

Missouri State Parks
Strategic Plan 2013-2017

Bill Bryan, Director



PROLOGUE

*“One can enjoy a rainbow without necessarily forgetting the forces that made it.”
~ Mark Twain*

With these few words, Missouri’s master of wit and wisdom reminded us there is a world of nature with its wondrous awe, and a world of culture with its reasoned understanding – equally essential and complementary realms in human experience.

Missouri’s system of state parks and historic sites stands today as living testimony to the power of our natural world to restore, excite and invigorate, and the power of our cultural heritage to educate, humble and inspire.

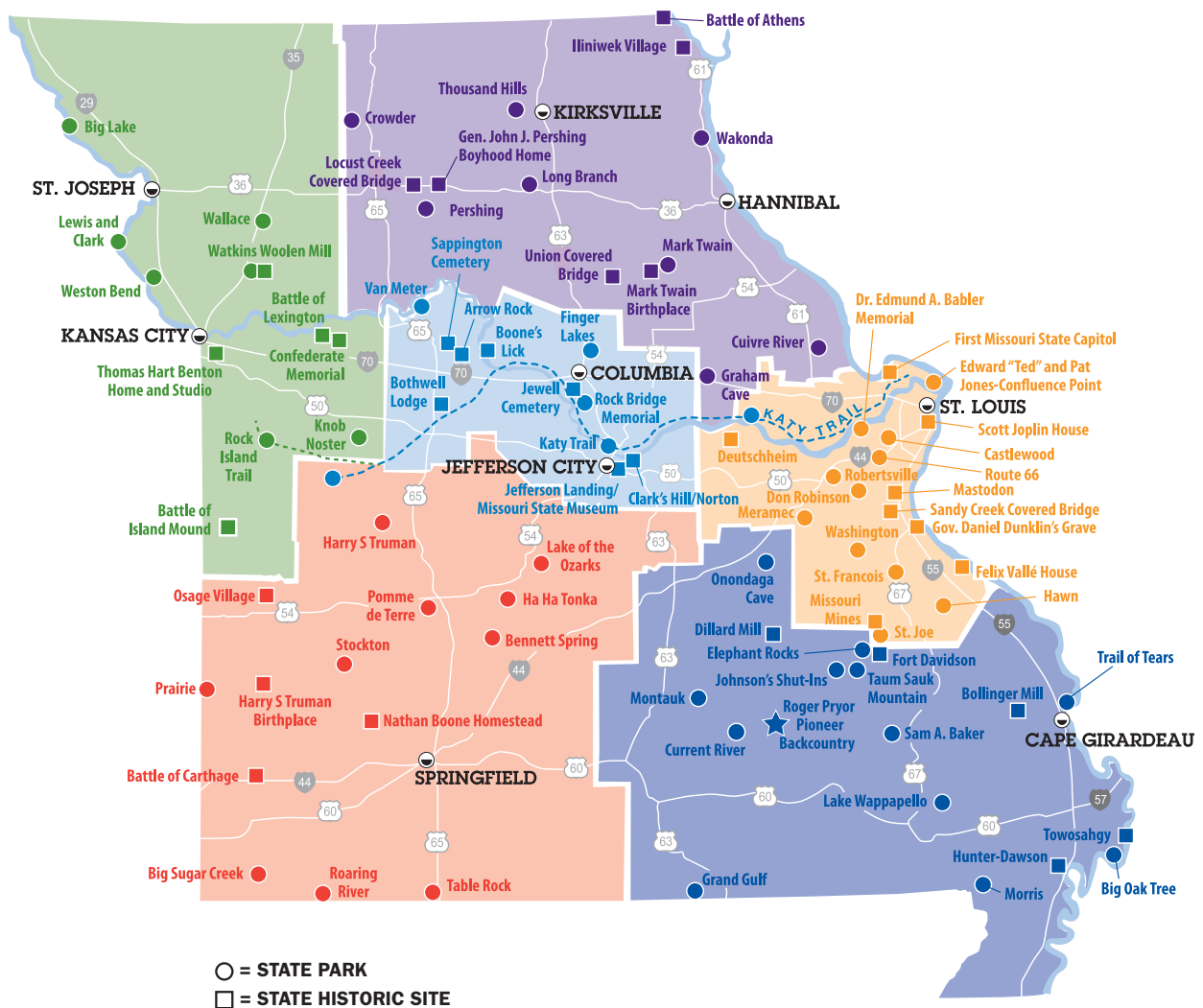
Strategic planning is a systematic process of envisioning a desired future, then translating this vision into goals, objectives and strategies to achieve that future. With the year 2017 marking the centennial of Missouri State Parks, it is only appropriate that this Strategic Plan will carry management of Missouri’s rich natural and cultural legacy to 100 years.



PRACTICAL MATTERS...and More

From simple beginnings in 1917 when the state acquired the historic Arrow Rock Tavern, Missouri's system has grown to 52 state parks and 35 historic sites. With these came obvious recreational, educational and pride-of-state benefits. But these natural and cultural tributes to Missouri's extraordinary places and people constitute a billion dollar industry, supporting thousands of private sector employees and generating millions of dollars in federal, state and local revenue.

