

Prairie State Park's

Tallgrass Tribune

Winter 2016

Missouri State Parks

Prairie State Park's Mission Statement

To preserve and interpret the largest remaining example of original tallgrass prairie in Missouri. The park further provides healthy outdoor recreation for all visitors. The park is dedicated to sustaining a large tallgrass prairie in its native form for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

Winter: A time for reflection and solitude

By Katy Holmer, Natural Resource Steward

When I lived in Wisconsin, people said we had two seasons – construction and winter. So, when I moved back to my home state of Missouri, I was excited to return to four distinct seasons. However, winter still has a special place in my heart. It's the reason I chose to go to graduate school in Wisconsin instead of a southern school when I had narrowed it down to two choices. I don't know if my fondness for winter is because I was born just after the winter solstice or happy memories of great snow events during my early childhood.

I especially love winter on the prairie when the tall grasses are at their peak height and you can appreciate the different colors of each species and how they look in the wind and during sunrise and sunset. Even though the days are shorter, it means you frequently get to see and appreciate both sunrises and sunsets!

Wind. Yes, the wind definitely shows its tremendous power during the winter on the prairie. I don't always like it, especially if I'm on an ATV driving into the wind, but it does make you appreciate the comforts we have and be thankful you don't have to face the prairie wind as the Osage or early European settlers did. But I do love winter hiking on the prairie, even if my cheeks are wind burned and numb.

The animals of the prairie are quite active in the winter. I tend to see more coyotes and foxes at this time of year. The short-eared owls and northern harriers have returned, elk are more visible, and the bison are big and woolly. And how can I forget -- no ticks or chiggers! After our busy fall with Prairie Jubilee, bison round-up and working, it's nice to have winter to remind us to slow down. So please come out and enjoy the quiet solitude you can find with a refreshing winter hike on one of the trails at Prairie State Park.



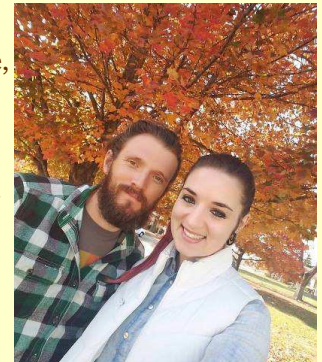
Prairie State Park Welcomes New Employee

Prairie State Park has a new worker. Fabio Giacomelli, a Pittsburg State graduate, is from Brazil. He started working here last summer part time and when the position of maintenance worker came open, he applied and was selected from a strong pool of qualified applicants.

He is an avid deer and turkey hunter and fisherman. His favorite fish to catch... gar! He loves catching and eating gar. He hopes to catch an alligator gar some day, though not out on the prairie!

Fabio and girlfriend Natalia, live in Pittsburg with their cat, tarantulas, lizards and other critters.

If you see him, be sure and welcome Fabio to the Prairie State Park team.



~Mystery item ~

The atlatl

Jerry Decker is correct that the ancient weapon being demonstrated is an atlatl. It is an Aztec word meaning “water thrower” as they used them to spear fish. This weapon originated in Europe about 30,000 years ago. By 12,000 years ago, it had made its way to North America where it was adopted and refined. They were still in use in some areas when the Europeans arrived in North America.

There are two parts to an atlatl. The atlatl itself is the tool used to throw the projectile that is called a dart. The addition of a bannerstone allowed for additional weight and speed while flying more silently. In effect, it was the first silencer. The dart from an atlatl was accurately thrown to 100 yards and hit speeds close to 100 mph. Some historians theorize that early peoples using atlatls may have contributed to the extinction of the woolly mammoth and mastodons in North America. Deer, bison, moose, elk and other large mammals were all targets for the atlatl.

More recently, Missouri has legalized them for hunting. People are once again using this ancient weapon that had its origins 30,000 years ago on another continent to kill game.



Atlatl about 20” long with a bannerstone and leather finger loops made by Matt Webb



A six-foot-long dart with a removable point made from river cane from southern Missouri.

Quentin Webb demonstrated the proper technique for throwing an atlatl at Explorer Day camp in 2011.



On what continent(s) would you find this animal?



Photo by Dana Hoisington

Send your answer to prairie.state.park@dnr.mo.gov and the person with the first correct answer will be listed in the next newsletter.

Calendar of Events

~Activities will meet at the nature center ~

January 13, 10 a.m.

*Preschool –Bird Feeders

Children will enjoy learning about birds and making a variety of feeders to hang in their backyard.

Please register by January 6

February 4, 1 p.m.

