

Park Staff

- Chris Ferree
Park Manager
- Richard Love
Park Supervisor
(Asst.)
- Andrea Grant
Park Specialist
(Asst.)
- Dustin Hillis
Senior Park
Specialist (Naturalist)
- Erik Veenstra
Lead Park
Maintenance Worker
- Jonah Coakley
Park Maintenance
Worker
- Micah Fansler
Park Maintenance
Worker
- Jonathon Thompson
Park Ranger

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

Wandering Wasps	1
Gift Shop	
Naturalist's Journal	2
Explorer Corner	3
Programs & Events	4
Park Happenings	5
Fall Camp Cooking	6
Manager's Comments	7
Hidden Treasures	8
Hidden Treasures (Cont.)	9
Park Info & Hours	
Highlighted Events	10

The Babler Babble

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3

FALL 2022

Wandering Wasps

As the heat of the summer begins to wane and we move into the cooler fall temperatures, many creatures, including us, begin a harvest in preparation for the colder months. People harvest their crops; squirrels gather acorns; and insects begin to disperse for the year in search of food to ride out the rest of the season. Around this time of year, gathering can be hectic for many species.

By late summer, most paper wasp colonies have assembled their full workforce and are busy preparing the next generation of queens for dormant overwintering. Nests are usually started in early spring with the initial set of workers emerging late spring into early summer. The initial

batch of workers helps the queen expand the nest and raise additional workers until late summer, when they all raise reproductive-ready members.

As colonies become more established, members typically become more aggressive, especially when the workers are protecting the future queens in late summer through fall. This aggression is limited mainly to around the nest, as wasps tend to be more docile when out foraging or doing other solitary work. When the situation allows for it, wasps should not be disturbed, as they play a crucial role in the ecosystem as predators. They are excellent at removing caterpillars and other crop-damaging pests from the

environment. The presence of paper wasps has the potential to reduce the need for chemical pesticides.

During the fall, once the reproductive wasps have mated for the season, the colony begins to decline. The initial workers and queen(s) begin to die off in greater numbers, the reproductive males and females are out in search of mating opportunities, and the remaining workers have little left to maintain. Eventually, the future queens will find a nice spot to overwinter. With less prey to hunt, the remaining members of the colony often seek out sources of sugar to keep them going for the remainder of the season. Apple orchards and picnic baskets become prime locations for late-season foraging, and you might start to notice wasps pestering you more during your outdoor adventures, especially when food is involved. Try to cut the little wasps some slack; they once lived in active social colonies that now stand mostly empty with the remaining members wandering in search of something sweet to eat.

-Cody Grainger,
Seasonal Naturalist



Paper wasps are the most familiar of Missouri's social wasps. Their tan, papery nests are easy to identify: a single layer of hexagonal cells, arranged side-by-side like a honeycomb, and suspended by a single stalk from some overhanging shelter (such as the eaves of a house or other building). Photo courtesy of MDC.

River Hills Visitor Center Gift Shop

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

more!



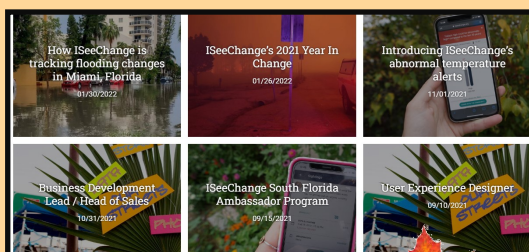
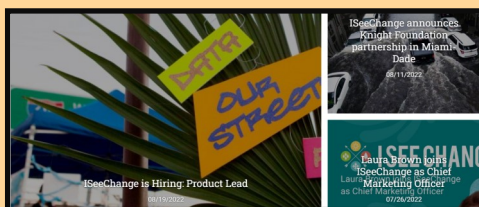
We provide school programs!

Contact Dustin Hillis, Senior Park Specialist at Babler State Park at
636-324-7064 to schedule your programs.

The Naturalist's Journal: Citizen Science Projects

Are you looking to help make a difference in the scientific community? Well, here's your chance! Join the ISeeChange project to help monitor changes in your local community by measuring rainfall, temperatures, weather, flooding and more. Recordings of subtle or major changes in any of these areas can be impactful help for scientists working to better understand our changing climates.

