

preservation issues

NEWS FOR THE PRESERVATION COMMUNITY

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

★ Vol. 3, No. 4 ★

Found: Medieval Village in Mid-Missouri

"If we analyze the charm of the large part of the rural cottages of England – the finest in the world – we shall find, that strip them of the wealth of flowing vines that adorn them, and their particular poetry and feeling have more than half departed" Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, 1850.



Occupying a roughly trapezoidal plot of land at the junction of old Highway 50 (now McCarty St.) and old Highway 63 (now High St.), sits a Jefferson City landmark. The Warwick Village Motel consists of a series of late-"medievaesque" cottages with common walls arranged in a U-shape around a central courtyard. And, although the cottages are no longer rose-covered and tree-sheltered, as shown in the historic postcard (ca 1940) above, they retain much of "their particular poetry and feeling" and have recently been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Warwick Village was the inspiration of Jefferson City businessman John

Guy Gibson, whose enterprises included the Capital City Oil Company. Gibson purchased the plot of land at the highway junction in the early 1930s and built a small DX filling station to service passing motorists. Gibson's contemporaries say his visit to the Chicago International Exposition in 1933 or 1934

provided the idea for the tourist court's design.








Bold experimental architecture and startling effects in color and lighting were dominant features of the Chicago exposition, which emphasized scientific and technological development in building construction. The exhibit that may have influenced Gibson the most, however, was the "Street of Villages" in which historic "villages typical of a number of different countries" were reproduced. In the English village were examples of buildings located in Warwickshire, a county in the midland area of England. These included Warwick Castle and several small half-timbered buildings. Among these were the birth-

place of William Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon.

Gibson hired Harry Satterlee Bill (1876-1946), a prominent Columbia architect, to interpret the English village theme as a tourist court of connected cottages with integral garages and a separate building to be used as a restaurant, filling station office, and manager's residence. Although the majority of Bill's previous designs were for Classical and Colonial Revival styles, he had also designed several "English"

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July/August 1993

A Message from President Bill Clinton

Deputy
State
Historic
Preservation
Officer

Although the following Preservation Week (May 9-15, 1993) message arrived too late to include in the May/June edition of *Preservation Issues*, the Historic Preservation Program believes the president's message is timely and important enough to bring to your attention now. We know that Missouri preservationists will find it heartening to know that President Clinton has a strong personal interest in historic preservation based on his own experience and that he understands the "connection" between "preservation and livable communities." Clinton's message follows:

As we celebrate Preservation Week, the preservation movement in America has matured beyond a concern for the most significant landmarks to include a broader focus on the quality of community life.

A wider range of committed neighbors now see preservation as a vital tool for guiding changes in the special places where they work and live, from traditional urban neighborhoods to historic small town squares to regionally distinctive rural landscapes.

For years, our family lived in a downtown neighborhood comprised of older homes and people of all socioeconomic backgrounds, and I have seen firsthand what preservation can do for a community.

Rehabilitation and restoration efforts help to stabilize areas affected by economic downturns: by maintaining housing for people who need it, by stabilizing property values for local government that depend on them, and by helping older communities compete for investment that could go elsewhere. In the process, the rehabilitation of older buildings provides more work for America's tradespeople and more workplaces better suited for small businesses, which produce the majority of our new jobs. In short, preservation is a proven path toward economic growth.

Preserving our communities also roots people by fostering a sense and pride of place. Such places define us as a people and remind us that we share a common interest with our neighbors, that we are members of a community, that we belong to something larger and more lasting than ourselves.

These critical points move us beyond the old debate that asked us to choose between "buildings" or "people." That was a false choice. We can and should choose both, as said in the theme of this year's Preservation Week, "Preservation and Livable Communities: Make the Connection." The historic elements of a community, from old buildings to traditional streetscapes, are worth preserving precisely because they serve the economic and social needs of people who live and work around them. — **Bill Clinton**

Preservationists from throughout the United States and Canada will gather in St. Louis Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 1993 to attend the annual meeting of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This year's theme, "The Challenge of Livable Communities: Revitalizing Urban Environments Through Historic Preservation," promises to provide vital information for historic Missouri communities striving for social and economic revitalization. (See *DATES*, Page 8.) — **Claire Blackwell**

Investment
Tax
Credits

Older hotels are often landmarks in a community, occupying prime downtown lots. Often constructed of brick,

stone, or terra cotta, and wonderfully detailed, older hotels symbolize a sense of place and permanence for many people in a community. When the landmark Robidoux Hotel was slated for demolition in St. Joseph, one long-time resident stated, "When the hour arrived for the explosives to be detonated, it was like waiting for a hanging to take place."

