Experience The Sea of Verdure

As early as 900AD, this region was an urban center. There are ancient village sites and affluent communities located on both sides of the Mississippi River from the Woodland and Mississippian Cultures – including Cahokia Mounds and other mound complexes. As rivers flow below them, Europeans used the rivers and overland trails to explore the region, including the Village of Cahokia in 1669. In 1803, President Jefferson bought the Louisiana Territory from France. Cahokia then became a major Native American site, and St. Louis was founded as a result.

The Confluence of Cultures

Here at the center of the world's largest river system, the Mississippi and Missouri rivers merge to form the third-longest river in the world of national and international importance. This 3,400 mile river system runs through 31 states, 28 provinces, and 42 countries spanning over 5 million square miles, one eight of the land area of the North American continent. As such, it is the world’s second largest drainage basin, draining 40% of the continent’s landmass. It is a rich habitat for diverse flora and fauna, it is a dynamic interaction of people, place and climate.

Spawning more than 1,000 years ago, this region is a viable and distinctive part of the heritage of America. It has been a crossroads of diverse cultures, traditions, customs, beliefs, trade economies, and folk life – including prehistoric Mississippi to Silvers, Spanish to English to American, and others. People have relied on this watershed for drinking water, food production, industrial manufacturing, transportation, and for recreational activities such as cycling, fishing, swimming, and boating.

Connect Our Communities

The Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site preserves, interprets, and celebrates the contributions of the people who established, built, and lived at Cahokia Mounds and surrounding indigenous communities on both sides of the river. This included a complex of over 250 mounds in Missouri north of the current location of the Gateway Arch and East St. Louis as well as 50 mounds found in present-day East St. Louis. Within the State Historic Site over 100 mounds have been identified along with remains of a prehistoric and Woodchucka, a solar calendar. The site includes Mounds Heritage Trail with a unique destination point that includes an interpretive center with extensive display, site tours, and trails for education and recreation. While Cahokia Mounds interprets the prehistoric past, the Gateway Arch interprets the opening of the ‘New’ by Euro-American settlers. The National Park Service states the Gateway Arch reflects St. Louis in the Vespasian of the United States during the nineteenth century. The park is a memorial to Thomas Jefferson’s role in opening the West, to the pioneers who helped shape its history, and to Dred Scott who sued for his freedom in the Old Courthouse.

100 mounds have been identified along with remnants of trees, grasses, perennials and native flowers: Coneflowers, Buzzy Star, Queen Ann’s Lash, Cherrony, and Goddament. Looking beyond Cahokia, Big Mound walking, and bicycling will help the landscape in urban environment.

The nearly flat terrain of the American Bottom in Illinois and the world's largest river systems make for pleasant traveling. However, the climb from the floodplain to the top is a great challenge for both riders and walkers as they approach the trail's edge.

The Mounds Heritage Trail corridor is ideal for many bicyclists and pedestrians. Once a Sea of Verdure along river banks, the trail is now a dynamic wildlife habitat for diverse flora and fauna, it is a dynamic interaction of people, place and climate.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources offers recreational trails on diverse state lands: flat, rolling and hilly terrain. The department’s mission is to conserve, enhance, and provide access to the state’s outdoor heritage for the benefit of all Illinoisans. The department’s goals are to conserve, enhance, and provide access to the state’s outdoor heritage for the benefit of all Illinoisans. The department’s goals are to conserve, enhance, and provide access to the state’s outdoor heritage for the benefit of all Illinoisans. The department’s goals are to conserve, enhance, and provide access to the state’s outdoor heritage for the benefit of all Illinoisans. The department’s goals are to conserve, enhance, and provide access to the state’s outdoor heritage for the benefit of all Illinoisans. The department’s goals are to conserve, enhance, and provide access to the state’s outdoor heritage for the benefit of all Illinoisans.

The Met East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) was formed by voters in November 2000, and is responsible for the land development, and recreation programs, and other activities. As one of the district’s main goal, MEPRD is committed to the preservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the region. The district’s mission is to preserve, enhance, and provide access to the region’s natural beauty for the benefit of all Illinoisans. The district’s goals are to preserve, enhance, and provide access to the region’s natural beauty for the benefit of all Illinoisans.

Since its inception in 2000, the Great Rivers Greenway District has been working to carry out the vision of the Great Rivers Greenway (GRG) and Bike St. Louis. The district’s mission is to enhance the region’s natural beauty through conservation, heritage, and recreation. The district’s goals are to enhance the region’s natural beauty through conservation, heritage, and recreation.

The purpose of the Mounds Heritage Trail is to introduce many people to the society that once reigned at Cahokia Mounds, and to the mound center communities and how they were connected in the past. Travel occurred between the communities via road or waterway. Today, the trail is a signed, multi-use path that connects numerous museums, architectural gems, historic districts, and parks. On the Missouri side, a leg from North St. Louis' Missouri Historic Site is a unique destination point that includes an interpretive center with extensive display, site tours, and trails for education and recreation.

A park is a memorial to Thomas Jefferson’s role in opening the West, to the pioneers who helped shape its history, and to Dred Scott who sued for his freedom in the Old Courthouse.

Thank You!