

NEW MISSOURI CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM OPENS

The new Missouri Civil Rights Museum opened its first major exhibit at the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center in Kansas City on October 26. More than a hundred people enjoyed a reception co-sponsored by MPA that also marked the opening of MPA's annual meeting. MPA also co-sponsored the exhibit, "Marching Toward Justice: The History of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution." Cheryl Simmons, Urban Affairs Coordinator in Kansas City for the DNR Division of State Parks, worked tirelessly to bring the exhibit to the Watkins Center in time for the MPA meeting.

The highly successful event helped launch a promising new partnership between state parks and Kansas City Parks and Recreation, which had operated the center since its completion in 1989. DNR/DSP is responsible for exhibits and programming at the State Civil Rights Museum, which functions as an extension of the Missouri State Museum in the State Capitol. KC Parks and Rec continues to operate other programs of the Bruce Watkins Cultural Heritage Center. Cheryl Simmons worked out the details of the new partnership and arranged focus group meetings with community leaders to determine the goals and mission of the new museum.

During the opening ceremonies several speakers paid tribute to Simmons as the driving force behind the exhibit, which commemorates U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and those who fought for civil rights. State Senator Mary Bland told the audience, "Marshall's fight goes on through you, through the people." Stephen Mahfood, DNR director, spoke about plans for permanent exhibits in the Missouri Civil Rights Museum. In Mahfood's words, DNR wants to make this "the best museum, an

illustration of what's best about our society. We want to be part of it and will continue to be part of it." John Cunning, director of the state park interpretation program, explained that DSP is holding public meetings to gather input on topics and themes to be featured in future exhibits. The museum will focus on the civil rights movement in Kansas City and in the state as a whole. "It is important to remember," Cunning said in an interview, "that it is an on-going movement. The civil rights story is still being written."

Curator of the new museum is Tilmon Stewart, former curator of the Black Archives of Mid-America, who joined the staff October 9. Other state park staff members at the facility include Michael Parks, tourist assistant; Yvette Bell, seasonal tour guide; and Rachel Pope, student intern. The "Marching Toward Freedom" exhibit will be open through January 6, 2002, from 10am – 6pm Tuesday through Saturday. There is no charge. Plan to stop at the Bruce Watkins Center, 3700 Blue Parkway.



Cheryl Simmons Will Be Missed

Scarcely a week after engineering the triumphant opening of "Marching Toward Justice" and participating in other aspects of MPA's annual meeting in Kansas City, Cheryl Simmons collapsed in church and died two days later on Tuesday, November 6. She was only 42.



"She was a wonderful person who worked hard on our behalf to establish a divisional presence in the Kansas City metro area and to seek to expand our programs to inner city neighborhoods," said park director Doug Eiken. "This is a terrific loss and she will be missed by all of us who knew and worked with her." Cheryl had been of particular assistance to MPA in facilitating MPA's Urban Populations Outreach Project, which was headquartered at the Bruce Watkins Center.

JOINT EFFORT ESTABLISHES PIONEER BACK COUNTRY

By Greg Iffrig

With picture perfect weather, amid the changing colors of fall, state officials, conservationists, friends and family of the late Roger Pryor, and many persons active in outdoor recreation joined staff of Pioneer Forest on Sunday October 14 to dedicate the new Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry. This 61,000-acre area of Pioneer Forest, the state's largest privately owned forest, is a landscape of landscapes. Found here are three Ozark streams running south through the area, 15 miles of frontage on the Current River, and miles of extensive forested hillsides. The tract is directly east of Round Spring and Highway 19.

Forest owner Leo Drey and his family were on hand to celebrate the realization of a decades-old dream, as DNR Director Steve Mahfood announced, "The Division of State Parks will lease the area's trails and trailheads in order to offer Missourians outstanding new opportunities to recreate in and learn from this beautiful region of the Ozarks."



l to r: Pioneer Forest Manager Clint Trammel, Randy Skeeter, Linda Pryor, Leo Drey, John Karel, Steve Mahfood

The Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry is named after one of the state's legendary conservationists who was a founder of the Missouri Parks Association and for many years worked for the Missouri Coalition for the Environment. The size of this area makes it the largest contiguous block in Missouri devoted to outdoor recreation. The backcountry will attract all those interested in primitive outdoor recreational pursuits, including day-hiking, overnight backpacking, and long-distance trips through scenic and rugged Ozark woodlands.

