



HERE THERE BE DRAGONS

LAKE OF THE OZARKS

NAVIGATING THE UNKNOWN
REALMS OF INTERPRETATION

Sunday, September 13th - Tuesday, September 15th
Camden on the Lake Resort, Lake of the Ozarks

2026 CONFERENCE PACKET

Your 2026 conference committee is eager to host you at the Lake of the Ozarks for an exciting journey of discovery and rejuvenation!

This document is your go-to guide to address any pre-conference questions you might have, so please read it carefully.

Still have questions? Feel free to contact the committee members listed on the final page.

**To register for the conference,
visit mointerp.org**

Find important information about...

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IS THIS A CONFERENCE ABOUT DRAGONS?

This year's theme "Here There Be Dragons – Navigating Unknown Realms of Interpretation" is inspired by the dragon-shaped curves of the Lake of the Ozarks and the legendary phrase that once marked uncharted maps. This year's theme celebrates the courage and curiosity at the heart of interpretation. We hope this conference excites you to explore the unknown and renews your purpose as a guide who turn mystery into meaning and helps others venture into new worlds with wonder and confidence.



PRICING

This year's conference offers various registration options for your convenience:

- Full Registration: Sunday to Tuesday, including the banquet
- Student Registration: Sunday to Tuesday, also including the banquet
- One Day Registration: Banquet included if Tuesday is selected

Please be aware that each registration comes with one banquet ticket, but AMI membership dues are not included in the price of registration.

Item	Price	Description
Full Registration	\$180	Sunday - Tuesday activities, meals including Sunday's dinner and Tuesday's evening banquet
Student Registration	\$100	Sunday - Tuesday activities, meals including Sunday's dinner and Tuesday's evening banquet <i>Must be currently enrolled as a student</i>
One Day Registration	\$80	Choice of day at time of registration. Includes any meals on chosen day
Additional Banquet Ticket	\$50	Only needed for anyone not registered for the conference

Any registration after September 1st will incur an additional \$20 Late Fee.

KEYNOTE SPOTLIGHT

DR. LILY SANTORO

Lily Santoro is a historian, public scholar, and community storyteller who thrives at the edges of the map. As an Associate Teaching Professor at the University of Missouri and a leader in public history initiatives statewide, she helps communities uncover and share the stories that shape American democracy. Her research on African American newspapers in the nineteenth century reveals how Black writers confronted the “dragons” of scientific racism and claimed space for citizenship and identity.

From digital history projects to Smithsonian-affiliated exhibitions, Dr. Santoro's work embodies the courage and curiosity at the heart of *Here There Be Dragons*. Her keynote will inspire interpreters to embrace the unknown, chart new paths, and guide others toward deeper understanding.



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Sunday, September 13th

11:00AM	Registration Open	Hotel Lobby
1:00PM	Opening Remarks and Keynote	Harbor Ballroom
3:00PM	Concurrent Session	Details to Come
4:00PM	Concurrent Session	Details to Come
5:00PM	Business Meeting (Dinner Included)	Harbor Ballroom
7:00PM	Patio Networking and Socializing	Harbor Ballroom

Monday, September 14th

7:30AM	Field Sessions Depart: 1. Luring the Dragon 2. Storming the Castle Trips	Hotel Lobby
8:30AM	Field Sessions Depart: 3. Legends & Limestone 4. Rambling with River Dragons 5. How to Hunt a Dragon	Hotel Lobby
6:00PM	Silent Auction Begins (Light snacks and cash bar)	Harbor Ballroom
7:00PM	Live Auction	Harbor Ballroom
8:30PM	Movie Night	Niangua Room

Tuesday, September 15th

8:30AM	Concurrent Session	Details to Come
10:00AM	Concurrent Session	Details to Come
11:00AM	Concurrent Session	Details to Come
12:00 - 1:30PM	Lunch	On Your Own
1:30PM	Concurrent Session	Details to Come
3:00PM	Concurrent Session	Details to Come
4:00PM	Explorer's Exchange and Trivia	Lakeside Room
5:30PM	Awards Banquet and Closing Remarks	Harbor Ballroom

THE SETTING FOR OUR QUEST



CAMDEN
ON THE LAKE RESORT

2359 Bittersweet Rd,
Lake Ozark, MO 65049

Conference attendees are invited to take advantage of a special room rate of **\$139 per night** during the event. This rate is applicable to any room type at the resort. After registering for the conference, you will receive a confirmation email that contains your unique booking code to receive the discount.

