

Frank H. Wielandy

“Father of the Missouri State Park System”

Missouri has a fine state park system, just passing the century mark of its first acquisitions. Its inception was in 1919, when the 50th General Assembly created a state park fund. The law appropriated \$100,000.00 and 5 percent of all fees from hunting and fishing licenses. The law also created a state park board composed of the Governor, Attorney General, and the Fish and Game Commissioner. Not much happened until the administration of Governor Arthur M. Hyde (1921-1925). In May of 1924, Hyde appointed Frank H. Wielandy Fish and Game Commissioner at a salary of \$3,500 per year. Hyde gave Wielandy great latitude in selecting and securing sites for state parks.

Frank Hector Wielandy was born in Jefferson City in 1868. The family moved to St. Louis when Frank was eight years old. At the age of eighteen in 1886, he joined his older brother Paul, working as a traveling salesman for John T. Boland, a large book and stationery company. Frank covered his sales route of the West and far Southwest for 28 years.

In 1902, Frank and Paul formed a partnership with A. M. Blackwell, a large retailer of Las Vegas, New Mexico and founded the Blackwell-Weilandy Book and Stationery Co. in St. Louis. Frank continued as a road salesman for another 10 years, expanding the business throughout numerous states.

While a stellar salesman, Frank Wielandy left his mark on Missouri history as an outdoors enthusiast. In 1893, he was instrumental in the creation of the Missouri Fish and Game League. Wielandy introduced the Izaak Walton League into Missouri. The Izaak Walton League was founded in Chicago in 1922 by a group of sportsmen intent on protecting fishing opportunities for the future. It quickly became a national organization dedicated to a wide range of conservation practices. Frank served as president of the St. Louis chapter. Missouri had 125 chapters, most in the nation. Pulaski County chapters were organized in Dixon and Richland, due in large part to Wielandy's proselytizing.

Wielandy's tenure as Fish and Game Commissioner was not without a few wrinkles. After five weeks in office,

Wielandy requested the resignation of the Chief Deputy Fish and Game Commissioner E. T. Grether, who had served under three previous commissioners. Grether, who had also been the editor of the popular “Rod and Gun” column in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, had a “hostile attitude toward Gov. Hyde's plan for state parks.” Also at issue was Grether's awarding of 55 honorary commissions without approval.

In late June of 1924, Frank and Governor Hyde went on a fishing trip on the Current River near Doniphan. While casting, the Governor hooked Frank in the right eye. Local physicians were of the opinion that he would lose its sight. However, the next day doctors were able to extract the barb and said there would be no permanent damage. The party finished their Ozark trip viewing possible state park sites in Howell, Oregon, and Carter counties.

Under Wielandy's acquisitive leadership, the state parks program was jumpstarted. Of particular interest were springs suitable for fish hatcheries, along with land for game refuges. The first park purchased was located in Dent County, known as Lenox Park, comprising 14,000 acres at a cost of \$4.50 per acre.

The next purchase was a small tract of 76 acres that contained the scenic Round Spring. The purchase price was \$5,000,

With plans for a game refuge, the state bought 6,100 acres of well timbered and watered land in Reynolds County for \$3.00 an acre.

Alley Spring was the next spring purchased. The site of a mill and failed private resort venture, the 475 acres cost \$31,000.

The state was not thinking small when, at Wielandy's suggestion, it purchased Big Spring in Carter County, four miles south of Van Buren. It is the second largest spring in the world with a discharge of 276 million gallons per day. (The largest spring is in France.)

The park also contained 5,000 acres of pine and oak timber for which the state paid \$21,195.00.

In 1971 Round Spring, Alley Spring, and Big Spring state parks were transferred to the Federal government to become part of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, the nation's first scenic river system.

The last spring purchased and developed into a state park was Bennett Spring, twelve miles south of Lebanon in Laclede County. The spring, rainbow trout hatchery, and 576 acres of land cost \$40,000.

