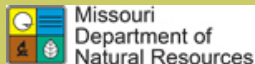


Fall 2010



ST. FRANCIS STATE PARK

Nature Notes

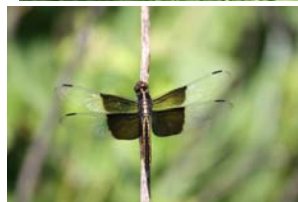
From the Naturalist



Fall is a time of great change. The weather is cooler, the leaves begin to fall gracefully from the trees and the animals make their preparations for the long winter ahead.

We know about the mammals that spend their winters in the long sleep that is hibernation, but have you ever stopped to wonder where all the insects go?

Many insects have very short life spans. One of the most surprising is the dragonfly. Dragonflies, as a species, are long-lived insects as larvae. But as an adult, most dragonflies never make it past two weeks of age. They will spend two years as a larva, living in clean clear streams with moving water. Dragonfly adults will lay



Dragonfly nymphs (above) live for 2 years in the water. Adult dragonflies (below) only live 2-4 weeks.

their eggs in water and then die. Then in spring, the larvae that are two years old will emerge as adults and frantically search for a mate before their short life is over-which is why there is a short time period in

summer when it seems like dragonflies are *everywhere*.

There are many insects that actually overwinter underground, like cicadas and grasshoppers. There are even some insects that migrate for the winter. Monarch butterflies are the perfect example.

There are two broods of Monarchs each summer. One in early summer, and one in late summer. The early summer butterflies will die before fall, but the late summer butterflies will migrate to the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico-a journey of up to 3,000 miles!

As the cooler weather approaches, watch for these telling signs of winter's approach.

Fall Colors Revealed

The air is cool and crisp, the acorns are dropping from tall oak trees and the tree line seems painted with a colorful palette of reds, oranges and yellows.

Have you ever wondered why leaves change colors?

Leaves are the food facto-

ries for trees. They contain chlorophyll, which takes in sunlight and produces the energy for the trees and gives the leaf its green color. The sensitive tissues cannot survive winter, so the tree must shed them.

As days grow shorter in the

autumn, the chlorophyll in the leaf starts to break down. As it does, its green color starts to fade and the other colors in the leaf begin to show.



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Missouri State Park Mission

- To preserve and interpret the finest examples of Missouri's natural landscapes
- To preserve and interpret the finest examples of Missouri's cultural landmarks.
- To provide healthy and enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences to Missourians and visitors to the state.

September Interpretive Program Schedule

Date	Programs
Saturday, September 4	2pm: Incredible Journey
	8pm: Nature Jeopardy
Sunday, September 5	2pm : Herpetology Hour
	8pm: Minute to Win It-State Park Style!
Saturday, September 11	2pm: Creek Walk
	8pm: Whose Park is it, Anyway?
Saturday, September 18	2pm: Civil War Fashion Show
	6pm: Bushwhacked!
Saturday, September 25	2pm: Making Tracks!
	8pm: Coyotes and Foxes

Fall Family Fun

By Amanda Adams

In today's society it can be hard to think of fun activities to do outdoors that inspire your family to want to be outside. Urban areas may not offer much in the way of fun, low-cost outdoor adventures. Here are some fun fall ideas that anyone can do, and at little to no cost:

- Safari: You can take a collection of plastic animals to your park or back yard. Hide the animals and then give your children butterfly nets.



The children can pretend that they are on a safari in the jungle as they capture the different creatures.

- Leaf-hop: Your entire family can gather leaves in your yard or park. If there are enough leaves, gather them so that there are many piles in various distances from each other. The piles can be in a straight line or create a specific path. You may make the piles near a bench, side, or boulder for rest areas. Have fun hopping from pile to pile!
- Scare crow: Dig out an old shirt and overalls and have your family stuff a scare crow! Complete it with a pumpkin head!
- Sun catcher: Use a low setting to iron a leaf between two pieces of waxed paper. Place a piece of plain paper on top of the waxed paper

before ironing. Let it cool, then hang in a window to let the light catch!

- Preserve a leaf: Find colorful leaves, then bring a mixture of two parts water to one part glycerin to a boil. Pour the mixture into a heat-proof container and use a wooden spoon to submerge the leaves into the mixture. Keep the container in a dark, cool place until you notice a slight change in the leaves color tint. Remove them and pat them dry with a paper towel. They will now keep their bright colors instead of turning brown!

We hope that your family will have great fun with these ideas. Maybe we will run into you at our park! Have a great autumn!





