

Ozark Run

Scenic Byway

2024 Expansion Proposal and Corridor Management Plan



**SCENIC
MISSOURI**

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June 2, 2024

Brenda K. Harris
Assistant to State Design Engineer - Right of Way
Missouri Department of Transportation
105 West Capitol Avenue, Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Ms. Harris,

Per the 2017 Missouri Byways Program Guide, Scenic Missouri is hereby nominating a route for scenic byway designation. This route will be an expansion of the existing Ozark Run Scenic Byway. We believe that these route extensions exhibit even more of the same intrinsic qualities that warranted the initial byway designation, specifically, recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, and historical interest. Expanding the scope of this byway will bring increased tourism and economic benefits to even more areas and communities within Missouri.

This application package has been assembled according to the instructions in section C of the Program Guide. The document includes a data sheet for the expanded byway route, a thorough description of its intrinsic qualities, and a corridor management plan.

This proposal has been developed with the full cooperation and support from chambers of commerce and other officials in Poplar Bluff, Perryville, Ste. Genevieve, Farmington, St. James, and Iron County.

Respectfully,



Eric Hermanson
Scenic Missouri
eric@ozarkrun.org
314-540-1533

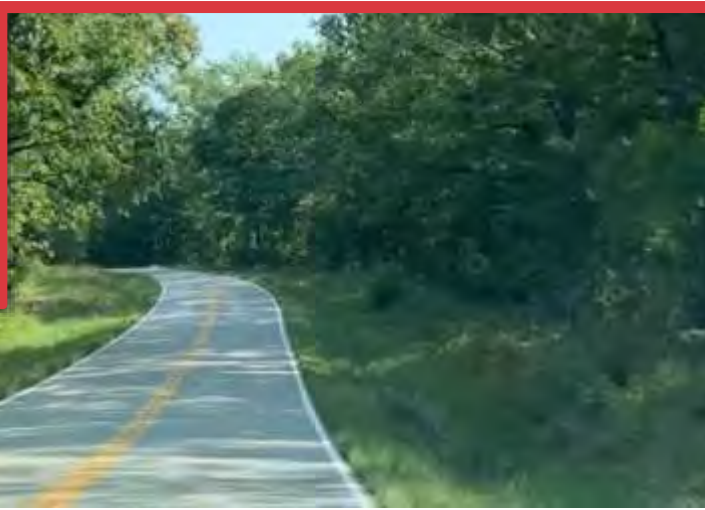
DATA SHEET

Proposal Name	Ozark Run Scenic Byway Expansion
Distance	257 miles (250 officially designated)
Reason for designation	The Ozark Run Scenic Byway guides drivers through key regions of the Missouri Ozarks, providing access to numerous recreational and historic sites, while traveling through unique Ozark scenery.
Counties	Phelps, Crawford, Iron, Wayne, Butler, Stoddard, Bollinger, Perry, Ste. Genevieve, St. Francois
Incorporated towns	St. James, Steelville, Pilot Knob, Annapolis, Des Arc, Piedmont, Mill Spring, Williamsville, Puxico, Marble Hill, Perryville, St. Mary, Ste. Genevieve, Farmington
US and MO Routes	US 61, MO 8, 32, 49, 51, 172, 221
Other Routes	H, T, W, FF, KK, O
Ste. Genevieve city streets	St. Marys, Main, Merchant, Market, 4th
Farmington city streets	Ste. Genevieve, Main, Liberty, A, Columbia

SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

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<p>Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce 1111 West Pine Poplar Bluff, MO 63901</p>	<p>Steve Halter, President shalter@poplarbluffchamber.org 573-785-7761</p>
<p>Perry County Heritage Tourism 508 N. Main Street Perryville, MO 63775</p>	<p>Trish Erzfeld, Director trish@perryvillemo.com 573-547-1097</p>
<p>Farmington Regional Chamber of Commerce 302 N. Washington Farmington, MO 63640</p>	<p>Candy Hente, Executive Director candy@farmingtonregionalchamber.com 573-756-3615</p>
<p>St. James Chamber of Commerce 100 State Rte B St James, MO 65559</p>	<p>Kelly Money, Director director@stjameschamber.net 573-265-6649</p>

Ozark Run Initiative



On March 8, 2023, the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission officially designated a new state scenic byway – the Ozark Run Scenic Byway. The initial phase of this byway makes a 78-mile journey across a key region of the Missouri Ozarks, links together many scenic and historic highlights in Missouri, and provides access to numerous recreational opportunities.

