Historic Places.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Equipment building | • Service Building (1978) |
| • *Kaes House (circa 1850) | • *Shed #1 – Kaes House |
| • *Outbuilding – River Bottom | • *Shed #2 – Kaes House |
| • Park Office (1989) | • Shelter |
| • *Pole Barn – River Bottom | • Shelter #1 (1978) |
| • Residence (1979) | • Shelter #2 (1978) |
| • Restroom – Picnic Area (1977) | • Storage Building – Lone Wolf TH |
| • Restroom – Shelter #1 (2018) | • Vault Toilet – Lone Wolf TH (2000) |
| • Restroom – Shelter #2 (1977) | |

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Castlewood State Park's uniquely undeveloped landscape offers an oasis within a growing urban setting. Undeveloped areas of the park should remain as wild as possible, preventing modern intrusions from disrupting the natural landscape. Development philosophy should emphasize sustainability and passive public management techniques. Developmental focus should be put towards enhancing non-vehicular accessibility, improving traffic flow and public safety, and ensuring adequate recreational opportunities.

1. Paved Corridor Trail

A paved corridor trail is to be developed generally following Kiefer Creek Road, stretching from the western park boundary to the trestle gate. This development will improve pedestrian safety throughout the heavily traveled day-use areas and improve traffic flow. Furthermore, this project will provide the public with a hard-surfaced trail to use when natural surface trails in the park are too wet for sustainable use. Depending on carrying capacity study and trail density research results, this trail may replace low-lying sections of existing Grottpeter trail. Lastly, the paved trail will serve as a long-term invitation to connect with the City of Ballwin/Village of Castlewood.

2. Paved Trail Loop

Located within the peninsula, a paved trail loop replacing a portion of the River Scene Trail or developed aside from the existing trail may be considered. This development could increase accessibility and alleviate overuse on non-paved trails; suffering from wet weather erosion. In addition, trail construction must mitigate flooding and erosion concerns.

3. ADA Parking/Access

To provide accessibility to the peninsula's paved trail loop, ADA parking is desired near the trestle. The appropriate road closure gate with associated ADA design must be installed. When the gate is open for special events/operations, the pathway under the trestle should be designed to meet ADA compliance.

4. Entrance Parking Area

Compatible ground for supplemental parking is limited due to the presence of archaeological resources and operational considerations. However, entrance parking may be constructed within the park's gate, in the open field east of the office. Construction will increase parking availability and alleviate traffic/congestion through the park. This area could potentially encompass 30 parking sites along with oversized parking for buses.

5. Parking Lot Redesign

Existing parking areas off Kiefer Creek Road are to be redesigned to improve traffic flow and alleviate congestion.

6. Road Redevelopment

To further address congestion and traffic flow issues, Kiefer Creek Road redevelopment is vital. Proposed development options include a braided system, roundabout, and/or reroute.

7. Day-Use/Special Event Area

To address special event operational concerns/overcrowding, the day-use area located within the peninsula is to be designated as a dual-use area (day-use/special event area). When not reserved for special events, the area use will revert to non-vehicular day-use.

8. Castlewood Narrows Connection

Due to erosion from flooding, a section of the River Scene Trail has been closed since the early 2000s. This portion of the trail provides connection to the Al Foster Trail and Stinging Nettle Trail, including all sections of Castlewood State Park north of the Meramec River. A solution is to be developed providing safe connectivity to all park sections north of the river. This effort will be a significant undertaking requiring collaboration amongst multiple

stakeholders including the US Army Corps of Engineers, Union Pacific Railroad, and Great Rivers Greenway District.

9. Canoe/Kayak Access

A canoe/kayak access area is to be constructed approximately 220 yards southeast of the Wildwood access at Glencoe (Al Foster Trail Head). Utilizing the existing trailhead, users will transport their boats to the park's designated access (park property).

10. Eliminate Equestrian Use North of the Meramec River

Equestrian use on the Grottpeter Trail and associated connector trails (6.85 trail miles) is to be eliminated due to:

- Low frequency of equestrian use;
- Parking issues associated with high visitation and poor equestrian staging area;
- Misuse of non-designated trails;
- Trail erosion;
- Safety concerns; and
- Public support.

