

HB 896 -- State Park Board

Sponsor: Mayer

This bill establishes the Missouri State Park Board within the Department of Natural Resources as the authority for all matters pertaining to the state park system. The board consists of nine to 11 members, with one member from each congressional district and at least two members from counties with a state historic site of significant importance to military history. Members are appointed by the Governor, with approval of the Senate, and serve three-year staggered terms. The director of the department serves as chair with a tie-breaking vote, and the executive director of the State Historical Society is an ex-officio member. The board meets at least twice annually. Members serve without compensation, but are reimbursed for necessary expenses.

The board holds public meetings on any addition, modification, or removal of military monuments, historical markers, designated veteran's grave markers, accepted practices, or permitted public ceremonies on department sites; maintains a registry of monuments and markers on public and private property; establishes procedures for the historical marker program; and publishes an annual report.

The bill also prohibits any state agency from erecting, modifying, or removing any monument or marker or amending any accepted practice or permitted public ceremony at a department site without notifying the public at least 60 days prior to any planned action, holding a hearing, and receiving approval from the board. Any monuments or markers that were in place on December 21, 2002, must be replaced by August 28, 2004. Monuments may be moved to surrounding property or to accommodate construction or repairs. Anyone who removes, defaces, or destroys any monument, memorial, or designated veteran's grave marker is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

The provisions of the bill will expire six years from the effective date.