Many older hotels in communities around the state are no longer economically viable for their original use. Architects and developers must be creative in adapting these buildings for new uses in order to ensure their eligibility for federal tax credits.

In recent years, several historic hotels have been adapted for use as senior citizen apartments. Such adaptive use projects entail minimal alteration of in-

(See *HOTELS*, Page 3)



Historic Hotel Bothwell in Sedalia was successfully adapted for use as senior citizen apartments.

Group Uses Historic Theatre to Attract Tourists

In the often cold jargon of the professional tourism world, a historic theatre is known as "an arts attraction." The community of Columbia, in the interest of tourism and with a passionate commitment to quality of life, is pulling together behind a local nonprofit organization to save its remaining historic performance hall.

Of Columbia's old theatres, one has been converted into a rock-and-roll bar. Another is being turned into a mini-mall. Still another is now a bicycle shop. In the midst of all this converting of buildings and loss of local history, only one historic performance hall remains both historic and a performance hall, the Missouri Theatre, central Missouri's only pre-depression era movie palace and vaudeville stage.

Although listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Missouri Theatre has not avoided entirely the insidious movement toward modernization. From 1953 to 1987, the theatre was leased by Commonwealth Theatres, Inc., a movie chain now defunct. During its tenure, Commonwealth chose to "spruce up" the place a bit, especially in the lobby and mezzanine areas, plastering over a spindle staircase, replacing crystal chandeliers with modern fixtures that were easier to clean, and putting in a dropped ceiling to decrease the space that needed to be cooled and heated.

In the mid-1980s, Commonwealth contemplated dividing the theatre's auditorium into three "shoebox" cinemas to make the hall more profitable. Public outrage erupted, and the Missouri Symphony Society, a private nonprofit organization, realized an opportunity to secure a permanent home for its orchestras and a performing arts center for the community. With the help of loans from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Historic Preservation Revolving Fund and a private lender, the society bought the building in December of 1987.

Although Commonwealth had tink-

ered with the interior and modernized the facade, the theatre retained much of its original grandeur, including intricate plaster relief and an 1,800-pound Italian brass chandelier. A baroque and rococo design, it was created in 1927 by the Boller Brother Architects of Kansas City. When it opened in 1928, the local newspapers advertised "the magnificent splendor of the Palace of Amusement will dazzle and thrill you."



PHOTO IAN SIGHTS

Theatrical mask detail over stage left organ loft, Missouri Theatre.

The Missouri Symphony Society is now setting about the restoration process to bring back the dazzle and thrill, while modernizing the stage and vin-

tage mechanical systems and making the building more accessible to the disabled. The board of directors has retained historic preservation architect Jack Luer of St. Louis to put together a master plan. The state of Missouri, through the Neighborhood Assistance Program, has extended \$180,035 in tax credits to the society to regrant to qualified donors. The city of Columbia has given the building a new electric supply, and the society has installed a new electric service to take advantage of it.

In spite of this fevered activity, the project is probably another \$2 million and five years away from completion. On the horizon is a major capital campaign. In the meantime, the Missouri Theatre remains open, an "arts attraction," home to the Missouri Chamber Orchestra and Missouri Symphony Pops, and host to a variety of events from theatrical performances to body building competitions to seminars to commencements. You are cordially invited to visit.

This article was a joint effort of Jeffrey Ippolito, Marketing Director, and Debra Sapp-Yarwood, General Manager for the Missouri Symphony Society, located in the historic Missouri Theatre, Columbia.

(HOTELS, from Page 2)

terior spaces and only upgrading of existing mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems. Two examples are the Bothwell Hotel in Sedalia and the Tiger Hotel in Columbia. The lobbies of both hotels were restored to their original splendor.