Much more than economics, however, there is growing and compelling scientific evidence confirming that nature, the outdoors and awareness of our past possess wide public appeal and are essential to human fitness, health, productivity, creativity, and the very quality of life today and for future generations.¹



¹ Stephen R. Kellert, 2012. Birthright: people and nature in the modern world. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 242pp.

MISSOURI STATE PARK MISSION

The threefold mission statement of Missouri State Parks derives from the state constitution, statutes and staff's long-standing commitment to exemplary public service. Each element is of equal importance:

MISSOURI STATE PARK VISION

Working with our partners and the public, we envision a future where Missourians personally connect with our state's natural and cultural resources, making memories so strong, warm, and lasting that our citizenry knows that state parks and historic sites are essential to Missouri's quality of life, and supports actions preserving and enhancing these resources for future generations.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2017:

A Stakeholder-Driven Process & Product

This Strategic Plan 2013-2017 is the most recent in a series of planning initiatives by Missouri State Parks. Distinguishing the current plan from prior efforts is the degree to which the results of this plan are grounded on stakeholder input. We conducted a four-part process between September 2012 and February 2013, in support of strategic planning for the period 2013-2017. Results of that process are detailed in a separate "Technical Document", representing a compendium of data collected expressly to better understand public sentiment toward Missouri State Parks; data essential for grounding the 2013-2017 strategic plan on Missourians' experiences with and expectations for state parks and historic sites. http://mostateparks.com/sites/default/files/2013_Strategic_Plan_Technical_Report.pdf

The Mission of the Missouri State Park System

The fundamental mission of the Missouri state park system is threefold; all are of equal importance.

- To preserve and interpret the finest examples of Missouri's natural landscapes;
- To preserve and interpret the finest examples of Missouri's cultural landmarks;
- To provide healthy and enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities

for all Missourians and visitors to Missouri.

This mission is derived from the Missouri constitution, Missouri statutes, and the honored tradition of the Missouri state park system.

SUMMARY OF THE FOUR-PART PROCESS AND MAJOR FINDINGS:

1. *Online survey of all Missouri State Parks staff* (response group = 390, 76%), allowing personnel to evaluate Missouri State Parks progress in achieving their objectives; propose objectives that might be missing; propose emphasis for each objective over the next five years; and identify opportunities and challenges affecting future success.

• **Major Finding:** Overall, staff described the performance of state parks and historic sites as “more than satisfactory.” This characterization, however, understates staff’s profound commitment to exceed merely “better than average,” but instead, pursue exemplary public service. Significant obstacles identified by staff to this consummate service level include shortfalls in funding and hiring. Despite these near-inevitable hurdles, staff is committed to Missouri State Parks’ three-fold mission and pursuit of excellence, giving voice to this commitment by identifying specific objectives that must be emphasized over the next five years to move the management of state parks and historic sites closer to the ideal.



2. *Missouri State Parks leadership team meeting* (participant group = 35), asking Missouri State Parks leadership to reflect on staff survey results; consider draft objectives evaluated by staff; propose any revisions, deletions, or additions to these objectives; offer specific strategies or actions by which each of the objectives might be achieved; and identify opportunities and challenges affecting future success.

• **Major Finding:** Leadership generally agreed with staff’s performance appraisal, as well as staff’s recommendations for objectives requiring emphasis in the next five years to improve performance. Leadership, too, aspires to exemplary public service, and the team crafted specific strategies to achieve the objectives needing emphasis if the ideal performance they envision is to be approached.

3. *Online survey of “frontline” or well-informed Missouri State Parks stakeholders* (n = 111; e.g., non-government organizations; federal, state, and local agencies), asking for their assessment of state parks and historic sites importance, performance, needed improvements, as well as challenges and opportunities over the next five years.

• **Major Finding:** Stakeholders offered praise, criticisms, and cautions. To illustrate: *“State Parks is doing a good job, even an excellent job, but there’s much more we could be doing as a state, expanding the State Parks mission and role to be even more active and proactive in preserving and expanding our access to natural and cultural environments. There’s strong need for more outdoor and natural opportunities near our population centers. However, without full and dedicated funding for continued operations and without extraordinary funding to make needed infrastructure repairs, our park system might not be up to the task.”*

Stakeholders were asked to rank 27 objectives upon which Missouri State Parks might place emphasis over the next five years. The priority order stakeholders assigned to these objectives was statistically similar to the ranking given these same 27 objectives by staff, revealing common thinking between informed citizens and staff on challenges and opportunities facing Missouri State Parks.



4. Telephone survey of Missouri's general public (n = 400) to assess what Missouri's "general public" knows and thinks about state parks and historic sites ("Missouri State Parks Poll 2013").

