



Laumeiersculpturepark

1.6 mile loop, approx. 40 minutes,
self-guided route (not a marked trail)



*A forest grew [in Max's room and]...the walls became the world all around –
Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak*

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Nature Trail is a project written and conceived by Jenny Price, Laumeier's 2014 In-Residence Environmental Historian.

Thanks to signs designer Jennifer McKnight, & to nature of St. Louis experts Esley Hamilton, Dennis Hogan, Maxine Lipeles & Mike Venso – & special thanks to Executive Director Marilu Knode, Curator and designer Dana Turkovic, Operations Supervisor Don Gerling, & all the staff at Laumeier Sculpture Park –JP

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The Nature of Laumeier Sculpture Park



*.....a breathtaking tale of ecology, geology, history,
art, industry, ideas, policies & infrastructure....
so how to start?*

With rocks!—& their importance in the history of St. Louis, which is an obscenely gifted city rock-wise. To the south, the old Ozark rocks are crammed with lead, iron, copper—exactly the metals you need for big industry. To the east, the younger Illinois basin rocks are loaded with oil, coal & natural gas—to power all that industry up. Right underneath St. Louis? Limestone galore!—& that’s perfect for building a lot of factories & houses.*

Just add water! St. Louis is also famously a spot where rivers converge—so it’s a perfect port site for inland commercial traffic. It lies at the juncture of 4 navigable rivers— the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Illinois...

& the Meramec! As St. Louis grew up as a central port city & big industrial metropolis, St. Louisans began to flock to the Meramec—the littlest, clearest & most sparkling of the rivers—to get away from all that city-ness. And these hills above the Meramec River quickly became an affluent refuge from the noise, the crowds, the social tensions, the above-average pollution. Here, you could take a break from the industry & commerce that sustained all of St. Louis—& that also financed the purchase of the getaway lands in these scenic hills. Resorts dotted this area by the late 1800s. Then big country houses. Year-round estates. Suburbs, eventually. And parks.

Including Laumeier!—a private estate that Matilda Laumeier so graciously donated to the public as a St. Louis County Park back in 1968. And which is now this lovely, rolling & exceptionally special landscape of wide grassy lawns, oak-hickory forest, outdoor sculptures, historic buildings, wildflowers & springs & creek-lets.

Rocks & history & water, oh my! How is this landscape shaped by the geology, ecology & other natural features of this particular area? And how has this landscape been shaped by this area’s connections to nature, people & places in the rest of St. Louis & beyond?

* Walter Schroeder, “Environmental Setting of the St. Louis Region,” in Andrew Hurley, ed., *Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis* (Missouri Historical Society Press, 1997).

**EXPLORE. WANDER. ASK. PONDER. ANSWER.
WAYFIND. PUZZLE. CONNECT. ENJOY.**

The idea of nature contains...an extraordinary amount of human history – “Ideas of Nature,” Raymond Williams

The Facts of Nature: A Scavenger Hunt!

Walk the Nature Trail route, learn about the nature of Laumeier Sculpture Park and win a prize!

A. Use the signs at the 15 Nature Trail stops to find these 15 facts (1 fact per sign)

What the St. Louis County sewer district is  _____

Where the coal mines are that St. Louis relies on for electricity  _____

Lawn vegetation species  _____

What spread w/parks into this part of St. Louis after WWII  _____

Important site in the American nature-lover tradition  _____

What drew people to this part of St. Louis in the late 1700s  _____

Substance in a plastic water bottle  _____

A pre-air-conditioning place to stay cool  _____

A city the water in the Meramec River eventually travels through  _____

What Native Americans once used fire to maintain here  _____

What the concrete in sculptures is made from  _____

How far the park is from STL County Parks HQ  _____

What museum shop items are all made out of  _____

Where you might live if you lived next to a steel mill  _____

Wild ancestor of the domestic dog  _____

B. Arrange the 15 circled letters in the spaces below to make this Facts of Nature question.

QUESTION:   ,             ?

C. Write your answer here--& not to worry, it's not the kind of question that has one absolutely right answer. Just tell us what you think!

ANSWER: _____

D. Got it? Place your completed page with your name and email in the mailbox outside the Education Center for a one-time 10% discount at the Museum Shop. (Re-Opening April 2014)

Name: _____ Email: _____