Other related compatible uses are either low-income or market-rate apartments. The Park Plaza Hotel, in the Central West End of St. Louis, is the ultimate hotel conversion to apartments in Missouri. A tall building in the Art Deco style, the Park Plaza affords wonderful views of the city; it is also located across the street from Forest Park. Upper floor penthouses in the hotel have commanded rents of \$1.00 per square foot.

Successful uses have also included a mix of retail and office space. Retail spaces have been located on the lower floors with offices being located on the remainder of the floors. In today's economic environment, commercial ventures can be risky, and combined retail/office adaptive use projects will generally have a higher vacancy rate than apartment projects.

In adaptive use projects for historic buildings, there is always the delicate balance of meeting the developer's needs and maintaining the architectural integrity of the historic building. For more information about rehabilitation project planning or the Investment Tax Credit program, call (314) 751-7859. — **Lance Carlson**



Missouri Architects and Builders

Harry Satterlee Bill

Architect Harry Bill was born on May 22, 1876, in Easthampton, Massachusetts, the son of Hibbard Dennison and Charlotte Elizabeth Bill. He was married to Florence Harrison of St. Louis in 1910. The couple moved to Columbia in 1918 and lived there for the remainder of their lives.

Bill studied architecture in Paris for many years before moving to Missouri. His contemporaries recall that Bill, who had spent years developing his professional skills, was concerned that Missouri had no professional licensing requirements for architects. Virtually anyone could claim to be an architect and design buildings – sometimes with disastrous results. Together with other concerned architects, Bill formed the Missouri Association of Architects (MAA), which wrote and promoted passage of state legislation for the professional licensing of architects. The group's efforts led to the establishment of the Missouri State Board of Registration in 1943. Bill was the fourth architect to be licensed in Missouri and served on that board until his death.

Bill was also a long-time member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), a national organization that began in 1857, and he promoted a mid-Missouri chapter of that organization through the MAA. (The MAA eventually became the AIA Mid-Missouri Chapter in 1971.)

During his career, Harry Bill designed numerous mid-Missouri buildings, most of which are still standing. Many of his designs were for Columbia buildings, including two buildings on the University of Missouri campus, two sorority houses, several commercial and professional buildings, the Municipal Building, and a number of houses in Grassland subdivision and elsewhere in the city. He also designed buildings in Mexico, Jefferson City, and Boonville.

Bill claimed not to like the modern architecture of his era, and most of his buildings are in Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and English Tudor styles. In addition to his design work, Bill was a professor of architecture at the University of Missouri-Columbia for 17 years.

Harry Bill died on Sept. 22, 1946. He had been in ill health since Oct. 2, 1945, when he suffered a heart attack. His body was cremated at Valhalla Cemetery in St. Louis.

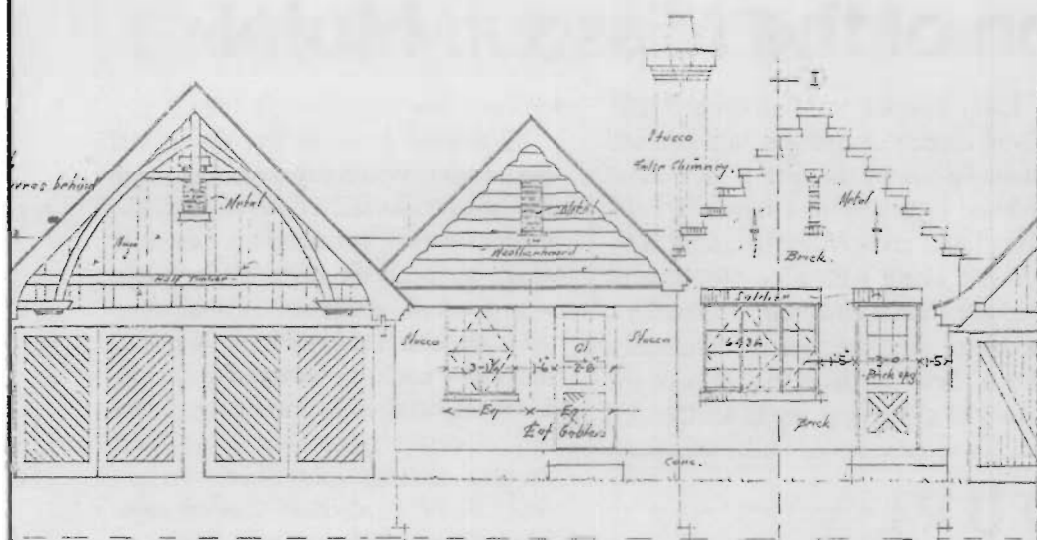
A number of Bill's drawings are in the possession of his friend, architect Dave Clark of Columbia, who remembers Bill well. – *Karen Grace*