Already part of this large area is a thirteen-mile segment of the Ozark Trail following the permanent waters of Blair Creek. Currently under construction is a new twelve-mile long Brushy Creek Trail, a loop that will lead hikers along an abandoned narrow-gauge rail line through the rugged upper end of the Brushy Creek Valley to the Current River and return through scenic Satterfield Hollow. Within the upper end of this hollow is a small area where centuries-old white oak trees dominate the canopy. Other long-distance trails are planned.

One of the most interesting features of this backcountry is that it is a managed woodland, harvested using conservative, single-tree selection techniques. Because every acre is continuously forested, even recently harvested sites are attractive for recreation. This large area will serve as an educational tool to clearly show that well managed and sustainably harvested forests continuously

(See "Pioneer" on Page 7)

AMEREN DROPS CHURCH MOUNTAIN HYDRO PROJECT

Only days before the deadline for comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on Ameren Development Company's application for a preliminary permit for the Church Mountain Pumped Storage Project, Ameren on August 29 announced its intent to cease all efforts to build the facility. MPA President Susan Flader and Audubon Missouri Executive Director Roger Still, speaking on behalf of all affiliates of the Taum Sauk Coalition, lauded Ameren's decision as "an exemplary corporate response to Missourians' concern about natural heritage and biodiversity values at stake in the Taum Sauk area." Groups along the entire spectrum of the conservation community in Missouri, from the Conservation Federation and Scenic Missouri to the Sierra Club and the Coalition

for the Environment, had joined the coalition to safeguard the area.

Scores of MPA members and other conservationists had written letters to FERC, with copies to Governor Holden and the chairman of Ameren, in response to an article on the issue in the August *Heritage*. The letters, virtually all in opposition to the project, offered eloquent testimony to Missourians' concern about the area and, for many, their experiences hiking the Taum Sauk Trail, which would have been flooded by the lower reservoir. And Ameren listened. Only hours after Attorney General Jay Nixon filed a motion on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources asking FERC to deny the permit, a motion supported also by Governor Bob Holden, Ameren announced

its withdrawal. CEO Charles Mueller stated "the views expressed to us have caused us to conclude that it is impossible to go forward with this project in an environmentally sensitive yet cost-effective fashion."

MPA and the Missouri Coalition for the Environment had been preparing to file a joint motion to intervene before FERC in opposition to the project but decided not to file, instead applauding Ameren for its decision. Subsequently, MPA and others have met with Ameren officials to discuss the future of the area and were heartened by Ameren's intent to continue its lease with DNR for park trail development on the property as it continues to explore a range of options.

THE HILLS OF ROARING RIVER: HOW SHALL WE LOVE THEM?

by John Karel

One of the crown jewels of Missouri's park system is Roaring River in Barry County. Visitors to this park, or readers of *Exploring Missouri's Legacy*, are already aware that Roaring River is dramatically scenic, set in the rugged, mountainous hills of the western White River Basin. It is centered on a natural feature of striking beauty, Roaring River spring, which generates the cold clear water that draws visitors from far and wide to fish for the rainbow trout that have been stocked in the spring branch for almost one hundred years. Since Native American days, the valley along this branch, set deeply amid these glorious hills, has been a haven for people to gather, recreate, and refresh their spirits.

The human history of this 3,403-acre state park includes rich local folklore, an eccentric donor, and a wealth of log and stone buildings in the appealing rustic style of the 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps. The natural history of Roaring River is likewise rich and diverse. An unusually large number of native plant and animal species make their homes at Roaring River, including many that are rare, threatened, or endangered—in the nation, the state, or the park system. The park is also home to one of the original units of the Missouri Wild Area system: Roaring River Hills Wild Area. This 2045-acre portion of the park is one of a series of eleven such areas in Missouri state parks set aside by formal designation to preserve forever their wilderness-like qualities as a resource of permanent value and benefit.

Recently, several of the key values embodied in the hills of Roaring River have seemed to come into conflict, causing considerable discussion among park division staff, the State Parks Advisory Board, the Missouri Parks Association and other citizen groups, all of whom support the natural and cultural heritage values of our state parks. The issue is complex, having to do with the desirability of maximizing biodiversity, on the one hand, and preserving the wilderness character of the designated wild area, on the other. The background review that follows is

offered with the hope that all resources involved can be enhanced.