Rooms listed as suites have a comfortable sleeper sofa in a separate space so room sharing is encouraged.

Have specific dietary needs?
Looking to lower costs?
Bring your own food to prepare!
Each room is equipped with a
kitchenette (fridge, microwave,
range, and basic kitchenware).



Resort Amenities Include:

- Pool featuring a swim-up bar
- Relaxing hot tub
- Lakeview rooms with balconies
- Spa and Wellness Center
- On-site restaurant
- Jitterbug Coffee & Café
- On-site shopping

Rooms can be reserved through
camdenonthelake.com or by
calling **(573) 365-5620**.

Book your room by **AUGUST 13, 2026!**
Rooms booked after this date
will be full price.

SECURE YOUR SUPPLIES FOR THE JOURNEY! DON'T FORGET TO PACK THE ESSENTIALS!

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ☐ Pen and Paper | ☐ Field Session Clothes | ☐ Auction Donations |
| ☐ Laptop/Tablet | ☐ Comfortable Shoes | ☐ Cash, check, or Credit Card |
| ☐ Business Cards | ☐ Binoculars | for auction or vendor items |
| ☐ Coffee Cup/Thermos | ☐ Bug Spray & Sunscreen | ☐ Chargers |
| ☐ Water Bottle | ☐ Swimsuit | ☐ Snacks |
| ☐ Name Badge Holder | ☐ Musical Instrument | ☐ A Smile! |

FIELD SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Embark on an epic adventure to uncover local history and culture, or master a brand-new skill!

1. LURING THE DRAGON: BENNETT SPRING EXPERIENCE

Leave: 7:30 AM Return: 5:00 PM COST: Lunch On Own Limited to 15 people

Journey into the cool, clear waters of Bennett Spring State Park for a hands-on exploration of one of Missouri's iconic outdoor traditions. Begin with a behind-the-scenes look at the hatchery renovations. Next, you'll learn the art of fly tying, the delicate craft of creating lures that tempt even the wariest river-dwelling "dragons." After lunch at the park restaurant (on your own), watch expert anglers demonstrate the rhythm of casting and reading of the water before trying your own hand at fly fishing. Whether you're a seasoned adventurer or a curious first-timer, this trip invites you to navigate new skills, follow the currents of interpretation, and discover what stories a river can tell. Valid Missouri Fishing Permit is required but Daily Trout Tag will be covered.



2. "HAVE FUN STORMING THE CASTLE": HA HA TONKA STATE PARK

Limited to 25 people

Leave: 7:30 AM Return: 2:45 PM COST: \$12 Catered Box Lunch - You will be contacted for ordering preference/dietary needs

Discover the wild edges of the map at Ha Ha Tonka State Park, where towering bluffs, castle ruins, and spring-fed waters set the stage for a day of exploration. Begin at the visitor center before a guided birding trek provides a chance to spot feathered "dragons" gliding through the Ozark canopy. After lunch near Spring Brook Trail, we'll review the basics of kayaking during a land-based demo, then launch into the park's quiet inlet to navigate its winding waterways. This trip blends science, skill-building, and adventure and invites you expand the edges of your map.



3. LEGENDS AND LIMESTONE: OZARK CAVERNS AND CAMDEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Leave: 8:30 AM Return: 2:30 PM COST: None - Lunch Included Limited to 25 people

Explore the natural and historical heart of the Ozarks with a guided hike along Coakley Hollow Trail, where rare fen ecosystems mark the edges of the map. Then venture into Ozark Caverns to uncover underground wonders early explorers might have labeled with dragons. Afterward, enjoy lunch (provided) and an engaging overview of local history at the Camden County Historical Society before exploring exhibits tracing the region's evolving stories. You'll enjoy a day of landscapes, legends, and newly charted realms.