• **Major Finding:** One-quarter (24%) of Missouri adults said that their interests in nature and the outdoors were their most enjoyable interests (roughly 1 million Missouri adults), while an additional 52% characterized nature and the outdoors as among their "more enjoyable" interests (an additional 2.4 million adults). Thirty-five percent (1.6 million adults) described the state's "historic places and people" as among their "more enjoyable" interests, and 14% (650,000 adults) described their interests in "historic places and people" as their "most enjoyable interests." The data supports emerging research findings that, rather than being recreational amenities appealing to limited interests, parks and historic sites are essential to our sense of place, identity, and accomplishment; essential to our health and fitness; and essential to the very quality of life today and for generations to come.

DRIVING FORCES

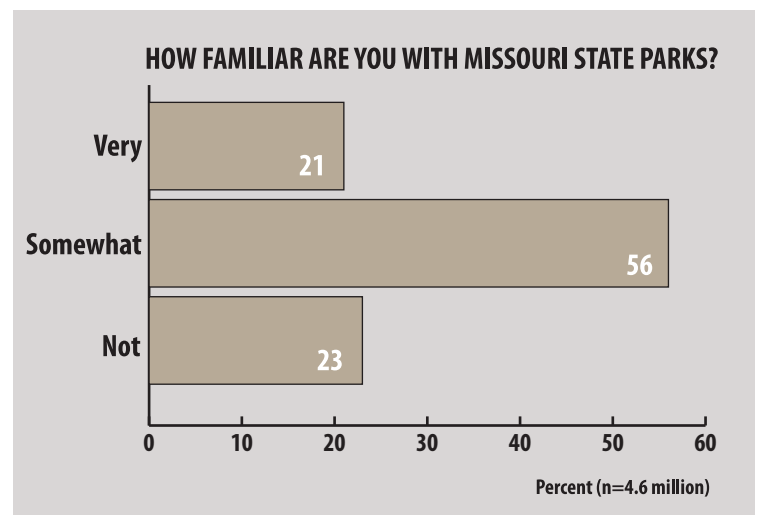
As public servants, employees of Missouri State Parks commit to exemplary public service in our management of state parks and historic sites; our citizenry deserves no less than our best. Our sheer grit, however, is not the only force at work; several other powerful and important dynamics are in play, as identified by many participants in the Missouri State Parks stakeholder involvement process – three factors are profoundly significant, each holding challenge and opportunity:

- **Funding,**
- **Attendance, and**
- **Cultural Diversity**

FUNDING

As of 2013, Missouri was the first of only four states enacting voter-approved earmarked sales taxes to underwrite natural/cultural resource management. Is it geographic coincidence that all four states are stacked atop each other in the midsection of the United States: Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota?

Originally approved by voters in 1984, Missouri’s parks-and-soils sales tax is a one-tenth-of-one percent sales tax; or 1 cent tax on every \$10 spent on most products, (about \$6/year per Missourian). As the name implies, revenues are divided equally between Missouri State Parks and soil conservation. The tax periodically must be resubmitted for voter endorsement, but re-approvals by landslides in 1988, 1996, and 2006 affirm solid citizen support for continuation of these earmarked expenditures.



77% of Missouri adults say they are “somewhat” or “very” familiar with Missouri State Parks, and 73% say they are satisfied with the way Missouri cares for its state parks and historic sites, likely helping to explain why Missouri voters continue to reauthorize the parks-and-soils sales tax by landslide votes. MO State Parks Poll 2013

About three-quarters of the system’s budget comes from this funding mechanism, with fee revenue the other major source. Stable funding allowed Missouri State Parks to make extensive repairs and improvements to the system, as well as develop new areas. But rising employee cost of living, aging infrastructure in need of maintenance and replacement, and expectations for system expansion are ever-present – and revenues are stretched.

Additional revenues targeting \$20 million annually would allow Missouri State Parks to fulfill unmet maintenance, capital improvement expectations, and staffing needs. Several funding avenues are strategic potentials to garner this supplementary support.

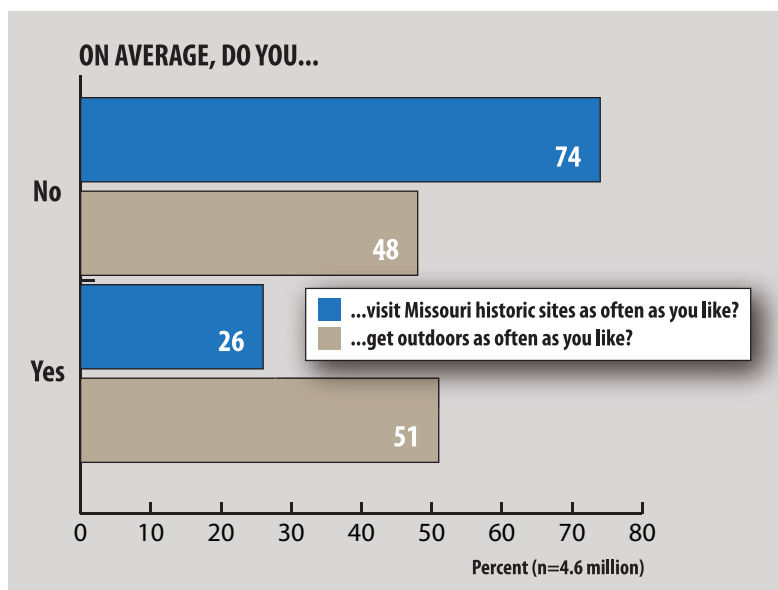
ATTENDANCE

Estimated attendance at Missouri State Parks in 2012 was 18.09 million, up 1.4% from 17.84 million in 2011. Visitors give meaning and purpose to parks and historic sites, but the digital age offers stiff competition:

