

THE BABLER BABBLE

Official Newsletter of Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park

Ecosystem Services

BY STEPHANIE MOLKENBUR

Have you ever stopped to consider all of the benefits nature provides? Outside of the obvious – the grand vistas and stunning sunsets, the recreational opportunities galore - the benefits we derive from the natural world around us are far more vast, and vital, to our survival.

An ecosystem service is one of the many benefits humans gain from the surrounding environments. An ecosystem service may be a tangible good or material obtained directly from an ecosystem, such as fresh drinking water, or it may be a more ambiguous and obscure underlying process provided indirectly as a by-product of the normal functioning of a healthy ecosystem, such as climate regulation. It may be something as small and inconsequential as the buds your favorite spring plants opening to brighten your day, or as necessary and essential as the conversion of carbon dioxide into breathable oxygen by those very same plants.

Ecosystem services fall into any of four broad categories:

1. Provisioning services.
2. Regulating services.
3. Cultural services.
4. Supporting services.

Provisioning services are those we are most familiar with and include any goods or materials that can be extracted from the environment. Here, think of classic natural resources, like food, drinking water, coal/oil/natural gas and timber. Regulating services are the nuts-and-bolts processes of a well-oiled ecological machine that work together smoothly to keep us rolling on the road of life. These processes are things like water purification, pollination and decomposition.

The concept of cultural services is a bit more difficult to grasp or quantify but are nonetheless important drivers of world civilizations throughout human history.

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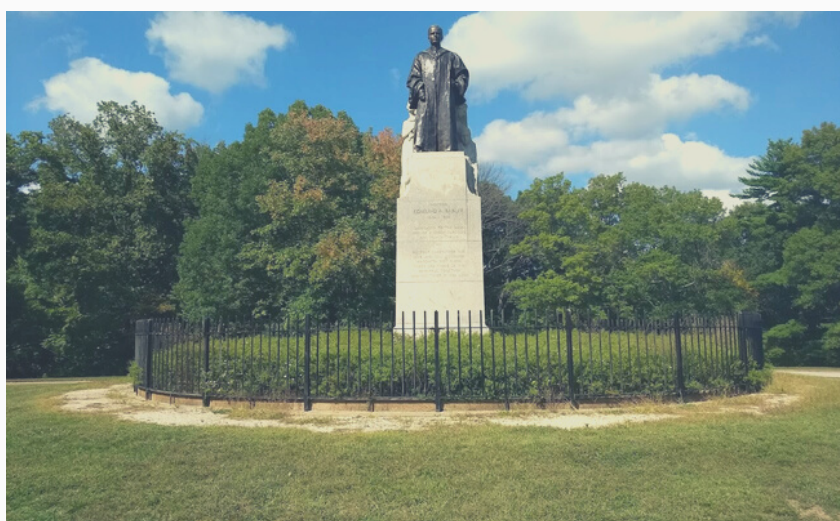
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Generations of Missourians have passed through Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park's massive stone gateway for cookouts and family get-togethers or to spend time with friends. The park's camping facilities, Civilian Conservation Corps architecture, 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-OCTOBER 7 a.m.- 9 p.m.
NOVEMBER-MARCH 7 a.m.- 6 p.m.

Visitor Center Hours

MARCH 17-31 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. FRI-SUN
APRIL-OCTOBER 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. WED-SUN
NOVEMBER-FEBRUARY CLOSED

Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park
800 Guy Park Drive
Wildwood, MO 63005

T: 636-458-3813
F: 636-458-9105
E: BablerStatePark@dnr.mo.gov

Park Staff

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ASST. MANAGER: RICH LOVE

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NATURALIST: DUSTIN HILLIS

SR. MAINTENANCE: ERIK VEENSTRA

MAINTENANCE: JONAH COAKLEY

MAINTENANCE: VACANT

RANGER: JONATHON THOMPSON





Special Events Schedule

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

PLEASE CONTACT THE VISITOR CENTER AT 636-458-3813 FOR MORE INFORMATION OR CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE.

Raptor Awareness

2 p.m.

June 3

Join us in welcoming the World Bird Sanctuary to Babler. WBS will bring multiple birds of prey to the park to teach guests about their importance and their identifying features. Bring a lawn chair, blanket and your friends to see these beautiful birds up close. Dogs are not allowed at this program due to the comfort of the birds. Meet in the Monument Field.



Stream Team Volunteering

Sundays from 10 a.m. -Noon

June 4

July 9

Aug. 13

Are you interested in volunteering with the park for a one time event (or more) that allows you to help the park with a stream team activity? If you answered yes, sign up with this event to be selected to help out. Seats are limited to 20. If you are not able to attend this program that's okay—we will have more opportunities like this in the future. All participants will need to plan to get wet. Meet at the Visitor Center.



