



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 6, 2022

### **NEW PARK OPENS JULY 30 IN ST. CHARLES COUNTY WITH DEDICATION, FAMILY ACTIVITIES** *Oglesby Park is 18<sup>th</sup> Open Park in System*

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO** – Celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the St. Charles County Parks Department is opening its newest park on Saturday, July 30, with a dedication ceremony to honor former property owner Benjamin Oglesby, for whom the park is named. Oglesby Park, located at 2801 West Meyer Road near Foristell, is the park system's 18<sup>th</sup> open park.

"I'm excited about the opening of this park, which combines the beauty of nature and the history of St. Charles County," says County Executive Steve Ehlmann. "There were a lot of hands in making this happen. We acquired the land in December with the help of Councilman Joe Cronin and the approval of the County Council, and already the Parks Department has it ready to open."

The park event is planned from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. that day with the dedication at 11:30 a.m. Festivities will include fun and games for the entire family. Oglesby Park's 199 acres include a playground, natural surface and paved trails, a lake, shelters, and restroom facilities. The park will remain open until 30 minutes after sunset that day; normal hours are daily from 7 a.m. to 30 minutes after sunset.

"Oglesby Park is in my district," says District 1 County Councilman Joe Cronin, "and I couldn't be more pleased to be able to say that. I was glad I was able to assist, but the County Parks Department deserves a lot of credit for making this a reality. This is a great tribute to a man who fought for his life, for his family and for his country, and became successful in life despite all odds."

Watch for more information on the event on the St. Charles County Parks Facebook Page or visit [stccparks.org](http://stccparks.org).

#### ***About Benjamin Oglesby***

Benjamin Oglesby was born a slave in 1825 in Bedford, Va., and was brought to Missouri in 1837 at the age of 12 by his owner, Marshall Bird. He worked on a farm near present-day I-70 and Highway W in the Foristell/Wentzville area. In 1864, at the age of 39, Oglesby fled captivity of Bird and enlisted in the Union Army in St. Charles. His wife and children remained in captivity while he went through basic training in St. Louis to eventually fight for their freedom. Oglesby was assigned to the 56<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Infantry and was honorably discharged in 1865.

After the Civil War, according to the 1870 census, Oglesby, his wife, Martha and their six children – Medora, Samuel, Oskar, Bell, Albert, and Charlie – worked on a farm in Hickory Grove Township in Warren County. In 1871, he purchased 146 acres of land in Foristell. He financed the property through a \$2,000 Deed of Trust and paid off the property six years later.

Oglesby farmed the land that is now the park for 30 years. His wife died in 1900, and he died in 1901. He is buried in Smith Chapel Cemetery, a mile from his farm. The Oglesby children owned the property through the mid-1900s.

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***About St. Charles County Parks and Recreation:***

*The St. Charles County Parks & Recreation Department was created in 1997 after voters approved a local use tax with the sole purpose of park land acquisition, development, operations, and maintenance. The department's mission is to preserve natural and historic features in areas throughout the county for the use of future generations. Today, the department has 21 parks, of which 18 are open and three are in reserve, totaling 4,197 acres of acquired park land. From historic homesteads to a skate park; from camping, hiking, biking, and fishing to weddings and educational classrooms, there's something for everyone in St. Charles County Parks.*

*For more information and specifics about each park, amenities, trails, and more, visit [stccparks.org](http://stccparks.org).*