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Park Manager
- Richard Love  
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(Asst.)
- Andrea Grant  
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Specialist (Naturalist)
- Erik Veenstra  
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Maintenance Worker
- Jonah Coakley  
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- Micah Fansler  
Park Maintenance  
Worker
- Sgt. Angela Carson  
Park Ranger

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# The Babler Babble

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FALL 2021

## Oh Deer!



Odds are you have seen a deer whether it was in the woods or your own backyard. Here at Babler deer populations are very high due to the amount of forest acres and the multitude of food and shelter resources for them. Not only that but there has been a decline of their natural predators like mountain lions, cougars and wolves because their habitat is shrinking. There are an estimated 79 deer per square mile here at the park currently, a healthy population is between 15 and 20 deer per square mile. Babler is a total of 4 square miles and encompasses 2,443 acres.

Why is it a problem to have a high population of deer?

While deer are good for an ecosystem in moderation as they provide food for our native bobcats, mountain lions, and coyotes, when these predators disappear from an area the deer population increases. When populations get too high they can cause issues with overgrazing. Overgrazing is caused by having too many deer in the



These deer are grazing in the monument field. Bucks will form bachelor groups for the year, except during the rut, which happens in the fall.

area feasting on shrubs, tall grasses, and undergrowth. This contributes to the loss of habitat for our small woodland friends like chipmunks, squirrels, and birds. Overpopulation can also cause more run-ins with humans and cars and an increase in illness among the deer population because resources become severely limited.

Populations are so high, especially during the fall mating season, that at the beginning of November and January there is a muzzleloader hunt performed here at the park. So if you are a hunting or muzzleloader enthusiast put your name in the MDC lottery system next July! The hunt itself is through

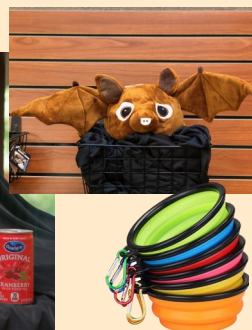


This 8 point buck is feeding in a field near Walnut Grove.

Continued on pg. 2

# River Hills Visitor Center Gift Shop

Start your fall adventures inside our store. beverages, collapsible dog bowls, snacks, hiking sticks, apparel, plush toys, Frisbees, kids wristbands, souvenirs, insect spray, and so much



## \*NEW\* Educational Trunks



Did you know that Babler now has two educational trunks that you can check out for free?

Babler has designed two educational trunks that cover topics of Reptiles & Amphibians and Arthropods! Each trunk is packed to the brim with educational materials to spark the interest of any individual. These trunks are able to be rented out to educators for free for up to two weeks at a time. Due to covid, we will also have a two week hold on returning trunks for quarantine.

You can reserve your preferred trunk by calling the park Visitor Center or park naturalist at:

636-458-3813.

**Reservations will begin starting August 1st.**

***Persons who the trunks are rented out to are responsible for trunk items. If items are damaged or missing, renter will be liable for replacing said items.***



Reptiles & Amphibians



Arthropods

## Oh Deer! Continued...

the Missouri Department of Conservation and sign up is done online at their website.

If you see a deer in the wild, leave it alone! In the spring, mother deer will leave their young in search

of food. They will also stay away from their babies during the day so as to not lead predators to them. The mother will then return at dawn and dusk to feed their babies and move them to another area. In the fall, run-ins with deer are more common because they are out looking for a mate. If you see one back away slowly and if you are in the car, brake when you can but do not swerve. Always stay alert when on a hiking trail or in a vehicle.

-Emma Zahner,  
Seasonal Naturalist

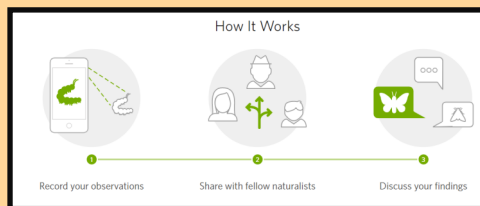




## The Naturalist's Journal: Citizen Science Projects

Are you interested in helping real life scientists? Well here's your chance to be a part of multiple active studies through iNaturalist. This platform is free to the public and has groups that you can become a part of such as LGBTQ+ Naturalists, National Moth Week, Mycological Societies, and more. Projects let you pool your observations with other people on iNaturalist. Whether you're starting a citizen science effort or keeping tabs on the birds in your neighborhood, Projects are the way to go for gathering large amounts of data super quickly. The park has created a project on iNaturalist called the Babler State Park Survey. This project allows individuals the ability to share with the park what flora/fauna they have seen inside the park. We hope you join us on this amazing journey.