Sign up for these events via the link below:

icampmo1.usedirect.com/MSPWeb/Activities/Search.aspx

Learn2 Aim

Saturdays from 10 a.m. -Noon

June 17

July 15

Aug. 19

Begin your journey as an archer by attending a hands-on workshop this summer! Take a step back in time and join Missouri State Parks for the Learn2 Aim event. This is a great opportunity to learn new skills with joint instruction on the basics of archery and atlatl throwing. The program is free and available to ages 10 and up. Missouri State Parks provides the equipment and expertise in a safe environment – you bring your enthusiasm to learn a skill that ties back to Missouri history.



All participants will need to sign up via

icampmo1.usedirect.com/MSPWeb/Activities/Search.aspx



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.



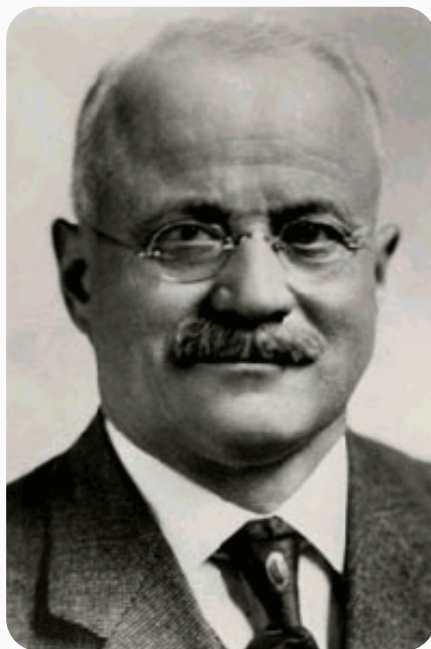


What's the Story ...

BY CARLEY WRIGHT

Picturesque Wirth Drive follows the ridgeline from Guy Park Drive, past Alta Shelter, and down the hill to meet with Guy Park Drive and Cochran Drive at the north end of the valley. Conrad Wirth was the assistant director of the National Park Services, and in charge of the entire State Park Civilian Conservation Corps when the park was dedicated in 1938, so it might be natural to assume that Wirth Drive was named for him, but this is not the case. While there were many worthy men in the family, Wirth Drive in Dr. Edmund A Babler Memorial State Park was named after Theodore Wirth. Born in Zurich Canton, Switzerland, Theodore was the son of a schoolteacher father and he closely followed his mother's ministrations to her garden. After serving an apprenticeship in horticulture and completing a course in engineering, Theodore worked in Zurich, London and Paris before immigrating to the United States in 1888 at the age of 25. Soon he was working as a gardener in New York City's Central Park. After a change in city administration, he went into business for himself and worked for a time in Niagara Falls Park following the design of Frederick Law Olmstead. In 1895 Theodore married Leonie Mense, and the following year became the superintendent of Hartford, CT park system. While there, he developed the first municipal rose garden in the nation. After 10 years in Connecticut, Wirth accepted a position as the superintendent of parks in Minneapolis, MN. This would be the place of his greatest achievements.

A proponent of people recreating in public parks, Wirth famously removed "Keep off the Grass" signs and advocated for the removal of unnecessary fences. He installed playgrounds with a goal of a play area within a quarter mile of every child and a complete recreation center within a half mile of every family. He created ball fields, improved the lake system and planted trees along streets. After forced retirement in 1935, Wirth was named Superintendent Emeritus and remained in the home built for him for the next 10 years. During this time he wrote the history of the Minneapolis Park System. In 1946 he moved to California with his second wife, Juliette Mense, for their health. He died in La Jolla, CA in 1949.



Theodore Wirth

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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.



We do off-site programs!

Contact Dustin Hillis, Senior Park Specialist, at Babler State Park to schedule your program(s). These can be for schools, assisted living facilities, etc.

E: Dustin.Hillis@dnr.mo.gov
T: 636-324-7064

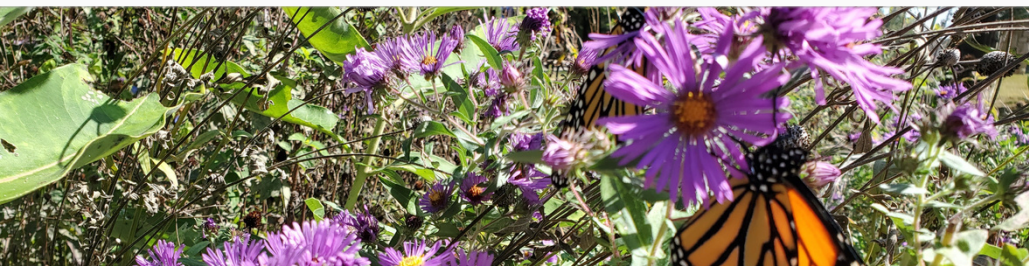


Ecosystem Services ... [Continued]

Cultural services encompass any non-material educational, inspirational/spiritual or cultural resources gleaned from the world around us, as well as the recreational opportunities provided within ecosystems.

