

Summer 2010



ST. FRANCIS STATE PARK

Nature Notes

From the Naturalist



Now that summer has arrived, I want the grown up readers to think about how you spent your summers as a child.

If I had to guess, you spent the majority of your time outdoors. It wouldn't matter if it was hot or if it was raining. We were shooed out of the house to find ways to entertain ourselves outdoors. And we did. We gathered the neighborhood kids and soon we were spies, pirates and explorers. We set up clubs and tree-houses (with elaborate rules about who was leader, who could come in and what you had to do to be a part of this elite "club").

Now think of your children



**GET OUT AND PLAY
IN MISSOURI STATE PARKS!**

Missouri State Parks are using the "Get Out and Play" slogan to promote outdoor time.

today. Do they spend as much time outdoors as you did as a child? Probably not. Whether its because of perceived dangers of unsupervised outdoor play, or because they are distracted by TV, video games and internet, children just aren't getting outdoors like they used to.

There really is something

missing from their lives. Outdoor play—the kind we had as kids that was unsupervised free play—has many benefits. Children learn vital social and reasoning skills. They even learn to cope with stress better.

In June, Gov. Jay Nixon and his wife Georganne are leading the charge with the "Children in Nature Challenge". This initiative bands together many agencies across the state who are working together to see children playing outdoors again. See the article on page 2 for more details. Now I'm going outside to play!



White-Nose Syndrome found in Missouri

In 2006, a mysterious fungus was found on hibernating bats in New York state. Since then, the fungus has spread rapidly, killing more than one million bats.

White-nose syndrome, or WNS, is named for the white fungus that appears



on the nose and wrists of affected bats. It causes the hibernating bats to wake up, using up precious energy they need to make it through the winter. In caves that have bats with

WNS, there is a 98 percent mortality rate.

In an effort to slow down the spread of WNS, which was found in Missouri in April, DNR and MDC have closed many "wild" caves. Tour caves like Onondaga remain open for tours.

Inside this issue:

May Program Schedule	2
The Most Unappreciated Weed	2
June Program Schedule	3
"Get Out and Play" at Play Day	3
Missouri's "Children in Nature Challenge"	4

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.

July Interpretive Program Schedule

Date	Programs
Saturday, July 3	2 p.m. Explorer Hour 8 p.m. Eagles
Saturday, July 10	2 p.m.: Creek Walk 8 p.m.: Bear Necessities
Saturday, July 17	2 p.m.: Townball 7 p.m. Bushwhacked!
Saturday, July 24	2 p.m.: Explorer Hour: Wild Edible Recipe Book Craft 2 p.m.: Wild Edible Buffet
Saturday, July 31	2 p.m.: Herpetology Hour 8pm: Nature Jeopardy

Governor and First Lady announce “Children in Nature Challenge”

Too many young people have become disconnected from nature and the outdoors. To remedy that, Gov. Jay Nixon and First Lady Georganne Nixon are leading the Children in Nature Challenge. It challenges communities across Missouri to take advantage of state programs to educate children about nature, and to create new opportunities for kids to experience nature first-hand.



“Generations of Missourians have grown up camping, hiking, bicycling, hunting, fishing and bird-watching,” Gov. Nixon said. “I did that with my father and with my sons. Every child needs to experience and learn about nature. Our efforts to connect kids with the outdoors, including promoting State Parks and the Children in Nature Challenge, will make sure that resources and opportunities are available for kids to explore Missouri’s many beautiful state parks, trails and streams, whether they live in the city, the country or the suburbs.”

Children benefit physically, mentally, and even spiritually by reconnecting with nature; it makes them feel happier and

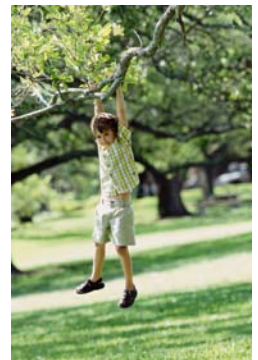
healthier. Educating children about nature helps foster a lifelong appreciation of the plants and animals that live around us, and can make children better future stewards of our precious natural resources.

Watch for announcements on how agencies like Missouri State Parks and the Missouri Department of Conservation will be working together to offer

programs and activities to help children learn to love nature again.

