

The Babler Babble

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2019

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The Beneficial Misunderstood

As the weather gets warmer, nature becomes more active. A small hike through the woods could reveal that quickly. Hikers, campers and nature observers alike are excited to see some furry animal favorites like cottontail rabbits, white-tailed deer and eastern chipmunks. Some might even enjoy the occasional three-toed box turtle. However, many will also find their worst nightmares. Many different snakes are out, as well as what others have deemed as nuisance animals. What if these troublesome, "terrible" creatures turned out to be anything but?

The topic of snakes makes most squirm in their seat, especially when discussing venomous snakes. Copperheads are one of the most common venomous snakes found in the area. They are characterized by their pattern, which is described as looking like hourglasses going down the back. Some say the pattern looks like Hershey kisses. Copperheads spend their time among the edges of woods, untouched farmland and in the



Copperheads are a vibrant bronze color with brown Hershey kiss patterns, which help them blend in with the leaves.

rocky areas such as bluffs. Timber rattlesnakes are another of Missouri's venomous snakes. They are tan with beautiful black and brown markings down their backs in the shape of chevrons. They also have a rust colored stripe running down the center of their back. The most notable trademark of any rattlesnake is its' rattles on the tip of the tail. These snakes can be found in rocky areas and in thick woods. The last of the venomous snakes



Timber rattlesnakes can blend in with their environments easily. Rattlesnakes don't always rattle, especially if they think they are camouflaged well.

that could be spotted around Babler, is the infamous northern cottonmouth, also known as the water moccasin. These snakes are known for their bright white mouths, which are held open when the snake senses danger. The inner part of the mouth looks like cotton, hence the name cottonmouth. Cottonmouths are dark brown to black in color and do not have a distinct pattern that is visible to the naked eye. They will use a

variety of aquatic habitats such as wetlands, creeks and rivers. All venomous snakes in Missouri, including the three discussed here,

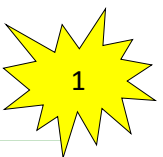


Northern cottonmouth with its' mouth opened wide to show off its "cotton" colored mouth.

have vertical pupils much like that of cat eyes. Missouri's venomous snakes are also known as pit vipers which means they have heat seeking pits on their faces. This allows for venous snakes to detect infrared thermal radiation in order to sense predators and prey.

This may sound terrifying to the average camper, but these slithery scoundrels are beneficial to everyone. A snake's diet consists of mainly rodents that can cause grief in our lives. First off, mice and rats like to take shelter in people's homes, creating damage to the home. These pests can gnaw through cords, destroy insulation, ruin furniture and could be the reasons for some house fires. Rodents can also cause destruction

Continued on Page 2.



The Beneficial Misunderstood (Continued)

for food production in agriculture. Contamination of crops and grain, disease and causing dysfunction in farm equipment are just a few ways mice, rats, voles and other small mammals can hinder farmers' abilities to produce food. Most snakes, like copperheads, will eat these problem animals affecting our life so greatly, creating less of a threat to us, both in the home and



Opossums are Missouri's only marsupial. Marsupials are mammals with a pouch used for nursing and raising young.

our foods. These snakes, though some of them are venomous, provide us a great service. So thank a copperhead for that corn-on-the-cob you ate at your barbecue.

Our misunderstood creatures don't stop at the slithery and scaly however. Virginia opossums are notorious for being labeled aggressive, gross and riddled with disease. However, these marsupials can be one of the most beneficial animals for Babler and the state of Missouri. These unique mammals are omnivores, meaning they eat both plants and animals. This is very important to hikers, campers, and outdoor enthusiasts alike because they will also eat insects, including ticks and spiders. Opossums also play an important role in the environment by eating carrion. This instates them as nature's maintenance crew as they help keep their habitat clean of carcasses. Just like some other wildlife, opossums are opportunistic eaters. Meaning they will rummage through garbage cans and eat the food of any outdoor pets. There are ways of preventing these kinds of

unwanted interactions. Garbage can locks can be placed before dusk, which discourages nocturnal animals that like to scavenge through the trash. Outdoor pet food should also be brought in for the night. As long as one takes the necessary steps in order to prevent the accidental feeding of wildlife, opossums can be a big help to anyone who spends time outside.

Before being quick to persecute venomous snakes or opossums, think about the environmental roles they play. These hidden heroes help keep the balance of nature at Babler and benefit you in ways you didn't think about before.

-Lauren Baker,
Seasonal Interpreter

Springs, Streams, and Aquatic Things

Babler has more than five springs scattered throughout the park. Two of these springs are accessible to the public, Babler & Crystal springs. Both of these springs connect together near the Walnut Grove Shelter where their branches join and flow northward towards Wild Horse Creek on the northwestern side of the park.

These springs and their streams are usually filled with flowing water year-



Babler Spring (above) and Crystal Spring (right) in early spring flow.

round,. However, during periods of extreme drought, they tend to have a lower rate of flow due to the water table being lowered. Both springs are home to a variety of plants and animals, as well as aquatic invertebrates such as crayfish. Along a section of the creek across from the Walnut Grove Shelter, you can find wild hydrangeas blooming on the exposed rock faces and small darters swimming in the water.

The next time you visit the park, take the time to find and explore these unique aquatic ecosystems .



Babler Spring

Babler Spring is located on a spur of the Dogwood Trail near the Walnut Grove Shelter. The spring starts in the woods as it exits the mouth of a small partially collapsed cave entrance. It then flows into a stream branch that eventually flows into Wild Horse Creek on the northwestern boundary of the park. Earlier this spring, the water flowing out of the spring was measured at around 236 gallons per minute!

Crystal Spring

Crystal Spring is located on the Paved Trail near the first trailhead on Guy Park Drive. The spring is on the left side of the trail as you head towards the campground and equestrian parking lot. This spring is a subterranean cave that has not formed an open cave entrance. Earlier this spring, the water flowing out of the spring was measured at around 36 gallons per minute.

Ask the Interpreter!

Q: Is it bad to feed hummingbirds the red-dyed hummingbird food mix?

A: Although there hasn't been any scientific data linking any harmful effects to the dyed solution mixes, it is not necessary to use red dye. Hummingbirds are attracted to the brightly colored flowers, not the "red nectar." The color red is used regularly on the design of hummingbird feeders to attract the attention of hummers. The actual nectar from flowers is clear. It is healthier for the birds to drink the clear sugar water versus the red-dyed solution; mainly since most of the red-dyed solutions use Red #40, which is an artificial colorant derived from petrochemicals, more specifically coal tar.

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

When making fresh hummingbird sugar water, the normal mixture is 1/4 cup of sugar per cup of water. If you mix up small quantities of sugar water every day or two, there's no need to boil the water. But if you mix up larger batches and refrigerate part for later use, then it's wise to make the mixture with boiling water.



Ruby-throated hummingbird, male.



Ruby-throated hummingbird, male, at feeder.



Ruby-throated hummingbird, female.

We do school programs!

Contact Dustin Hillis, Interpretive Resource Specialist at Babler State Park at 636-458-3813 ext. 223 to schedule your programs.

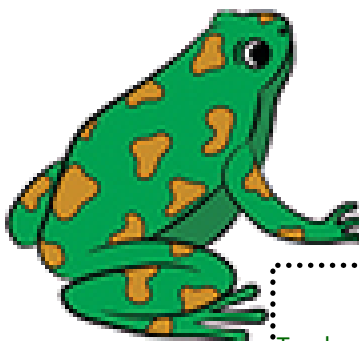
Explorer Corner

Mr. Frog needs your help! He must find all the vocabulary words in the word search.

Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

Did you know?

Missouri has 26 species and subspecies of toads and frogs. Toads and frogs are part of a class of vertebrates known as Amphibians, this group includes toads, frogs, salamanders and tropical caecilians.



Did you know?

Toads and frogs start out as eggs in the water and hatch into tadpoles. A single toad or frog can lay over 100 eggs! It pays to have numbers on your side when you grow up in an environment where everyone tries to eat you, even your parents!

Word

List

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| Amphibian | Pollywog |
| Bullfrog | Pond |
| Colorful | Slimy |
| Croak | Spawn |
| Eggs | Swim |
| Froglet | Tadpole |
| Gills | Toad |
| Hibernate | Tongue |
| Hop | Treefrog |
| Jump | Vertebrate |
| Larva | Webbed |
| Leap | |
| Metamorphosis | |



Special Event Schedule

All programs are FREE and open to the public.

Please contact the visitor center at 636-458-3813 for more program details or check our Facebook page!

June

Family Health & Fitness Weekend

Saturday, June 8

10 a.m. Babler's Old Time Games

Join the interpreters for some fun and old time games. Meet at the Monument Field.

2 p.m. Town Ball

Think you have what it takes to beat the interpreters? Take them on at a game of town ball. Meet at the Monument Field

8 p.m. Into the Dark

Immerse yourself in the sounds, smells and sights of the night. Join an interpreter to discover what lies in the dark with a hike down the Virginia Day Trail. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Sunday, June 9

9 a.m. Babler Tweets

Join the interpreters for a hike in search of Babler's songbirds on the Woodbine Trail. Meet at the Guy Park Trailhead.

Babler State Park Public Meeting

Saturday, June 29

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Staff from the park will be on hand to provide information about the site and answer questions. The public is invited to share comments about the park and its operations. The meeting will be followed by a Raptor Program presented by the World Bird Sanctuary at noon. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Follow us on Facebook to check for program updates and the 4th of July weekend holiday programs.