One of the areas of expertise that guides the park division in the stewardship of the natural resources at Roaring River, and at other parks as well, is a relatively new field known as restoration ecology. This is a field that has expanded around the country in the last decade or so, but no state park system has shown more skill or determination in applying its tenets than Missouri's.

Restoration ecology endeavors to maximize biodiversity by restoring natural landscapes with species and biotic communities that were present prior to Euro-American settlement but that have been affected by recent human activities. A variety of clues are used to determine the nature of such presettlement landscapes; and when the still-evolving



Roaring River hills and valley through cedars.

restoration techniques are fully applied, the results can be dramatic. Typically, such restoration projects employ the use of prescribed fire, or even mechanical removals of trees or brush that have colonized areas that were once open or grassy before human efforts to restrict wildfire. Examples of restored landscapes in Missouri parks include unglaciated upland prairie at Prairie State Park, wet bottomland prairie at Pershing, western Ozark glades and oak savanna at Ha Ha Tonka, and igneous glades and savannas at Taum Sauk Mountain. Related efforts apply to natural area protection and recovery programs for specific rare or endangered species or habitats. The Missouri Parks

Association supports these programs and is proud of the prominence our park staff has achieved in this field.

At the same time, the tri-partite mission of Missouri's park system emphasizes a careful balance between natural resources, cultural resources, and outdoor recreation. Most of the time these priority missions reinforce and complement one another, but on occasion initiatives from one mission conflict with values from another. Then we must use prudence as we sort out the most critical resources and the most important long-term benefits for the people of Missouri. As an example, park planners may find that a site that offers a choice location for a modern campground turns out to have also been used by native Americans and is thus now of archaeological importance, or perhaps the site is home to a rare species of plant or animal. We are fortunate that when such issues arise our park staff is trained to evaluate them with skill and sensitivity. But some situations are easier to resolve than others. Such a tough situation confronts us now in the hills of Roaring River, and the values at stake are of direct concern to all of us.

Many would argue that one of the original and powerful contributions to world civilization coming from the American experience has been the concept of wilderness preservation. When the settlers first encountered North America, wilderness was a condition against which most of them struggled, to establish homes, livelihoods, and communities. As the settlement of our nation proceeded, there began to grow the notion that the rapidly dwindling pockets of untrammled wilderness might have value to the American spirit—that such wildland was after all the raw material out of which we had built our nation.

The impulse to set such areas aside derives from our conservation tradition and love of expansive scenery, but also, perhaps even more deeply, from our American cultural experience of encountering the original untamed landscape—an encounter that was in part, to be sure, a confrontation, but was also a profound and satisfying engagement. Every region experienced a version of this encounter, and the history of every state, including Missouri, has been shaped by it. As we inexorably triumphed over the wilderness, a rough national consensus eventually emerged that the remnant vestiges of wild land did have value, and in 1964 Congress embodied this consensus in the Wilderness Act, which established the National Wilderness Preservation System. This system included only federal lands, and at first was applied almost exclusively in the mountain West.

A significant percentage of Americans had come to value highly the opportunity occasionally to

renew that elemental American encounter with our native wilderness. The key satisfaction in that experience is the sense of contact with untamed wildness – landscapes that are not overtly managed by humans but rather are affected primarily by the raw forces of nature. This experience has become highly cherished by many Missourians and is considered a form of recreation, though many would also consider it to be at least as much a cultural or even a spiritual experience. Many find it of great comfort that our society has mustered the reverence and self-discipline to leave some land, as much as possible, alone. Even from a scientific perspective, it can be argued that we have yet much to learn from such land, that we are wisest not to assume that we have arrived at all the answers about natural communities and biodiversity. Wilderness can serve as an instructive comparison to lands we manage more actively.

