

Trail of Tears State Park

Town Hall Public Meeting

09/16/2023 2:00 p.m.

Invitations included Senator Holly Thompson Rehder and Representative Barry Hovis.

Handouts: the agenda and the parks data sheet plus the Lake Boutin campground bond project on the backside (from the webpage).

Thirteen in attendance. Three members of the public and ten staff members. Of the three public members, two were local residents and Alexander Wade who attended on behalf of Senator Holly Rehder. No media coverage.

Agenda;

- Welcome, staff introductions, why we have public meetings and the importance of public input;
- DSP mission and how Trail fulfills all aspects of that mission;
- Sales Tax, review park datasheet (mentioned closure of Hwy 177 last year and lower attendance);
- Special events – Trail of Tears/Coors Light Triathlon 150 people this year, upcoming total eclipse in 2024;
- recent and upcoming projects -updated VC well house, replacing decking on the main overlook, emergency replacement of one culvert due to August flash flooding events, working through the permit process for a second culvert replacement, 2026 Lake Boutin campground renovation, wastewater renovations at the VC and Lake Campground lagoon – still troubleshooting issues;
- New Interpretive Resource Coordinator, Dr. Tiffanie Atherton still learning the job since mid-January, Visitor Center attendance 4000 so far this year, 67 programs with 874 people attending, river boat bus tours, recently met with other staff to work on exotic species, mapping and plans to address the problems;
- Ranger Ben Mayfield discussed his duties for Trail of Tears and the area, safety and security of park users and protecting the park resources, enforce rules and regulations.
- Greg Comps Eastern Region Director discussed state parks overall, ARPA funding to upgrade water systems, Bollinger Mill foundation repairs with CI funds.
- Supt. Dowling wrapped up with discussion of the Trail of Tears/Big Oak Tree management unit.

Public comments;

Mr. Underwood; The staff are friendly and do a great job. But over the years has seen the park go down for example less pavilions at the lake and need more vault toilets especially in the day use area. Glad to hear about the upcoming campground renovation because there are not enough RV camping facilities (his friends end up camping in town at Cape RV because Trail is already booked up, need to increase the budget for Trail.

Ms. Magnus asked why the day use pavilions were not replaced. There is no reason why we cannot replace them and it is a good suggestion. We will put that on the future project list.

**Trail of Tears State Park**

**PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Agenda:

Denise Dowling, Park Superintendent

Welcome to the meeting

- DSP Mission Statement, Parks and Soils Sales Tax

Introduction of staff

Brief description of the park/site history

- History associated with the acquisition of the facility, pertinent people,
- Relevant facts and figures
- Natural and Cultural features

Danny Counts, Assistant Superintendent

Projects

- Completed projects
- In progress project
  - replace the Bushyhead Culvert pipe with a box culvert
  - WW replacement
- New projects
  - Replace decking on the Overlook
- Future
  - Bond Issue to renovate the Lake Boutin Campground

Tiffanie Atherton, Interpretive Resource Coordinator

Basic role within the facility

Interpretation offered at the facility

Special and third party events on site

- just had annual Coors Light/Trail of Tears Triathlon
- upcoming partial eclipse in October
- April 2024 total eclipse

Wild Area information

Ben Mayfield, Park Ranger

Basic role within the facility

What areas of responsibility

# Trail of Tears State Park

**LOCATION:** Cape Girardeau County

**NUMBER OF ACRES:** 3,415.39

**NUMBER OF FULL-TIME STAFF:** 5

**NUMBER OF PART-TIME STAFF:** 12

**VOLUNTEER HOURS:\*** 1,612

**STEWARDSHIP HOURS:** 147

**2022 ATTENDANCE:\*** 109,867

**MILES OF TRAIL:** 14

**NUMBER OF STRUCTURES:** 20

**MILES OF ROADWAYS:** 7.21

**NUMBER OF PROGRAMS PRESENTED:\*\*** 77

**STATE SALES TAX PAID:\*** \$2,765.63

**LOCAL SALES TAX PAID:\*** \$981.88

**TOTAL SALES TAX:** \$3,747.51

**SMALL MAINTENANCE & REPAIR BUDGET:** \$8,000.00

**ANNUAL BUDGET:** \$395,811.00

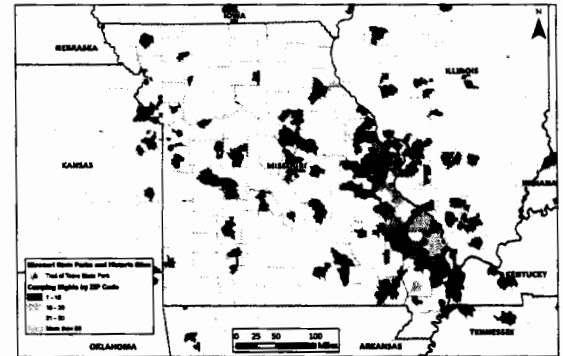
**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS COMPLETED:\*** 1