Dustin Hillis,
Senior Park Specialist



Connecting people to their changing environments and developing solutions together. The changes we are facing can seem huge or even insurmountable, but every day, we are learning more about how to adapt to these changes and building the case to push for more actions to reduce emissions. The ISeeChange community is a great place to share the small and the big ways that you, your community, or other communities are mitigating or adapting to climate change.

<https://www.iseechange.org/>

Volunteers Wanted:

Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park is looking for people who want 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.



Explorer Corner



Did you know?

The full moon that occurs closest to the fall equinox is much brighter—almost orange—and rises much earlier than a typical full moon. This full moon, called the harvest moon, occurs sometime in September or October, and it was very helpful for farmers who used the moonlight to help harvest their crops, according to “The Best of Life.”



Did you know?

Everyone loves the colors of leaves in the fall. They range vibrant reds to eye-popping bright oranges, but did you know that the color the leaves turn is based on how much sugar they contain, according to “One Country.” That’s why maple leaves are such a brilliant red color.

Hidden Finds

Can you find all 37 leaves in this newsletter?

Fall is here!



Special Events Schedule

All programs are FREE and open to the public.

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

September

National Public Lands Day

Saturday, Sept. 24

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 5th Annual Fall Festival

Saturday, Oct. 29

Nature Stroll

10 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. 29

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

Saturday, Nov. 19

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.



Upcoming Programs:

December

Nature's Décor *Registration only*

Saturday, Dec. 10

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>



We provide Senior Living Center programs!

Contact Dustin Hillis, Senior Park Specialist, at Babler State Park at 636-324-7064 to schedule your programs.

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: Managed Deer Hunts

Babler State Park will be totally closed to the general public for our annual managed deer hunt on November 5-6 and December 3-4. These deer hunts allow 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.

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 rented 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 one of the following:

park visitor center 636-458-3813

Park naturalist 636-324-7064.

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

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.

Fall Camp Cooking



Fall is one of the best times of year for outdoor cooking! It's not too hot or too cold for cooking on the fire. There are multiple ways to prepare your camp food over the fire—for example, tin foil packets, Dutch ovens, skewers and so much more!

Cooking with tin foil can be such a fun experience, especially for a new camper. It's super easy and involves little cleanup. My favorite thing to cook using tin foil is pineapple upside-down cake. Yep, you read that right. It is delicious, and better yet, you can make smaller individual cakes instead of one massive cake! The only things you need are some butter, angel food cake, maraschino cherries,

pineapple slices, and brown sugar. Start with a large spoonful of brown sugar, then place your cherry and pineapple slice on the sugar. Lastly, place your cake and butter on top. Cook for around seven minutes in medium heat. Once done, remove from fire, then open and flip to enjoy!

Dutch oven cooking is one of the most enjoyable forms of cooking. It is so versatile that you can use it to make breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even dessert! The easiest breakfast you can make in a Dutch oven is a meal called "cowboy breakfast." All it is cooked ground sausage, potatoes (hash browns), onions, peppers, and scrambled eggs. However, don't forget to top it with

shredded cheese. Mmmm...I'm getting hungry just thinking about it.

Cooking while camping should be a fun and exciting endeavor. By using these different methods of cooking, you have opened a door to many different ways you can experiment with your dishes. Check out the two recipes mentioned and more on our Facebook page. Happy cooking!

-Dustin Hillis,

Senior Park Specialist



Above: pineapple upside down cake.



Above: Dutch oven blueberry cinnamon rolls



Above: Dutch oven chili. Right: cowboy breakfast (sausage, egg, potatoes, onions, and peppers).



The Eagle's Nest: Manager's Comments



It's finally here: my favorite time of year for lots of reasons, fall. I always look forward to putting the hot days behind me and seeing that lower-on-the-horizon sun, which gives off, in my opinion, the best light of the year, especially when leaves start to change.

We have had a busy summer throughout the park with projects and equipment replacement, record usage continuing in the campground and day-use areas, the Outdoor Education Center—run with our partner Parkway-Rockwood Community Ed—back to “normal” operations, and planning for bigger projects ahead.