The Chubb Trail and Castlewood Loop (4.8 trail miles) will remain accessible for equestrian use, with a quarter mile connector trail added to the Castlewood Loop. Parking redesign south of the Meramec River to better accommodate equestrian use is warranted. Evaluation of equestrian use opportunity and partnerships south of the river will continue.

11. EMS Boat Launch

A concrete or other sustainable surface boat launch, for first responder river access, is to be constructed in the peninsula at or near the existing gravel boat launch. This will eliminate the need to annually replace gravel after weather/flooding events and will provide improved EMS access to the Meramec River.

Special Consideration

Located in the Cedar Bluff tract, the Kaes House is a three-story stone structure featuring unique architecture of the 1850s. The most recent Cultural Resources Management Plan (2005) recommends maintaining the resource in a stabilized state; however, the current structural integrity of the house continues to decline and presents a legitimate risk or injury to trespassers. Complexities surround the structure including access limitations (no easement or public access to the Cedar Bluff tract), public safety and security (property vandalism and trespassing), operational difficulties (distance to the park office and access), and renovation costs. As such, unless a reasonable solution arises with a partnering group/agency, it is recommended that the Kaes House be documented and then demolished.

The Kaes House is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places and its rumored historic significance has not been documented as plausible.

PROJECT PHASING

- Phase 1
 - Day-Use/Special Event Area Designation
 - Eliminate Equestrian Use North of the Meramec River
 - Canoe/Kayak Access
 - Kaes House Documentation & Demolition
 - Castlewood Narrows Connection
- Phase 2
 - EMS Boat Launch
 - ADA Parking/Access
 - Paved Trail Loop
- Phase 3*
 - Entrance Parking Area
 - Parking Lot Redesign
 - Road Redevelopment
 - Paved Corridor Trail

** Dependent on carrying capacity research.*

Cultural and natural resource clearances will be required before on-site modifications and development occur.

PLANNING AND RESEARCH GOALS

- Continued documentary research and exploration of cultural and natural resources.
- Update and/or completion of the General Management Plan.
- Research human-related impacts to park resources through a carrying capacity study or similar approach (i.e. Leave No Trace - Hot Spot Program).
- Develop a trails master plan to provide long-term guidance for the development and maintenance of trails at Castlewood. The plan should evaluate and address the following:
 - User related impacts to park natural and cultural resources;
 - Trail density (trail mileage/acre) and use-sustainability;
 - Trail design and sustainability;
 - User satisfaction; and
 - Operation and maintenance utilizing industry best practices.
- Research other high-visitation public lands and parks nationally on a regular basis to determine best practices for sustainable management methods.

ACQUISITION UNITS

If offered, acquisition of adjacent property may be pursued only through willing sellers or donors. To be considered, units should enhance the mission of Missouri State Parks through one of the following categories:

- Resource preservation and protection
- Recreational access and opportunity
- Management facilitation

CONTEXTUAL PLANNING INFORMATION

Public Input

Public input is an integral part of the CDP process. The following includes input opportunities throughout the planning process:

- 1. Public Meeting #1 September 17, 2020 – 5:00 pm**
 - a. Castlewood State Park, Shelter #2 & Facebook Live
 - b. Public input received September 17, 2020 to October 19, 2020
 - i. Comment card & online survey
- 2. Public Meeting #2 July 29, 2021 – 5:30 pm**
 - a. Castlewood State Park, Shelter #2
 - b. Public input received July 29, 2021 to August 30, 2021
 - i. Comment card & online survey

CDP Team Members

- David Kelly – Missouri State Parks Director
- Brian Stith – Deputy Division Director
- Laura Hendrickson – Deputy Division Director
- Greg Combs – Eastern Regional Director
- Kevin Albrecht – Eastern Region Deputy Director
- Ed Schott – Park Superintendent/Lower Meramec Management Unit
- David Meeker – Park Superintendent
- Ken McCarty – Natural Resource Management Program Director
- Dr. Mike Ohnersorgen – Cultural Resource Management Program Director
- Kim Dillon – Cultural Resource Management Section Chief
- Rachel Campbell – Archeologist
- Terry Bruns – Planning and Development Program Director
- Don Stier – Design Section Chief
- Ryan Dunwoody – Planning Section Chief
- Jeremy Robinson - Planner
- Rebecca Young – Outdoor Recreation Management Section Chief
- Ben Nagy – Trails Coordinator
- Zane Price – Real Estate Manager