See page 4 for details on the St. Francois Family Play Day, to be held Saturday,

Sept. 25.





August Interpretive Program Schedule

Date	Programs
Saturday, Aug. 7	2 p.m.: Explorer Hour 8 p.m.: Owl Prowl
Saturday, Aug. 14	3 p.m.: Star Chart Craft 9 p.m.: Night Sky Over St. Francois: Perseid Meteor Shower
Saturday, Aug. 21	2 p.m.: Creek Walk 8 p.m.: Bats: Myth and Reality
Saturday, Aug. 28	2 p.m.: Explorer Hour 8 p.m.: Who Wants to Be A Missourian?

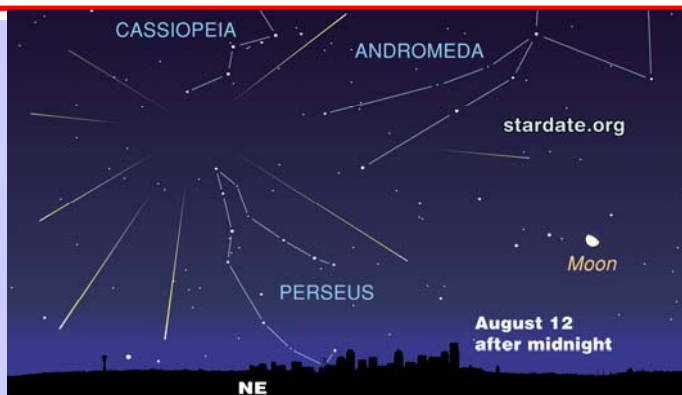
- “Bushwhacked” will involve some running around on the trails to escape the bushwhackers! Wear good shoes!
- “Night Sky Over St. Francois” will take place at Shelter #2. Bring a blanket to lay on, flashlights and binoculars.
- Creek Walks will meet at the Mooner’s Hollow Trailhead near Shelter #1. Bring water shoes and prepare to get wet!

Get Out and Play at Family Play Day

Perseid Meteor Shower Puts on a Show

Every year around Aug. 12, the night sky lights up with the fire of hundreds of meteors raining down on Earth. The Perseid meteor shower, so named for the constellation it seems to radiate from, is one of the best meteor showers of the year—often promising close to 100 meteors per hour.

This year, the meteor shower will peak in the early morning hours (after midnight) on Aug. 13. The best viewing time is in the couple of hours before sunrise. However, early evening can be a great time to see Earthgrazers. These are meteors that skip across the atmosphere like a rock skipping across a pond. They are large and often very colorful.



Look northeast for the radiant of the meteor shower.

Join us at Shelter #2 on Saturday, Aug. 14 at 9 p.m. to watch the meteor shower. The park naturalist will point out constellations and tell a few tales of sky lore. Bring a blanket and a flashlight!

As part of the Children in Nature Challenge, we will be hosting a “Family Play Day” Saturday, Sept. 25 from 1- 4 p.m. 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! More details in the fall newsletter.

ST. FRANCOIS STATE PARK

8920 U.S. Highway 67 North
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.

New 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 State Park, we only have BASIC and ELECTRIC campsites. To make a reservation, call 1-877-422-6766.

Halloween Happenings Event Goes Home

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 in 2005, 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, Oct. 30 at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park's day-use area. The Vaudeville-full event of skits, stories and songs will begin at 7 p.m., with the "Creatures of the Night" walk starting after. There may be preregistration required for the creature walk. Call the park for more information and watch next month's newsletter for more details!

Creature Feature

Daddy Long Legs (Harvestman)



The harvestman, or daddy long legs, is a cousin to the spider. It has eight legs, but only one body part (where a spider has two). Other arachnids are ticks, mites and scorpions.

Did you know...

- Harvestman have very long legs, which they can break off if they feel threatened. The leg can then be regrown.
- If we had legs as long as a harvestman's in proportion to our body, our legs would be 40 feet long!
- It is a common belief that the daddy long legs is the most poisonous of all spiders, but their mouths are too small to bite. **This is a myth.** The daddy long legs produces no venom at all, so could not possibly be the most venomous.