Of all ecosystem services, perhaps the most important are the support services, upon which all other ecosystem services are based, and upon which life itself depends. These are the most basic, yet often the most complex, of natural systems. Without highly specialized processes like photosynthesis and nutrient cycling, all life on earth would cease.

So, the next time you're out and about, take a moment to appreciate all of the bounties nature provides, and remember that fostering healthy, stable, and sustainable ecosystems is vital to our continued existence.



What's the Story ... [Continued]

Theodore Wirth is considered the dean of the park movement in America, and the father of the Minneapolis Recreation System. Of his three sons, Theodore Rudolph served in the military, Conrad was longest serving director of the National Park Service, and Walter also became a 'park man,' serving as superintendent of Dr. Edmund A Babler Memorial State Park from 1947 to 1948 and had similar roles in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Oklahoma and Oregon.

Grandson Theodore J Wirth (son of Conrad) built the first National Park in Saudi Arabia. He also worked with the National Park Service in the 1950s and 60s, guiding planning and development of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks

The Wirth family motto was 'Parks are for people,' and they certainly lived up to the motto, and Theodore Wirth's legacy.



The first US municipal Rose Garden, Elizabeth Park, Hartford, CT.



Conrad L. Wirth, 6th National Park Service Director (Dec. 1951-Jan. 1964).

Photo courtesy of the National Park Service.

Volunteers in Parks

VIPs provide invaluable assistance to Missouri State Parks on a wide variety of tasks and projects around the state. Volunteers assist people in visitor centers and contact stations. They help catalog historic items and documents, and they serve as natural history interpreters and tour guides. Some VIPs perform maintenance or light construction tasks, or help with constructing or renovating trails. There is almost no limit to the types of work that volunteers can perform. The main requirement is a willingness to serve.

Contact the park for more information at
636-324-7064.

Or signup at the following:
mostateparks.com/page/57872/volunteer-parks-program



Explorer Corner

A constellation is a group of visible stars that form a pattern when viewed from Earth. The pattern they form may take the shape of an animal, a mythological creature, a man, a woman or an inanimate object, such as a microscope, a compass, or a crown. Can you find the names of the constellations listed down below?



Constellations

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

cassiopeia	libra	hercules	corona borealis
cygnus	gemini	aries	orion
pisces	pegasus	ursa major	sagittarius
virgo	scorpius	leo	cepheus
draco	ursa minor		

Did you know?

The largest constellation by area is Hydra which is 3.16% of the sky.

Did you know?

The word "constellation" comes from a Latin term meaning "set with stars."

Did you know?

The sky was divided up into 88 different constellations in 1922. This included 48 ancient constellations listed by the Greek astronomer Ptolemy as well as 40 new constellations.

The Naturalist Journal

GLOBE AT NIGHT

The Globe at Night program is an international citizen-science campaign to raise public awareness of the impact of light pollution by inviting citizen-scientists to measure their night sky brightness and submit their observations from a computer or smart phone. Light pollution threatens not only our "right to starlight", but can affect energy consumption, wildlife and health. More than 200,000 measurements have been contributed from people in 180 countries over the last 14 years, making Globe at Night the most successful light pollution awareness campaign to date!

To learn more about the Globe at Night program, use the link provided.

globeatnight.org/about.php





Smooth Criminals: How to Critter Proof Your Campsite

BY HOLLY MORRIS

It's a familiar scene at campgrounds across the country: the sun is rising, campers are leaving their tents to start the day, and trash and food are haphazardly strewn around. While you were sleeping, your campsite was invaded. From black bears to raccoons, Missouri has plenty of curious (and hungry) animals that will seize an opportunity to snag an easy meal if you let them. Keep yourself and your belongings safe by following these tips:

1.Minimize smells

Nothing will attract animals to your campsite quite like the smell of food. Now that doesn't mean you have to forgo roasting hotdogs over your campfire. Most of our native animals will avoid campsites with people or fire, even if they do smell food. However, be careful to avoid leaving food residue and crumbs around your campsite. Some ways to help this include prepping ingredients at home, washing dishes promptly and dumping any rinse water away from your campsite, and putting trash in designated containers instead of burning it. More than just food, many animals are attracted by the scent of toiletries. Even soap that's branded as "unscented" can be enticing.