We are proposing that the Ozark Run Scenic Byway should be expanded, to include more miles of scenic roadway, more recreational opportunities, more historical sites – and most importantly – more communities that value the benefits that tourism can bring to their economy.

This proposal adds 257 driving miles to the existing byway, creating a route that spans 335 miles.

A scenic byway of this magnitude will help to unite communities and organizations around a common mission: bringing the world’s attention to the Missouri Ozarks – a supremely beautiful, yet largely overlooked territory in the heart of our nation.



Existing Ozark Run Scenic Byway



Proposed Expansion

St. James

Potosi

Ste. Genevieve

Steelville

Farmington

Perryville

Pilot Knob

Marble Hill

Piedmont

Poplar Bluff

8

21

221

O

32

61

51

49

67

FF

H

51

172

W

KK

T

Ozark Run

Theme



*The purpose of the Ozark Run Scenic Byway is to
Define and Discover
the Ozarks*



Pilot Knob

Define

What is "The Ozarks"? The answer is not that simple. Is "Ozarks" singular or plural? Is it a plateau, or are they mountains? Where is "The Ozarks"? The boundaries are nearly imperceptible, and there is no obvious center. Having a scenic byway stretching from the Meramec to the Mississippi, the Big River to the Black River, and passing by Missouri's highest peaks, will define this corridor as a focal point in the Ozark region.



Discover

The towns and natural attractions of the Ozarks are quiet and somewhat remote. This adds to their charm, but it also means they are largely overlooked and unknown. Most major highways bypass the area, to avoid the rough terrain. As a result, many people do not get the opportunity to encounter the treasures waiting to be discovered in the rugged hills.

Now is the time to invite everyone to discover the Ozarks! Everyone should come marvel at the billion-year old granite boulders in Elephant Rocks State Park. Campers should come spend a peaceful night alongside Clearwater Lake. History buffs should visit the lovingly maintained town of Ste. Genevieve. Hikers should experience the countless wilderness trails, including the 430-mile Ozark Trail. And tourists from other states really ought to know...yes, Missouri actually does have hills!

What qualifies the Ozark Run to be a Scenic Byway?

In order to earn a designation as a Missouri Scenic Byway, a route "must contain exceptional examples of any of the following six intrinsic qualities: Cultural, Historical, Archeological, Natural, Scenic and Recreational."

The Ozark Run Scenic Byway exhibits three of these intrinsic qualities: **Recreational, Scenic, and Historic**. The next few pages demonstrate the abundance of recreational opportunities, historic sites, and enjoyable Ozark scenery along the route.

Taum Sauk Mountain



Recreational

Recreational Quality involves outdoor recreational activities directly associated with and dependent upon the natural and cultural elements of the corridor's landscape. The recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive recreational experiences. They include, but are not limited to, downhill skiing, rafting, boating, fishing, and hiking. Driving the road itself may qualify as a pleasurable recreational experience.

Scenic

Scenic Quality is the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and manmade elements of the visual environment of the scenic byway corridor. The characteristics of the landscape are strikingly distinct and offer a pleasing and most memorable visual experience. All elements of the landscape—landform, water, vegetation, and manmade development—contribute to the quality of the corridor’s visual environment. Everything present is in harmony and shares in the intrinsic qualities.



Elephant Rocks State Park

Historic

Historic Quality encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or manmade, that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past. The historic elements reflect the actions of people and may include buildings, settlement patterns, and other examples of human activity.