One of those projects that has been in the planning stage for more than a year is the rehabilitation of the paved bicycle trail. Final touches are being made, with the construction documents for final submittal with a tentative timeline of the winning bidder to start construction spring of 2023. This will include repairing and replacing many failing culverts under the trail, widening portions of the trail, addressing drainage issues, and overlaying new asphalt. We are excited to have this project close to being finished.

Many small behind-the-scenes improvements have taken place—things that are not showy but are needed to keep our infrastructure operating. These have included the replacement of electrical panels and controls for the Walnut Grove lift station and the replacement of a 35-year-old HVAC system at the Outdoor Education Center dining hall. Additionally, we were awarded in last year's budget dollars to replace one of our aging tractors that does a lot of mowing and heavy lifting for the park.

Some larger upcoming projects are the creation of some full-hookup campsites and the upgrading of all electrical sites to 50-amp sites, as well as the first phase of the Babler Lodge renovation. I know I have talked about these in the past, but some of the scheduled planning has been shifted around due to the addition of approved monies from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Some of these funds will go toward improving drinking water and water treatment here at Babler. It is going to be a busy next few years with large projects slated to occur at the park.

Fall is also a busy time of year in the campground, capping off with our Halloween (Oct 29- 30th) weekend events, which continue to grow in popularity. After that, the rest of the calendar year seems to just fly by with the holidays.

Keep on your calendar our public meeting, scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 9, at 10 a.m. here at the Visitor Center. I can talk about so many more things there than I can here, and you can ask us specific questions you may have. As an added bonus, you will get to meet some of the great staff who really make it all happen!

I hope you find yourself enjoying the park; I know I will during my favorite time of year.

-Chris Ferree,
Superintendent



Reptiles & Amphibians

Educational Trunks

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

Park staff have designed educational trunks that cover the topics of reptiles & amphibians and arthropods! Each trunk is packed to the brim with educational materials guaranteed to spark the interest of any individual. These trunks can be rented out to educators for FREE for up to two weeks at a time. Due to COVID-19, we will also have a two-week hold on returning trunks for quarantine.

You can reserve your preferred trunk by contacting the park naturalist at:

636-324-7064 or dustin.hillis@dnr.mo.gov.



Arthropods

The Hidden Treasures of Babler

It's been a great summer, but now that we are rolling up to fall, I thought it would be a good time to take a peek at some of our collections here at the Babler Visitor Center. These items are generally too fragile to be on display in the exhibit hall.

Babler Family Bible

This Bible, kept by a family member, has had some restoration work. It is rather heavy and has newspaper articles about the family glued inside.



Family Photo Album

Covered in purple velvet, this album contains family photos and calling cards.

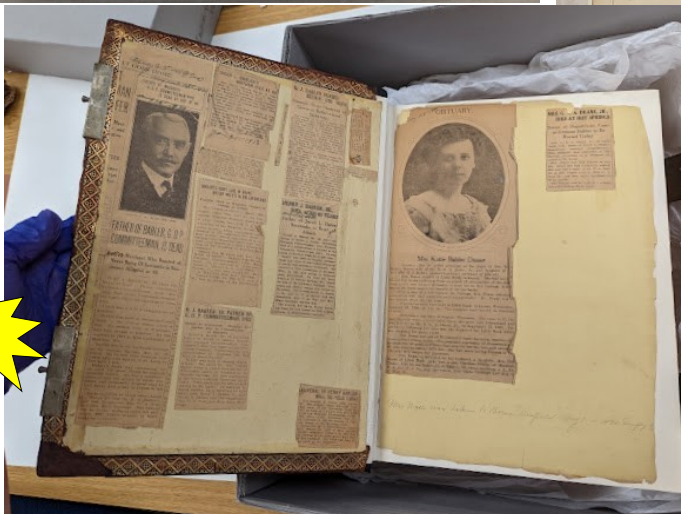
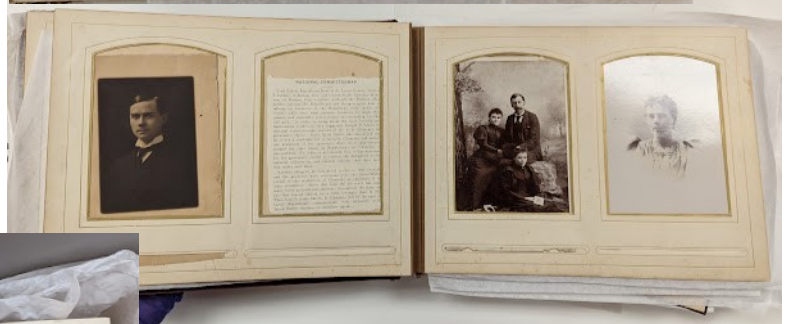