The Wild Area program in Missouri dates back to the 1970s, when the nation as a whole was deliberating about how to apply the benefits of the Wilderness Act to qualified lands in the eastern states. Congress recognized the need, and finally acted. Each eastern state, including Missouri, developed its own proposals and struggled to build the needed political support. In the end, a very broad coalition of civic and conservation groups worked with the Missouri congressional delegation in the 1970s and early 1980s for the designation of a total of eight Missouri areas. In the course of this lengthy campaign, it became apparent that the universe of wildland resources in our state was severely limited, and that of this limited resource, not all was on federal land. Critical portions of Missouri's remaining wildlands, including some of the most beautiful and representative, were on state parklands. Missouri conservationists worked with the Department of Natural Resources to develop a policy whereby such wild areas could be recognized and protected in an enduring way, and also made accessible for use and enjoyment by the people of Missouri in such fashion that their wilderness qualities would remain unimpaired for future generations. A program was developed based as closely as possible on the federal system.

This policy was adopted by DNR in 1978, after which state parklands were surveyed to see what areas might be suitable for inclusion in the new Wild Area System. As a result, over the next several years a total of ten areas were designated, including Roaring River Hills. In part owing to the restrictive criteria, the system has been conservative, with few enlargements except in 1995 when the newly acquired Goggins Mountain was added as the eleventh area, bringing the total acreage of the system to nearly 23,000 acres. This system, now approaching its 25th anniversary,

represents a thoughtful and serious commitment on the part of the State of Missouri to its citizens.

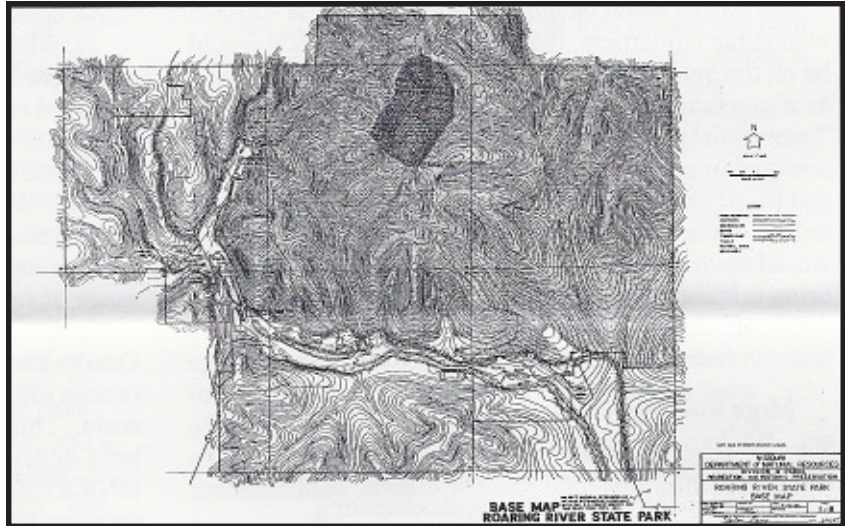
In order to conserve the fragile resource of wilderness on these specially designated lands, DNR has adopted special guidelines for their management, modeled on those for federal wilderness areas. Our state areas are generally smaller than federal wilderness, and as a result some criteria and management techniques are necessarily modified, but the principles and the goals are the same: to maintain for the visitor the sense of encounter with a landscape that has been shaped by the forces of nature—in the words of the Wilderness Act, “untrammeled by man”—and to do so in a spacious setting with ample opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation.

This system has been popular, but it has also remained modest in scope, recognizing that Wild Area policies are restrictive of other uses and of management prerogatives. They place a special burden on managers to preserve the wilderness atmosphere, and that is another reason that there have been few additions to the system since its founding.

One of the management tools that has been considered to be compatible with the Wild Area policy is prescribed fire. Although controlled fire can be, and is considered by some, a human intrusion, fire is presumed to have been a factor in native ecosystems in Missouri for thousands of years, and several Ozark landscapes, including glades and savannas, are dependent upon periodic fire to retain their characteristic appearance and species composition. Since fire has been excluded from most Missouri landscapes for many years, such fire-related ecosystems have often seen changes in their vegetation, and especially in the Ozarks an increase in eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). A focus of restoration ecology in state parks generally has been to control red cedar and re-open old glades.

Some of these cedar-grown glades are located in designated wild areas, and DNR policy has permitted the use of fire in these areas to maintain or restore the glades. This practice has not been particularly controversial, though there are still debates among professionals about the exact role of fire in presettlement Missouri, and even about the degree of naturalness of that fire, since much of it seems to have originated with Native Americans.