Dustin Hillis,  
Senior Park Specialist



iNaturalist is a joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society. Every observation can contribute to biodiversity science, from the rarest butterfly to the most common backyard weed. We share your findings with scientific data repositories like the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to help scientists find and use your data. All you have to do is observe. You can either sign up via the iNaturalist app or via the online platform at:

[iNaturalist.org](http://iNaturalist.org)



### We do school programs!

Contact Dustin Hillis, Senior Park Specialist at Babler State Park at 636-458-3813 ext. 223 to schedule your programs.

# Explorer Corner

Connect the dots to complete the turkey.



### Did you know?

Male turkeys are called gobblers or toms, while females are called hens. Young males that are not old enough to breed are called jakes, while young females are called jenny's.

### Did you know?

Missouri's turkeys were once overhunted to the point that we had less than 2500 turkeys in the state by 1950. Through the hard work of the Missouri Dept. of Conservation, Missouri was able to rebound our turkey populations to nearly 400,000 birds!

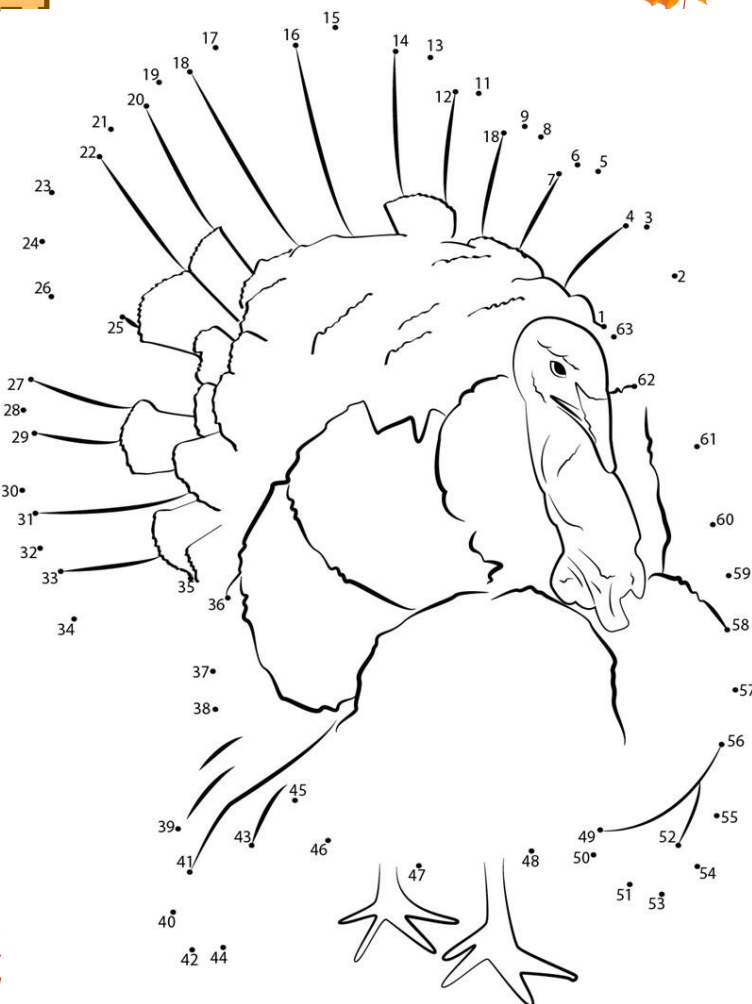


### Did you know?

Are they girls or boys? One certain way to find out is by checking their droppings. A male's poop will be shaped like the letter J, while the female's is more spiral-shaped.