4. RAMBLING WITH RIVER DRAGONS: JEFFERSON CITY ADVENTURES

Leave: 8:30 AM
Return: 5:00 PM

COST: Lunch and Central Dairy On Own
Limited to 25 people for art experience, hike is unlimited

Your journey begins at the historic Lohman Building before embarking on a unique tour around the Missouri State Capitol grounds and Adrian's Island. After lunch in downtown Jefferson City (on own) and time to explore the Missouri State Museum exhibits, the group splits into two paths. The company of outdoorsy types will trek to Clark's Hill Historic Site, where sweeping views and archaeological echoes invite you to imagine the dragons that once marked the edges of early maps, while the league of the sun-averse will partake in an art-making experience at JC Museum of Modern Art. The full fellowship reunites for a sweet reward at Central Dairy before returning to the hotel, a fitting end to a day spent navigating both familiar landmarks and unknown realms of interpretation.



This field session has two different afternoon options. When registering, please be sure to mark the specific afternoon option you prefer.
Option HIKE or Option ART

5. HOW TO HUNT A DRAGON: SPORTING CLAYS & HUNTING HISTORY

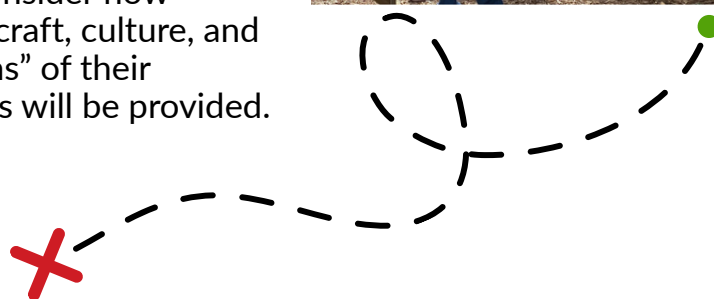
Morning only Program!

Leave: 8:30 AM Return: 12:45 PM

COST: None

Limited to 15 people

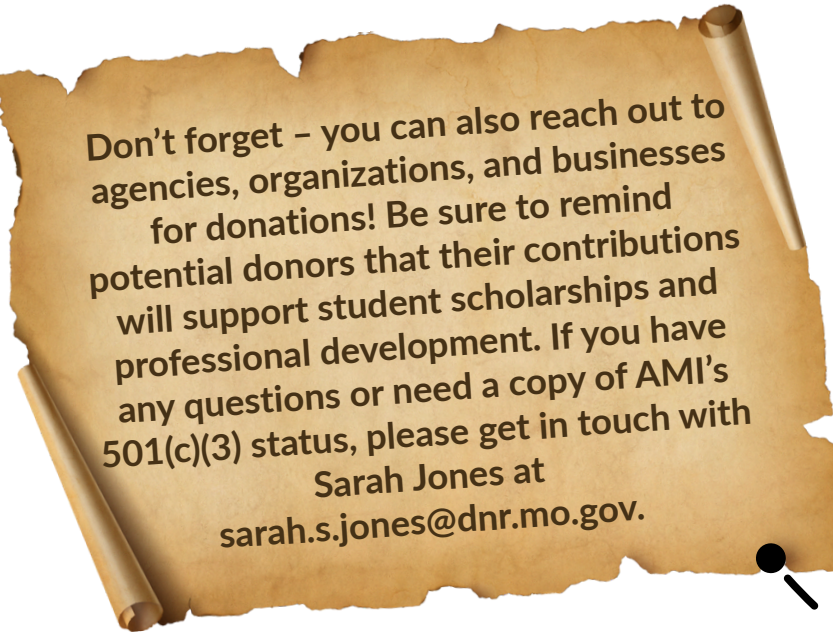
Step into the evolving story of hunting in the Ozarks with a morning that bridges centuries of skill, survival, and interpretation. Begin by meeting first-person interpreters who bring historic hunting to life through demonstrations of tools, techniques, and the cultural values that shaped them. Next, the experience shifts into the modern era with hands-on sporting clays instruction using contemporary shotguns. Whether you're learning the basics or refining your aim, this adventure invites you to test your focus, follow the arc of a clay bird across the sky, and consider how traditions adapt over time. It's a journey through craft, culture, and the ever-changing ways humans navigate "dragons" of their environment. All shooting equipment and supplies will be provided.



