

### Big Lake Future Information Being Gathered

The Missouri State Parks Department conducted three meetings this week to receive public input on the redevelopment of Big Lake State Park in Holt County. In recent years Big Lake State Park and the homes and cabins around the lake have been subjected to multiple flood events.

In 2011 the Park was underwater for several months due to levee failures caused by upstream releases of water on the Missouri River.

The Missouri State Parks Department wants to redevelop the State Park and make it as flood resistant as possible, while accounting for significant natural and cultural resources of the park and the recreation opportunities that make the park a pleasant place to visit.

Dan Files, District Supervisor with the Northern parks District explained the purpose of the open house type meetings that were conducted in Mound City, Maryville and St. Joseph. ( play audio :08 seconds )

During the first meeting at Mound City on Wednesday evening a large number of Big Lake area residents and property owners attended the meeting. Files says that at this point, the Missouri Parks Department is still waiting on FEMA before they go in and do any demolition or repair to the existing facilities. ( play audio :13 seconds )

Earlier reports said Big Lake State Park would not open in 2012 while repairs are made. While it appears likely that will be the case, Files says final decisions have not been made. ( play audio :13 seconds )

During the meetings those in attendance were asked to fill out a survey indicating which facilities at Big Lake State Park they have used in the past. Included on the survey was the campground, cabins, motel, dining lodge, swimming pool, playground and day-use shelter. The Parks Department will use the information gathered to determine the redevelopment plan for Big Lake State Park. A couple of different ideas were available to view during the meetings. Files explained the options being considered. ( play audio :25 seconds )

Big Lake is the largest oxbow lake in Missouri and the park provides activities such as fishing, swimming, boating, dining, lodging, and migratory bird watching in the marsh area. The Park area is 125 acres and when you include the marsh area, it swells to 550 acres.

Files noted that possible plans for the redevelopment include a memorial to Missouri State Trooper Fred Guthrie who lost his life while on flood patrol in the Big Lake area this past August. ( play audio :11 seconds )

If you did not get a chance to attend any of the meetings, you have an opportunity to review the plans displayed on line at [mostateparks.com](http://mostateparks.com) for two weeks. An on-line survey will also allow the public to provide input on plan alternatives. ( play audio :16 seconds )