

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

River Hills Current

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Fall 2014

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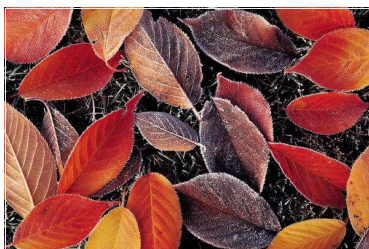
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Nature's Gifts

With most of the leaves on the ground and frosty mornings coming soon, we can all tell that winter is on its way. However, there are still some wonderful gifts that nature can provide us at the end of fall. Hiking at Dr. Edmund A.

Babler State Park can be a

wonderful way to experience the transition from autumn to winter. The park has



four hiking trails – Dogwood, Hawthorn, Woodbine, and the Virginia Day Memorial Nature Trail – all with their own personality and secrets. This past week, I chose to hike the Dogwood Trail, intent on seeing what secrets it might reveal this time of year.

The Dogwood Trail begins at the Guy Park Trailhead and is blazed in green. Marked as the most strenuous hike in the park, this two-mile trail meanders its way over slopes and ridges and through deep valleys. Along the way, hikers might see exposed chert, a flint-like rock common to the area. At the highest point on the trail is a stone picnic shelter and restroom, which was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression.

A cold rain had fallen the night

before, and temperatures did not recover until the late afternoon. Despite the chilly weather, I was determined to get out in the morning to discover some of the trail's secrets. The first thing I noticed was how quiet it was. Not even squirrels -- usually the noisiest of forest

inhabitants -- could be heard scrambling in the trees. The only sound was a few crows in the distance, angrily cawing at each other. As I continued down the trail, a brisk wind blew

ness. They were not the last deer I saw that morning. They seemed to be playing hide and seek with me, appearing and disappearing like ghosts among the trees. It was one of nature's secrets being revealed to me.

As I often do when I am hiking, I chose a spot to stop and observe my surroundings. My lookout tower for that day's hike was a fallen log just off the trail. Looking down the ridge, I could take in the remnants of fall color that still clung desperately to the trees. A breeze picked up, gusting over the

ridge and biting at my face. I heard a few soft *plops* behind me, and when I stood up and turned, I noticed a few dozen dusty orange fruits on the ground. Sure enough, there was a persimmon tree behind me, loaded with fruit. It had only taken a quick breeze to knock down a few ripe persimmons. I gathered some and enjoyed their sweetness. Nature's bounty was all around, even as the seasons changed. No matter the time of year, nature has gifts that she can provide us, if

only you know how to look.

(continued on page 3)



past me, and I was overcome with the scent of fall. Its a musky smell that only seems to happen on the mornings after it has rained, rich with leaf rot and dirt and the crispness of cold air. On down the trail I went, and as I looked up the hillside, I saw four does looking at me, frozen in place and unsure if I was friend or foe. When I walked on, they calmly went back to their busi-

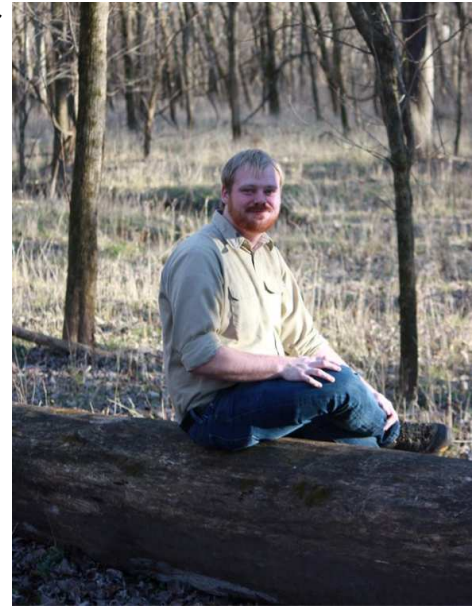
Park Staff

- Jeff Robinson,
Park Superintendent
- Richard Love
Asst. Park Superintendent
- Andy Senters
Interpretive Resource Specialist
- Andrea Grant
Sr. Office Support Assistant
- Ron Thurmon
Park Maintenance Worker
- Gary Simon
Park Maintenance Worker
- Joseph Lee
Park Maintenance Worker
- Brandon Bartz
Park Ranger

Meet Our New Interpreter

Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park would like to welcome Andy Senters as our new Interpretive Resource Specialist.

