

# Mounds Heritage Trail



The most significant cultural resources along the Mounds Heritage Trail are Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in Illinois and the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (Gateway Arch) in Missouri. The Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site preserves, interprets, and celebrates the contribution 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 26 mounds in Missouri north of the current location of the Gateway Arch and Eads Bridge as well as 45-50 mounds found in present day East St. Louis. Within the State Historic Site over one hundred mounds have been identified along with remnants of a palisade and Woodhenge, a solar calendar. The Site provides Mounds Heritage Trail users a unique destination point that includes an interpretive center with extensive displays, site tours, and trails for education and recreation.

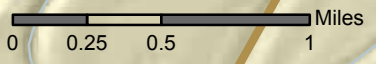
While Cahokia Mounds interprets the prehistoric past, the Gateway Arch interprets the opening of the "frontier" by Euro-American settlers. The National Park Service states "the Gateway Arch reflects St. Louis' role in the Westward Expansion of the United States during the nineteenth century. The park 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." Then-President Thomas Jefferson commissioned the scientific and commercial Lewis & Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast, which departed from present-day Hartford on May 14, 1804.

Enjoy your time on the trail, respect other trail users and the environment, and share your memories with others so that they too can visit and enjoy the Mounds Heritage Trail.

### Legend

- Mounds Heritage Site
- Point of Interest
- Metrolink Stations
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Dining
- Food
- Drinking Water
- Main Alignment
- Loop Option
- Existing Trail
- Planned Trail
- Mounds Heritage Sites
- Public Open Space
- Metrolink
- Railroad
- Streams
- Bodies of Water

Madison County Parcel Data 2010  
 St. Clair County Parcel Data 2010  
 St. Louis County Parcel Data 2008



## History

The metropolitan area now known as St. Louis has been a population center for more than 1000 years. There is evidence of villages located on both sides of the Mississippi River south of the confluence with the Missouri River. Abundant water and wildlife, rich soil for agriculture, and a central location provided an ideal location to settle.

Over time, as Europeans migrated to North America, some of the same rivers and overland trails were used to reach the confluence area, establish European-style settlements, and explore this new land. The Lewis & Clark Expedition departed from this area on May 14th, 1804.

The first European community, named after the Cahokia (a sub-tribe of the Illiniwek), was established in 1699 in Illinois. The settlement that became St. Louis was established 65 years later in 1764. St. Louis is now a significant metropolitan area, covering 8,649 square miles and boasting a population of over 2.8 million. The focus of the region is still on the central core: the confluence of the two rivers and those original indigenous community settlements.

Today the area is crisscrossed by roadways and railways. The river is traversed by bridges instead of ferries. And while the automobile is still very much the center of our transportation lifestyle, increasing fuel costs, a sensitivity for our natural environment, and a renewed awareness of the need for physical activity have added a robust trail system to the St. Louis transportation network. The **Mounds Heritage Trail** is proud to be part of the 200+ miles of trails and bikeways that make our region so livable.

## Natural Resources

For many bicyclists and pedestrians, the **Mounds Heritage Trail** corridor is ideal. The nearly flat terrain of the American Bottom in Illinois and the streets of St. Louis make for pleasant traveling. The climb from the floodplain to Sugarloaf Mound in south St. Louis could be a welcome challenge for some riders and walkers.

Along the way, one can see wetlands and bottomland forests intermixed with the urban areas of the city.

Looking closer, trail users will find that abundant wildlife coexists with humans in this corridor. A great variety of birds are abundant. This area is part of the "Mississippi Flyway", a corridor through which many waterfowl and song birds migrate from summer nesting grounds to winter feeding areas. There are a wide variety of amphibians (water-loving creatures), reptiles, and mammals that have adapted to living near and in urban environments.



There are many interesting types of trees, grasses and flowers growing along the trail. Cattails and Phragmites are common in the wetlands. Along the trail you may see Queen Anne's Lace, Chicory and Goldenrod.

photo: William Freeman

## Cultural Resources

Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site and the Gateway Arch (also known as the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial) are highly-visible cultural icons in the St. Louis area that are found along the **Mounds Heritage Trail**.

In addition to these landmarks, there are numerous museums, architectural gems, historic districts, and points of interest, parks, and various venues for refreshments or entertainment on or near the trail route. Listed are a few of these resources:

- Lewis & Clark State Historic Site
- Katherine Dunham Museum
- Broadway Hotel
- Spivey Building
- Majestic Theater
- Malcolm Martin Memorial Park
- Eads Bridge
- Laclede's Landing
- Laclede Power Building
- River View Park
- St. Louis Mounds Group Interpretive Site
- Big Mound Site
- Iron Horse Trestle & Old North St. Louis Trailhead
- Eugene Field House Museum
- Soulard Market
- Anheuser Busch Brewery
- Lyons Park
- Sugarloaf Mound
- Route 66

## Mounds Heritage Trail

### Mounds Heritage Trail



### Thank You!

The following organizations and agencies have been generous supporters of the Mounds Heritage Trail:

- City of East St. Louis
- Fairmont City
- Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development
- Great Rivers Greenway District
- Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Illinois Department of Transportation
- East West Gateway Council of Governments
- Washington University
- National Park Service
- Osage Nation

### Funding Provided By:



The Norman J. Stupp Foundation



### Additional Funding Provided By:



photo courtesy of Great Rivers Greenway



photo: Lynn deLeonie

### Mounds Heritage Trail

The Mounds Heritage Trail combines the slower-paced opportunity of a bikeway for cyclists and pedestrians with the convenient opportunity of an auto tour for those with limited time or mobility.

Connecting the World Heritage Site of Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in Illinois with St. Louis, Missouri, the trail provides a unique blend of historical, cultural, and natural features. Along the 15-mile route, one can visit not only mound sites, but museums, historic buildings, cultural landmarks, and more.

Along the way, there are shops, delicious eateries, the majestic Mississippi, the iconic Gateway Arch, and other ways to enjoy your time.

### An Introduction to the Confluence Region

The confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers - at the center of the world's third largest river system - is of national and international importance. As the Great Rivers of North America, the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers are among the nation's foremost natural and cultural resources. Their confluence represents the center of a 3,740 mile river system that runs through 31 states, two Canadian provinces, and a watershed that covers 1.2 million square miles - one-eighth the land area of the North American continent. As such, it is the world's second largest drainage basin, draining 40% of the continental United States.

The rivers and watershed of the Confluence region are an essential resource for people, plants and animals providing a bountiful habitat to support life. The people of the St. Louis region rely on the water from the Confluence watershed for drinking water, crop irrigation, livestock production, industrial manufacturing, transportation, and for enjoying recreational activities such as fishing, boating, swimming, and relaxing. The flora and fauna of the region also rely on the watershed for their habitat, including 60% of all North American bird species.

More than just a unique physical feature - the union of two great bodies of water - and a crucial natural habitat, the Confluence is also a dynamic intersection of people. Spanning more than 1,000 years, it has seen a confluence of diverse culture, traditions, customs, beliefs, folk life (including confluences of prehistoric Mississippian to Siouan, Spanish to French, English to American, and others), making the Confluence a valuable and distinctive part of the heritage of the United States.

### The Confluence Vision

The Confluence is a sustainable, nationally-significant park, trail, and open space system with significant historical and cultural features focused on the confluence of the Mississippi, Missouri and Illinois rivers which is treasured and cared for by the people of the region. The Confluence enhances the community's attachment to the nation's Great Rivers by improving the quality of the life of the region, preserving and conserving its natural and built resources, increasing recreational and development opportunities while interpreting the heritage of "the confluence of People & Place".