### Did you know?

The United States nearly had a different bird as our national emblem. Benjamin Franklin wanted the Turkey to be our nation's national bird. He did not like the bald eagle as a candidate for the fact that they will steal food from other birds.





## Special Event Schedule

All programs are FREE and open to the public.

Please contact the visitor center at 636-458-3813 for more program details or check our Facebook page!

### September

#### National Public Lands Day

**Saturday, Sept. 25**

**10 a.m.—Noon**

Join us in celebrating National Public Lands Day by helping the park remove invasive bush honeysuckle. All tools and herbicides will be provided. Meet at the Visitor Center, we will be working along the Virginia Day Trail.



### October

#### Babler's 4th Annual Fall Festival

**Saturday, Oct. 30**

##### **Nature Stroll**

**9 a.m.**

Join an interpreter for a stroll through the woods and enjoy the scenery that Babler has to offer. We will be hiking the Hawthorn Trail and will travel through one of Missouri's most prized possessions, a dolomite glade. Meet at the Alta Shelter parking lot.



##### **Slither Me Timbers**

**2 p.m.**

Slither on over to meet one of Babler's resident snakes and learn about snakes. Also find out how they are beneficial to you. Meet at the Visitor Center.



##### **Camper Judging**

**7 p.m.**

Any camper that wants to participate in the Halloween decorating contest will be rated by a panel of judges. The winner will be announced late that night. Judging starts in the campground at 7 p.m.



#### Babler's "Howl"-oween

**Saturday, Oct. 30**

**4 p.m.—8 p.m.**

Are you looking for a place to trick or treat? Stop by the park's Visitor Center from 4pm to 8pm for some fun activities and learn about things in Missouri that make people howl, campfire, s'mores, animal interactions, and most of all...CANDY! This event will provide a safe environment for kids of all ages to enjoy Halloween and visit Babler State Park.



### November

#### National Take A Hike Day

**Sunday, Nov. 14**

**10 a.m.—Noon**

Join the interpreters for a hike through the forest on the Woodbine Trail. This 1.8 mile trail shows off some Babler's dry woodlands and possibly some beautiful fall colors. Meet at the Guy Park Trailhead.



### MO State Parks Explorer Program

Giving visitors a new appreciation and respect for the natural world and the historic setting around them, along with an interest in preserving them is the main goal of the Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites Explorer Program. The patches and stars earned are visible symbols of a person's commitment to preserving the living environment.



**The program has three parts to complete to earn the patches:**

1. Interpretive Study—complete two programs learning about an animal, building or history related to the park or historic site.
2. Interpretive Programs—complete four programs: guided tours, evening programs, hikes, etc.
3. Identification—identify 10 significant things to a park interpreter (objects, people or other living things), giving the proper name and its importance to the park or historic site.



## Up Coming Programs:

### December

#### Nature's Décor \*Registration only\*

Saturday, Dec. 4

10 a.m.—Noon & 2 p.m.—4 p.m.

Deck the halls with boughs of holly...the holidays are just around the corner and we're in the mood to decorate! We'll use nature's resources to create wonderful winter wreaths. You provide the grapevine wreath (you choose the size and shape you want) and pliers, and we'll provide everything else for decorating. Meet at the Visitor Center in the basement.

*Sign up for these events via the link below starting November 1st:*

<https://icampmo1.usdirect.com/MSPWeb/Activities/Search.aspx>



### Volunteers Wanted:

Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park is looking for people to volunteer in the park. Volunteers will help with nature hikes, educational camps, park maintenance and so much more. Contact the park for more information at 636-458-3813.

## Park Happenings

### **NEW!** Educational Trunks!

Attention educators! Babler now has a couple of educational trunks that can be checked out at no cost. Trunks can be checked out for two weeks at a time. These trunks are packed full of learning materials that can teach your students about the following topics:

1. Reptiles & Amphibians
2. Arthropods (insects, arachnids, etc.)

To check these trunks out please call the park visitor center and/or naturalist at 636-458-3813.

### Service Projects Available for Scouts

Park staff have recently compiled a new list of potential scout projects for the park. These projects include a variety of skill and time requirements, from a few hours to a full day, ongoing, group and individual projects. Contact the Visitor Center for more information! 636-458-3813

### Babler State Park is on Facebook!

It is a great way to stay up to date on current program offerings, stay in contact with park staff, and post comments about the park. Please check us out on the social networking site at Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park and "Like" us.