<https://www.scenic.org/bywayqualifications>

Ozark Run

Recreational

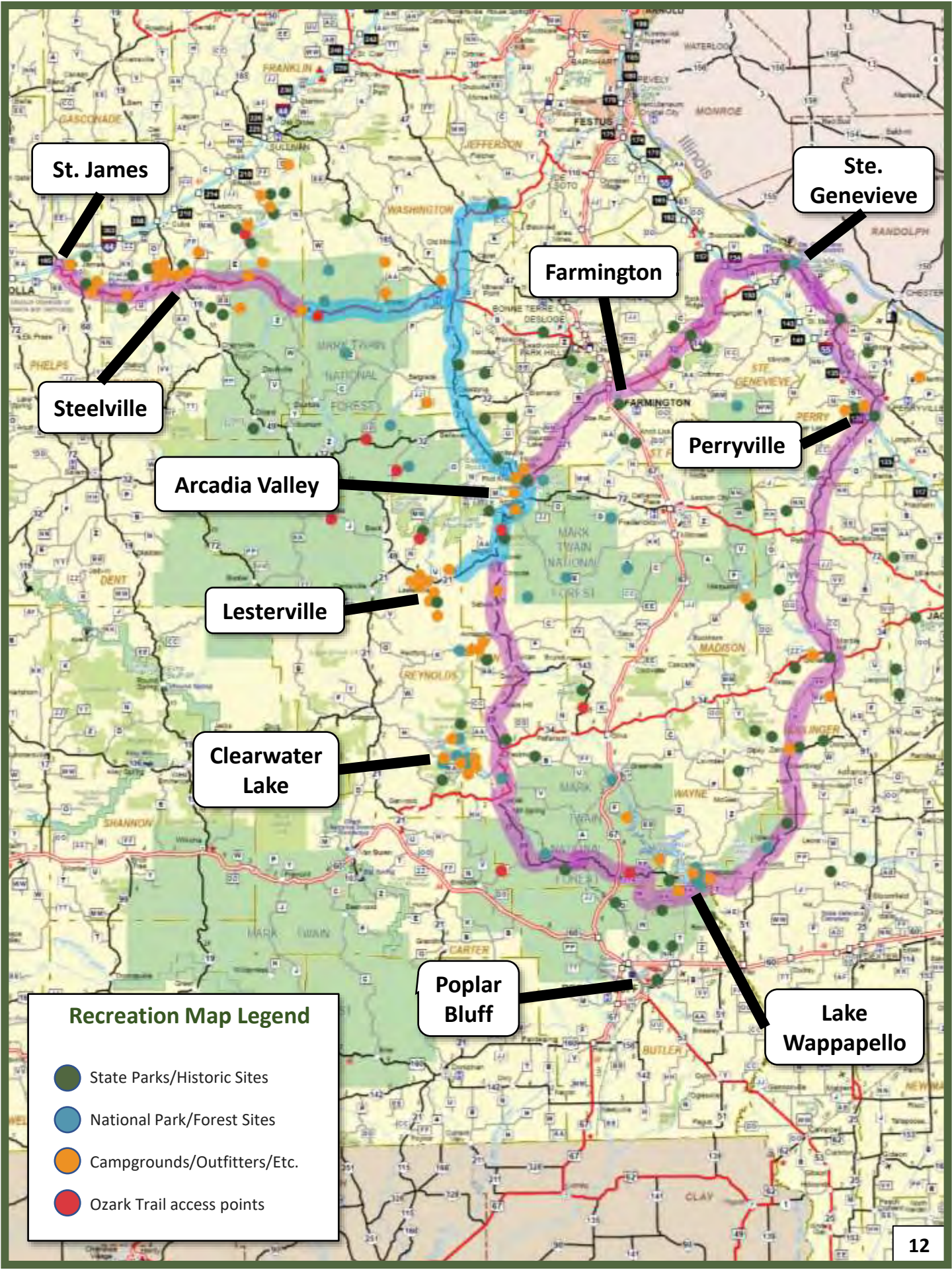


The Ozarks region is a vast playground for those who love the outdoors. If you love the smell of fresh air, the sound of the breeze in the trees, and the warmth of the sun on your face, there is an activity here for you – and the Ozark Run Scenic Byway will take you there!