Bison Hike

It may be winter but the bison are ready for it. A wooly fur coat keeps them nice and warm. Be prepared for two-mile hike. The winter winds can be very fierce so dress for the weather.

February 10, 10 a.m.

*Preschool – Owl Pellets

Children will dissect owl pellets to learn what owls eat.

Please register by February 3

March 4, 10 a.m.

Bison Hike

Spring is coming soon and the bison are ready for it. Join us as we go out and see these majestic animals on their native habitat. Dress for the weather! Spring winds can really sting. Be prepared for a two-mile hike.

March 10, 10 a.m.

*Preschool – Tracks

Children will explore the fascinating world of animal tracks.

Please register by March 3

March 24, 9:30 a.m. - noon

*Springtime on the Prairie HS

Celebrate spring's debut as you learn about baby animals and spring wildflowers as the prairie wakes from its winter slumber.

April 1, 10 a.m.

Bison Hike

Spring is officially here! Join us as we go out and see these majestic animals on their native habitat. Dress for the weather! Spring winds can really sting. Be prepared for a two-mile hike.

April 14, 10 a.m.

*Preschool – Grow As We Go

Explore the life cycles of familiar wildlife and understand that living things grow and change. **Please register by March 31**

April 21, 9:30 a.m. -noon

*Nature Photography –HS

Bring your camera or phone and join us as we explore, observe and record nature through the lens.

May 6, 10 a.m.

Bison Hike

There could be baby bison to view now! Come join us as we learn about bison, prairies, wildflowers and more. Be prepared for a two-mile hike. Dress for the weather. May can be warm or cool. Insect repellent, snacks and water are recommended. Wear close-toed shoes. Don't forget your cameras!

May 19, 9:30 -noon

*Snakes– HS

Snakes are one of nature's most misunderstood and often feared animals. You will learn about these critters, and that knowledge will help you dispel myths that are often attributed to them.

HS denotes home school program.

***Registration is required.**

Please call 417-843-6711 to register.

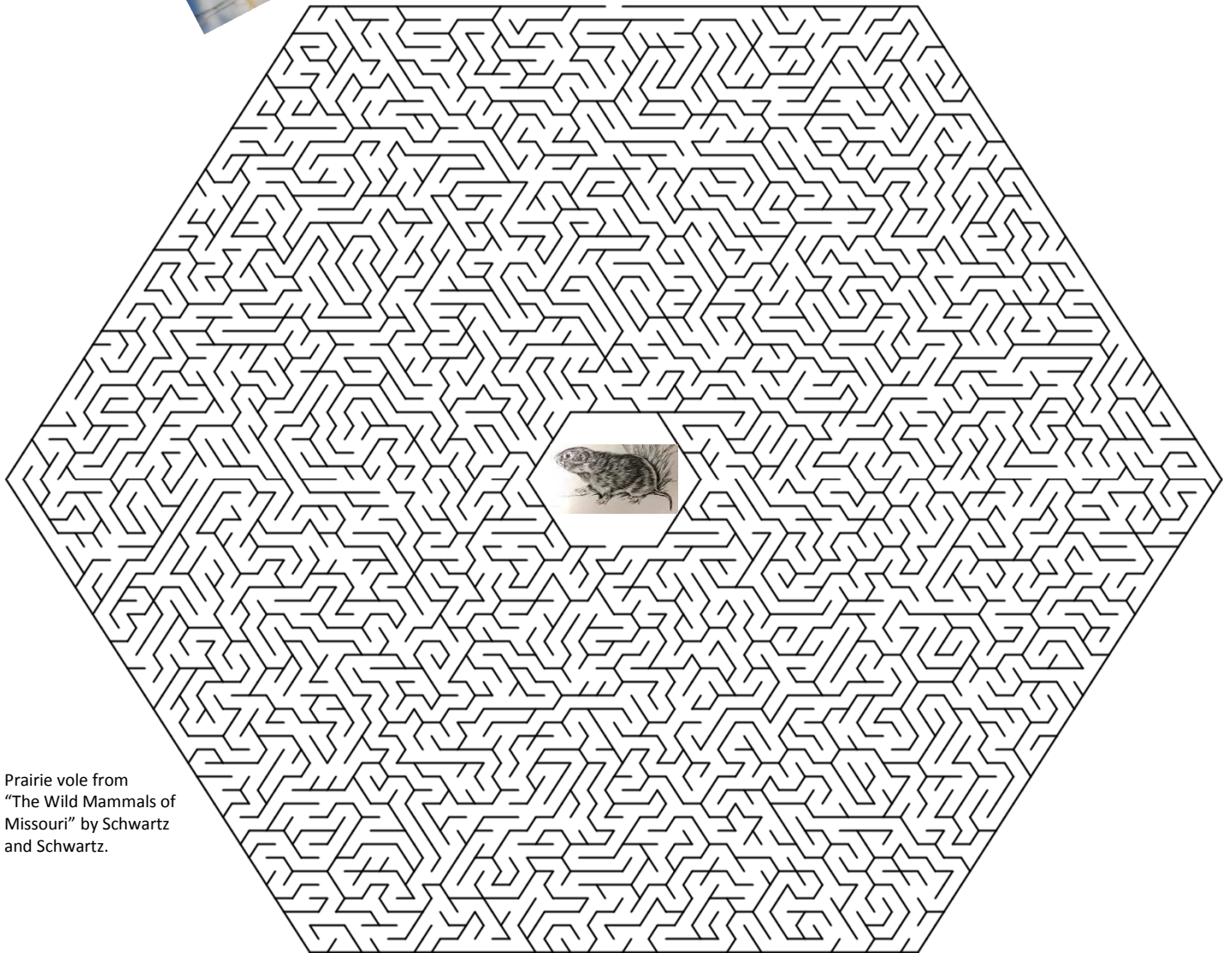
~ Prairie State Park 2016 ~

The year in review

- Another new staff member joined us in 2016: Maintenance worker David Meeker transferred to Knob Noster State Park and Fabio Giacomelli took his place as a maintenance worker.
- Bison hike attendance was up 39 percent in 2016. A total of 343 people attended our guided bison hikes. That is 97 more than 2015.
- First Day Hikes continue to be popular with people. This year, 53 people came out to see bison and get in touch with nature and enjoy some exercise on Jan. 1.
- The National Bison Legacy Act was signed by Pres. Obama May 9, 2016, recognizing the bison for its historical and cultural significance. Our National Bison Day celebration had 120 people celebrate our new national mammal. They enjoyed a bison hike and bison-oriented crafts and games, and sampled bison chili.
- Prescribed burns were conducted on Tzi-sho Prairie and along the north part of Sandstone Trail.
- Our survey of the state endangered Mead's milkweed in late May located two new colonies of this plant. If you would like to be a part of this annual survey, contact the park. We can always use extra eyes to help locate them.

Hey Kids!

Winter is here and birds need to find enough food to get them through the cold of winter. Short-eared owls need small animals like mice, voles, rats, birds and shrews to survive. Help this owl find the prairie vole so that it will survive the winter.



Prairie vole from "The Wild Mammals of Missouri" by Schwartz and Schwartz.

Spring Homeschool Programs 2016

Springtime on the Prairie **March 24, 9:30 a.m.– Noon**
 Come celebrate spring's debut on the tallgrass prairie! Learn about baby animals, spring wildflowers and other exciting things that are waking from winter's slumber.

Nature photography **April 21, 9:30 a.m.– Noon**
 Bring your camera or phone and join us for a morning of fun as we observe nature through the lens of a camera.

Snakes **May 19, 9:30 a.m.– Noon**
 Snakes are one of nature's most misunderstood and often feared animals. You will learn about these critters, and that knowledge will help you dispel myths that are often attributed to them. You will have a chance to get up close and personal with one of these amazing animals.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE PROGRAM YOU WILL BE ATTENDING
 Springtime Nature Photography Snakes

NUMBER ATTENDING _____

PARENT'S NAMES _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

CHILDREN'S NAMES and AGES _____

HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

Complete the form for **each program** (copy as needed). Please register **every person** that will attend.
Each family must pre-register for each program.

You may mail, phone, or email your registration anytime after you receive this notice.


PROGRAM REGISTRATION for all homeschool programs has a deadline of March 1, 2017!

After that date, call to see if there are openings for the programs. Typically, supplies are purchased for nearly every program. In case of inclement weather, call 417-843-6711 to check status of the programs. In most cases, we cannot reschedule the program. Contact information:

Prairie State Park, 128 N.W. 150th Lane
 Mindenmines, MO 64769
prairie.state.park@dnr.mo.gov

Nature Bingo returns again this year!
 Prizes will be awarded!
 Bring your family and learn about Missouri plants and animals on these dates at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.:

January 21
 February 18
 March 18
 April 15





Check out our Facebook page for photos, interactive posts, information on upcoming programs and events.
 Give us a "like".
<https://www.facebook.com/PrairieStatePark>

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