On one of Frank Wielandy's several trips into the Ozarks to scout possible state park sites, he visited a location near Dixon. The idyllic setting prompted Frank and brother Paul to buy the 360-acre property for their own recreational use. They named the place Blue Jay Farm, after their company's line of school supplies (tablets, pencils, pens, and crayons). Today it is a bed and breakfast resort (see entrance on cover).

By all accounts (with the probable exception of E. T. Grether), Frank W. Wielandy was an exceptional Fish and Game Commissioner. He was praised for his aggressive enforcement of the game laws in effect at the time. His leadership in acquiring properties for the fledgling state park system earned him the appellation “The Father of Missouri's State Park System,” which today contains 93 state parks and historic sites on 160,000 acres.

Although his appointment was set to expire in 1927, Frank was replaced at the end of Governor Hyde's term in 1925. His short tenure was exceptionally productive. Frank and brother Paul were also quite energetic in civic improvement causes. Wielandy also made an unsuccessful bid for the Republican nomination for governor in 1928.

Frank's passion for wildlife and effective conservation practices did not wane. He addressed groups throughout the state on the need for reform to the Fish and Game Department. In April of

1935, he spearheaded a meeting in St. Louis that called for a law that would take the Department out of politics. He called for a constitutional amendment, achieved by initiative petition if necessary, that would mandate the Department's administration by a bipartisan commission.

One of the outcomes of that April meeting was the formation in November of the Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), comprised of sportsmen and conservation-minded groups in the state. Frank served as a member of the first Board of Directors. CFM began an initiative petition to establish “a nonpartisan nonsalaried commission of four members to be appointed by the Governor and clothed with wide powers to replace the present Fish and Game Commissioner. The new commission would be empowered to employ a permanent director.”

Amendment No. 4, as described above, passed in the 1935 general election. It went into effect the following June, creating the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Frank's impact on Missouri's recreation and wildlife was extraordinary and he had a fondness for a place in Pulaski County. After a year-long illness with leukemia, Frank H. Wielandy passed away at his St. Louis home on June 25, 1946.



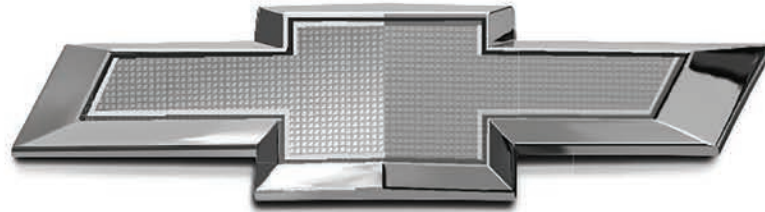
Frank H. Wielandy
1868-1946



Blue Jay was the name of Blackwell-Wielandy's line of school supplies, which included tablets, pencils, and crayons.

Taylor Grubaugh

WAYNESVILLE, MISSOURI



Automobile Sales

Monday—Friday 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM

Saturday 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM

(573) 443-8145

Service

Monday—Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

(573) 433-8146

Parts

Monday—Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

(573) 433-2182



Auto Repair Center

Service

Top technology, skilled technicians, and fair pricing have made Lowe Chevrolet a favored auto service center in the Waynesville area.

Parts

Genuine GM Parts and Accessories and a wide selection of tires.



Collision Center

I-Car Platinum Class Certified auto body shop features a state of the art facility. We work with all insurance companies. If you need a car while yours is being repaired, we offer a free loaner.

COMMITTED TO SERVING WAYNESVILLE DRIVERS WITH TOPNOTCH CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Our dealership is staffed with only the best automotive professionals in the Waynesville area. We work hard to bring our customers a broad selection of brand-new vehicles from the latest lineup of Chevrolet car, truck and SUV vehicles. Our teams can work with you to find the best new or used vehicle for your needs, the best finance deal for your budget, and much more. With service, parts, and sales help all under one roof, you'll never have to look elsewhere for your automotive needs again.

Taylor Grubaugh Chevrolet
103 Lowe Avenue
Waynesville, MO 65583

Off Route I-44 at Exit 156

WE BUY CARS

www.grubaughchevy.com