(WARWICK, from Page 1)

(or Tudor) style buildings. Columbia architect Dave Clark, a friend and contemporary of Bill's, recalls that "he designed a lot of Classical [symmetrical] buildings, but he preferred the picturesque," which Downing concluded "will be found always to depend upon . . . irregularity, and a partial want of proportion and symmetry . . ."

There was considerable contemporary precedent for English Tudor design and its subcategory, English Cottage. Architectural historians Virginia and Lee McAlester, for example, have concluded that Tudor was the second most popular American house style in the 1920s and 1930s "when only the Colonial Revival rivaled it in popularity." Numerous English Tudor and English Cottage style houses were built in Missouri between the 1920s and 1940s.

The Warwick Village cottages, however, do not clearly follow American precedents in English Tudor design. Bill employed a historicism, probably unequalled in Missouri at that time, for its accuracy and careful attention to detail, texture, and subtle color; the result is a rich blend of Medieval sources – English, French, Dutch, German, and Swiss – grafted on a Tudor base. Variation in the design and size of individual cottages, their siting, and the subtle grade changes between cottages all combined to produce the visual effect of a village developed haphazardly over



**A TOURIST VILLAGE
FOR THE
CAPITAL CITY OIL COMPANY
JEFFERSON CITY MISSOURI**

BILL AND WELCH - ARCHITECTS

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6

hundreds of years.

Despite its quaint appearance, Warwick Village contained all of the modern amenities that highway travelers were just beginning to expect in the mid-1930s; private baths with showers, electric lights, and steam heat were not typical of most roadside accommodations in the state.

State-of-the-art materials and construction methods were also used. The exterior walls were hollow masonry blocks veneered with metal lath and Portland stucco, brick, or stone. Composition shingles were used for the cottage roofs; each cottage was roofed in a different "slate" color - red, grey, brown, or green. And most of the windows were "modern" steel casements.

Location, design, and modernity combined to make the court a highly successful business enterprise, popular with both tourists and local residents who patronized the restaurant. It also received praise in a Chamber of Commerce promotional booklet published in 1936: "A most modern and attractive group of cottages for tourists is Warwick Village, built in 1935, with fourteen English-type cottages . . ."

In 1945, after World War II building restrictions were lifted, Harry Bill was again commissioned to design a three-story, 23-room "lodge" to be attached to the east wall of the restaurant. Before the design work was completed, however, Bill suffered a massive heart attack from which he never recovered.

Richard Schell, the general contractor for both the 1935 buildings and the lodge, recalls that he accomplished all of the interior design for the lodge.

Although Warwick Village had a series of owners over the years (currently six), it remained a successful business enterprise and was well maintained. Cherry Grubb, who owned and managed the property between 1946 and 1954, recalls that both the motel and the restaurant were very popular and that "all of the rooms were full by 4 p.m." daily. Grubb's large staff included a full-time gardener who maintained several flower beds including a large circular bed at center court.

The motel and business began to decline when both highways 50 and 63 were by-passed in 1960. And, as motel revenues decreased, so did maintenance of the buildings and grounds. Warwick Village now sits at the junction of two quiet residential streets instead of two busy highways and has been converted to one-bedroom apartments. No trace of the original landscaping remains; the courtyard has been leveled and covered with asphalt along with much of the rest of the site. And, although there have been some unfortunate alterations to both the cottage and garage doors (ca 1983), the buildings are currently being well maintained and are still picturesque. -

Karen Grace



PHOTO STEVE MITCHELL

Warwick Village Motel west and south block (foreground). Old Highway 50, now McCarty St., at bottom of photo. Jefferson City, Cole County.

