

# Don't Sell the Eleven Point State Park – NO to HB 1972 & HB 2483 and HA 3 of HB 1597



The Eleven Point State Park consists of 4,167 acres of native savanna, woodlands, streams and riparian areas along the Eleven Point National Scenic River. Its purchase expands the size and diversity of unfragmented forest along the river, benefiting important migratory bird populations and reducing erosion and nutrient input into the river. This in turn improves water quality, protects aquatic resources and provides for public enjoyment of the land.

House Bill 1972 would authorize the auctioning off of this beautiful Oregon County park if the state lost a pending lawsuit concerning the park's easement.

## Protecting Natural Resources Is A Smart Investment



The Eleven Point River has been designated a National Wild and Scenic River since 1968. It is a state treasure – a great place for our new state park to preserve the area in a manner in which Missourians and others can enjoy.

## Proper Process Used for Park

The funds for the Eleven Point State Park came from the ASARCO bankruptcy settlement. For decades, ASARCO released heavy metals such as lead, zinc and cadmium from its lead operations into the environment, resulting in injuries to natural resources (air, land, water and wildlife) belonging to the State of Missouri. The Natural Resource Damages (NRD) settlement negotiated with ASARCO was to be used "to restore, replace, rehabilitate or acquire the equivalent of" the injured natural resources. The NRD settlement was not part of the settlement between the Environmental Protection Agency and ASARCO for remediation or clean up of the contaminated sites. The decision to purchase the land for a new state park was made by the Trustee Council comprised of the State of Missouri, the Department of the Interior, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the US Forest Service. The purchase of the property and creation of the Park was an appropriate use of the settlement monies and was completed in accordance with the settlement agreement and regional restoration plan for the area.

HB 1972 was filed by Rep. Copeland. HB 2483 was filed by Rep. Dinkins. HA 3 of HB 1597 was filed by Rep. Copeland and it has been added to the bill, which has been perfected.

# Myths and Facts About the Eleven Point State Park

**Myth:** *The settlement funds used to purchase the state park were supposed to be used to clean up contaminated sites.*

**Fact:** The settlement agreement pursuant to the Superfund law, from which the park was purchased, provided \$40 million that could only be used “to restore, replace, rehabilitate or acquire the equivalent of” the injured natural resources. This is a separate settlement from the one entered into by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and ASARCO for cleanup or remediation of contaminated lead mining & smelting sites. The EPA/ASARCO settlement agreement was for \$35 million.

**Myth:** *State ownership of the park has caused a loss of significant property tax revenue, hurting local schools and government.*

**Fact:** The park property was not a significant source of property tax revenue before DNR purchased it. According to the Oregon County Collector, taxes collected on the parcels of land comprising the state park were approximately \$4,542. If opened, the boost to the local economy is likely to far outweigh the loss of this property tax revenue because of increased tourism. Missouri’s state park system on multiple occasions has been ranked as one of the top four state park systems in the nation. According to the Missouri Tourism FY17 Annual Report, tourism brought \$16.8 billion into the state with 42 million visitors. Missouri’s population is approximately 6 million, meaning for every Missouri resident there are 7 visitors entering the state – many of these to enjoy our state parks.

**Myth:** *Opening the Eleven Point State Park would divert money from maintenance of other state parks.*

**Fact:** Restoration projects approved by the Trustee Council will include restoration and maintenance monies. A total of \$411,656 of the settlement monies was approved to fund 100% of anticipated restoration and management costs for the first 3 years of operation.

Last year, in excess of a \$1 million dollars was returned to the restoration fund that had been approved by the Trustee Council for restoration and maintenance costs. State parks returned \$574,372 and instead opted to use its core funding for this purpose. The Environmental Improvement & Energy Resources Authority (EIERA), which served as the purchasing agent for DNR and pass thru of funds, returned \$500,000 to the restoration fund.

The Trustee Council has the sole authority to approve the release of settlement funds for restoration and maintenance costs, and as such, the funds should have been used for these purposes as opposed to returning funds and using the department’s resources.