SCHOLARSHIP AUCTION

GATHER YOUR TREASURES NOW!

The scholarship auction is our golden goose for funding student scholarships and professional development grants. So, dig through your treasure troves and bring those top-notch goodies! With exciting and fierce bidding wars, we'll fill those scholarship coffers in no time!



Don't forget – you can also reach out to agencies, organizations, and businesses for donations! Be sure to remind potential donors that their contributions will support student scholarships and professional development. If you have any questions or need a copy of AMI's 501(c)(3) status, please get in touch with Sarah Jones at sarah.s.jones@dnr.mo.gov.

All auction donations must be accompanied by a completed donation form. To save time, please fill this out prior to your arrival at the conference! You can find the form on the conference page of the AMI website.

Examples of quality auction items include:

- Gently used outdoor gear
- Handmade art
- Unique historical items
- Gift baskets



JOIN US FOR AN EXPLORER'S EXCHANGE!

Join us at the Explorer's Exchange, where you can exchange not only trinkets but also ideas! This thrilling new event takes place on Tuesday afternoon in the Lakeside room, featuring poster sessions, vendors, and information booths ready to pique your interest.

What to Expect:

- Explore and interact with engaging poster presentations
- Meet the challenge playing Team Trivia throughout the event
- Browse vendors for your new favorite treasure
- Learn about new ideas and organizations from informational tables



NEW EVENT!

Those interested in hosting a table (either as a vendor or informational) should contact Sarah Jones at sarah.s.jones@dnr.mo.gov

Those interested in presenting a poster can find the submission form on the conference page of the AMI website.

OPTIONAL PRE-CONFERENCE OUTING

CAN'T WAIT FOR THE ADVENTURE TO START?

JOIN US FOR A PRE-CONFERENCE EXCURSION TO THE STATE PENITENTIARY.

Join your AMI pals for a captivating tour of the Missouri State Penitentiary! Prepare to explore Jefferson City's intriguing history as you walk through the prison's dungeon cells and hidden corners. You can catch a ride from the hotel or meet us at the penitentiary gates. The tour is 2-3 hours long and tickets are \$40 per person. Contact Sarah Jones (sarah.s.jones@dnr.mo.gov) for more details. Indicate your interest in this event during registration.



VOLUNTEERING

We need your help! Volunteers are the secret ingredient of any conference! Please consider joining the volunteer team during the event. You can choose from a variety of roles when you register. Our priority roles include room monitors, field session drivers, and auction assistants.

If you have signed up to volunteer, you will be contacted closer to the conference to finalize the details of your role. If you have any questions about volunteering at this year's conference, please contact **Melina Matheney** at melina.matheney@mrbo.org

If you have volunteered before and are eager to take on a more significant role, consider joining your regional conference committee! There is an immediate need for members in the Northwest region to help plan the 2027 AMI conference.

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!**

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT BEING A COMMITTEE MEMBER OR NEED MORE INFORMATION ON THE CONFERENCE?



Please feel free to reach out to any of the 2026 conference committee members below!



Sarah Easton
MDC



Sarah S. Jones
DNR



Malcolm DeBroeck
MDC



Chris Edmonson
DNR



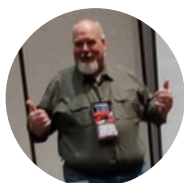
Stori Smith
MRBO



Melina Matheney
MRBO



Sandy Nelson
Master Naturalist



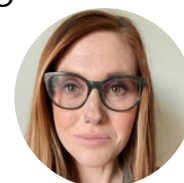
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