2.Be smart about storage

The safest place to keep food and toiletries is in a locked car. Raccoons and possums can't open car doors, but black bears (which haven't been spotted at Babler yet but are not unheard of in the area) can. If you're not able to store your items in a car, use a hard-sided container like a cooler or a bear canister. But be sure your storage container has a locking mechanism—raccoons can easily pull the lids off of most coolers. Whatever you do, never keep food or toiletries into your tent, even if they're still in a sealed package. Rodents can chew holes through tent fabric to get in, and raccoons can unzip tent doors.

3.Keep it neat and tidy

Especially around a campground, local critters have the experience to know food containers when they see them. Put away coolers, dishes and trash before going to bed or leaving a campsite unattended. If you don't, those visual cues can be a dead giveaway for savvy thieves.

4.Don't feed the wildlife

The animals found in the park naturally fear humans. However, that fear can be broken down over time if park-goers offer up food. Once animals learn to associate people with food, they'll feel emboldened to approach our campsites—and us—in the hopes of snagging an easy meal. Don't make things more dangerous for the next camper; don't feed the wildlife.

Scout Projects

Park staff have compiled a 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. Scout projects are available now.

Contact the Visitor Center for more information!

636-458-3813



Thank you to our
Park Rangers.





Manager's Notes

BY CHRIS FERREE

I cannot believe where we are on the calendar for the year already. It seems not that long ago the park was just starting to show hints of green and now it's hard to see 10 feet into the woods. With that and the first holiday weekend behind us for the "on" season we are all looking forward to a busy summer.

The crew here has been hard at work mowing, clearing trails, developing programs, opening buildings, cleaning shelters and shower houses and staffing the Visitor Center for all of our guests to enjoy. They are all truly dedicated in getting the park to looking great. If you see one of them on a mower, picking up trash, giving out information at the campground booth or Visitor Center, give a wave and say thanks. It really brightens our day to see people enjoying this awesome place.

We are equally excited for one of our larger projects to start with construction-the paved bicycle trail repaving. This paved trail starts in the campground and extends down to the Guy Park trailhead parking lot, connecting the campground to the interior of the park. Part of the Woodbine Trail also uses a section of it. Because this project entails removing large portions of old asphalt, reconstruction of culverts, grading and widening, the entire trail will be closed for use. This project will also effect the equestrian trail in the area that uses the current equestrian lot and tunnel that goes underneath Guy Park Dr. During the first phase of construction, the equestrian lot will not be open and the equestrian trail will not have a continuous loop around the park. Completion is slated for late summer or early fall.

The new temporary Equestrian Lot and trailhead will be moved to the area of the old pool off of Guy Park Drive in the central portion of the park. To access the Equestrian Trail riders will use the White Connector trail to gain access to the existing Equestrian Trail (keep in mind the closed section).

We are eager to observe the functionality of using the area by the old pool for equestrian use and if it seems to be a better fit than the current lot we may look to move it permanently. Keep a look out for signs directing you to the new Equestrian Parking Lot. The current one will be closed during trail reconstruction to be used a staging area.

We are still moving forward with our other large projects that include campground improvements (fall/winter 2023-2024), Babler Lodge rehabilitation, and connection of the park water supply to municipal water. These are all transformational projects for the park and we are very fortunate to have them happening over the next few years. I would be happy to talk about these to anyone in more depth and a good place to hear more about them and get further updates will occur at our Public meeting that is scheduled for Sept. 30 2023 at 2 p.m. We hope to see you all in the park enjoying a hike, meeting with friends and family at one of our shelters or picnic areas, enjoying some camping, attending an interpretive program or just laying down in the grass watching the clouds go by. Happy summer to you all.

River Hills Gift Shop

Start your spring adventures inside our store. We have beverages, collapsible dog bowls, snacks, hiking sticks, apparel, plush toys, Frisbees, kids wristbands, souvenirs, insect spray and so much more!



Program Highlight

Come explore the night sky at the park. Members of the St. Louis Astronomical Society will set up telescopes in the monument field to offer visitors a view of the night sky. Telescopes will be pointed at a variety of objects. We also hope to see some Perseid Meteors after it gets dark. Everyone is encouraged to bring warm clothes, shoes, mosquito repellent, red flash light, chairs, blankets and binoculars.

Sunset is at 8pm and it should be dark by 8:45pm.



PERSEIDS OVER BABLER

Saturday, August 12th
8:30P.M.-Midnight
Meet at the Monument Field