

Route 66 State Park

Public Information Meeting

Thursday, Sept. 14, 2023 6 p.m.

Open house-style meeting

Three non-DNR people attended. Tim Nugent from CDG Engineers was there to discuss the bridge renovation project. Greg Combs and Maria Potter from East Region were there to discuss parks from their perspective. Clint Barnett attended and was able to provide input on the Bridge Renovation from the project manager perspective.

Assistant Superintendent Jonah Coakley, Superintendent Ed Schott and TSL Kevin Tenney participated in the meeting. The majority of the meeting involved discussing the bridge project, some history of the bridge, and changes that have gone on in the park and management unit over the past year.

Route 66 State Park Mission:

1. To preserve and interpret the cultural history of the community that was Times Beach.
2. To preserve and interpret the cultural history of Route 66 and Times Beach's place along the Route 66 Corridor.
3. To provide safe recreational opportunities which are compatible with the park's resources.
4. To protect and preserve green space along the Meramec River corridor from expanding urban development.

Most funding in Missouri State Parks comes from the Parks and Soils Sales Tax. This tax accounts for one tenth of one percent of all retail sales tax in Missouri. It is split between Soil and Water Conservation Division of DNR and Missouri State Parks Division of DNR. This tax is voted on every 10 years to reaffirm the voters support for these Divisions of DNR.

Route 66 State Park Description

- Boat ramp, picnic area, shelters, playground. Trails.
- Historic Route 66 Meramec Bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places. Restoration of this bridge is a cooperative effort with the following entities:

Missouri State Parks

Great Rivers Greenway

Missouri State Parks Foundation

Completion of this project will not only restore this historically significant structure, but it will create a significant trail connection between Eureka, West Tyson County Park, and Chubb Trail. This is part of the Meramec Greenway Master Plan.

- Route 66 State Park Staff (thanks to everyone for their hard work and dedication):
 - Ed Schott, Park Superintendent for Route 66 and the Lower Meramec Management Unit
 - Jonah Coakley, Assistant Superintendent
 - Alex Kazmierski is Maintenance Worker (currently out in training)
 - Mike Gozia-Park Ranger

Seasonal Employees that help staff the visitor center, clean, mow, and maintain the park, stock gift shop, and are folks most park visitors meet. Big thanks to our seasonal staff!

Brief description of the park/site history

- History of Times Beach - the area west of the river:
 - 1926-Times Beach lots were sold with newspaper subscription for \$67.50.
 - The community evolved from a weekend getaway spot to a permanent town.
 - Early 1980's it was discovered that waste oil spread on the streets to reduce dust in previous years was contaminated with dioxin.
 - 1982 the town flooded and was evacuated. The residents did not return and there was a federal buyout of property-town was declared an EPA Superfund Site.
 - Contaminated soil was incinerated on site.
 - The land was transferred to DNR and opened as Route 66 State Park in 1999
- History of the roadhouse: Restaurant and lodging for travelers on vacation and those moving across the country for business or military purposes.

1935-Bridghead Inn	1946-Steiny's Inn
1972-Bridghead Inn	1980-Galley West
- Attendance:

2001 - 216,368 visitors	2009 - 258,595 visitors
2017 - 200,272 visitors	2022 - 256,980 visitors
- Budget 2024:

Operations (Utilities, supplies, and operating expenses) \$53,016
Small Maintenance and Repair \$7,000
Equipment \$1,900
Seasonal Employee Payroll Budget 2,873 hours
- Route 66 here was the second iteration of Route 66 in West St. Louis County:
 - 1926-The northern route (Highway 100/Old Manchester in Wildwood).
 - 1933-The southern route (Eureka over Meramec River-in front of the visitor center).
- The only State Park dedicated to The Mother Road. Visitors come from around the world to learn about Rt. 66 and get their bearings as they (mostly) travel west on 66. Many local residents bike, run, walk, and hike in the park.
- Part of the Missouri Birding Trail and serves as habitat for many species of wildlife. The park is located along the lower Meramec River. This un-impounded river takes in water from a massive watershed and provides habitat for numerous species of fish, mussels and other aquatic fauna.

Events

- Harvest Moon Run (annual community food drive benefit/5k)
- Operation Clean Stream (Stream Team Cleanup with Open Space Council)
- Other events: Slug Run, Castlewood Adventure Race, GO! St. Louis Halloween Run
- Education and outreach:
 - Show Me MO Parks – with MO State Parks Urban Outreach office in St. Louis.
 - Rockwood School District – STEM engineering with 3rd graders
- The roadhouse has been utilized for a variety of purposes by our partners over the past year:

Missouri Route 66 Association Meeting in January, Sierra Club Outings Committee meeting in February, Missouri State Parks Leadership Team meeting in March

Brief Description of completed and/or ongoing projects

- Ongoing repairs in Visitor Center-paint, HVAC, etc.
- Bridge project-currently in design phase progress project titles for the year.
- Cleanup of trees, trail clearing.
- Water leaks.
- Challenges of I-44 construction.

Lower Meramec Management Unit-Includes Robertsville State Park, Don Robinson State Park, Route 66 State Park and Castlewood State Park

Timeline on Route 66 Bridge Project

Project Phase	No. of Working Days	Submittal Date	Approval Date
Schematic Design	60	October 13, 2023	November 3, 2023
Design Development	80	March 1, 2024	March 22, 2024
Construction Documents	100	August 13, 2024	September 3, 2024