One such area, in fact the area where park biologists feel that cedar colonization has been most extensive, is Roaring River Hills. Although generally forested, Roaring River is at the western edge of a natural region of the Southwestern Ozarks known as



Roaring River State Park showing wild area in light gray and natural area in dark gray highlighting.

the White River Hills. One of the most distinctive characteristics of this region is the broad extent of open glades on the limestone and dolomite slopes. Fire treatments have been applied to glade areas at Roaring River and in the wild area for several years, but the fires alone have not had the result of clearing away the cedars. It is felt that this is due in part to the fact that the cedars are so dense and robust they tend to resist fire. Some park staff have proposed that in order to restore the open glades inside the Roaring River Hills Wild Area, treatments should be applied that would require a waiver of wild area policies: the physical removal of the cedar trees, possibly by commercial logging operations. This has already been tried on glade areas at the park outside the wild area.

The kind of operation that would result from such a waiver would certainly challenge the values that the wild area was established to protect. It would in fact be considered by most people to be highly irregular on state parklands in general. For many visitors, there is a great aesthetic and philosophical gap between, on the one hand, the effects of a fire which, even if prescribed, mimics the natural process that shaped the glade community, and on the other the outright physical removal of the native cedar trees. During the operation there would be vehicles and machinery inside the area, accompanied by the high decibel whine of chainsaws; following the event there would be visible for many years the telltale stumps of the cut cedars and other scars of the harvesting operation.

Presumably, we would see on the newly cutover areas a resurgence of glade vegetation and glade-associated wildlife, including coneflower, collared lizards, and road-runners; and possibly also we might see on those same areas a corresponding decrease in cedar-associated wildlife, such as the prairie warbler.

All of this could be quite controversial. For those who value wilderness, the most troubling effects would be on the quality of the Roaring River Hills Wild Area as a sanctuary dedicated to the human need for areas “untrammled by man.” Even if our goal in the cedar removal operation is to recreate landscape scenery and biotic communities that we are certain existed before white settlers came to southwest Missouri, we would obviously have laid a heavy hand on the land to bring this about. This would strain, if not tear, the fragile sense of wilderness we seek to protect in this area, and which the state has pledged to provide.

More troubling still is the precedent that could be set. Whenever in the future the conservative guidelines for wild area management prove to be irksome or inconvenient for some competing purpose—perhaps less noble than landscape restoration, such as a powerline right-of-way, road or reservoir, or any of the myriad landscape-altering endeavors to which we humans are so prone—we will by this precedent have weakened our ability to defend the whole system, and thus our capacity to provide a secure resource of wilderness for future generations.

MPA has supported the wild area program from our inception, and we have also applauded and encouraged the restoration ecology program in the state parks. We support both programs and know that in the long run they are mutually reinforcing; after all, biological diversity ultimately came forth from wilderness. We would like to assist the park division in the resolution of this dilemma. In doing so, we urge that all parties acknowledge the integrity of the motivations for the cedar removal project at Roaring River, and also that all parties acknowledge the values of the wild area resource that are placed at potential risk by the proposed project.

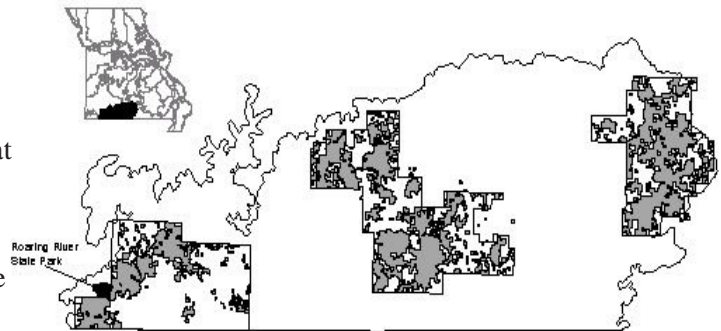
MPA president Susan Flader and this writer have developed an alternative proposal for consideration by the park division. It is intended to respond to concerns about the glade ecosystems of southwest Missouri and also to retain intact the policies that govern and define the Wild Area System. It is offered as an outline, an approach to a solution:

1) On the 1300 acres of Roaring River State Park outside the wild area, continue to use aggressive techniques, including cedar removal, to reclaim known glade habitats.

