

Leo Drey- 2017

“On March 9, at the annual conference of Missouri Park and Recreation Association, Leo Drey was honored as the 2017 inductee to the Missouri Recreation and Parks Hall of Fame. This honor recognizes an individual who made exceptional contributions to the pursuit and realization of quality of recreational experiences for the citizens of the state of Missouri.

Drey’s legacy is one of selfless giving to our state’s natural resource heritage, contributing in many ways, from developing selective harvesting techniques that changed Missouri’s forest management operations to protecting priceless natural resources at a personal financial loss. The preservation of many of Missouri’s greatest natural resources is the direct result of conservation efforts of Drey, including Grand Gulf State Park, Dillard Mill Historic Site and the Piney Narrows. Greer Spring is the second-largest freshwater spring in the Ozarks. Privately owned in 1987, it was set to be commercially developed by Anheuser Busch Brewing Company. Drey felt that it was a mistake to lose this wild resource, but realized that the wheels of government moved much slower than the wheels of commerce. Using personal funds, he purchased the \$4.5 million site, then sold it to the US Forest Service at a \$500,000 loss.

When the Ozark rivers and streams were suffering from water quality problems at the hands of poor timber and farming practices, Drey helped convinced congress of the need for the development of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, then secured over 35 miles of recreational waterway easements along the Jack’s Fork and Current rivers for public use – what we now call the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

These are the only two of Drey’s contributions to Missouri’s outdoor heritage, and there are many more. As a member of MRP Hall of Fame, he will be permanently recognized for securing Missouri’s natural resources for generations.

Clint Trammel, one of Drey’s forest managers once said, “Leo is going to be one of those people, who, at some time in the future, if not already, people are going to realize the stature of what he has accomplished and what he has done for this state.”

Leo Drey’s widow and best friend, Kay Drey, was present at the ceremony, as was Greg Iffrig, Executive Director of the Leo A. Drey Foundation, which carries on his legacy.”