APPENDIX


- CDP Map
- Public Meeting #1 Survey Results
- Public Meeting #2 Survey Results

**CASTLEWOOD
STATE PARK**

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

March 2022

APPROVED BY:



David Kelly
Director, Missouri State Parks

5/9/22
Date



Terry Bruns
Program Director, Planning and Development

03/28/2022
Date



Greg Combs
Director, Eastern Region

4/29/22
Date



Kevin Albrecht
Deputy Regional Director, Eastern Region

04-25-2022
Date



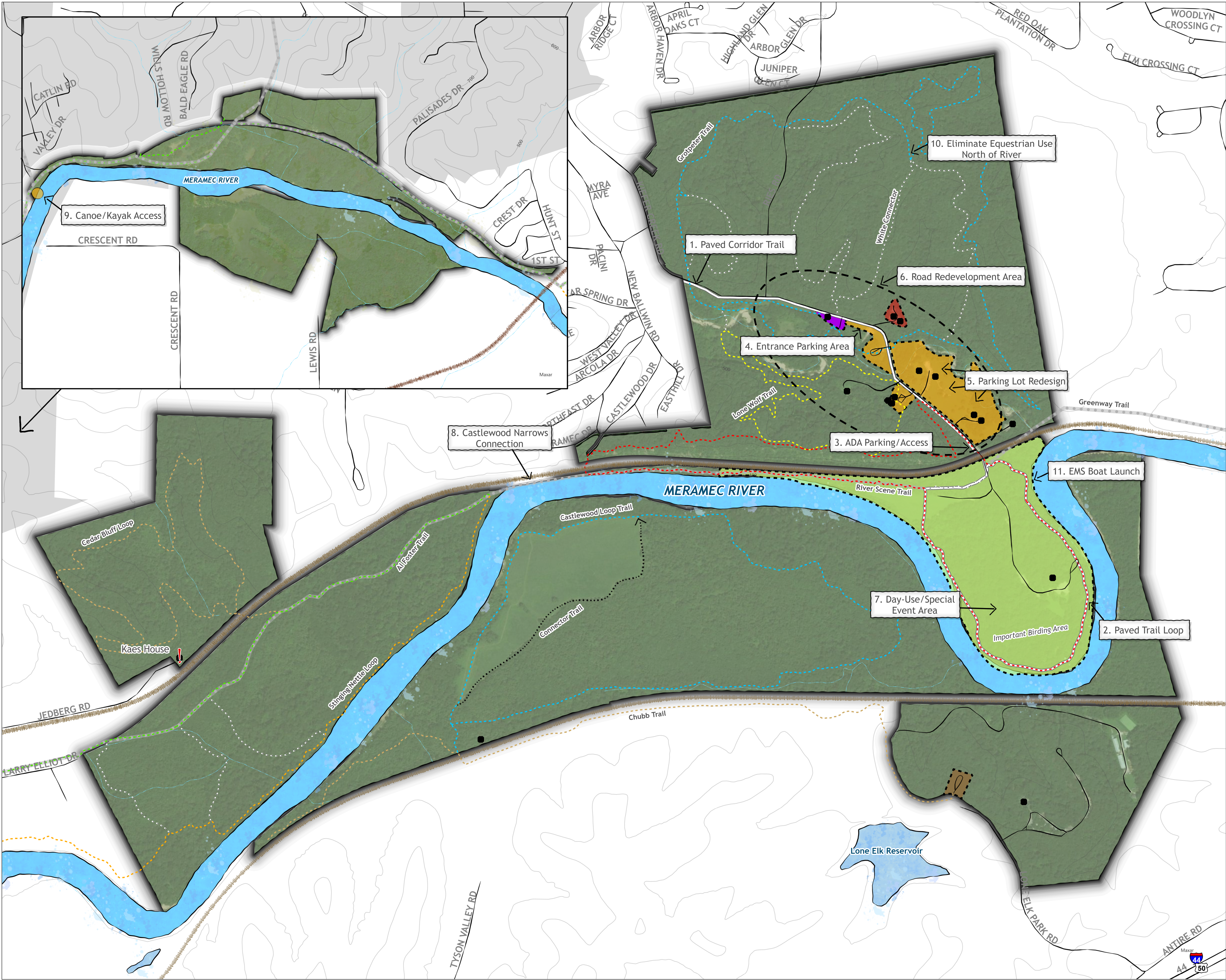
Ed Schott
Park Superintendent/Lower Meramec Management Unit