**NUMBER OF CAMPING NIGHTS SOLD:\*** 2,955

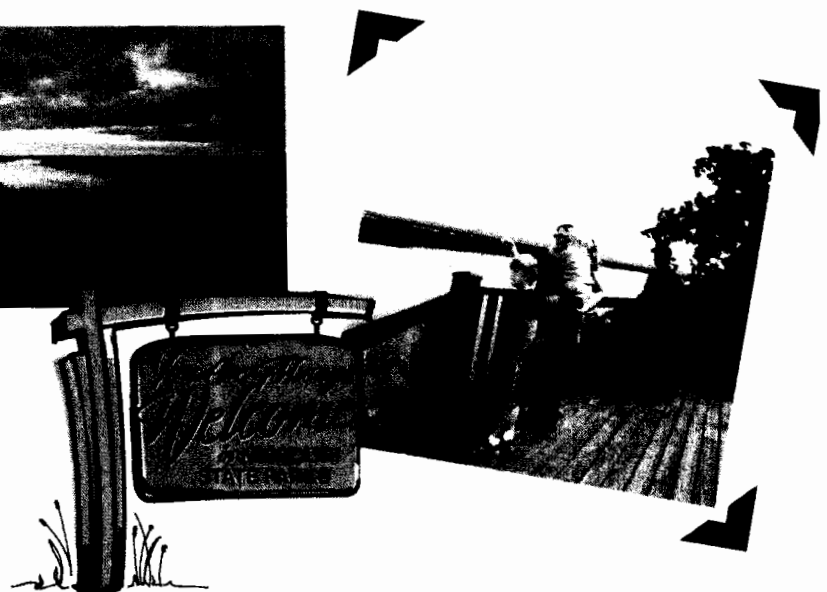
**NUMBER OF CAMPSITES:** 54

**NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT GUESTS:\*** 7,570

**CAMPING NIGHTS SOLD BY ZIP CODE:** >>>>>>



**THIRD PARTY EVENTS:** 3



\* All numbers through December 2022. † Information includes park and concession-run operations. \*\* Estimated park and concession sales tax paid.



Improved campsites include concrete pads, 50-amp electric, sewer and water hookups.



## Trail of Tears State Park CAMPGROUND UPGRADE PROJECT

A complete renovation of a campground is proposed for Trail of Tears State Park.

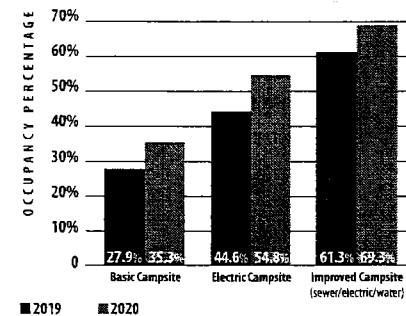
The demand for 50-amp electric at campsites continues to increase throughout the state parks system with 82% of campsites rented, including electric (See Example A). The proposed project would renovate the basic campground at Trail of Tears State Park with the removal of 35 basic campsites and replace them with 32 newly constructed sites. Within those 32 new sites, 28 will offer 50-amp electrical service and four will offer basic amenities.

The anticipated revenue from this project is \$61,000 annually (See Example B). The revenue estimate is based on current camping rates and occupancy rates for similar campsites in other nearby state parks. The cost of the renovation is estimated at \$1.7 million (See Example C). Campsites have a lifespan of 40 years and the calculated payback will be just short of 28 years to complete. This project is eligible for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant which would reduce the length of payback.

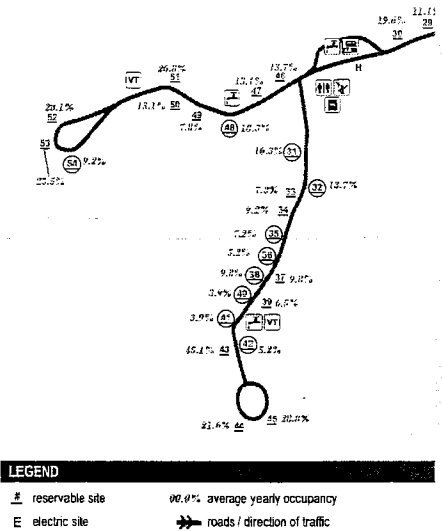
### A. WHY PURSUE THIS PROJECT?

State park visitors continue to request additional campsites and increased campsite amenities. User data shows that campsites with these amenities have the highest occupancy and visitors stay longer. In response to user demand and age of existing infrastructure, the project is expected to be well-received and attractive to park visitors, while providing revenue opportunities to the park.

The graph below reflects percentage of nights occupied by site type. Information is based on sites available on more than 300,000 nights sold and approximately 1 million overnight guests.



The map below is a portion of Trail of Tears State Park's campground map, depicting the average percentage of occupancy per site for May through Sept. of 2020.



### B. WHAT IS THE REVENUE THAT WILL BE GENERATED BY THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

Campsites offering 30-amp electric service rent for \$23 a night, and basic campsites rent for \$13. Newly constructed 50-amp sewer/electric/water campsites will rent for \$37 a night. The increased rate and potential occupancy for these campsites will generate more than \$61,000 annually.

CALCULATION FOR APPROXIMATE ADDITIONAL REVENUE	
Number of Renovated Campsites	31*
Rate Per Night	\$13-50
Average Annual Revenue Generated	\$161,491
Less Revenue of Existing Sites	(\$152)
<b>TOTAL APPROXIMATE REVENUE GENERATED</b>	<b>\$61,339</b>

\*Construction will include a campground host site, which does not generate revenue.

### C. WHAT IS THE COST OF THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

Renovation will be \$44,000 per campsite. This includes the total cost of water, sewer, roads and electrical service.

#### ESTIMATED COSTS TO RENOVATE A CAMPGROUND TO IMPROVED, FULL HOOK-UP SITES

Construct 32 Campsites	\$1,344,444
Design and Bidding	\$154,250
15% Contingency	\$181,500
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$1,680,194</b>



Project details are under development and the proposed schedule may be adjusted as needed. The total cost for each project is subject to change; costs and projected revenue are only estimates based on 2020 information.

*Building Missouri's Legacy*

scheduled for 2026

Funded with the Oct. 2021 Revenue Bond sales