

Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park

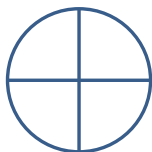
Overview

Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park (<http://www.stlouisco.com/parks/creve.html>) is the largest unit of the St. Louis County Parks System at 1,917 acres. The Park is located in West St. Louis County almost entirely within the historical Missouri River floodplain east of the River and bisected by Page Avenue/Route 364. In the late 1990's, the Park was expanded by nearly 1,000 acres as a result of mitigation requirements mandated by the Federal Government during the planning and construction of the Page Avenue/Route 364 Extension. The mitigation lands south of Page and west of the Maryland Heights Expressway total 616 acres and are collectively referred to as the Little Creve Coeur Lake area (LCCL). This area includes the remnants of a Missouri River oxbow lake/wetland, has over 200 acres of wetland pools and shrub marsh and nearly 300 acres of wet prairie and early successional bottomland forest.

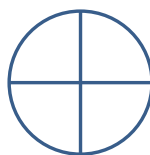
The entire park is part of the St. Louis Urban Oases Important Bird Area (IBA) that also includes Forest Park and Tower Grove Park in the City of St. Louis. Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park was included largely due to the LCCL area wetland complex where a number of Missouri Species of Conservation Concern have been observed, including American and Least Bittern and Virginia Rail. In fact, of the 21 species of wetland birds on the MDC 2008 Conservation Concern Checklist, 10 were observed in the LCCL area during the 2004-2005 monitoring season.

What SLAS is Doing

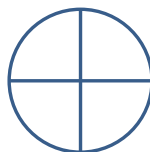
St. Louis Audubon's recent involvement with Creve Coeur Park has been primarily associated with the LCCL wetland areas. Two separate grant programs provided physical support and funding for restoration needs and a focus for volunteer involvement.



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Black-Crowned Night Heron
Mike Grant Photo



Great Egret
Mike Grant Photo

Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park--continued

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Wet Prairie Restoration

St. Louis Audubon recently completed a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as part of the Service's Urban Bird Conservation Treaty Program. In total, the program funneled over \$114,000 to St. Louis area natural areas and open spaces for bird and wildlife habitat restoration projects. \$22,000 from that program was used to restore a wet prairie area just south of Hwy 364 and west of the large marsh pool known as Little Lake. In total, 20 acres was planted with a mix of native prairie grasses and forb species and an additional 5 acres was planted with mesic woodland species of bur, pin, and swamp white oak.

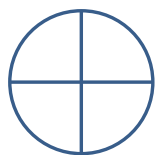
Bottomland Forest Restoration

The Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative provided a grant for \$17,000 that was used to plant over 25 acres with eleven different species of bottomland forest trees, including walnut, hickory, pecan and seven different oaks. In total, over 900 trees were planted, with tree guards, to help re-create a portion of the bottomland forest from the Missouri River floodplain. The project area runs north-south on the western edge of the Park, south of Hwy 364 and east of River Valley Drive. This project included a full year of documented bird surveys from Chapter volunteers. The data serves as a vital resource for future needs assessments of this area.

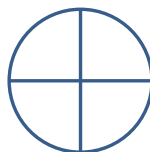
Future Plans

Discussions are ongoing with the St. Louis County Parks Department to identify the greatest needs for the Park and the best fit for volunteer support. Future projects may include any or all of:

- Woody species removal from the Little Lake marsh pool
- Development and installation of interpretive trails and informational kiosks
- Re-establishment of regular, documented bird counts
- Bush Honeysuckle removal from the upper parts of the Park
- Seasonal cleanup days



Little Lake March—Wet Year
Mitch Leachman Photo



Little Lake March—Dry Year
Mike Grant Photo