July

World Snake Day

Saturday, July 13

10a.m.

Join the interpreters in celebrating World Snake Day. Slither on down to learn about Missouri's scaly, misunderstood reptiles. Meet at the Visitor Center.

August

International Owl Awareness Day

Sunday, August 4

10a.m. - noon

Join us for a morning full of hooting good fun. We will have games, owl pellet dissecting, an owl movie and more. You can even learn how to hoot like an owl! Meet at the Visitor Center.



MO State Parks Explorer Program

Giving visitors a new appreciation and respect for the natural world and the historic setting around them, along with an interest in preserving them is the main goal of the Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites Explorer Program. The patches and stars earned are visible symbols of a person's commitment to preserving the living environment.



The program has three parts to complete to earn the patches:

1. Interpretive Study—complete two programs learning about an animal, building or history related to the park or historic site.
2. Interpretive Programs—complete four programs: guided tours, evening programs, hikes, etc.
3. Identification—identify 10 significant things to a park interpreter (objects, people or other living things), giving the proper name and its importance to the park or historic site.

Park Happenings

Babler State Park is on Facebook!

It is a great way to stay up-to-date on current program offerings, stay in contact with park staff, and post comments about the park. Please check us out on the social networking site at Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park and "Like" us.

Service Projects Available for Scouts

Park staff have recently compiled a new list of potential scout projects for the park. These projects include a variety of skill and time requirements, from a few hours to a full day, ongoing, group and individual projects. We have Eagle Scout projects available. Contact the Visitor Center for more information!

Military Discounts Now Available!

New for 2019, Missouri State Parks will offer a military discount on camping stays. Customers who are retired, veteran or active-duty military personnel (including active-duty family members) are eligible for a \$2 per camping night discount. Like the Senior/ADA discount, there are acceptable forms of identification for the Military Discount including-CAC card or the DD Form 1173. The proper military identification must be shown at time of check-in. This discount applies to camping only. The discount does not apply to lodging (i.e., cabins, yurts, etc.). The qualifying party must show proper identification upon check-in.

2019 Camping Rate Increase

In 2019, the rates for campsites with electricity increased by \$2 during the on-season only, beginning with arrivals May 1 and after. The funds generated from this increase will be earmarked to fund various electrification projects. This past season we had several campsites that were not available to our customers due to electrical issues. With these potential improvements and repairs, Missouri State Parks will better meet the needs of our guests.

Volunteers Wanted:

Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park is looking for people to help in the Visitor Center.

Volunteers will help with nature hikes, educational camps, school groups and so much more.

Contact the park for more information at 636-458-3813.

River Hills Visitor Center Gift Shop

Swing on by the gift shop to see what's new! We have apparel, food items, hiking sticks and so much more! We now sell drinks!



NEW KIDS CORNER!



Thank you for your support by continuously voting to renew the 1/10 of 1% Parks, Soils & Water Sales Tax.

It is through this constitutional tax, in which half of the funding generated is earmarked for the Division of Missouri State Parks. This provides about three-fourths of the division's budget for the operation and development of state parks. All additional funding comes from revenues generated in the state park system and some federal funds.

The Man That Left His Mark

Frequently, visitors come in and ask about Dr. Edmund Babler. Who was he? What did he do? How did he die? Why is the park named after him? However, not very many ask about Jacob Babler. Jacob is the true reason why Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park exists. It is only fair that his story be told as well.



Jacob L. Babler was a very prominent businessman, as well as being an extremely active in U.S. and Missouri politics.

Jacob was born in Appleton, MO., to parents Henry and Salome Babler. Jacob was the oldest, followed by Edmund, Henry, Catherine, Mary and Emma Babler. He attended high school in El Dorado, MO., where he graduated. He then went on to Washington University in Saint Louis where he graduated from with a degree in law. Jacob then began practicing law in his hometown of El Dorado. After practicing law for ten years, Jacob decided to go into

business. Jacob started two insurance companies, one in New Jersey and one in Saint Louis. Both were very successful businesses.

During this time, he also made investments in oil, land and real estate. Jacob was very successful and wealthy. This wealth put him in the position to create such an amazing memorial for his younger brother, Edmund.

Although, Babler State Park is named after Edmund Babler, many people do not know that Edmund never saw this park or even stepped foot here.

Edmund was Jacob's younger brother. When Edmund died unexpectedly at age 55, Jacob wanted to make sure his brother's memory was not forgotten. Therefore, to insure the perpetuity of his brother's memory, Jacob decided to build a park to memorialize his brother Edmund. Well why was Edmund so important? Edmund was a skilled reconstruction and intestinal surgeon in St. Louis. Edmund had a large private

practice where he devoted much of his time to helping those less fortunate.