4/10/2022
Date



David Meeker
Park Superintendent

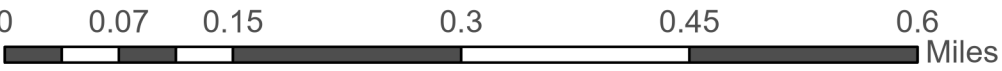
3.29.2022
Date



CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK

CDP: February 2022

Projected Coordinate System:
NAD 1983, UTM Zone 15N
Contour Interval: 100 Feet
Absolute Scale: 1:8,000



Legend

- Use Area**

 - Day-Use Area
 - Day-Use/Special Events Area
 - Equestrian Use Area
 - Service Area
 - Visitor Center Area

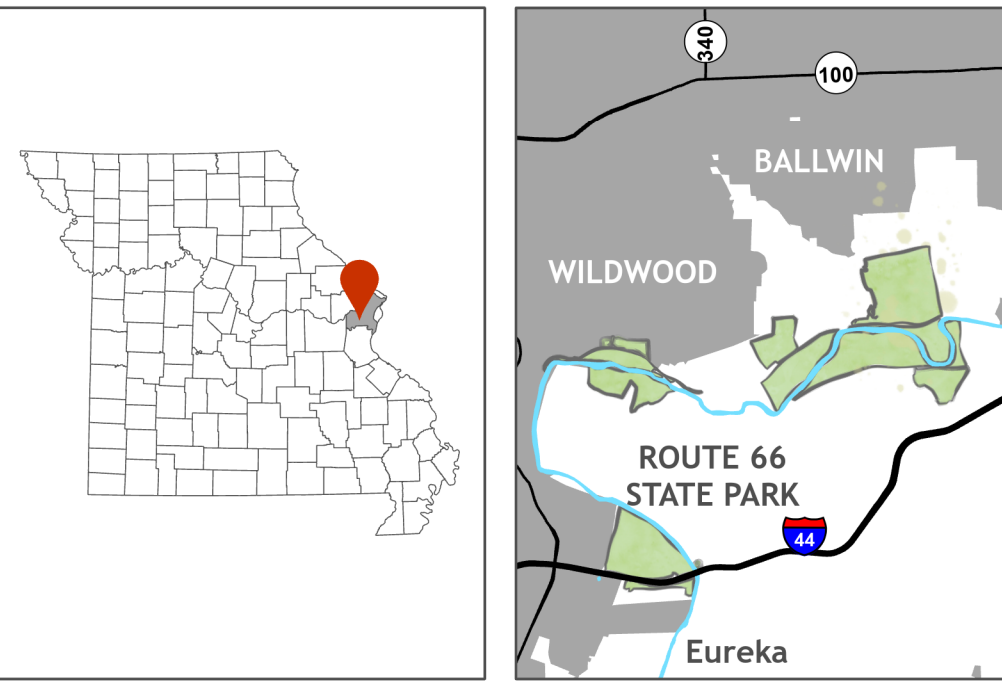
Trails

 - Al Foster Trail
 - Castlewood Loop Trail
 - Cedar Bluff Loop
 - Chubb Trail
 - Grottpeter Trail
 - Lone Wolf Trail
 - Riverscene Trail
 - Stinging Nettle Loop
 - Greenway Trail
- Landscape & Features**

 - Castlewood State Park
 - River
 - Waterbody
 - Stream
 - Municipal Land
 - Contours 100ft
 - Road
 - Railroad
 - Structure

Development

 - Paved Trail
 - New Trail
 - Redevelopment Area
 - Development Objective
 - Special Consideration



Although the data in this data set have been compiled by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, no warranty, expressed or implied, is made by the Department as to the accuracy of the data and related materials. The act of distribution shall not constitute any such warranty, and no responsibility is assumed by the Department in the use of these data or related materials.