

Rep. Smith Remarks for the Natural Resources Subcommittee on
National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
February 3, 2022; 10AM; Virtual

Thank you Chairman Neguse and Ranking Member Fulcher for holding this hearing today and for your consideration of my legislation, the Ste Genevieve National Historical Park Boundary Revision Act.

In 2018 my legislation with Senator Blunt to establish the Ste Genevieve National Historical Park was signed into law by President Trump. We were not the first Members to advocate for this legislation, in fact, Missouri Senators and Members of Congress representing Ste Genevieve going back decades have been supportive of this effort.

But the Ste Genevieve National Historical Park does not exist today only because of the actions of Members of Congress. The park exists today in large part thanks to the continued dedication and advocacy of the community in Ste Gen.

Long before the park was established, city official, local volunteers, and the state of Missouri worked to preserve the unique collection of French vertical log houses which represent some of the earliest colonial settlements west of the Mississippi. In 2018, when the park was established, the Park Service was able to join that effort and provide resources not previously available to tell Ste Gen's story.

In partnership with the Park Service, the people of Ste Gen are dedicated to ensuring visitors to their community don't just have an enjoyable experience but ultimately leaves with a deeper understanding of an era in our nation's history.

My legislation seeks to further the partnership between the community of Ste Gen and the Park Service. The City of Ste Genevieve is seeking to

transfer ownership of its Welcome Center to the Park Service, and the Park Service, which currently use the space as part of a cooperative agreement with the city, is willing to take the building on. The Welcome Center is the first point of contact for visitors to the park. By allowing the Park Service to take over management of this building, visitors to the area will have a more integrated and streamlined experience.

I authored this legislation for the same reason I authored the original legislation to establish the park, because of the deep community support for this effort. The people of Ste Genevieve want to help tell the story of our nation and the state of Missouri, and my goal is to help them achieve that.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to working with you all to move this legislation forward.