October Interpretive Program Schedule

Date	Programs
Saturday, October 2	1pm-4pm: St. Francois Family Play Day 7pm: Public Meeting 8pm: Nature's Night Shift: Night Hike
Saturday, October 9	2pm: Herpetology Hour 8pm: Hibernation Preperation
Saturday, October 16	2pm: Fall Sun Catcher Craft 8pm: The Trials of a Snakes Life
Saturday, October 23	2 pm: Craft hour 8pm: Creepy, Crawly, Hairy and Not-So-Scary

- "Bushwhacked" will involve some running around on the trails to escape the bushwhackers! Wear good shoes!
- St Francois Family Play Day will be held in the Ball Field Day Use Area (near Shelter #1)
- Creek Walks will meet at the Mooner's Hollow Trailhead near Shelter #1. Bring water shoes and prepare to get wet!

Get Out and Play at Family Play Day

Halloween Happenings event "migrates" to Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park

For the past three years, we have been privileged to host the "Halloween Happenings" event here at St. Francois. The event has been a huge success here, but its time for it to go home.

This event has been a tradition at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park since 1993. When the reservoir breach caused that park to close, Park Naturalist Janet Price decided to take her show "on the road". We happily agreed to host the event here, and we've had a lot of fun and a TON of laughs while it lasted.

This year, the event will move back to its home park, and will take place on Saturday, October 30 at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park's day use area. The theme this year is "metamorphosis." The Vaudeville -full of skits, stories and songs will begin at 7pm, with the "Creatures of the Night" walk starting after. This program is family-friendly. The only thing scary about it



will be our singing!

Like last year, registration will be required for the "Creatures of the Night" walk. Limited spots are available on a **first come, first served** basis. Call the park office at (573) 546-7855 to make your reservations starting Monday, August 23. We encourage the children to dress up in their Halloween costumes, and after the program they will have a chance to come on stage and show them off.

As part of the Children in Nature Challenge, we will be hosting a "Family Play Day" on Saturday, October 2, 2010 from 1-4pm. This event will feature more than a dozen activities to encourage families to get outside playing and exploring together.

Studies show that children (and even adults!) benefit greatly from time spent outdoors. Children who spend time outside have better memory and concentration and do better both academically and socially. They are also less likely to be obese. So let's get outside and play together!

Some activities at Play Day will include: Learn to geocache, explore a creek, fly a kite, play games, build a fort and take a hike. Visitors will be encouraged to play at each station for as little or as long as they'd like-as long as they are having fun! Call the park office for more details.

ST. FRANCOIS STATE PARK

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Bonne Terre, MO 63628

Phone: 573-358-2173
www.mostateparks.com/stfrancois.htm



Find us on Facebook!

Search "St. Francois State
Park" and watch for program
updates and park news.

Camping Rates for the 2010 Camping Season (On Season Rates)

Basic Campsite- \$13.00

Electric Campsite- \$21.00

Electric/Water- \$23.00

Sewer/Electric/Water- \$26.00



\$2 discount for seniors and persons with disabilities.

*Note that at St. Francois, we only have BASIC and ELECTRIC campsites. To make a reservation, call 1-877-422-6766.

Annual Public Meeting- Let Your Voice Be Heard

On Saturday, October 2 at 7pm, the park will hold its annual public meeting. These meetings are held each year, and gives visitors a chance to have input on park operations and future plans for the park.

This year has brought on many challenges as Missouri State Parks face budget cuts and staffing shortages. One way we were able to meet that challenge was through the establishment of the State Parks Youth Corps. This program gave youth ages 17-24 an opportunity to work in a state park in a variety of park operations positions. Funded through a federal grant, this program helped parks to meet our staffing challenges, and provided a once in a lifetime opportunity to young people who are interested in outdoor careers.

The program's impact here at St. Francois will be just one of the items discussed at the public meeting. Join us and let us know how you think we are doing!

Creature Feature

Big Brown Bat
(*Eptesicus fuscus*)



One of Missouri's most common bats. They live in trees, attics and old buildings during the summer, but in winter will hibernate in caves.

Did you know...

- Bats are insectivorous-meaning they eat insects. One bat can consume 3,000-5,000 mosquitoes every night!
- Bats are not blind. They see quite well, but depend mostly on their echolocation to find their prey.
- Their wing is just a modified hand. Bats have every bone that we have in our arm and hand. Their scientific name is "Chiroptera" which means "hand wing".