Please join us in welcoming Andy Senters to Babler State Park.



Senters comes to us from a variety of interpretive sites, including Johnson's Shut-ins State Park and Mastodon State Historic Site in Missouri and Arkansas' Cossatot River State Park.

He received his bachelor's degree in fisheries and wildlife from the University of Missouri Columbia. He is excited to return to the St. Louis area where he grew up.

Park Notes

You may be familiar with the devastating fire at the Alta Shelter in 2008, and the reconstruction that occurred last summer. With great fanfare, the Alta Shelter was reopened for the 75th anniversary celebration of Dr. Ed-



mund A. Babler Memorial State Park in October 2013. In addition to the shelter, there were several other projects that were completed at the park.

These projects included infrastructure upgrades that are integral in maintaining the facilities in the park. Other notable projects completed since our anniversary include the upgrade of flo-

rescent lighting to new, brighter, high-efficiency lights in all our buildings, six new roofs including Walnut Grove Shelter, a new furnace at the Henry Babler Enclosed Shelter to extend the season for rentals, and the rehabilitation of the cabins at the Outdoor Education Center.

Future projects will include campground upgrades, repairs to Cochran Shelter, restoration of one of the old CCC restrooms damaged by a fallen tree, and more roofs. For additional information, contact Richard Love at: Richard.love.dnr.mo.gov.

Ask the Interpreter!

Q: What are these crumpled paper-like things around the base of some plants?

A: The white tissue-like substance at the base of some plants in autumn is called a frost flower. Frost flowers are neither frost nor flower, but ice instead. They form when water inside a plant stem freezes and expands, pushing thin

ice layers through cracks in the stem. During late September and



Questions for "Ask the Interpreter" can be submitted via e-mail to Andrew.Senters@dnr.mo.gov or on Facebook!

October, this phenomenon is often found on cold mornings in weedy fencerows, ditches and low-lying valleys. These "flowers" are associated with late-maturing plants such as yellow ironweed and white crownbeard, whose pithy cores can hold excess water.

Park Hours

Visitor Center Hours

April - October: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Wed - Sun.
March & November: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sat - Sun
December - February: CLOSED

Park Hours

April - October: 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. Daily
November - March: 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Daily

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We're On The Web!

mostateparks.com/babler

Save The Date!

(More information will be available in the Winter 2014/2015 newsletter)

- Even though the visitor center will be closed, some weekend programming will be offered in December, January and February. Stay tuned for the winter newsletter for more information.

In The Next Issue:

Wildlife in winter

A Peek at 2015: Astronomical
events and nature-related activities

Check out Missouri State Parks
website and Babler State Park's
webpage at mostateparks.com

and

Follow us on Facebook!

Looking for a place to share your
talents and time? Dr. Edmund A.
Babler Memorial State Park is looking
for volunteers! Please feel free to stop
by or call the visitor center to learn
more about the opportunities available.

Nature's Gifts (continued from page 1)

Looking for and eating wild edibles can be an enjoyable experience for all. Knowing how to identify them properly in the field and when and where you can harvest them is important to keep in mind when searching for nature's edible gifts. The visitor center at Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park has a number of wonderful books and references to help you in creating a hobby that can last a lifetime. For more information, contact the Visitor Center at 636-458-3813. — Andy Senters



To experience Missouri in its
grandest splendor, please join us
for a variety of fall hikes. These
hikes will be held on Saturdays
throughout November and free
for all ages.



Missouri State Parks — a division of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources