



Post Office Box 30036
Columbia, Missouri 65205

For Immediate Release:
Contact: @
The Missouri Parks Association
1-573-449-4805 for more info.

MPA Receives Grant For UPOP In Kansas City

March 23, 2006 — The Missouri Parks Association has received a \$10,000 grant from the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation to defray some expenses for its Urban Populations Outreach Project (UPOP) in the Kansas City area. This outdoor programming to benefit urban youth in Kansas City continues a partnership between MPA and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources State Park Division and expands it to include the Missouri Department of Conservation through its Urban Discovery Center.

MPA initiated UPOP in Kansas City in six year ago with a mission of introducing urban children to Missouri's beautiful state parks system. Working through youth service agencies in Kansas City, UPOP has introduced thousands of kids to Missouri's state park system as an enjoyable and educational alternative to their urban core lifestyles. These kids had no knowledge or experience with the state park system.

The program has grown each year and last year sponsored 12 field trips for nearly 400 kids to Missouri state parks and more than 2,500 contact hours of environmental education and outdoor recreation. Since its inception, the Kansas City UPOP has provided more than 70 field trips for more than 2,400 urban core kids.

All costs for the program have been provided by MPA through its membership program and special gifts. The new Conservation Heritage Foundation grant will enable continuation and expansion of the UPOP program that hopefully will cultivate future conservationists who will protect our precious natural resources – especially in urban areas.

This summer, disadvantaged kids in Kansas City will take trips to state parks and state conservation areas. Expenses paid by the grant will include bus transportation to and from sites, lunches and/or snacks, and equipment needs for all field trips. Kids will enjoy a creek walk up Brush Creek from the Discovery Center to the Bruce Watkins Cultural

Heritage Center; go carp fishing on Truman Lake and visit the nearby Lost Valley Fish Hatchery; bike on the Katy Trail; visit Watkins Mill State Park and Historic Site and hike in Weston Bend State Park. Other outdoor activities will include learning to fish plus learning about natural habitats and outdoor skills. One trip will take kids fishing at a nearby pond while on the overnight camping trip for an event they are sure to enjoy.

Additionally, it is our hope that UPOP will have the opportunity to operate out of the Discovery Center in 2006. This will allow easy coordination with Discovery Center personnel for the upcoming trips as well as provide a foundation for our program.

The Missouri Parks Association (MPA) a non profit advocacy group for Missouri's state parks and historic sites, has for the past five years, sponsored their Urban Populations Outreach Project (UPOP) with great success. Designed to attract urban youth to the state park system, UPOP hasw sponsored more than 60 field trips for more than 2,100 urban youths, lending nearly 15,000 contact hours of historical and environmental education. Many of these students were first time visitors. Their field trips have included urvban fishing through MDC, biking on the Katy Trail, boating on Truman Lake, overnight camping weekends and numerous other visits to the state parks and historic sites. The program coordination with the Missouri Division of Natural Resources Division of State Parks has brought added success to the program.

This partnership, (MDC, DNR & MPA) will serve to provide youth with a refreshing alternative to their traditional urban lifestyle, and to provide activities they may not normally have experienced inside the urban core. The field trips include:

- 1) Weeklong Summer Discovery Camp at Urban Discovery Center: Students will spend time in each of six workshops learning about habitats or outdoor skills. They will explore the worlds of fish, forests and wildlife while discovering the world around them. The camp will operation from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily and will provide transportation to and from site as well as lunch for participants. Approximately 60 youths will participate.
- 2) Creek Wal From Urban Discovery Center To Bruce Watkins Heritage Museum. Approximately 60 students will partake in the creek walk. Prior to leaving the Discovery Center, students will work with an education specialist from Nature's Aquarium workshop to discuss water tables and history of Brush CVreek, how the creek has transformed over the years and what it probably looked like during the days of Lewis and Clark. Additional environmental education will be discussed, as well as the local habitat. The walk will end at Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center where students will eat lunch, learn the history of the site and make dugout canoes. The program will provide transportation to the Urban Discovery Center and from the Watkins Museum as well a provide lunch and natural craft activities.
- 3) Outdoor Skills Camp At Burr Oak Woods Nature Center. Students will receive instruction on archery, fishing, canoeing, air rifle and map and compass skills.

The program will provide approximately 30 kids water and lunches to participants as well as transportation to and from the site.

- 4) City Fishing Program. About 30 kids per trip will retreat to Fleming Park or Watkins Mill State Park for fishing lessons. Snacks and drinks will be provided for the trip as well as transportation to and from the site.
- 5) Watkins Mill State Park and Historic Site. While at the lake beach, students will experience a special treat of fascinating wildlife in the area such as a variety of birds, mussels, geese and blue heron as well as native wildflowers and plants along the trails. Students can also enjoy a tour of the mill, the Watkins family house, heirloom garden and school house. The staff of Watkins Mill, dressed in 18th Century period clothing conduct the tours and give descriptions of daily chores and school life in the 1850's. Snacks and drinks will be provided for the trip as well as transportation to and from the site.
- 6) Weston Bend State Park. Kids will enjoy one-half to one mile hiking on a trail with a magnificent view overlooking the Missouri River and the surrounding valley. The area is heavily treed on the cliffs providing some shade for hiking pleasure. Snacks and drinks will be provided for the trip as well as transportation to and from the site.
- 7) Lost Valley Hatchery and Carp Fishing on Truman Lake. Students will visit the hatchery's visitor center where they will view the aquarium as well as a variety of exhibits focusing on fishing and aquatic themes, a model of hatchery water flow and how to legally measure fish. They will learn the fish species being raised at the site and view the hatchery production room from windows located inside the Visitor's Center. Participants will then retreat to Truman Lake for a pontoon ride and fishing. Approximately 15 students will participate in the outing. The program will provide transportation on the trip as well as lunch for the kids.
- 8) Biking on the Katy Trail at Windsor, MO. Students will enjoy a leisure bike ride along the Katy Trail. Area park naturalists will discuss the flora and fauna of the area, the history of the Katy Trail and view area initiatives to restore the natural prairie grasses and native wildflowers along the trail. The naturalist will explain how controlled burning was used to restore the area to its native setting. After the ride, participants will be treated to the local Dairy Queen sundaes, a refreshing treat for a hot day! Bikes will be rented by the program and transportation will be provided to and from the trail for approximately 15 students.
- 9) Camping at Knob Knoster State Park and Fishing at Kearn Wildlife Area. Approximately 50 students will unload belongings at Camp Bob White, eat lunch and then retreat to Kearn Wildlife Area for an afternoon of fishing. Personnel will give demonstrations on angling, caring for fish after the catch and cleaning. Participants will then retreat to the campsite for a fish fry and cookout. Students can then swim at the camp pool (lifeguards will be provided), play basketball,

partake in crafts and make s'mores and roasted marshmallows at the evening bonfire. Students will sleep in organized group cabins. The following morning students will eat breakfast, do additional programming, eat a snack and depart the site. The program will provide transportation to the campsite and Kern Wildlife Area as well as activities for students during the trip.