- Americans now spend 90% of their time indoors² ;
- American children now devote 52 hours each week to electronic media, while spending less than 40 minutes outside, compared to more than four hours outdoors just a generation ago.³

Benefits of modern conveniences, digital devices and entertainment that tend to keep us sedentary and sofa-glued are difficult to argue. But fused with our dietary habits, inactivity imposes an alarming penalty on the state and nation (following data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):⁴

- 65% of Missouri adults 18 and over are overweight;
- 31% of Missouri adults 18 and over are obese;
- 14% of Missouri adolescents, grades 9-12, are obese;
- Obesity is the number two cause of preventable death in the United States.⁵



We want Missourians off their sofas and in their parks and historic sites (they can bring their electronic media if they like; in some locales, we provide Wi-Fi). Everybody is a winner – and unarguably a healthier and reinvigorated winner – when people make memories in Missouri State Parks. In fact, 95% of Missouri adults indicate they believe that spending time outdoors leads to a happier and healthier life.⁶

We intend to increase visitation among all Missourians and out-of-state visitors to 20 million by the year 2020, or about a 10% increase over current attendance – a strategic emphasis to boost our appeal and relevance in competitive times.

Targeting roughly a 10% increase in visitation by 2020 is realistic given the finding that 48% of Missouri adults say they do not get outdoors to enjoy nature as much as they would like, and 74% say they do not visit Missouri historic and cultural sites as often as they would like. MO State Parks Poll 2013

² Stephen R. Kellert, 2005. Building for life: understanding and designing the human-nature connection, Washington, DC: Island Pr.

³ Children & Nature Website: Annotated Bibliographies, volumes 1-5, www.childrenandnature.org

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/stateprograms/fundedstates/missouri.html>

⁵ Obesity-related statistics in America, Get America Fit Foundation, <http://www.getamericafit.org/statistics-obesity-in-america.html>

⁶ MO Residents' & Recreation Professionals' Opinions on Parks & Recreation in MO. MO Pks. & Rec. Association, Jefferson City, 145pp.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Missouri is slightly less racially and ethnically diverse than the nation as a whole: 84% of Missourians are white, compared to 78% of the U.S. citizenry; 4% of Missourians are persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, compared to 17% of the nation's population. Still, our vision sees all Missourians personally connecting with our state's natural and cultural resources to make strong, warm and lasting memories. Public polling data collected to guide this strategic plan (Missouri State Parks Poll 2013) offered a clear direction regarding our minority outreach:

- The odds of non-white poll respondents saying they got outdoors to enjoy nature as often as they liked were about the same as for white respondents;
- The odds of non-white respondents saying they visited Missouri historic-cultural sites as often as they liked were about the same as for white respondents;
- But the odds of white respondents saying they "often" heard or read something about Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites were nearly three times greater for white respondents than non-white respondents.

Simply, enhanced communication with Missouri's minority populations about their state parks and historic sites – indeed, improved communication with all constituents of all backgrounds and abilities – is a strategic opportunity, as well as a compelling responsibility.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Eight goals (and accompanying objectives and strategies in no priority order) are detailed for the planning period, 2013-2017. These do not include all day-to-day operations, but rather the actions that citizens and staff identified as important for supporting and strengthening the system:

- 1) Resource Management;
- 2) Interpretation;
- 3) Recreation;
- 4) Funding;
- 5) Staff Development;
- 6) Partnerships;
- 7) Marketing; and
- 8) Administration.

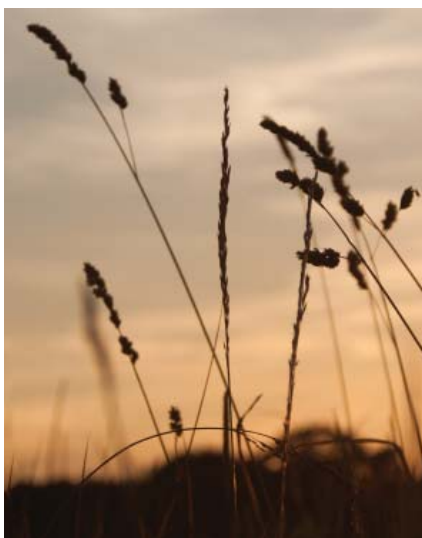
ANNUAL ACTION PLAN: Best Management Practice Accompanying Strategic Planning

The world is dynamic, not static; an obvious but critical appreciation if this strategic plan is to have more worth than a paperweight. To ensure this plan is a working and hopefully dog-eared guide to priorities over a five-year period, each fall, Missouri State Parks leadership team will engage the best management practice of reviewing strategic goals, objectives and strategies to establish priorities for the coming year. This exercise affords opportunity to amend, add, or delete plan content, and incorporate a sociocultural scan of current events, fiscal realities, staff insights, and inevitable month-to-month seminal moments – opportunities and uncertainties – for Missouri State Parks. Outcomes of this fast-paced analysis will result in an Annual Action Plan detailing assignments, scheduling, and progress milestones for Missouri State Parks.⁷

1) *Resource Management Goal: Actively preserve, restore and manage natural and cultural resources in Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites.*

A) OBJECTIVE:

Preserve, restore and manage our state's most significant natural landscapes and resources.



Strategies:

- Survey for potentially significant natural resource lands.
- Train staff to adequately meet prescribed fire and other management needs.
- Natural Resource Management staff will identify and implement incentives to encourage resource preservation activities.
- Expand our capacity to conduct prescribed fires.
- Investigate conservation easements and other tools to preserve lands other than fee simple ownership.
- Establish collection centers for recyclable materials in Missouri State Parks.
- Enlist volunteer organizations to accomplish natural resource projects.
- Review Conceptual Development Plans to confirm proposed land acquisitions are identified that support natural resource objectives.
- Fully explore mitigation possibilities to meet resource goals (e.g., wetland credits, carbon credits).
- Expand our treatment of the most ecologically destructive invasive species as they affect our most important natural areas.
- Update Missouri State Parks Challenge of the '90s: Our Threatened State Parks study.

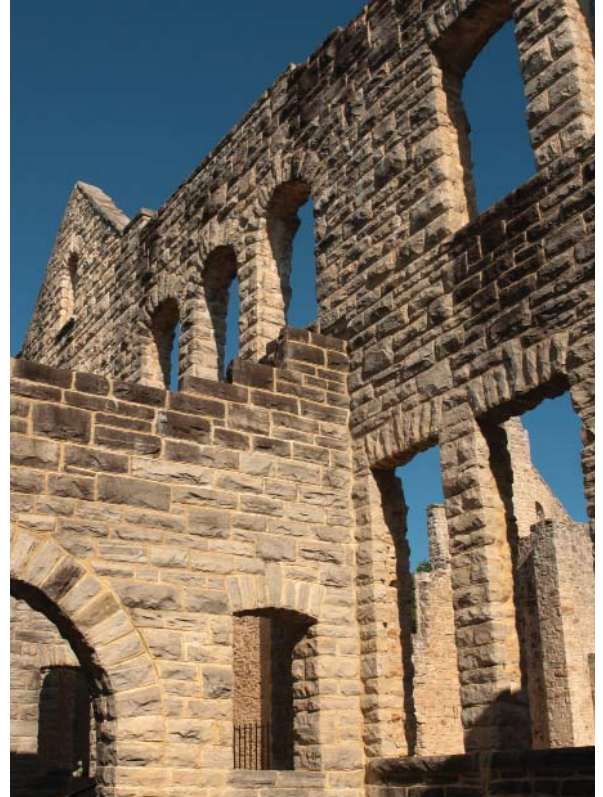
⁷ The initial Action Plan was compiled by the Leadership Team immediately upon approval of this Strategic Plan in spring, 2013.

B) OBJECTIVE:

Enhance scientific research, monitoring and biological inventories in Missouri State Parks.

Strategies:

- Dedicate additional funds for natural resource inventories.
- Create internships with universities for natural resource management, research and inventories.
- Utilize Natural Resource Management Plans to identify goals and needed resources (funding and labor).
- Cultivate partnerships with state universities and research organizations to focus research in Missouri State Parks.



C) OBJECTIVE:

Preserve lands and secure funds through partnerships and designations that work toward Missouri's state-wide landscape management goals.

Strategies:

- Partner with other agencies to identify key land acquisitions needed to achieve natural resource goals.
- Integrate compatible state parks natural resource goals with larger statewide conservation plans.
- Collaborate with other public land agencies for integrated land management including shared education and training.

D) OBJECTIVE:

Preserve historic structures in the system through treatment and documentation.

Strategies:

- Establish and deploy a Historic Specialist Construction Crew.
- Identify and/or pre-approve contractors/experts with special skills particular to historic resources.
- Designate a core, set-aside budget for historic building work.
- Document (plans and photos) historic structures and their conditions (see current Land and Building Survey efforts).
- Evaluate and improve implementation of centralized project clearance procedures.
- Conduct workshops/trainings for historic property maintenance.

E) OBJECTIVE:

Preserve, restore and manage our state's most outstanding cultural resources.

Strategies:

- Participate in National Heritage Health Index.
- Cultural Resource Management staff will identify and implement incentives to encourage resource preservation activities.
- Partner with local historic sites/communities (e.g., staff expertise, projects, promotion).
- Update Challenge of the 90s: Our Threatened State Parks study.



F) OBJECTIVE:

Preserve artifacts in the system through treatment and documentation.

