

## History of Wild Acres

In the early 1900s, with the acceptance of the automobile, wealthy St. Louis businessmen began to realize that they could dwell in a country estate far from the city and quickly reach their office jobs by way of the swift touring car.

In 1903, Charles D. Garnett, a wealthy paper manufacturer, adopted the elaborate country estate idea with his purchase of "Wildwood," which was located on the Creve Coeur electric car line, seven miles west of the city limits. In addition to his beautiful brick home, he also built a cottage for his gardener; an icehouse which was stocked from the lake; chicken house; pump and well house; large stable complete with sleeping rooms and running water; and a complete carpenter and blacksmith shop. Many of the elaborate interiors in the main house are still intact.

In 1909, the estate was purchased by Louis A. Cella, who at one

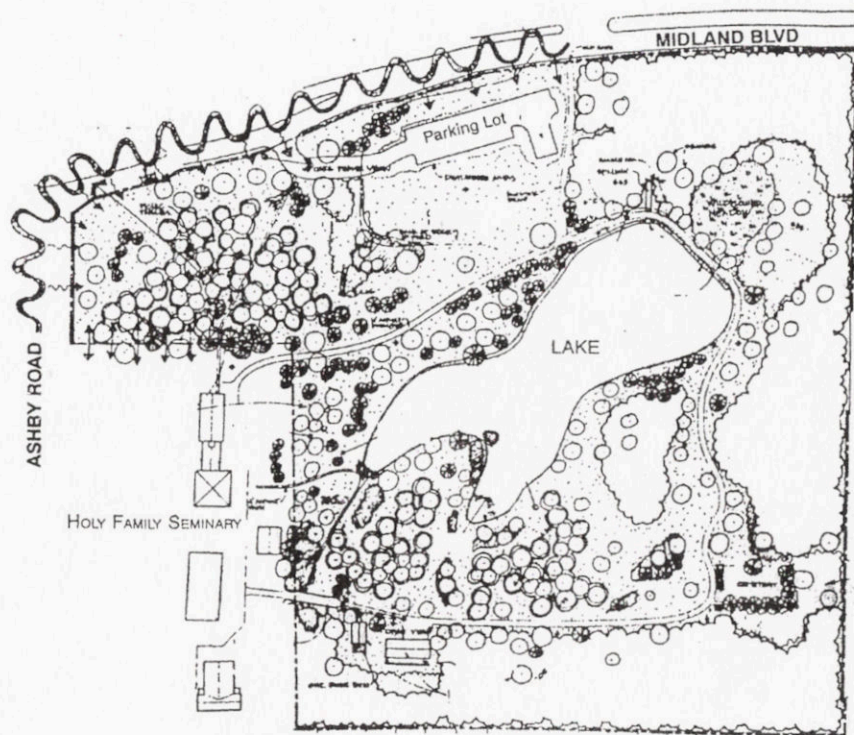
time was reputed to be the richest man in the city. After Cella died in 1918, the estate was sold to a grocer, Frank Lind and his wife Della, where they lived until his death in 1939. The house stood vacant for four years until Della Lind and the other heirs sold "Wildwood" in 1944 to the Congregation of the Holy Family.

In 1994, the property was subdivided when Mission Omega bought the house and related buildings on the west portion of the property. The following year, residents of the City of Overland approved a 3½% utility tax increase which permitted the purchase of the remaining 25.17 acres that we now know as Wild Acres Park.

## Points of Interest

As you explore Wild Acres, watch for the numbered posts that mark special points of interest:

- 1. 1904 World's Fair Bridge**  
In disrepair, but scheduled to be renovated
- 2. Museum Building**  
For educational exhibits
- 3. Service Building**  
For storage of maintenance equipment
- 4. Trail Entrance**  
Connecting loop
- 5. Holy Family Cemetery**  
46 interments, from 1944 until 1986
- 6. Wildlife Thicket**  
For wildlife movement to the lake
- 7. Boat Ramp**  
For conservation use only
- 8. The "Beaver Tree"**  
Busy beavers took this one down
- 9. The "Fallen Giant"**  
A huge fallen oak
- 10. Wildflower Meadow**  
Soon to be seeded



## Future Plans for Wild Acres

With guidance from the Missouri Department of Conservation, Overland city officials and many private citizens have worked long and hard to make "Wild Acres" a reality. Landscape architects from Austin Tao & Associates Inc. were hired to develop plans that would preserve the natural state of the property. By preserving the forests and natural habitat, Wild Acres will be ideal for nature study groups by school children, scouts, bird watchers and others.

Plans include :

- a wildflower garden
- a butterfly garden
- placement of numerous bird houses
- a fishing pier
- an aeration fountain in the lake
- natural wood chip trails
- paved trails
- labeling of various species of trees and shrubs
- accessible areas for those with disabilities

It will take several years to complete all phases of the restoration plan.

In the meantime, so that all visitors may enjoy the park, we ask that you please obey the following rules:

- No fires or barbecues
- No bicycles beyond the parking lot
- No skateboarding or rollerblading

Fishing is permitted to those who possess a valid state fishing license.



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# Welcome to Wild Acres Park

*Dedicated April 20, 1997*

