

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

River Hills Current

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Winter 2011/2012

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Making Your New Year Great (Outdoors): Resolutions for getting into nature in 2012!

The typical day for most families looks much like this: mornings start with getting the family up, dressed, fed, and off to school and work. Then eight or more hours of work, traffic-packed commutes, after-school activities, dinner, homework, and cleaning fill the evening until bedtime. Schedules like this often make it difficult to include, or even think about, getting yourself and the family outside to enjoy our natural environment or to actively play without screens, keypads or controllers. More and more people, though, are realizing that playing and enjoying the outdoors is extremely important to the health and well-being of humankind.

The Benefits of Being Out

Numerous articles and current research suggests that humans are much more dependent on nature than many suspect. Experiences in nature have been shown to improve mental health by lowering stress levels, improving mental outlook, and lessening a person's chances of developing depression and anxiety disorders.

The Center for Disease Control reports that childhood

obesity has more than tripled over the past 30 years. Getting outside to play in nature can help decrease these rates along with stimulating creativity, increasing concentration, and developing problem-solving skills. In a nutshell, the benefits of being in nature and playing outdoors are endless!

A New Start

The start of a new year brings about the making of resolutions. Many of these resolutions revolve around health: losing weight, eating better and becoming more active. This year, why not take this resolution to another level and include enjoying nature! There are numerous organizations who promote being outdoors and many offer suggestions for fitting nature experiences into our hectic lives. For example, the National Wildlife Federation promotes 60 minutes of outdoor play



each day, called Green Hours, and also offer a parent support program online that provides suggestions for incorporating the outdoors into our day-to-day lives. Another great resource is the Children in Nature Challenge (childreninnature.mo.gov) where families can find ways to get outdoors in Missouri and can even sign up to become a Children in Nature Family and earn prizes for enjoying nature. The Children and Nature Network (childrenandnature.org) also provides a great way to learn about new research, read articles, and find events and other families interested in spending more time outdoors.

Quick Trips and Fun Weekends

Incorporating an hour of outdoor playtime each day may seem like an impossible feat. Although this seems impractical in a 60 minute block, it can be done with small changes and additions throughout the day. The following are just a



(cont'd on page 6)

Pioneer Profile:

Rev. Robert Goodwin Coleman and Family

In 1836, upon favorable word from family and friends who moved to St. Louis County, Rev. Robert Goodwin Coleman purchased 450 acres in "Bonhomme Bottoms." Rev. Coleman was a noted Baptist preacher and wealthy Virginian landowner. It is speculated from family documents the purchase and subsequent move to Missouri was an attempt to aid the health of his ailing wife, Caroline Harris Coleman. On April 20, 1837, the Coleman family set out on their journey to Missouri. Rev. Coleman had loaded everything they owned into wagons; his family rode comfortably in carriages and on horseback and his slaves (over 100 in total) walked alongside.

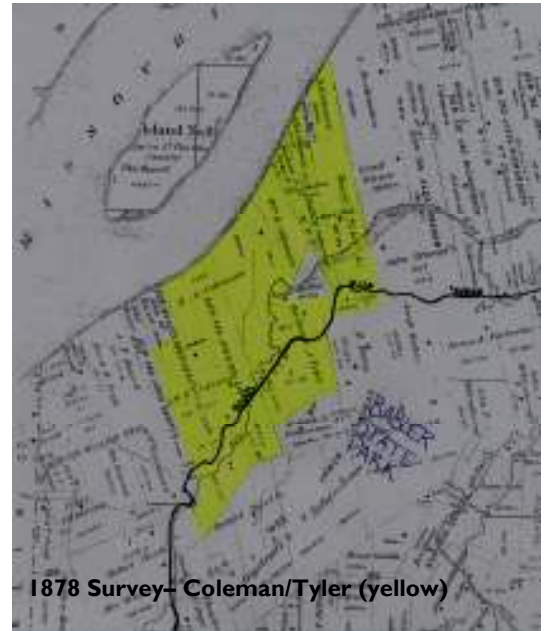
Rev. Coleman's son, William H. Coleman, kept a journal of the trek, detailing the landscape and mishaps they encountered along the way. They were not met with much trouble, just a few occasions of toppled wagons and broken carriages. The only injury noted was of his brother, Robert G. Jr., from the misfire of a muzzleloader. The family's biggest worry arose each time they came to larger camps or towns. Kidnapping of slaves was a serious problem; they were a valuable asset. William made mention of breaking the slaves into companies when entering towns and protecting them with guns drawn as they passed through. They also had to keep watch throughout the night when they camped alongside oth-