Strategies:

- Establish a professional conservator position with lab resources.
- Ensure Cultural Resource Funds are fully dedicated to projects.
- Inventory and prioritize artifacts for acquisition and preservation.
- Place greater emphasis on cataloging in PerFORM plans.
- Train and share field staff among sites in artifact cataloging and preservation skills.
- Establish cataloger “action-team” that travels site-to-site to speed and increase quality of cataloging.
- Annually designate funds for grant hard-matches.

- Ensure skill-sharing (training) is included in scopes of work for selected projects when contractors are used to do historic preservation, e.g., similar to work at Nathan Boone Homestead State Historic Site.

G) OBJECTIVE:

Identify significant archaeological sites in the system through survey and documentation.

Strategies:

- Cultivate relationship with the Missouri Archaeological Society to conduct preliminary archaeological surveys.
- Contract for archaeological surveys.

2) *Interpretation Goal:* Facilitate personal connections between visitors and State Parks and Historic Sites.



A) OBJECTIVE:

Train and equip interpreters to create and deliver innovative educational and inspiring programs.

Strategies:

- Initiate routine evaluation of interpretive methods (e.g., stay current with methods; web-based, virtual exhibits, etc.).
- Require and fund all full time interpreters to become Certified Interpretive Guides (CIGs).
- Restart winter site interpretive staff training.
- Establish, maintain and evaluate interpretive standards for all interpreters system-wide.
- Require all seasonal staff to attend interpreter training.
- Develop an evaluation team to review, train, and assess interpreters.
- Complete an Annual Implementation Schedule from the Interpretive Plans.

- Enhance “Learn 2” recreation programs to include resource interpretation.

B) OBJECTIVE:

Develop and update exhibits, publications and social media that support interpretive activities.

Strategies:

- Dedicate more staff (in-house and contractors) for exhibit review, fabrication and installation.
- Better coordinate in-house staff in interpretive exhibit development (e.g., include architect and exhibit staff in design and planning).
- Investigate establishing a statewide contract for exhibit development.
- Develop training for interpreters and historic site staff on interpretive exhibit development methods.
- Provide better directional and informational signage.

3) *Recreation Goal:* Connect people to natural and cultural resources through enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities.

A) OBJECTIVE:

Appeal to youth audiences, underserved clienteles and decision-makers.

Strategies:

- Investigate and expand social media where appropriate.
- Conduct a survey of the general public, with special emphasis on youth to identify what would attract them to state parks and historic sites.
- Establish points of contact and liaison with underserved communities (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged) to improve services to these constituencies.

**B) OBJECTIVE:**

Improve facilities and infrastructure that support recreation activities.

Strategies:

- Identify and prioritize infrastructure improvement needs.
- Implement a schedule to update all Conceptual Development Plans.
- Expand Wi-Fi where appropriate.
- Increase all types of camping options (e.g., walk-in, basic, electric).
- Develop a prioritized list of campground upgrades to stay current with camping trends in utilities and technologies.
- Redevelop group camps to serve non-traditional groups.
- Require Maintenance Journal record-keeping for cyclic and preventive maintenance.
- Place higher priority on the demolition of non-essential (non-historic) structures.
- Monitor and maintain existing trails.
- Build more trails for recreation and non-motorized access to park facilities.
- Adopt sustainable design and development practices when possible.

C) OBJECTIVE:

Increase recreation programming beyond do-it-yourself activities.

Strategies:

- Expand “Learn 2” programs.
- Increase recreation programs by establishing a Recreation Specialist position.
- Partner with concessionaires, local businesses, local parks, and community colleges to add programs.
- Expand availability of rental recreation equipment.
- Conduct programs in non-traditional locations.
- Conduct programs for non-traditional constituencies.



D) OBJECTIVE:

Provide facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Strategies:

- Dedicate staff/team(s) to a wide-ranging facility assessment (with special attention to the American’s with Disabilities Act and United States Access Board Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Facilities) to update transition plans.
- Prepare template of Best Practices by updating the Patterns Book (standards for accessibility).
- Adopt achievable Universal Access Standards.
- Reestablish an Accessibility Advisory Committee with members representing varying disabilities.
- Dedicate funding for accessibility improvements.
- Build additional accessible trails and fishing areas.

E) OBJECTIVE:

Expand the system in support of the mission.

Strategies:

- Tie physical expansion to revenue expansion.
- Focus on growing our existing parks/sites through identified acquisition units.
- Update Missing Masterpieces to identify significant cultural and natural resource properties.
- Consider priority acquisition/development of additional parks near urban population centers.
- Develop a process for “line item readiness” in budgeting (i.e., project design is substantially complete before authorization).
- Establish development-capacity for each park/site with special consideration for infrastructure variables such as wastewater and available parking.
- Study underutilized facilities for alternative uses through the Conceptual Development Plan process.

F) OBJECTIVE:

Provide an environment that is safe and secure for visitors and staff to Missouri State Parks.

Strategies:

- Conduct regular staff training in safety and security (load , environmental management, theft prevention, crisis scenarios).
- Encourage staff to “3-B”: BE visible, BE outside, and BE nearby.
- Get rangers, superintendents, and hosts out of vehicles and on foot or bike, enhancing frequency and quality of contacts.
- Use technology as a security-force multiplier (e.g., online application for reporting crime).
- Develop a “Fresh-Set-of-Eyes” program where visiting superintendents identify opportunities to improve safety and security.
- Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies in building site selection, lighting, vegetation management, and all design considerations.



4) *Funding Goal:* Strengthen the financial condition of Missouri State Parks.

A) OBJECTIVE:

Secure new revenue streams.

Strategies:

- Maximize partnership opportunities with concessionaires and reevaluate standard concession contracts.
- Evaluate potential self-operating concessions.
- Continue attempts to reestablish general revenue funding.
- Develop and advertise state parks and historic sites donation priority list.
- Provide information to explain Missouri State Parks inclusion in statewide bonding initiative.
- Conduct Missouri State Parks “Telethon,” perhaps customized for social media.
- Develop “Adopt-a-Project” program.
- Further engage the Missouri State Park Foundation.
- Continue investigation of Net-metering and carbon credits.
- Gain legislative approval to retain interest on earnings.
- Reevaluate the fee structure of easements/agreements.
- Consider the sale or lease of property not mission-essential.
- Evaluate the fee structure for rental or lease of buildings.
- Expand Maintenance Resource Account and leasehold opportunities.



B) OBJECTIVE:

Renewal of the parks-and-soils sales tax.

Strategy:

- Meet with Missouri Parks Association, Conservation Federation of Missouri, Missouri Farm Bureau, and other constituent groups to formulate a plan to inform and educate the public of the benefits of the parks-and-soils sales tax.
- Post "Completed as Planned" signage.

C) OBJECTIVE:

Maximize existing revenue streams.



Strategies:

- Continue to cultivate relationships with business partners.
- Develop an evaluation process for existing fees (e.g., camping, tours, and shelters).
- Maximize campground revenue sources related to the camping experience.
- Maximize retail sales opportunities and sites to meet visitor expectations.
- Maximize use of surplus property program.

D) OBJECTIVE:

Support federal funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund and Recreational Trails Program.

Strategies:

- Advertise accomplishments and customize information to congressional delegates.
- Greater publication of program successes.

5) *Staff Development Goal:* Foster excellence, professionalism, empowerment, and accountability in our employees.

A) OBJECTIVE:

Staff facilities and programs to meet essential functions.

Strategies:

- Define and prioritize essential functions of facilities, programs, and districts.
- Review and evaluate the current housing policy and revise as necessary.

B) OBJECTIVE:

Attract, recruit, and retain qualified, motivated, and capable staff.

Strategies:

- Establish minimum education/training requirements for specific positions and locations.
- Develop and implement a Recruitment and Retention Plan.
- Develop a mentoring program.
- Work with Office of Administration on the following issues:
 - Keep registers open all the time.
 - Allow more flexibility in hiring/reaching people on the register.
 - Create positions applicable to job requirements of Missouri State Parks.
 - Improve control over staff career progression.
 - Streamline register process.
- Temporarily double-fill positions to pass-along expertise of vacating employees.
- Streamline hiring authority.

C) OBJECTIVE:

Foster a workplace committed to staff learning, growth, innovation, and open communication.

Strategies:

- Reinstate tuition reimbursement program.
- Develop a two-year Structured Training Program for all new managers.
- Cross-train to increase staff flexibility to fill vacant, priority positions.
- Develop New Employee Training Program with Ranger Training Program as template.
- Expand Project Frontline/Back-office.
- Commit to continuing education and training.
- Review out-of-state travel restrictions to support continuing education and collegial exchange.

6) *Partnerships Goal:* Nurture partnerships.

A) OBJECTIVE:

Strengthen existing partnerships.

Strategies:

