

**KNOB NOSTER STATE PARK
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
PREAMBLE
2020**

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

Knob Noster State Park was originally created by the National Park Service in the 1930s as the Montserrat Recreation Demonstration Area; named due to its proximity to the town of Montserrat. The park was developed to demonstrate how marginal agricultural land that had been disturbed could be reclaimed for recreation and conservation purposes. The area would provide much needed recreational opportunities for those living in Kansas City and the surrounding area; away from possible threats of construction and urban sprawl.

As part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs, the newly-elected President signed the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) Act in 1933. The ECW included several agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA; renamed in 1939 as the Work Projects Administration). The ECW provided relief for unemployed workers and farmers while improving and building new structures throughout the United States. The WPA is responsible for the construction of 110,000 buildings across the nation.

During the Great Depression, the WPA began to work on the area's development. From 1938 to 1941, WPA workers transformed what had been exhausted farm and mining land into the Montserrat Recreational Demonstration Area. Development included four artificial lakes, two organized group camping facilities, service buildings, the caretaker's residence, bridges, a picnic shelter, entrance gates, and the park office. Plans originally called for building two additional organized group camping facilities in the area. However, these were never constructed. In addition, during the course of development 315 acres of trees were seeded and planted, 20 acres of land were seeded with various flora, and around 10 miles of foot trails were constructed. Approximately 200 people (mostly unskilled labor) were involved in the area's development and administration. Though World War II significantly delayed construction, the project was finished in 1946.

On October 10, 1946 the Montserrat Recreational Demonstration Area became part of the Missouri State Park system and was renamed Knob Noster State Park for the nearby town. Knob Noster State Park is the only park in the system developed solely by WPA workers and still has many of the rustic buildings. One of the organized group camps and five other structures were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985; the entirety of Camp Shawnee is now considered a Historic District.

The park is located in the Osage Plains area of the state, which is dominated by historic prairie plains. Clearfork Creek, which meanders through the park, has had a great influence on the landscape characteristics. The area surrounding the creek is dissected and hilly with a wide corridor of trees. The woodland structure and old growth post oaks bear testament to this landscape being historically the matrix between prairie, savanna, and woodland. Today, after

many years of regularly occurring prescribed fire, Knob Noster State Park harbors great examples of this historic woodland interface.

Knob Noster State Park offers numerous resources to park visitors. Cultural resources that can be found at Knob Noster State Park revolve around the WPA structures throughout the park. These structures reflect the simple architecture for which the National Park Service is known.

Although most of the park had been extensively farmed and/or strip mined prior to becoming public land, there are several areas of natural resource significance. These areas include Pin Oak Slough, Christopher Woods, and Clearfork Woodland. Pin Oak Slough is a recognized Natural Area that is home to many wetland flora and fauna. Christopher Woods is the largest contiguous tract of old oak and hickory forest in the park. Clearfork Open Woodland is one area of the park that is prescribed burned to maintain the open woodland that would have been present in the park area prior to European settlement. Other managed areas include Opossum Hollow Woodland, North Loop Grassland, Kiosk Grassland, and Clearfork Grassland.

Recreational resources that can be found at Knob Noster State Park include a family campground with sixty-two campsites, a special-use camping area that can accommodate two hundred people, two organized group camps that will each accommodate approximately one-hundred fifty people, and two pack-in camp sites on the McAdoo Trail system. The park also offers seven trails for hiking for a distance of nearly 19 miles. All trails are open to hiking, while the McAdoo Trail system is open to equestrian users and the Opossum Hollow Trail is open to bicyclists. The park also offers lake fishing, ball courts, kayak rentals, and horseshoe pits. There are three open shelters available by reservation or on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Special management responsibilities at Knob Noster State Park include a lease with Whiteman Air Force Base. The lease is on a 50-year renewal period, which started in 1955 and was renewed again in 2005. The base leases the land for use as a golf course (Royal Oaks Golf Course). The park is also impacted by the close proximity to Whiteman Air Force Base due to frequent use by visitors to the base. Knob Noster State Park also has multiple entrances from State Route DD, running through the center of the park. The park is also located adjacent to State Route 23.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of Knob Noster State Park is to preserve and interpret the unique flora, fauna, and natural features created by the Clearfork Watershed; to preserve and interpret the cultural landmarks credited to the 1930's development of Montserrat Recreational Demonstration Area; and to provide safe, healthy, enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities.

APPROVED BY:

Director, Missouri State Parks

Date

Regional Director

Date

Deputy Regional Director

Date

Natural Resource Manager

Date

Park/Historic Site Specialist III

Date

Interpretive Resource Specialist III

Date

DRAFT