Jacob wanted to ensure that the good work his brother did was not forgotten. To do this Jacob donated 868 acres of land to the state of Missouri to be called Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial Park. The park was built with the help of the



Jacob was able to see the park's design through with the help of the two Civilian Conservation Corps camps: 2729 & 3763.

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and National Park Service. The park was dedicated Oct. 10, 1938, with the unveiling of the statue. Jacob continued to support the park by establishing a two million dollar trust to ensure the park continued after he was gone. Through his influences with the National Park Service and CCC, his donations of present-day parks (Babler and Big Oak Tree State Park), and his love for Missouri's natural resources, he is commonly called "The Father of Missouri State Parks."

-Shelly Hesselbein,
Seasonal Interpreter



The Babler Family home in El Dorado Springs, MO. It is unknown if the house is still standing today, since it is located off-site and not on park property. However, our interpreters are investigating whether or not the house is still standing.

The Legacy Continues

75 CCC Worker Statues in 42 States



- ★ #74 to be dedicated at Chatfield Hollow State Park (CT) on May 11, 2019 ★
- ★ #75 to be dedicated at Tishomingo State Park (MS) on May 15, 2019 ★

● Two projects in fundraising stage in Florida and Connecticut ●

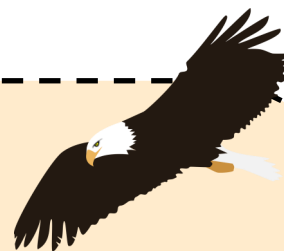
- ★ #02 relocated to Babler State Park (MO) & dedicated on October 13, 2018 ★

No statues in Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, Rhode Island and Vermont

Did you know that there are only 75 CCC Worker Statues in the entire U.S.? Babler has statue number 2 in the nation!

Our CCC Worker Statue was first dedicated at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis in April 14, 1996. Due to lack of staffing and funding, the Civilian Conservation Corps exhibit closed down. Through private and organizational help, the statue was donated to the Missouri State Parks system. Number 2 was rededicated at Babler State Park on Oct. 13, 2018. Stop by and visit our CCC Worker & exhibit pieces on display in the Visitor Center.

The Eagle's Nest: Manager's Comments



Spring is fleeing and summer soon approaches. Park activities are increasing with the redbuds and dogwoods providing their yearly show of colors. Activities during this time of the year include camping in the cool, late spring air, the park's interpretive staff providing walks and programs for park visitors and surrounding schools, the Rockwood's School District holding sixth grade science camps and Missouri Heritage Days at the Outdoor Education Center. The Visitor Center is now open Tuesday throughout Sunday. The rain and warming of spring have brought out the Morel mushrooms, which visitors can collect for their personal consumption. Visitors are enjoying the opportunity to be outside to bike, walk and run the roads and trails of the park and equestrians have begun to use Babler's vast trails for enjoying a ride through the park.

Management switches gears to start to prep the park for the busy season. This includes trimming of trees, mowing of the park, filling the swimming pool at the Outdoor Recreation Center, turning the water on throughout the facility, preparing the Outpost for Babler Wild Summer Camps, preparing all the shelters for group reservations, getting the Henry Babler enclosed shelter ready for Babler Outdoor Adventure programming, which serves the disadvantaged youth in our community by providing an opportunity for an outdoor experience they will never forget.

The end of the fiscal year is approaching in June and we are finishing up any capital improvements and small maintenance projects that are left. Projects completed this spring include a complete renovation of the administration building at the Outdoor Education Center, installation of a new industrial water heater for the shower house in the campground and installation of new soap dispensers in all of our public restrooms. Unfinished projects include replacing the blinds in the Visitor Center auditorium and repairs to the skylight at the Visitor Center which is projected to be completed by the end of June.

As we leave spring and head into summer, it's a great time to visit Babler. The weather is usually comfortable with lots of activities and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. If you happen to be in the Visitor Center enjoying our exhibits or shopping in our gift shop please stop by the front desk and say hi. We are always looking for your input on how we can make your visit more memorable.

-Jeff Robinson,
Park Superintendent



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

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Fax: 636-458-9105

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River Hills Visitor Center Hours:

April-October: 8:30 a.m.- 4 p.m.—Wednesday-Sunday

November & March: 8:30 a.m.- 4 p.m.—Saturday & Sunday

December-February: CLOSED

Generations of Missourians have passed through Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park's massive stone gateway for cookouts and family get-togethers or to spend time with friends. The park's camping facilities, Civilian Conservation Corps architecture, and hiking, bicycling and equestrian trails help all visitors find their place to get away from it all, just minutes from St. Louis.

Park Hours:

April 1 – Oct. 31: 7 a.m.-9 p.m.

Nov. 1—March 30: 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

We're on the web!

mostateparks.com/babler

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



Babler State Park Public Meeting

June 29th

10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