2). There are still open glades in the Roaring River Hills Wild Area; use prescribed fire in a more aggressive way to retain and gradually expand these glade areas. If some stands of red cedar manage to grow to maturity, it seems reasonable to assume that they will prove of aesthetic and scientific interest in their own right.

3). Most importantly, we urge that this issue be considered from a bioregional perspective. The park is bounded on the east and south by Mark Twain National Forest lands, and the bulk of the public land in the White River Hills ecoregion is Forest Service-owned. We propose that a multi-agency task force be formed that will work with the Forest Service to manage its glade lands for biodiversity and apply a full range of restoration techniques. This approach could be modeled on the cooperative program in the eastern Ozarks known as “Pine Knot,” which is intended to restore old growth shortleaf pine savannas on a sizable scale. This would capitalize on the expertise that has been developed by park staff, and would expand DNR’s role in interagency partnerships. It would also do more to ensure a continuing resource of glade-associated biodiversity in southwest Missouri than anything we might do at Roaring River alone.

This proposed general approach has been submitted to the park division and to the State Parks Advisory Board. It is presumably under consideration,



Roaring River State Park (black) and Mark Twain National Forest land (gray) in the White River Hills Ecoregion.

and will serve, we hope, as a starting point for further dialogue.

In the meantime, we encourage all readers to give this issue thoughtful reflection. MPA pledges to work toward a solution that respects both biodiversity and wilderness as precious resources, a solution that will protect and enhance all native species and ecosystems and will also protect the fragile resource of wilderness that still haunts the remote hills of Roaring River.

PARTNERSHIPS THEME OF ANNUAL MEETING

Partnerships, synergy, and urban initiatives were major themes of the MPA annual meeting in Kansas City October 26-28. The opening reception at the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center celebrated the cooperative effort of the city and the state to explore and interpret African-American history.

In his annual "State of the Parks" address Saturday morning, DSP Director Doug Eiken proposed better and stronger partnerships between public agencies, private support groups, and the general public as a way of enhancing existing operations and launching new initiatives in an era of decreasing revenues and heightened expenditures for security since September 11. As a step in this direction, a Missouri State Parks Foundation is being organized as a viable and active partner working with MPA, local friends groups, and others. Eiken praised MPA for supporting outreach initiatives in Kansas City's urban core and indicated that DNR's newly strengthened Outreach Center, to which the Historic Preservation Program has been transferred, will be much more active, interfacing with urban populations through the St. Louis Urban Outreach Center, the Kansas City Discovery Center, and Springfield's National Wildlife Museum.

At a panel discussion on the role of parks in metropolitan Kansas City, Cheryl Simmons and Sharon Curls, MPA's Urban Populations Outreach Coordinator, reported on the summer 2001 UPOP program, in which more than 500 inner city youth participated. Most of the participants had never previously visited a state park, Curls reported, adding that for some the experience could be life changing. Corwynn Romberger of the Center for Management Assistance offered advice on fund-raising for UPOP and other programs, stressing the need to develop collaborative strategies and break down the barriers between the public sector, private corporations, and non-profit organizations. Sandra Aust of the Kansas City Parks and Recreation Commission spoke about recent drastic budget cuts and identified public-private partnerships as the "only salvation" for the urban park system, while Dale Bergerhofer of the Kansas City Discovery Center discussed the ways in which the Missouri Department of Conservation and DNR were working together to provide educational and outreach programs in the city. State Senator Ronnie DePasco called for a state park in the urban core of Kansas City, specifically nominating Kessler Park and Cliff Drive, a suggestion that occasioned considerable discussion about the relative needs and allocation of resources as between urban and rural parks.

A Saturday afternoon driving tour led by Booker Rucker highlighted urban parks and historic properties, in many of which DNR/DSP has played or has been asked to play a role. The tour included a stop at the McConahay Building, which once housed the offices of Walt Disney's 1920 enterprise, Laugh-O-Gram Films; a drive along scenic Cliff Drive, designed by landscape

architect George E. Kessler; lively discussion of construction underway at the Liberty Memorial; and a tour of the Thomas Hart Benton Home State Historic Site.

