

Prairie State Park's

Tallgrass Tribune

Summer 2017

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.

Summers' Pull

By Dana Hoisington

Summer has a way of drawing us in for a closer look. That may be gaining a new perspective on something we have seen multiple times. If you always walk a trail from the same direction, you might be surprised how different it looks walking it the other way. Let's take Path of the Sky People Trail for example. If you always start walking toward the west, take the fork heading north instead. It gives you a much different look. You can see the same stuff, just in a new way. You might be amazed at how different it appears. It can be like hiking a different trail altogether.

Also, vary the time that you hike. If you are always an afternoon hiker, try a hike in the morning. Animals are more active and the temperature is better too! Don't forget a late afternoon/early evening walk. The setting sun can be glorious. The Sandstone trailhead is a favorite place to watch sunsets. It has a nice expanse of prairie and is easily accessible.



Make a change in what you are seeking. If you are usually after wildflowers, take a look and listen for the insects that are busy pollinating them. After all, the flowers would not be there without them and many are just as strikingly beautiful as the flowers! Looking for bison? Keep an eye out for lizards, turtles and snakes. These important members of the prairie are often secretive in nature and hard to spot. A keen eye helps the enjoyment on the prairie. Don't forget to listen and look for the birds, too. They are busy raising their families and have beautiful songs and colors we can enjoy.

The beauty of summer is enchanting. The colors of the prairie flowers, the blue sky, sunrises and sunsets, birds, fungi, fish, snakes, turtles, frogs and more all have their appeal. Mother Nature paints with a masterful brush using all that nature offers as her palette and with the whole outdoors as her canvas.

Take a trip and let summer pull you in until it is a part of you.

July 22 Explorer Daycamp!

Are the kids looking for something fun to do? This year's "It's What You Don't See" Explorer Daycamp will focus on some of the unusual plants and animals of Prairie State Park. Daycamp is July 22 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Learn about some of the lesser known residents of the park.

Here is a hint of what you will discover:

Beetles that roll their food away and bury it
A bird known as the "butcher bird"
A lizard that does not look like a lizard

All this and more will be explored. Participants will earn the Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites Explorer Patch upon completion of the day's activities.

Follow the link to learn more about the Explorer Program.

<https://mostateparks.com/page/57582/explorer-program>

Call 417-843-6711 by July 1 to register.



~Mystery item ~

Killdeer eggs

Dan Johnson was the first to identify the eggs as being from a killdeer. Killdeer are named for their call, a repeated kill-deer kill-deer kill-deer, often while in flight. These shorebirds are frequently found quite a distance from water and near people. Golf courses, driveways, parks and flat rooftops are all places they will be found. Their nest is nothing more than a depression in gravel. Their eggs have perfect camouflage for such a nest. Sometimes they don't choose the best locations for nests. We have seen them in the middle of 130th lane on the east side of the park. Such nests are rarely successful.

A broken wing display is often used to draw would-be predators away from the nest. The female will move a short distance away from the nest and start dragging a wing and calling loudly with the hope that the predator will follow her and leave the nest alone.

The young are able to move about soon after hatching so they are not the helpless baby birds with which we are familiar.



This hatchling killdeer was photographed along 150th lane running along the edge of the road just north of the Regal Tallgrass Prairie Nature Center.

What is the flower and the insect?



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

Hey Kids!

Find some of the summer animals that call the prairie home!

D I C K C I S S E L T B D N M S
H L A A G N E B L G A U I U R S
S A M E W R R I T I U L M S A G
I A E F C R A R R S T L R N O A
F D R R I R R Y U R L S A Y S N
Y R I F B H E F T E R N B S I D
A A C S B I S I X R S A U D O B
R Z A N B R R G O O E K L D E U
C I N R N G R N B S E E L S R I
E L T R U T L L E H S T F O S L
I E O F U B U L T K H F R R O N
R C A R O E I R A I L E O S O B
I N D I G O B U N T I N G R B G
A E E I T W O R R A P S E L T L
R F L A R G E M O U T H B A S S
P L H E T N I A B N T N D X L F

American Toad

Bison

Bluegill

Bull Snake

Bullfrog

Dickcissel

Fence Lizard

Gray Tree Frog

Heron

Indigo Bunting

Largemouth Bass

Ornate Box Turtle

Prairie Crayfish

Softshell Turtle

Sparrow

2017 Calendar of Events

~Activities will meet at the nature center ~

June 3, 10 a.m. Bison Hike

Summer is nearly here! Join us as we go out and see majestic bison on their native habitat. Bring your cameras as the wildflowers will be in full force. Be prepared for a two-mile hike.

June 10, 10 a.m. Wildflower Walk

Summer is coming and wildflowers are blooming in abundance. Join us on a journey of the botanical world of Prairie State Park. Bring water and comfortable shoes.

June 10, 2 p.m. Missouri's Wild Cats

Come learn about the facts, habits and habitats of two of Missouri's most amazing and beautiful mammals – the bobcat and mountain lion.

June 17, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. 7th Annual Hug a Herp Day

Join park staff for the 7th annual Hug a Herp Day! Come and see various reptiles and amphibians like snakes, turtles, frogs, toads and salamanders. This event will help to dispel myths and rumors about reptiles and amphibians. We will be showing the movie "The Snakes' Tale" throughout the day.

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 17, 7:30 p.m. Public Meeting/Night Hike

Prairie State Park will conduct its annual public meeting to allow people to find out about park plans and goals. Visitors will have the chance to provide feedback about what they would like to see. The meeting will be followed with a guided night hike on the prairie at 8:30 p. m.

June 24, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Nature Bingo

Come play nature bingo. Learn about Missouri plants and animals and win a prize!

July 8, 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. Don't forget your cameras!

Be prepared for a two-mile hike over uneven terrain. Bring water, snacks, a hat and sunscreen, and wearing sturdy shoes. Binoculars will be useful in looking at bison as well as other wildlife that you may see.

July 15, 10 a.m. Wildflower Walk

As summer gets into its full glory, the prairie is ablaze with color. Join a park naturalist at Prairie State Park's Regal Tallgrass Prairie Nature Center for a walk among green grasses and colorful flowers to learn more about the amazing prairie ecosystem.

Dress for the weather and hiking across the prairie; long pants, water, insect repellent and sturdy shoes are recommended. The hike will last about two hours covering about 1.5 miles. Bring a camera!

July 22, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Explorer Daycamp – It's What You Don't See!

You will explore some of the lesser known plants and animals that call Prairie State Park home. Bring your lunch and come prepared to have fun learning!

Preregistration is required. Call us at 417-843-6711 by July 1 to save your spot.

July 29, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Nature Bingo

Come play nature bingo. Learn about Missouri plants and animals and win a prize!



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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