er groups waiting for barges.

The Coleman' reached St. Louis County on June 6, 1837, and immediately went to work setting up a log-cabin home at Tyler's Landing (a steamboat landing on the Missouri River near Wildhorse Creek). Being a religious man, Rev. Coleman quickly established the family as members of the Antioch Baptist Church, where he would later preach. This church was unique in that both black slaves and their white owners worshipped together. This church later went on to become Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, with two slave cemeteries and an accompanying school. White landowners re-established the Antioch Baptist Church in its current location on Wildhorse Creek Road in 1860.

Rev. Robert G. Coleman, his son William H. Coleman, and relative Henry Tyler continued to purchase land and were the first to begin their new plantations. Rev. Coleman managed his plantation and 54 slaves until his death in 1840, after which the land was divided between his sons Robert G. (Jr) and William H. The plantations grew a good amount of wheat, corn and oats, but their primary

crop was hemp for off-plantation sale. William managed the laborious act of hemp production with 23 slaves and in 1850 his 400 acres were valued at \$6,000. He also built a large brick mansion, named Mount Comfort, on his



property in 1848. Robert G. Coleman Jr, maintained his inherited land (440 acres) in a similar fashion with 36 slaves and in 1860 his 440 acres was valued at \$13,000. (cont'd on page 4)

Year of the Bat 2011-2012

Takes Flight!

Join the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (EUROBATS) in celebrating the Year of the Bat.

- Echolocation, hibernation and sleeping upside down are just some of the unsung talents of bats.
- Pollination, seed dispersal and insect control are the underestimated eco-services bats provide.
- From forests to grasslands, deserts to cities, north to south, over 1200 species of bats help maintain biodiversity and replenish eco-systems worldwide.
- Mysterious and misunderstood, the world's only flying mammals bring us delicious fruits, useful products and life-saving medicines.
- Bats are essential to our global environment and well-being. Yet over one fifth of all bat species are threatened.

Support Bat Conservation

a bat today

Learn more at www.yearofthebat.org

Program and 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!

December 2011

Cabin Fever Days

Wednesday, Dec. 28

Friday, Dec. 30

12 p.m. - 4 p.m.

River Hills Visitor Center

(Ages 5 to 12) Are the kids going stir crazy over the holiday break? Do you need to run errands without their help? Sign them up for a Cabin Fever Day at Babler! There will be lots of fun nature-related activities available – movies in the theater, crafts, mazes, games and even an animal tracking hike to look for signs of wildlife. Space is limited, so call early to make your reservation!

January 2012

First Day Hike: A Walk in

Winter's Wonderland

Sunday, Jan. 1

2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Virginia Day Memorial Trail

Start your new year off right with a hike in Missouri's wonderful winter landscape. Learn how animals and plants survive the frosty conditions and scout for signs of life – tracks, scat, browsing and more. This hike will be a great way to make good on resolutions such as getting more exercise and spending more time outdoors! Call the visitor center to make your reservation today.

February 2012

The Mating Game

Saturday, Feb. 11

6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

River Hills Visitor Center

As spring approaches, many of Babler State Park's wild residents are looking for love! Join in the fun by representing our native fauna in their quest for a mate in this Dating Game-style program. You will be amazed at the crazy antics of Missouri's animals in their quest for a sweetheart. For more information and to make reservations, please call the visitor center.

