

# Prairie State Park's

## Tallgrass Tribune

Summer 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.

### The Bumblebee – Friend or Foe?

By Rebecca Knox

You're working in your backyard or hiking along one of Missouri's beautiful state park trails and a bumblebee flies into your space. How do you react? Do you view the bumblebee as a foe to be feared or do you view the bumblebee as an important friend to be valued?

About 250 species of bumblebees are known to exist worldwide. Most of them are found in the temperate zones of North and South America and throughout Eurasia and, in all these places, bumblebees are important pollinators. In fact, bumblebees are more effective than honey bees at pollinating crops grown in greenhouses.

Bumblebees are "buzz pollinators." This means that the bees extract pollen from a flower by vibrating against the flower's anthers, making an audible buzzing noise. Plants that you may grow in your vegetable garden that bumblebees are particularly attracted to are tomatoes, bell peppers and eggplant.

Unfortunately, bumblebees are at risk. Their numbers have drastically declined over the past several decades. Researchers aren't sure of the exact reasons for this, but one possibility could be that of habitat loss. Bumblebees need three kinds of habitat to be successful: suitable underground areas for nesting (abandoned rodent burrows, for example), sites for overwintering (mulch, rotting logs), and an abundance of wildflowers for food from spring through fall. These habitats may be threatened due to urbanization and other forms of land alteration.

Another possible cause for decline is the overuse of pesticides in our world today. Chemicals that are meant to control pests may be having unfortunate effects on bumblebee populations, as well.

You can see how important bumblebees are – they directly affect our food supply and crop production – but there are things that you can do to help them:

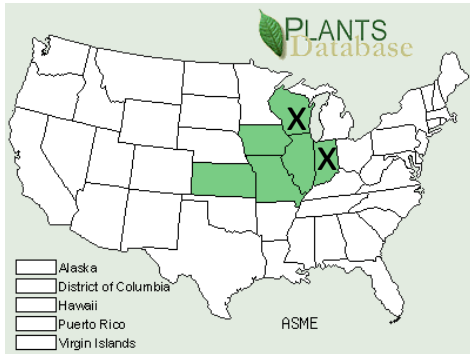
- 1) Plant pollen and nectar-rich plants in our gardens. Plant native wildflower species and use them in our landscaping.
- 2) Provide habitat for bumblebees. Leave those rotting logs at the back of our property and use mulch in our flowerbeds.
- 3) Purchase foods that have been raised locally and without the use of chemicals.

These are just a few simple ways that we, as individuals, can work together to help our friend, the bumblebee.

## ~Mystery plant ~

### Mead's milkweed

**Nina Decker** correctly identified this plant as Mead's milkweed, *Asclepias meadii*. It is a federally threatened species that formerly was found in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Indiana, Wisconsin and Illinois. It was never a common plant. It requires high quality prairies that have a lot of diversity.



It is considered extirpated from Indiana, Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

Extirpated means it no longer exists in that particular location, but it does exist in other places.



In 2014, we renewed efforts to locate and document Mead's milkweed. The photo above is from those efforts. We were able to relocate a population that had not been found since 1985. We found additional plants this year, about 200 yards from this location that were previously unknown to us. Since 2014, we have found new populations every year.

Look at all of the pollinators on this Meads! Obviously lack of pollinators is not an issue. It does, however, need to get pollen from another plant, and if there isn't one close then no seeds will develop. Being as scattered as they are, pollination is often difficult.

The best way to give this plant a chance is to maintain natural prairie ecosystems, which is what we do at Prairie State Park.