In his address at the annual banquet Saturday evening, Roger Still, Executive Director of Audubon Missouri, challenged MPA members to think long-term and large-scale in facing extraordinary threats to our natural heritage. He called for a broad-based "culture of conservation," in which many organizations work together as they did on the recent Church Mountain issue. As examples of large-scale thinking, he cited the Nature Conservancy's program to protect one hundred thousand acres in the Ozarks and encouraged Missourians to protect their grassland habitat by joining with other states in the Prairie Passage program, creating a corridor from Minnesota to Texas that restores and interprets our grassland heritage.

At the annual membership meeting on Sunday, MPA elected five new members to the board of directors: **Bonnie Stepenoff**, director of the historic preservation program at Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, joins the board as editor of *Heritage*; **David Bedan** of Columbia, retired from DNR with experience in four different divisions, has been active in many conservation organizations and is webmaster for MPA; **Carol Grove** of Columbia is an architectural historian active with the Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation and the MoDOT scenic highways commission; **Yvonne Homeyer**, an attorney, is president of the St. Louis chapter of the North American Butterfly Association and active on many conservation issues; and **Terry Whaley** of Springfield is executive director of Ozark Greenways and former park director of Fenton. Harriet Beard of Kirksville was reelected to a second three-year term.

All current officers were reelected to another one-year term: Susan Flader, President; Jim Goodknight, Vice President; Barbara Lucks, Secretary; and Eleanor Hoefle, Treasurer. A special resolution of thanks was extended to retiring directors Robert Jameson, Neil Lombardi, Jr., Glee Heiligttag Naes, Osmund Overby, Mary Phillips, Mary Ellen Rowe, and Helen Murray White.

("Pioneer" from Page 2)

maintain high values for wood products, protect biological diversity, and permanently support a variety of recreation opportunities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and swimming. The goal of the Pioneer Forest management method has been to move every acre of the forest into a condition where the characteristic Ozark species of oak, hickory, and pine are larger and older and where such trees are much more prominent in the forest canopy.

MPA HONORS EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

Four employees of the Division of State Parks received employee of the year awards at the MPA annual banquet at the Rockhill Tennis Club in Kansas City on Saturday October 29. MPA President Susan Flader presented each with a plaque, an engraved clock, and a check in recognition of outstanding service to the park system.

Field employee of the year was **Jean King**, clerk typist at Sam A. Baker State Park since 1987, who developed work sheets and computer programs that were used as models by other units, and who has always willingly extended herself to help colleagues and the public.

Racine Myers received the award for maintenance and construction employee of the year for his unusual service maintaining the bison and elk herds at Prairie State Park. His dedication and quick action enabled him to recapture the elk that had escaped from the park shortly after their 1993 reintroduction.

Facility manager of the year was **Kurt Senn**, now site administrator at Confederate Memorial, who was recognized for his work as assistant site administrator at Mastodon State Historic Site, where he deftly

handled a crisis when a sewer line broke after a flood.

Jenny (Graham) Frazier, real estate/contracts manager in the Planning and Development Program, was named central



l to r: State Parks Director Doug Eiken, Racine Myers, Jean King, Jenny (Graham) Frazier, Kurt Senn, MPA President Susan Flader

office employee of the year. The award recognized her patience and diplomacy in facilitating several land acquisitions, including the purchase of the state park at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

In a surprise presentation, Roger Still of Audubon Missouri and John Karel of MPA jointly presented a special "Thinking Like a Mountain" award to MPA President **Susan Flader** in recognition of her extraordinary leadership in the successful campaign to save Church Mountain from a proposed hydro development by Ameren.

OSAGE BEACH VIOLATES AIRPORT LEASE

DNR officials recently learned that the City of Osage Beach, which since March 1999 has leased and operated the Lee C. Fine Airport at Lake of the Ozarks State Park, undertook destructive land clearance and earth moving at the end of the north runway without receiving approval from DNR. City administrators had apparently certified to MODOT and the Federal Aviation Administration that they had obtained the required permits. DNR has issued a Notice of Violation and will meet with Osage Beach officials in the near future to determine a course of action. The city will likely be required to pay damages and undertake mitigation, and its federal funding is apparently at risk.

MPA is particularly concerned about this violation, as it has long favored discontinuing airport operations, which it believes are incompatible with the park mission (See *Heritage*, July 1999). MPA through its attorney had made a formal request to the city to be notified in advance of any meetings or opportunities for public input into the decision-making process on all matters related to airport construction, and no notice had been received. MPA is considering options for further action.



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