

WEST TYSON PARK

PARK HISTORY

Originally, a part of the Federal Government's Tyson Valley Powder Plant, the initial 240 acres of West Tyson was conveyed to St. Louis County in 1955.

In 1979, St. Louis County purchased the additional 410 Mincke Tract with a L&WCF grant. This tract is just north of the original park. The whole park includes rugged wooded uplands which typify Ozark beauty, steep bluffs, flood plain, and a portion of the Meramec River. The park is now subject to Section 6(f) restrictions.

In 1988 the Parks Department began the ambitious William Epstein Memorial Prairie creation project in the Mincke Bottoms, thanks to a gift from the Epstein family. Thirty acres of bottomland farmland were planted with a mixture of native prairie grasses and forbs. The original planting consisted of 3 species of grass (big bluestem, Indian grass, and switch grass) and 4 species of forbs (Illinois bundle flower, blazing star, yellow coneflowers). Since then, a supplemental planting of grass and 4 species of forbs has been introduced to the site. To date, nearly 75% of the site is covered with native grasses and forbs. The additional forbs will increase flora and fauna diversity of the site, as well as increase aesthetic value. This undertaking has received assistance from the Missouri Department of Conservation, Soil Conservation Service, Nature Institute, Missouri Botanical Garden, and the Missouri Chapter of the Native Plant Society.

Of historical interest are the numerous archaeological sites located upon the Mincke Tract. These include aboriginal flint quarries which were utilized by pre-historic Indians for thousands of years, including the Indians of Cahokia. The Cahokian Indians actually controlled these quarries to obtain the high quality of flint which was shaped into tools and projectile points. As a result, parts of the park are included in the National Register of Historic Places. Crescent Quarry Archaeological Site on the Mincke Tract was listed in 1971, and the Beaumont-Tyson Quarry District, listed in 1974, includes part of West Tyson and all of Antire Park.

In 1985, the Chubb Trail, which was developed by the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation and the Missouri Department of Natural

Resources through the cooperative efforts of MRRA, was opened. The trail is open to hikers, equestrians and mountain bikes. Access to the Chubb Trail can be obtained through either West Tyson or Lone Elk County Parks.

West Tyson Park is included in the Meramec River Greenway and the Henry Shaw Ozark Corridor. The park was also included in the earlier Henry Shaw Parkway, and one of the Parkway signs is preserved in the park.

WILLIAM H. EPSTEIN MEMORIAL PRAIRIE

William H. Epstein was appointed to the Park Advisory Board late in 1965 and served through 1972. He was chairman in 1970 and 1971. He died on June 25, 1987. His daughter Ellen is married to R. E. Lenox. Shortly after his death, his family gave the County Parks \$5,000 to create the William Epstein Memorial Prairie at West Tyson Park. There is also an Epstein Shelter, named in his honor, at Sioux Passage Park.

CHUBB TRAILHEAD

Robert Walston Chubb was born in 1894 in Brooklyn, New York. He came to St. Louis in 1924 to join the law firm of Lewis, Rice, Tucker, Allen and Chubb, which he stayed with until his death in 1977. During his lifetime he held a number of public offices and was also involved in many educational and charitable organizations. He served on the committee of the Missouri Bar Association, which originated in 1936 the "Missouri Plan" for judge selection, and was a member of the first voluntary Race Relations Commission in St. Louis. For the last several years of his life he was involved in fund-raising for acquisition of county and state parks and served as the president of the Open Space Foundation. Chubb and Lindell Gordon were responsible for gathering the funds necessary to purchase Bee Tree Park. In his memory the St. Louis County Parks contain the Walston Chubb Trail, which connects West Tyson Park and Lone Elk Park, and the Walston Chubb Memorial Overlook at Bee Tree Park.

ROTH MEMORIAL LODGE

Michael C. Roth was born on May 14, 1947. He began working in the Parks Department in 1978, as a recreation complex manager. He managed the North County Recreation Complex. He resigned in 1986 and became area manager in the recreation division of the City of St. Louis. He was appointed acting recreation commissioner in 1989 and recreation commissioner in 1990. He also served as vice president of the Notre Dame Elementary School. Roth was killed on January 31, 1993 in an automobile accident on Interstate 55 near Arsenal, leaving a wife and two daughters aged 12 and 14. The Roth Lodge Campsite at West Tyson Park is named in his honor.

GRANDDADDY SHELTER

Former Parks Director Wayne C. Kennedy recalled, “Right after we built the shelter and the first group of campfire girls came out and spent the night, the long legged spiders were all over the shelter, in the kids hair, in their beds, and in duffel bags. Of course they didn't bite so the kids got accustomed to seeing them and were no longer afraid. The kids started calling the shelter the granddaddy long legs shelter which was later shortened by our sign maker. I tried to get the boy scouts to use the park but was not successful for about 5 years. Their leaders said it was too primitive and they would rather stay in Beaumont.”