The Evolution of the Missouri Motel

The availability and affordability of the automobile in the 1920s, coupled with road and highway building improvements, created a national passion for touring. No longer were travelers bound by train schedules or rail routes that bypassed natural vistas and cultural sites; the modern tourist was bound only by his or her sense of adventure and travel budget.

Early travelers in Missouri and elsewhere carried camping equipment and pitched a tent by the side of the road at bedtime – usually in a farmer's field. Complaints and general harassment by farmers, along with a proliferation of roadside tourist camps in which, for a moderate sum, the tourist could rent a plot of land for the tent and have the luxury of a nearby privy as well, ended

the era of the trespassing tourist.

Tourist camp owners soon discovered that travelers would pay more for a cabin than a tent site and began to offer the alternative of a permanent structure in which to spend the night. Early cabins were generally crude affairs, sometimes just a wooden framework with screened walls that could be covered with roll-down canvas shades. Some early cabins had electric lights, but none were plumbed, although some offered the convenience of a centrally located water spigot. These cabins were the beginning of Missouri's motel industry.

MISSOURI

Historic Architecture

Streamline Moderne Buildings

ca 1930s-1950s

Characteristics:

- A style of architecture borrowed from the design of transportation machines, especially automobiles, ships, and trains.
- The style is primarily used for transportation-related buildings, especially gas stations, motels, fast-food restaurants and diners, car dealerships and repair shops, tire and auto parts shops.
- The primary design characteristic is the use of repeated rounded forms on exterior walls and the absence of sharp corners.
- Walls are typically veneered with shiny, "car-like" materials – silvery stainless steel or aluminum, metal panels with a "baked" on car paint finish, shiny glass or ceramic tile.
- Buildings are usually one or two stories and have flat or slightly vaulted roofs.



PHOTO KAREN GRACE

The Mountain Terrace Motel in Eldon consists of eight duplex cottages. These slab rock-faced buildings exhibit the especially fine stonework indicative of a master builder.

The Depression Era, beginning in 1930, had a profound effect on the location, number, and design of accommodations for motoring tourists. The number of motorists passing through the state in search of a better life out West increased dramatically during this period, and Missouri was a convenient place to stop for the night. Falling prices for farm products drove many farmers out of the business; farmers who owned highway frontage constructed tourist cabins to help replace lost income. Missourians did not give up vacationing during the 1930s but, faced with smaller travel budgets, more of them stayed closer to home. This propensity for in-state travel contributed to the rapid growth of the tourism industry in the Ozark region of the state.

Providing tourist accommodations was a growth industry in Depression

PHOTO ESLEY HAMILTON



The Coral Court Motel in Marlborough, St. Louis County, ca 1941, is an exceptionally well-preserved example of the Streamline Moderne style in Missouri. Note especially the repeated rounded forms in the design by architect Adolph L. Strubig. Glass block and tile are curved around corners, dark horizontal bands of tile top the walls, and the units are sited amidst flowing curved driveways. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



These rubble stone cottages (ca 1930) at the Shady Side Cottage Camp were part of a rural complex of buildings all catering to the overnight tourist. For \$1 or \$2, guests had a cabin and access to community toilets and showers, and the added convenience of an adjacent grocery store and a cafe. Located in Rescue, Lawrence County.

Era Missouri and led to a proliferation of tourist camps, courts, and cottages; all three terms were used interchangeably. The resulting competition between these businesses helped to raise the industry's overall standards. According to the *Architectural Record*, tourist cottage construction was the only growing division of the building industry during the 1930s.

Builders' trade literature promoted the construction of "modern" tourist cottages and provided sample plans and photographs of successful tourist courts. Guidance was also provided to architects through their trade journals and some (see Page 1) brought a highly developed

aesthetic sensibility to the design of tourist courts. Whether designed by an architect, a builder, or copied from a pattern book or periodical, the most prevalent styles for Missouri motels in the 1930s were also the most prevalent styles for houses – Colonial Revival, Bungalow, and Tudor-English Cottage – and most, even when they were connected, looked like small houses.



This four-unit building at the Wagon Wheel Motel is constructed of rubblestone in the English Cottage style. Note the window and door trim of white glazed brick. Located in Cuba, Crawford County.