Each of the color-coded dots on the following map corresponds to a unique recreational opportunity, either on public land, or an outdoor recreational business. This is not a comprehensive list – there are simply too many destinations, activities, and adventures to count!



Huzzah Conservation Area



St. James

Ste. Genevieve

Steelville

Farmington

Arcadia Valley

Perryville

Lesterville

Clearwater Lake

Poplar Bluff

Lake Wappapello

Recreation Map Legend

- State Parks/Historic Sites
- National Park/Forest Sites
- Campgrounds/Outfitters/Etc.
- Ozark Trail access points

Recreational

Berryman Trailhead



Play

Hiking is perhaps the most common outdoor recreation activity in the Ozarks. Trails can be found everywhere, from the short paved paths at the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, to the challenging 430-mile long Ozark Trail. Another very popular Ozark activity is floating. The byway provides access to several navigable streams for canoeing, rafting, and kayaking. Other activities are hunting, horseback riding, rock climbing, mountain biking, ATV riding, dirt biking, and even disc golf.

See

There is much to see along the byway! Tourist highlights include Ste. Genevieve National Historic Park, Maramec Spring, wineries, golf courses, off-road recreation areas, antique shops, museums, festivals, music theatres, historic small towns, and nature centers.

Stay

For those who wish to spend the night under the stars, there are many options, from backcountry camping in Mark Twain National Forest, to RV parks, to outdoor resorts with cabins and swimming pools.

RV park on the Black River





Route 8

Roads

The roads in the Ozarks are an experience unto themselves, and are extremely popular with motorcycles. Several communities around the region publish maps of their local roads – specifically for motorcyclists – boasting that they have the best hills, curves, and views.

Seasons

The Ozarks have something to offer everyone, in every month of the year. Summer is the best time for campgrounds and marinas. Fall is a perfect time to hit a hiking trail. Winter is cold, but you can still hop in the car, crank up the heat, and enjoy a scenic drive. Spring puts rain in the rivers, and warmth in the air, which are the ingredients for a perfect canoe ride.



Motorcyclists love the Ozarks!

Ozark Run

Scenic



What are the definitive elements of Ozarks scenery? The rugged terrain is the primary feature that sets the Ozarks apart from surrounding areas on the map. The Ozark uplift in Missouri is primarily a deeply dissected plateau, plus the ancient mountains in the St. Francois range. The hills are notable not for their altitude - the highest peak in Missouri is only 1,772 feet - but for their frequency. The roads in the region constantly curve left and right, up and down, in order to cross the vast network of ridges, valleys, and streams.



The Ozarks region has a scenic characteristic that is entirely its own, an essence that is not so much seen as felt. The myriad trees and hills, towns and valleys, are pleasing to the eyes. But when the whole landscape is experienced while gliding along a perpetually winding road, a traveler can sense they are in a different land. They begin to feel that they are a step removed from civilization, to a world where life has a slower pace.

Seasons

The Ozarks experiences four distinct seasons, and the roadside views take on an entirely different appearance for each one. In the summertime, the trees are dense, lush, and leafy. Many miles of the byway wind through the forests, in shady tunnels of green. On the occasion that a mountain can be seen from a distance, the tall trees on its slopes seem to enhance its elevation. Autumn brings a blaze of bright colors, as thousands of hillsides slowly trade green leaves for yellow, orange, and red.



Hiking trail in Summer



St. Francois Mountains in Autumn

After the leaves fall, winter brings another layer of beauty to the Ozarks. The sculpted ridges and hillsides become visible through bare forests. Vistas of distant mountaintops suddenly appear. Tall pines and dark green junipers stand out among the hardwoods. Springtime brings splashes of pastel colors - redbuds, dogwoods, and millions of little wildflowers. Spring rains also bring creeks and waterfalls back to life.



Wintertime



Redbuds and Dogwoods in Spring

Scenic

Highlights



Maramec Spring Park

Here are some of the most scenic locations that can be accessed from the route. Most of these sites are located within ten miles of the byway. Nearly all are located on public lands, either in a state park or national forest.