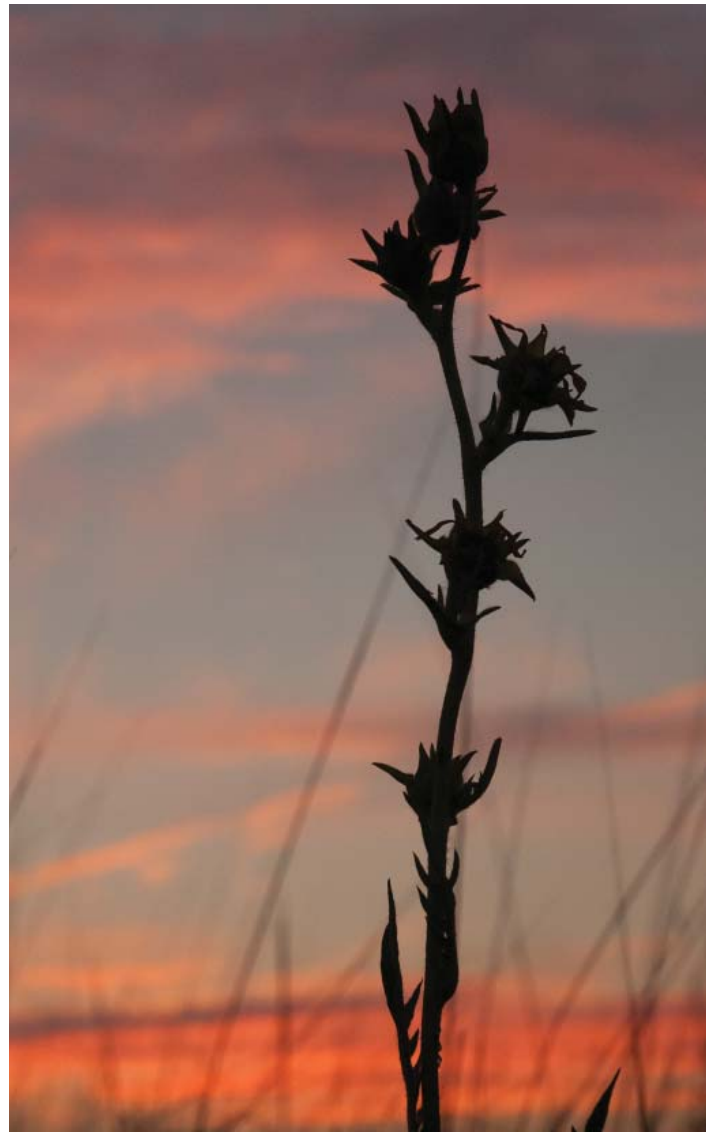
- Conduct regional stakeholder meetings for ideas, proposals and guidance.
- Evaluate current partnerships and expand where appropriate, e.g., educational institutions, non-government organizations, government agencies.
- Work with the Missouri State Park Foundation to expand its role.
- Establish a Missouri State Park Youth Corps career development program.
- Expand volunteer programs.

B) OBJECTIVE:

Seek new partners.

Strategies:

- Develop corporate partnership policy, and explore partnership opportunities.
- Seek sponsors for specific advertising, capital improvement projects, and donations.
- Seek partnerships for an individual state park and/or historic site.
- Advertise existing partnerships to garner new partners and support.
- Partner with non-traditional organizations and appropriate high-profile individuals, e.g., health department, hospitals, artists, entertainers, writers, sports figures, other celebrities.



7) *Marketing Goal:* Build a strong Missouri State Parks identity, maintaining existing clientele and attracting new visitors.

A) OBJECTIVE:

Attract new visitors by broadening appeal through innovative marketing and customer services.



Strategies:

- Develop a Marketing Plan for Missouri State Parks.
- Undergo a branding process to direct marketing efforts.
- Leverage advertising and marketing budget by working with Division of Tourism and other partners (e.g., *Missouri Life* magazine, local communities, local historical societies, etc.).
- Increase state park and historic site presence on-line, in social media, and by adopting new technologies.
- Work with other agencies to construct Missouri State Parks exhibits at rest stops and welcome centers.
- Increase staff to support graphic design projects (e.g., Phase 5 brochures).

B) OBJECTIVE:

Increase public and political visibility of Missouri State Parks.

Strategies:

- Plan and facilitate opportunities for legislators and staff to visit state parks and historic sites.
- Plan and facilitate opportunities for Division of Tourism staff that work in Welcome Centers to visit State Parks and Historic Sites.
- Improve informational opportunities and outreach.
- Encourage all parks and sites to engage local politicians, chamber members, and community leaders.
- Encourage and support staff participation in community activities.
- Engage local schools and universities, especially those with Park, Recreation, and Tourism programs.

C) OBJECTIVE:

Evaluate attendance measurement calculations.

Strategies:

- Revisit multipliers (ratio) used for visitation estimates as warranted.
- Optimize placement of car counters, types of counters, and numbers of counters deployed.
- Define visitation (e.g., off site, driving through, virtual).

8) *Administration Goal:* Improve and strengthen decision-making.

A) OBJECTIVE:

Improve data use and allocation of digital resources.

Strategies:

- Identify best management practices for creating, managing, and accessing an integrated system of databases.
- Apply data insights to operations.
- Communicate decisions effectively.

B) OBJECTIVE:

Evaluate program functions and responsibilities to optimize performance.

Strategies:

- Stay apprised of the most effective planning and business practices, and operational efficiencies.
- Apply best practices in adaptive management process.
- Communicate decisions effectively.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

Missourians' support of their State Parks and Historic Sites has been outstanding; in fact, virtually unprecedented when considering citizen passage of the one-tenth-of-one percent parks-and-soils sales tax on repeated occasions. And as should be the case at the "end" of every plan, the real work just begins; to implement the plan and achieve the vision – a future where Missourians personally connect with our state's natural and cultural resources, making memories so strong, warm and lasting that our citizenry knows that state parks and historic sites are essential to Missouri's quality of life, and supports actions enhancing these resources for future generations.



For more information on Missouri state parks and state historic sites, visit our website at mostateparks.com.



Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Division of State Parks

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