Mail order and prefabricated houses and garages were also constructed; however, their prevalence has not been documented. Missouri stone, used as a veneer, was the favored building material, but clapboard, brick, stucco, and half-round logs were also used.

Depending on the building site, cabins were usually arranged in line, or in a U, L, or C shape, but some examples have been found in which cabins appear to have been sited haphazardly. Whatever the plan, Missouri tourist courts of the 1930s were lavishly landscaped, as much as the owner's budget and the site allowed. Trees, shrubs, flowers, wishing wells, goldfish ponds, and

trellage all contributed to the hominess the business owners were trying to achieve.

Although many tourist courts advertised "modern" accommodations, the word apparently had a variety of meanings in the 1930s and throughout the 1940s. The number of extant privies located near cabin courts from the period, and the advertising of courts promising a "bathroom in every room" suggests that many were without plumbing.

Missouri tourist courts constructed starting in the early 1940s began to lose their small-house look. Free-standing cottages became more and more rare throughout the decade (except in resorts) and even connected units no longer looked like individual cottages. The "modern" motel facade "read" as a single linear building punctuated by evenly spaced windows and doors. Colonial, Tudor, or Bungalow details were added to these generically modern buildings, but they failed to convey the hominess of earlier cottage courts. Two new designs for motels were also introduced to Missouri's highways: the Streamline Moderne with its curved corners and windows and the International Style, unornamented flat-roofed boxes with corner windows. Both styles enjoyed a lengthy period of popularity in Missouri. – *Karen Grace*



A half-log veneer gives the Hardesty cabin (ca 1930) its rustic appearance. Part of a three-building complex that also included a filling station and garage, the cabin was once rented to travelers passing through Avilla overnight on Route 66.



The Boots Motel, constructed in 1939 and shown on this historic postcard ca 1945, is a good example of the Streamline Moderne style. Note the rounded corners and roof parapet emphasized by bands of black tile by day and neon tubing by night. Located in Carthage, Jasper County. (Courtesy Route 66 Association, Jim Powell.)

DNR Seeks Qualified Historians and Architectural Historians

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources is seeking historians and architectural historians qualified to perform Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant-funded projects such as completion of architectural surveys and preparation of National Register nominations.

Federal regulations governing the use of HPF monies require that grant-funded survey and nomination activity be carried out by qualified professionals. While many organizations, agencies, and local governments may have inhouse professional staff qualified to carry out survey and nomination activities, other project sponsors may need to contract with professional historians or architectural historians for those services on a case-by-case basis.

To assist project sponsors in the task of locating qualified historians and architectural historians, the Department of Natural Resources is developing a list of qualified consultants. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) has been prepared to identify qualified individuals and firms capable of carrying out this type of work. Individuals and firms who successfully meet the requirements outlined in the RFQ will be entered on a list of approved contractors maintained by the Department of Natu-

Dates to Remember

Field Trip of 19th Century Emigrant Roads to St. Joe, July 17. Sponsored by the Gateway Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association. Call Larry Bunse (816) 378-3165.

Route 66 Meeting, Rolla, July 17. For more information call Jim Powell at (314) 982-5500.

Battlefield Protection Conference, Kansas City, July 24-26. For more information, call Connie Slaughter at (402) 221-3426.

25th Annual National Meeting of the Lewis & Clark Heritage Foundation, St. Louis, August 1-4. Call Jerry Garrett at (314) 843-8050 for information.

Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Quarterly Meeting, Jefferson City, August 13. Call (314) 751-5365 for more information.

Route 66 Motor Tour, Sept. 18-19. Annual cross-state motor tour sponsored by the Route 66 Association of Missouri. Call Jim Powell for details at (314) 982-5500.

National Trust for Historic Preservation, The Challenge of Livable Communities: Revitalizing Urban Environments Through Historic Preservation, St. Louis, Sept. 29-Oct. 3. For registration information call (800) 944-6847.

ral Resources, Division of Administrative Support which will be made available, on request, to state agencies, local governments, organizations, and other parties undertaking survey and nomination activities in the State of Missouri.

Consultants interested in being included on this list should request a copy of the RFQ from Dan Ferrier, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Administrative Support, P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO 65102, (314) 751-7961.

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