Mark Twain National Forest



Mingo National Wildlife Refuge



Sainte Genevieve



Clearwater Lake



Pickle Springs Natural Area



Scenic Pullout near Piedmont



Lake Wappapello



Castor River Shut-Ins



Hilltop View near St. James



Black River

Ozark Run

Historic



The land of southern Missouri is distinctly different from most of the Midwest. Instead of open fields of corn and soybeans, this area is dominated by rugged hills and valleys. The difficult terrain of the Ozarks has always presented a challenge. Before 1700, the Osage Indians lived in the surrounding region, but they had very few permanent settlements within the Ozark uplift. The rocky soil was not good for farming, and they ventured into the uplift area only for extended hunting trips.

Only after the first French missionaries floated down the Mississippi River did villages start to appear in the Ozarks. Around 60 years before the founding of St Louis, French explorers noticed the abundance of lead in southeast Missouri. Mining operations started shortly afterwards, and still continue around the area to this day. The village of Old Mines dates back to 1720 as a part-time encampment. Due to its rugged surroundings, this area remained culturally and geographically isolated. It took 80 years before the first year-round settlement was established in the area.



Historic village near Old Mines

Ste Genevieve – 1740s

For many years, the closest civilization to the lead mines was a small village named Ste. Genevieve. Ste. Genevieve was settled right at the edge of the Ozarks, where the uplift meets the Mississippi River valley, and served as a gateway into the wilderness. It was a base camp for miners and explorers, and a port for exporting lead to the world.

Ste. Genevieve was established in the late 1740s, when a group of French colonists left what is now Illinois and established a new village on the west side of the Mississippi. In the 1760s, France ceded Illinois to the British, and gave the lands west of the Mississippi to Spain. This led to a population surge in Ste. Genevieve, as French settlers, as well as Shawnee and Delaware tribes, chose to migrate from Illinois to the west bank. Finally in 1785, a major flood forced the villagers to relocate the entire town to higher ground about three miles north. This is where Ste. Genevieve is today.

In 1804, thanks to the Louisiana Purchase, Ste. Genevieve became United States territory. The area saw an influx of German and English settlers, but Ste. Genevieve managed to hold on to its French heritage, and still celebrates it today. The entire town center was preserved as a historic district in 1960. Several French colonial houses constructed during the 1700s are still standing, and have been incorporated into the new Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park, which was established in 2018.



Kaskaskia – 1703

Ste. Genevieve may be the oldest surviving permanent European settlement in Missouri, but it was not the first in the area. In the early 1700's, both sides of the Mississippi River were controlled by France, and a few villages had appeared on the east bank including Cahokia, Fort de Chartres, and Kaskaskia. Kaskaskia had been a Native American settlement for centuries. French missionaries joined them in 1703, and within 15 years Kaskaskia had a stone church, a fur trading post, and became the capital of French Illinois Country. In 1741, King Louis XV sent a bell for its church – this bell rang in celebration when Revolutionary War hero George Rogers Clark arrived in 1778 to liberate the town from the British. The bell was named "The Liberty Bell of the West", and is still on display today. In 1881, during a major flood, the Mississippi River shifted its course to the east side of the town, completely cutting it off from the rest of Illinois. Kaskaskia is now essentially an island, and can only be accessed from a small bridge in St. Mary, Missouri.



Immaculate Conception Chapel



Illinois State Line – St. Mary, MO

Farmington – 1822

In 1798, William Murphy traveled from Kentucky to Spanish Louisiana, looking for new land for his family. He found a suitable farming site with a spring, and acquired a land grant from the Spanish government. William died on the return trip to Kentucky, but his family returned and claimed the land in 1801. Twenty years later, Missouri became a state, and the family donated 52 acres of the village known as Murphy's Settlement to be the county seat. The new town was renamed Farmington.

Farmington grew up around the mining industry. In 1844, the Iron Mountain Mine started producing hematite ore, and manufacturing pig iron. The fastest way to transport these products to market was via the Mississippi River at Ste. Genevieve, and the only way to get there was through Farmington. In the 1850s, a plank road was built from the mine to the river, passing through Farmington on Columbia Street. Farmington became a hub of development and shipping, providing employment and homes to shipping teams, foundry workers, merchants, and others. The plank road was used to ship ore and supplies until 1874, when the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad created a direct connection between the mine in Arcadia Valley to St. Louis.

Today, nearly 150 years later, Farmington continues to serve as the focal point of its region. Farmington is the second largest city in southeastern Missouri. Farmington's Historic Downtown District is home to dozens of locally-owned shops, restaurants, galleries, coffee houses, and boutiques. And if you know where to look, there are signs describing the Old Plank Road from days gone by.



Perryville – 1821

Just south of Ste. Genevieve is Perry County. The first permanent settlers in this area were recipients of Spanish Land Grants in 1795. These settlers included Americans from Kentucky and other southern states, as well as earlier settlers of French heritage. The city of Perryville was founded as the county seat in 1821, just days before Missouri officially achieved statehood. A significant wave of immigration followed shortly afterwards, consisting largely of Germans leaving their homeland for better economic and living conditions. In 1839 alone, over 700 German Saxon Lutheran settlers arrived in the eastern part of the county. Across the state, Germans formed strong communities and made significant contributions to Missouri culture and religious heritage. Their story is evident at the Lutheran Heritage Center & Museum in Altenburg, and in the 39 historic churches that participate in the annual Christmas Country Church Tour.



Steelville – 1836

Before they ceded their lands in Missouri in 1808, Osage hunting parties used to visit this hilly area along the Yadkin Creek. Delaware and Shawnee tribes roamed here for the next twenty years, until Crawford County was organized in 1829. The first permanent settler came to this little valley in 1833, and built a grist mill at Hoppe Spring, which served people from up to 15 miles away. Two years later, a small settlement had developed, and when James Steel sold forty acres to the county, the court named the growing town Steelville in his honor.

Like many other Ozark towns, Steelville suffered during the Civil War, but rebounded afterwards. The first iron furnace in this area opened back in 1818, but several others opened in the 1870s. Iron production became a booming industry until its decline in the 1920s. Jobs at mines and foundries attracted German and Austro-Hungarian settlers to Crawford County. The St. Louis, Salem & Little Rock railroad reached Steelville in 1873.

Tourism has been a leading industry for the last century. People from all over Missouri and the Midwest would come by train or Model T to resorts in Steelville. They would spend several weeks enjoying the hills and canoeing in the streams. In the 1970s, a controversy erupted around a proposed dam on the Meramec River, that would have submerged the river and its tributaries. Public opposition defeated the dam project. Today Steelville is still a destination for canoeing and kayaking on its free-flowing Ozark streams – and proudly calls itself the "Floating Capital of Missouri".



Poplar Bluff – 1850

Butler County straddles the escarpment separating the Ozark highlands from the lowlands of the Missouri bootheel. Its natural resources have been a primary driver in the area's development over time. In the 1700s, the dense woods in this area served as a hunting ground for both Native Americans and European-Americans. The first settlers started arriving from Kentucky and Tennessee in 1819, and peacefully coexisted with Natives in the wooded hills around Cane Creek. For these pioneers, hunting and trapping was their principal occupation, and furs were the primary currency.

Butler County was officially created in 1849, and the settlers chose a new uninhabited location for establishing the county seat. The site was atop a bluff along the Black River, at the very spot where the river emerged from the Ozarks and became deep enough to be navigable by small steamboats all the way to the Mississippi. The grove of trees growing there inspired the name of the new city - Poplar Bluff.



Lake Wappapello

The Civil War was disastrous in Missouri - especially for those counties that lined the border with Confederate Arkansas. Organized soldiers and lawless bands from both sides roamed the area, engaging in nearly continuous armed conflicts. These small forces also plundered houses, stole livestock, and killed civilians. Residents fled the area, leaving only four families in Poplar Bluff by the end of the war in 1865. Gangs of robbers continued to terrorize the area into the next decade.

Butler County experienced a post-war boom. In the 1870s, the first railroads arrived in Poplar Bluff, connecting the area with St. Louis, Little Rock and Memphis. Businessmen seized the opportunity and started exporting mineral and timber resources. By 1920, all the trees had been cleared from the lowlands, and the land was converted to the production of cotton and then rice.

Speaking of trains, one train bound for Poplar Bluff unwittingly made history in 1874, when it became the target of "The Great Missouri Train Robbery." Jesse James and his gang stopped the train in Gads Hill, robbed the passengers of several thousand dollars worth of cash and other valuables, then escaped into the Ozark wilderness.

Today, the natural resources around Poplar Bluff are used for tourism. After World War II, the federal government restored Ozark timberlands in Mark Twain National Forest, and constructed the dam at Lake Wappapello. Generations of tourists have enjoyed these areas over the years.



Mo-Ark Railroad Museum

St. James – 1859

Missouri is home to over 4,000 springs - the fifth largest is Maramec Spring, in what is now Phelps County. This spring contributes 100 gallons of fresh water each day to the Meramec River. In 1827, the Meramec Iron Works started operations next to the spring, using the tremendous water power to run its machinery. The facility processed high-grade hematite ore from a nearby deposit, and shipped its iron bars to St. Louis and Arkansas using wagons. Trains replaced wagons in 1860, when the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad was extended to a new station about six miles from the iron works. By that time, a new town was already growing around the station, called St. James.

During the Civil War, the Union Army took control of the town and the railroad. Iron shipped from St. James was used for cannonballs and gunships. After the war, St. James experienced an influx of German and Italian immigrants, increasing the population and influencing the culture. The town's industry turned from iron to lumber, agriculture, and winemaking. Route 66 came through in the 1920s, and St. James became a destination for travelers enjoying the Ozark forests, springs, and streams. Today, St. James is known for several award-winning wineries and restaurants, the Forest City Mountain Bike trail, and a historic downtown center with unique shops. As for the spring that started it all, Maramec Spring and the remnants of the iron works are now located in a park, which is privately run by the James Foundation.

Maramec Spring Park



Marble Hill – 1842

Bollinger County was named for one of the earliest pioneers in the region, George Bollinger. Bollinger was a Swiss German, born in North Carolina. He first came to Spanish Upper Louisiana in 1796, settling about 20 miles west of the Mississippi River. Louis Lorimier, the commandant of the Cape Girardeau district, promised land grants if Bollinger would bring more permanent settlers to the country. So, he returned to North Carolina, collected his wife and twenty other families, and brought them to Upper Louisiana. They claimed land along the White Water and Castor Rivers. George Bollinger built a large mill in 1801, and it became a major center for industry for the region. The mill was destroyed during the Civil War, but was rebuilt in 1867 and is still standing today.

In the meantime, a road was constructed in 1820 connecting Jackson, Bollinger's Mill, and Greenville. Along this road, a new county was established in 1851 and named in honor of Bollinger. The site for the county seat was a scenic hill overlooking the junction of Crooked and Hurricane Creeks, and was eventually named Marble Hill. A separate town called Lutesville was established across Crooked Creek in 1869, and became a depot for the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad. Lutesville and Marble Hill grew side-by-side until they merged together in 1985, keeping the name Marble Hill.



Bollinger Mill

Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park

<https://www.nps.gov/stge/index.htm>

Felix Valle House State Historic Site

<https://mostateparks.com/park/felix-valle-house-state-historic-site>

Foundation for Restoration of Ste. Genevieve

<https://www.historicstegen.org/>

The Centre of French Colonial Life

<https://www.frenchcolonialamerica.org/>

Kaskaskia Bell Memorial

<https://dnrhistoric.illinois.gov/experience/sites/southwest/kaskaskia-bell.html>

Perry County Historical Society

<https://perrycountyhistoricalsociety.com>

Lutheran Heritage Center & Museum

<https://lutheranmuseum.com>

Christmas Country Church Tour

<https://visitperrycounty.com/christmas-country-church-tour/>

Poplar Bluff History Museum

<https://www.pbmuseum.org/>

Margaret Harwell Art Museum

<https://www.mham.org/>

Mo-Ark Railroad Museum

<https://www.poplarbluff-mo.gov/205/Railroad-Museum>