### Park Closure: November 6th & 7th

Babler State Park will be totally closed to the general public for our annual managed deer hunt on November 6-7.

This Deer Hunt allows the park to control our rising deer herd and manage for high browsing rates in the park. The park will also be monitoring Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) by sampling the harvested deer within the park. This data will allow the Missouri Dept. of Conservation to know how far the disease has spread and will allow the park to monitor the health of our resident deer herd.

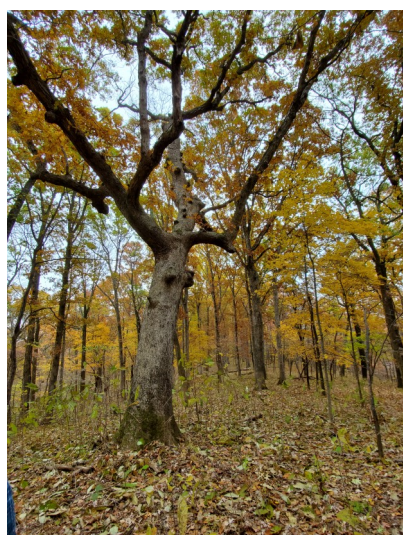
Thank you for your support by continually voting to renew the 1/10 of 1% Parks, Soils & Water Sales Tax.

It is through this constitutional tax, in which half of the funding generated is earmarked for the Division of Missouri State Parks. This provides about three-fourths of the division's budget for the operation and development of state parks. All additional funding comes from revenues generated in the state park system and some federal funds.



# To Leaf or not to Leaf

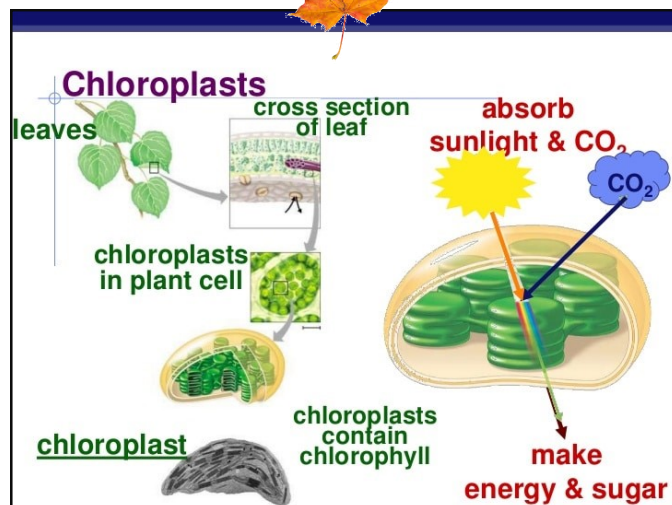
Have you ever wondered why leaves change color in the fall, or why some trees lose their leaves and others don't? Trees are grouped into two main categories, the Coniferous and the Deciduous. Deciduous trees have different shaped leaves depending on the species of tree and often shed their leaves in the fall. Examples of these trees are Oak, Hickory, and Maple. Coniferous trees have



White oak in the middle of an open woodland near the Alta Shelter in peak fall colors.

needle-shaped leaves and keep their green leaves year-round. They are also called evergreens. Examples of these trees are Pine, Cedar, and Spruce trees.

All trees' leaves produce chlorophyll which lets them use energy, sunlight, and water to make food. In the summer, there's more sunlight which causes the trees to make more chlorophyll (green color). As the days get shorter in the fall, there's less sunlight and water, which tells the tree to start preparing for winter and slow down its production of chlorophyll. For deciduous trees, their green colors start to fade and show more of the red, orange, and yellow colors underneath. They will then lose their leaves so they can conserve energy and water for the winter. Coniferous trees don't lose their



The process of photosynthesis by using chlorophyll.

leaves in the winter, so they keep their green color. Their leaves have a waxy coating that makes them resistant to the cold and less likely to lose water.