2012: A Year of Amazing Opportunities

(Part One)

Who knew so many cool things were happening in 2011 and 2012!

Dec. 10: Total Lunar Eclipse – This lunar eclipse will be visible in North America and will occur at moon set (around 1 UTC).

Dec. 13 - 14: Geminids Meteor Shower – Considered the best meteor shower, it can produce 60 meteors per hour at peak. Meteors may be visible Dec. 6 through Dec. 19. Best observation time will be after midnight looking to the east from a dark location.

Dec. 14 - Jan. 5: 112th Annual Christmas Bird Count- Thousands of experienced and novice birders across the Americas take part in this longest-running wildlife census! For more information and how to get involved, go

to <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

Jan. 3 - 4: Quadrantids Meteor Shower - This is an above average meteor shower with 40 meteors per hour at its peak. Meteors may be visible from Jan. 1 through Jan. 5. The moon will set shortly after midnight, leaving dark skies to optimize viewing.

Feb. 17 - 20: 15th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) - This four-day event gives birders of all ages a chance to participate in real wildlife science! For more information on how to get involved go to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

2011/2012 is International Year of the Bat! Babler State Park will be providing numerous opportunities throughout the year to learn more

about the importance of Missouri's bats and the perils they face. Stay tuned for more information or see the flyer on page 2 to learn more and get involved with events across the country!

150 years ago...2011/2012 also celebrates tumultuous times in Missouri's past. 150 years ago our state was in the beginnings of the Civil War. Many states were Union aligned; many were Southern sympathizers....Missouri was both! By late 1861, Missouri had two competing state governments and sent representatives to both the U.S. Congress and the Confederate Congress. Some of the park's former landowners were participants on both sides— neighbor against neighbor! Check out mo-stateparks.com for upcoming events in Missouri state parks and historic sites.

Pioneer Profile

(cont'd from page 2)

Robert G. Coleman Jr went on to become a state senator serving multiple terms (approx. 20 years) during his lifetime, and participated in the famous and hectic session of 1861. On Oct. 28, 1861, Sen. Robert G. Coleman Jr met with his fellow senators and representatives in special session at Neosho, Mo. These Southern sympathizers, including Gov. Claiborne Jackson, had fled the state Capitol in June upon the realization that Unionist Capt. Nathaniel Lyon was planning to seize the Capitol. During this session, a large amount of legislation was passed... some of the most important being the ratification of Missouri's secession from the United States and annexation to the Confederacy...at least in name (a new Unionist government had been established in the Capitol in August).

Upon the start of the Civil War, some of the Coleman slaves abandoned their work and joined the 68th United States Colored Infantry, most notable for their combat in Tupelo, Miss., in 1864. Three of these "freed men" are buried in the cemetery alongside the Antioch Baptist Church. One of note, Elijah Madison, was a slave of Robert Coleman and came back to Bonhomme

Bottoms after the war. He, along with four other "freed men" from the area worked a farmstead, though it is uncertain whether Elijah owned land or was a sharecropper for one of the planta-



Elijah Madison

tions.

After the Civil War, the production of hemp was impossible without slave labor. The Coleman plantations contin-

ued to prosper, growing a mix of wheat, oats, corn and livestock. Their relatives, the Tyler', did not fare as well. They could not maintain their plantations without hemp production. The Tyler plantation continued to decline and upon Henry Tyler's death in 1867, the land was subdivided and sold. The large tracts of land owned by the Coleman family were eventually sold piece by piece to farmers, homesteaders and industry. Large amounts were eventually purchased by Jacob L. Babler and his family and donated to the State of Missouri to become a park...Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park.

Stay tuned for more pioneer profiles throughout the year as we count down to the park's 75th anniversary in 2013!

Ask The Interpreter!

Questions for "Ask the Interpreter" can be submitted via e-mail to kendra.swee@dnr.mo.gov

Q: Do all of Missouri's mammals hibernate in the winter?

A: Yes and no. A large number of Missouri's mammal species do not hibernate in winter. Missouri's winters are considered fairly temperate and many mammals can find food throughout the season. When the weather is extremely poor, some species, such as the opossum, will find a secure place and enter a short state of torpor. They are able to survive these short periods of rest by lowering their body temperature and metabolism to conserve energy. Torpor is considered a temporary hibernation. We are often led to believe hibernation occurs when an animal spends the fall building up their fat reserves, then sleeping the winter



away. Black bears, for instance, will eat up to 20,000 calories a day to build up fat stores for winter. They will easily wake during hibernation to defend their den and eat. Female bears will also give birth to their cubs during this time. Chipmunks, on the other hand, do not build up their fat reserves.

They awaken slowly every once in awhile to eat. Can either be considered a true hibernator? YES, but the answer may surprise you! The chipmunk is considered the true hibernator and the bear a light hibernator! Neither the amount of fat reserves added nor the



length of sleep determine hibernation; physiological changes are the indicators. Black bears must put on extra pounds because they only lower their body temperature 12°. This means their metabolism is higher, burning fat quickly and easy to wake. The chipmunk does not put on extra weight because its body temperature lowers to 34° (2° above freezing) and their heart rate lowers from 350 beats per minute to two beats per minute. Their metabolism will be much lower, needing less fat reserves, and will take longer to rouse from sleep. So, Missouri mammals take part in a variety of hibernations styles. Some are true hibernators, some light, and others only occasionally participate!

Park Notes

Vandalism at Alta Shelter

In late August 2011, park staff noted the removal of numerous large capstones from the parking lot retaining wall and inside the shelter itself. A police report was filed and measures were taken to determine the identity of the culprit. To no avail, more stones went missing late November 2011. Restoration of the Alta Shelter will begin this winter. The large log piles

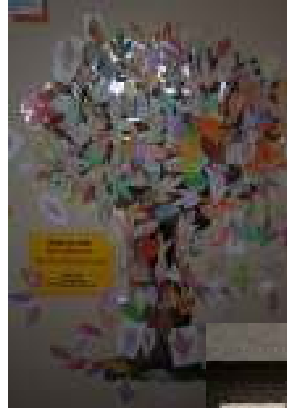


Damage to rockwork at Alta

scattered throughout the park have been moved to a central location and milling has begun. Crews are slated to begin work on the shelter shortly, but this blatant disregard for the historic integrity of the park will create more work and time needed for preservation staff to bring Alta Shelter back to its full glory.

Busy Autumn at the Visitor Center

Autumn saw a wonderful increase in visitation to the park and to the visitor center! Our play day in September saw 73 participants and Night Sky Over Babler in October had 165 attendees! It was great to see so



many people enjoying the programs and spending time in our exhibit hall. Our fall colors display in the visitor center was a good gauge for visitor attendance; you can't see the tree for all the leaves! The visitor center closes during the winter (December – February), but we hope to have as good of attendance in 2012 as we have had in 2011.



Play Day 2011

Volunteer Spotlight: The Ozark Trail Association & St. Louis Adventure Group

Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park would like to thank the members of the Ozark Trail Association (OTA) and the St. Louis Adventure Group (SLAG) for their time and hard work



on the Virginia Day Memorial Trail re-route. In February, two small tornados passed through the park, downing trees in many areas. Most trails and roadways were cleared in the spring, but a short section of the Virginia Day Memorial Trail was too damaged to clear. A potential reroute was proposed and clearances were granted over the sum-

mer. In October, a small group of sawyers from the OTA came to Babler and began work on the reroute, felling a few trees along the proposed path. Then in November, a group of 25 volunteers from SLAG and OTA helped park staff cut the new trail. Everyone worked hard and the new trail was cut in four hours! