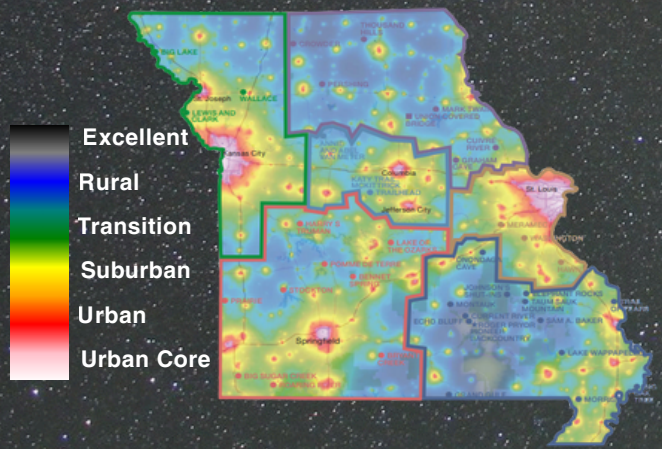
VIEWING THE MILKY WAY IN MISSOURI

While Missouri offers neither the pristine dark skies our ancestors saw, nor the darkest skies still visible in some parts of the United States today, there are still locations in our state where we can see the Milky Way. All we need is good weather, a little planning, and knowing where to look. The Milky Way galaxy is visible year-round, but appears brightest in late summer, when its spectacular center is visible in the southern direction of the sky. The best time to see the galaxy is starting 90 minutes after sunset. Try to choose a moonless night, as any extra light, even the moon's glow, can diminish visibility of the sky's starry brilliance. In this color coded map, the grey and dark-blue areas are the best dark sky viewing areas, with shades from green, yellow, orange, red, to white being successively worse.

For more tips on viewing the Milky Way in Missouri, visit DarkSkyMissouri.org/



DarkSky MISSOURI

DarkSky Missouri is a tax-exempt 501c3 Organization, EIN 42-3191976

Website: DarkSkyMissouri.org
Social media: @DarkSkyMissouri

DarkSky Missouri is dedicated to promoting the responsible use of outdoor lighting at night to conserve the night sky and nocturnal habitats

A product of DarkSkyMissouri

DarkSky MISSOURI

MISSOURI DARK SKY DESTINATIONS

Find the darkest state parks in Missouri to view the night sky

DARK SKY DESTINATION STATE PARKS

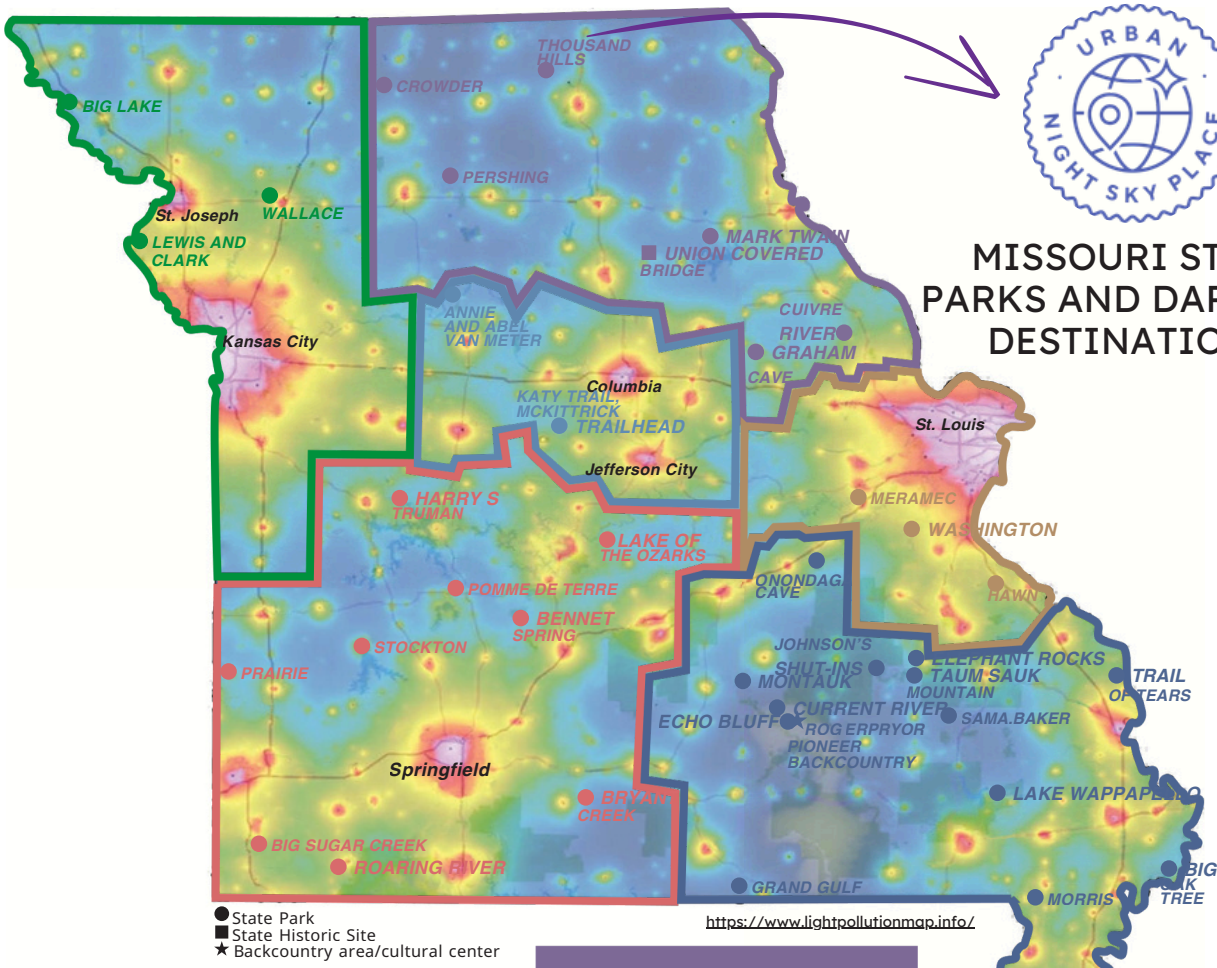
In November 2024, Thousand Hills State Park made history as the first state park in Missouri to be certified by DarkSky as an "Urban Night Sky Place." Many of our state parks sit in regions with naturally low light pollution, making them ideal havens for stargazing, astrophotography, and nocturnal wildlife. As Missouri State Parks transition toward dark-sky friendly, fully shielded lighting, residents have a unique opportunity to help protect our heritage after dark. Responsible lighting cuts wasteful glare, saves energy, and safeguards wildlife – all while restoring our view of the Milky Way. By supporting smart lighting upgrades in your local state parks and adopting dark-sky practices at home, you help ensure that future generations can experience the awe of Missouri's pristine night skies.

MISSOURI STATE PARKS

Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites are administered by the Division of State Parks, which is a part of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The mission of the State Parks System is to preserve and interpret the state's most outstanding natural landscapes and cultural landmarks, and to provide outstanding recreational opportunities compatible with those resources.

WEBSITE: MOSTATEPARKS.COM

MISSOURI STATE PARKS AND DARK SKY DESTINATIONS



KANSAS CITY REGION
Big Lake
Wallace
Lewis and Clark

CENTRAL REGION
Annie and Abel Van Meter
McKittrick Trailhead

LAKES REGION
Bryant Creek
Stockton
Prairie
Harry S Truman
Roaring River
Pomme de Terre
Big Sugar Creek
Bennett Spring
Lake of the Ozarks

NORTHEAST REGION
Mark Twain
Union Covered Bridge
Pershing
Graham Cave
Crowder
Long Branch
Wakonda
Thousand Hills
Cuivre River

ST. LOUIS REGION
Hawn
Washington
Meramec

NOT SHOWN ON MAP
Mark Twain National Forest
Ozark National Scenic Riverways National Park

SOUTHEAST REGION
Current River
Echo Bluff
Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry
Montauk
Sam A. Baker
Johnson's Shut-Ins
Grand Gulf
Taum Sauk Mountain
Big Oak Tree
Lake Wappapello
Onondaga Cave
Elephant Rocks
Morris
Trail of Tears