**This plant has been used medicinally for at least 400 years.  
What is it and for what is it used?**



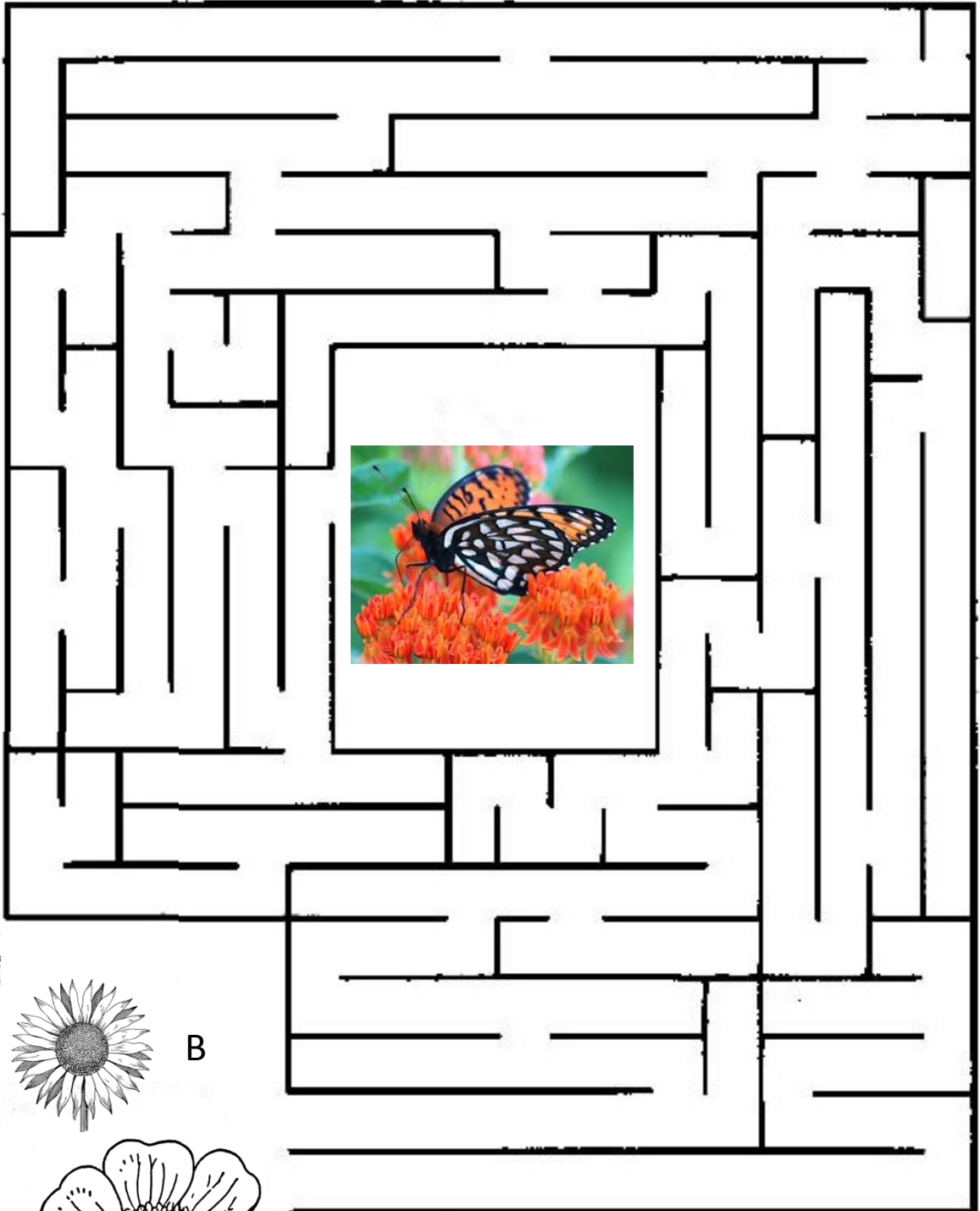
Photo by Tom Hoisington

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

# Hey Kids!

Work this from the inside out. The Regal fritillary butterfly has found the food it needs, but now it needs to find the right plant upon which to lay its eggs. It has to find a violet. Which one is the violet?

Email us your answer to [prairie.state.park@dnr.mo.gov](mailto:prairie.state.park@dnr.mo.gov)



A



B



C



D

## Calendar of Events

~Activities will meet at the nature center ~

**June 18, 10 a.m.– 3 p.m.**

### Hug a Herp Day

Come to the park for the 6th annual Hug a Herp Day! See various reptiles and amphibians like snakes, turtles, frogs and toads. This event will help to dispel myths and rumors about reptiles and amphibians. It will also give people a chance to see and touch some up close. Make an amphibian or reptile craft to take home with you.

**June 25, 9 p.m.**

### Curious Constellations

As a part of the Great American Campout, the park will have a Curious Constellations night hike. Meet at the picnic area. Learn how to find the constellations and how the Native Americans explained the stars and planets of the night.

**July 2, 10 a.m.**

### Bison Hike

Summer is in full swing now. Wildflowers and bison abound. This should be a great time to get some photos of both. Join us to take a hike on the prairie and see bison. Meet at the Regal Tallgrass Prairie Nature Center. Be prepared for a two-mile hike over uneven terrain. Bring water, snacks, insect repellent, a hat and sunscreen, and wear sturdy shoes.. Binoculars will be useful in looking at bison as well as other wildlife .

**July 16, 10 a.m.**

### Wildflower Walk

The wildflowers are blooming and the prairie is alive with color! Come out and see the vibrant colors the prairie has and the wildlife that depend on these plants for survival.

Wear closed-toe shoes and don't forget your camera!

**July 23, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

### \*Explorer Day Camp-Pioneer and Osage Foods

Pioneers and the Osage had different foods than what we have today. Learn what was on their menus at Prairie State Parks Explorer Day Camp. Participants will be awarded the Missouri State Park Explorer Patch upon completion of the day's activities. The event will meet at the Regal Tallgrass Prairie Nature Center. **Pre-registration is required by July 9.**

Call 417-843-6711 to register.

**July 30, 9 p.m.**

### Curious Constellations

Constellations are often a thing of mystery. Learn where they are in the sky, how to locate them, and how the Native Americans interpreted them. The night hike will meet at the picnic area located just past the campground.

**September 24, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**

### Prairie Jubilee

Prairie Jubilee is a celebration of all that a prairie has to offer--history and nature combined. Learn about prairie birds, take a tour to see the bison, make some twine for a jump rope, learn about pollinators, see an Osage lodge, and have bison for lunch. Aside from the meal, all other activities are free.

**\*Registration is required.**

**Please call 417-843-6711 to register.**

## Explorer Day Camp Same Food/Different Packaging – Pioneer and Native American Cuisine

By Rebecca Knox

Have you ever wondered what the pioneers and Native Americans ate and how they prepared their food? That's what we will be learning about at this year's Explorer Day Camp!

Come join in the fun as we make pemmican, explore the art of cheese and butter making, plus lots more, earning your Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites Explorer patch in the process!

Explorer Day Camp 2016 will be held at Prairie State Park on Saturday, July 23 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Preregistration is required by Saturday, July 9; class size will be limited to 30 people. For further information or to make your reservation, call 417-843-6711.

KH2



Come and enjoy learning like these folks from years past!



Check out our Facebook page for photos, interactive posts, information on upcoming programs and events.

Give us a "like".

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

Prairie State Park, 128 N.W. 150<sup>th</sup> Lane  
Mindenmines, MO 64769

[prairie.state.park@dnr.mo.gov](mailto:prairie.state.park@dnr.mo.gov)

417-843-6711

## Slide 4

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**KH2** Is this correct? It is the same as the June 25 listing.  
Holmer, Katy, 6/13/2016