Photo in Frame

This is a photo of Anna Babler, wife of Henry Babler, in a beautiful floral frame.



Scrapbook

This scrapbook contains photos, although others have newspaper articles and business documents from Jacob Babler. These photos are of events at the park.

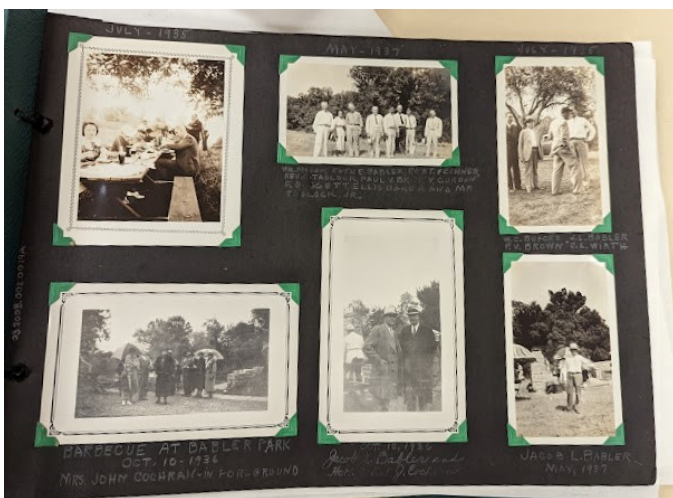
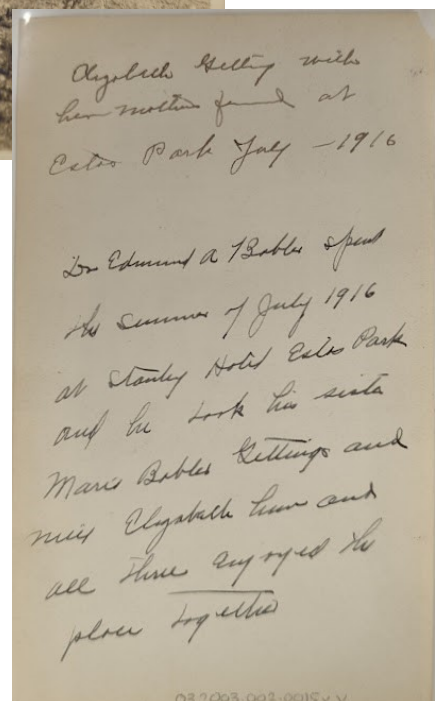


Photo from the Stanley Hotel

This photo is from a 1916 vacation at the Stanley Hotel in Colorado. The back of the photo states: "Elizabeth Gettings with her mother illegible at Estes Park July 1916. Dr. Edmund A Babler spent the summer of July 1916 at Stanley Hotel Estes Park and he took his sister Marie Babler Gettings and Miss Elizabeth illegible and all three enjoyed the place together."



-Carley Wright,
Volunteer



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

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





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

800 Guy Park Drive
Wildwood, MO 63005
Phone: 636-458-3813
Fax: 636-458-9105

Email: dustin.hillis@dnr.mo.gov

**Temporary
River Hills Visitor Center Hours:**

May-October: 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.—Wednesday-Sunday

November-March: CLOSED

April: 9 a.m.— 4:30 p.m.—Sat & Sun

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-October: 7 a.m.-9 p.m.

November-March: 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

We're on the web!

mostateparks.com/babler

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



Babler "Howl"-oween

**October 29
4pm-8pm**