Next time you go outside, see what trees are coniferous or deciduous. Watch how they change or not change as the seasons go by.

-Claire Humes,

Seasonal Naturalist

## Hidden Finds

Can you find all 37 leaves in this newsletter?

## Batty Business

Bats are mammals and like most mammals bats are able to contract rabies, but they are not asymptomatic (live with no visible symptoms) carriers of the disease. The chance of getting rabies from a bat is very small, however, you should never handle a bat without wearing protective equipment such as gloves. A bat's teeth are very sharp and if you get bit, it

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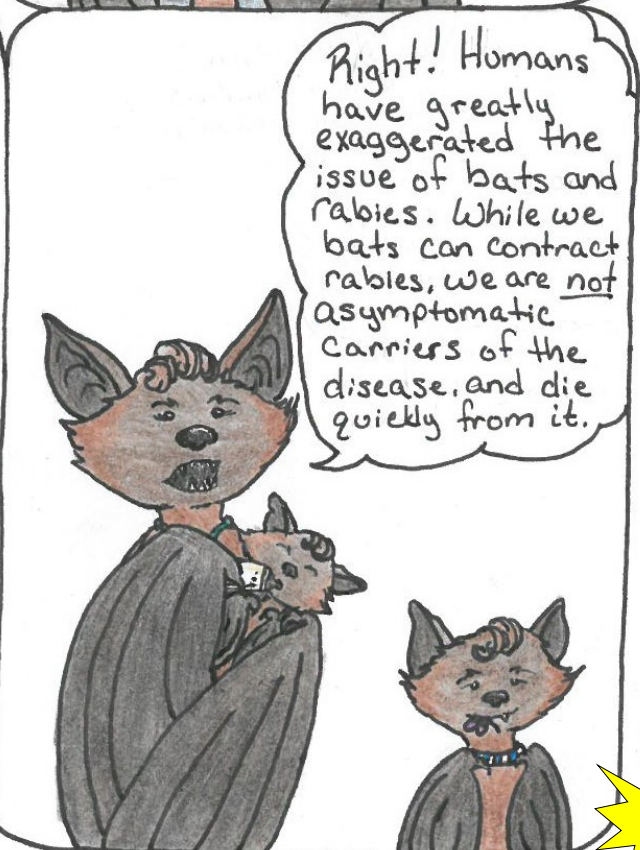
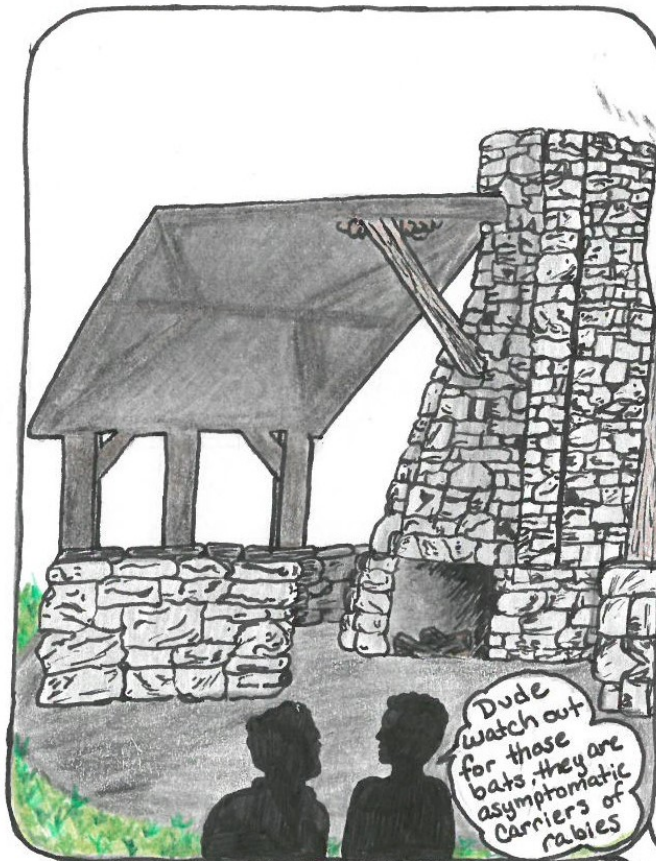
isn't a fun process for you or the bat. Due to outdated practices, if you are bitten and still have the bat in your possession, it is a death sentence for the bat. This is due to the procedure of a bat bite. The bat must be euthanized and sent off for the testing of the bat's brain tissue for the disease. For you, it could be a 16 shot series, if on the off chance the bat does in fact test positive for

rabies. It is best practice to give bats there space and allow them to live in peace. After all, they are one of the best insectivores that Missouri has to offer.

-Kayla Heady,

Seasonal Naturalist

# Bat Tales: Fact or Fiction





# Babler's First Families: James Mackay



Born in Scotland in 1761, James Mackay was the third son of George Mackay and Elizabeth MacDonald. He grew up in a Scottish longhouse croft at Loch Arichlinie, which is in the very northern part of the country. At the age of 15 or 16, he moved to Canada with his older brother John to take part in the lucrative fur trading industry.

As James traveled across Canada, he made important allies of the Native Americans along his route. He took copious notes and made drawings that would turn into maps that Lewis and Clark used during their exploration of the newly purchased Louisiana Territory. James' journeys once took him to North Dakota and Montana, where he named the Yellowstone River (Rochejaune) for the striking color of the rocks found on the banks.

John Mackay had settled in New York City, and James visited in Spring 1789, where he was

witness to the festive atmosphere of George Washington's inauguration. Eventually James opened a store in Cahokia, IL before he started up the Missouri River with John Evans to create his famous map for the Spanish government. Spain could only pay in land, so James acquired several land grants in the St. Louis area. One of those grants included most of the land on which Dr. Edmund A Babler Memorial State Park sits. These 4,460 arpents of land (approximately 3,768 acres) included Wild Horse Creek, where Mackay built a mill house and farm for the people in the area.

In 1798 James Mackay laid out the very first village in the area, San Andre del Misuri, or St. Andrews. Although it would eventually be washed away by flooding, San Andre grew to be the 4th largest community in St. Louis County. Amongst the neighbors of San Andre were

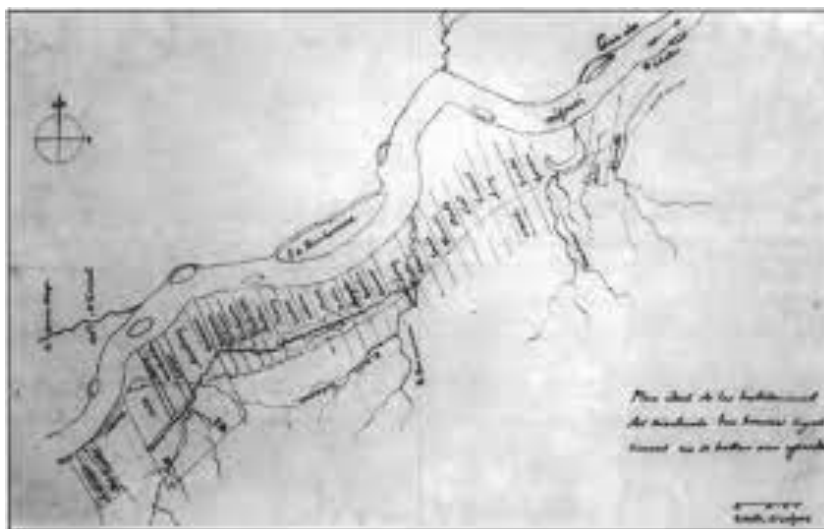


James Mackay

the Long families. James grew close to John Long, and married his daughter Elizabeth in 1800. The couple moved to San Carlos (St. Charles), where James was the commandant for several years.

The Mackays eventually moved their family from St. Charles to another land grant on Gravois Road. This grant included some property which was sold to Elizabeth's brother, William Long. William began building the home now known as White Haven in 1816. After additions from the next owners, Theodore and Anne Lucas Hunt, the Dent family purchased it in 1820, and now it is preserved as the Ulysses S Grant National Historic Site.

James and Elizabeth had 9 children, some of whom had notable godparents such as Antoine Soulard, Charles Gratiot, and Eulalie Choteau. Elizabeth lived in the home on Gravois after the untimely death of her husband in March 1822.



Hand drawn map of San Andre del Misuri or what would become modern day St. Andrews, MO.





Thanks to the fortuitous grant of land along Wild Horse Creek, James Mackay invested in the area, building roads, a mill house, even an entire village. Without Mackay kickstarting the infrastructure, the land around Babler Park could have had a much different story. While we don't know for sure where his farm and mill were located, it is widely assumed they were on park property and maybe one day will be discovered.

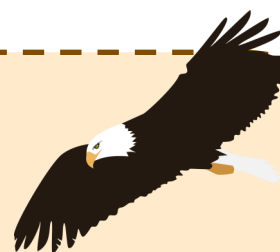
-Carley Wright,  
Volunteer

**Author's Note:** There is much more to the story of James Mackay. He was a surveyor, a judge, a state representative, and he had a hand in building what would become Olive Street. One of his land grants (which he had to fight the courts for and mostly lost) encompassed the land for Boone's Lick SHS. There is also the first sanctioned hanging for murder west of the Mississippi, and a secret meeting with Lewis and Clark. Oh, and maybe he was poisoned. Have fun digging into some research.!

**If you have any information on the families that once called Babler home, please contact either the park naturalist or the cultural resource volunteer at the following email addresses:**

dustin.hillis@dnr.mo.gov  
parkpool20@gmail.com

## The Eagle's Nest: Manager's Comments



As I write this it is mid-august and it is a month of transition for us. Summer is winding down, school is getting ready to start and the park sees its first glimpses of the next season to greet us. The light in the early evenings this time of year are my favorite.

We also are settling in to our new fiscal year that started July 1st. When our park budget come out various funded requested projects become known to us. One is replacing a very old heating/cooling system at the Outdoor Education Center (OEC) Dining Hall. Another is replacing rotting wooden racks that hold electrical equipment for two of our sewage lift stations with modern outdoor rated metal ones. We have also received project money to work on the expansion of our equestrian parking lot which we are excited to get working on this winter.

Though not in our operation budget final approval was granted for the State to issue bonds for 2 major projects at Babler. Upgrading of our campground facility including electrical and water expansion. The renovation of the Babler Lodge that we official received back from the Division of Youth Services on July 1st. Both of these projects are at the very early stages of development and planning. When we get more details we will share them!

We also have another full time staff person to welcome to the Babler family. Micah Fansler joined us at the beginning of August as a Maintenance Ground Technician. He brings with him wealth of knowledge working in various roles with the Boy Scouts of America and recently with us a part-time worker with our maintenance staff. We are all very grateful to have him on board. This filled position also means we are fully staffed for the first time in over a year and a half!

Lastly I would like to remind you of our annual Informational Meeting being held on Saturday September 25th, 3 PM here at the Visitor Center. It is a great place to meet some of our wonderful staff, ask questions and get answers to them! These meetings are import for us to share lots of good information on what is happening at the park and hear from all of you. We hope to see you.

Enjoy the late summer and early fall here at the park, I will be.

-Chris Ferree,  
Park Manager



**Dr. Edmund A. Babler  
Memorial State Park**

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Wildwood, MO 63005  
Phone: 636-458-3813  
Fax: 636-458-9105

Email: [dustin.hillis@dnr.mo.gov](mailto:dustin.hillis@dnr.mo.gov)

**River Hills Visitor Center Hours:**

April-October: 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.—Wednesday-Sunday  
November & March: 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.—Saturday & Sunday  
December-February: CLOSED

Generations of Missourians have passed through Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park's massive stone gateway for cookouts and family get-togethers or to spend time with friends. The park's camping facilities, Civilian Conservation Corps architecture, and hiking, bicycling and equestrian trails help all visitors find their place to get away from it all, just minutes from St. Louis.

**Park Hours:**

April 1 – Oct. 31: 7 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Nov. 1—March 30: 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

**We're on the web!**

[mostateparks.com/babler](http://mostateparks.com/babler)

<https://www.facebook.com/DrEdmundABablerMemorialStatePark/>



# Babler "Howl"-oween

**October 30  
4pm-8pm**

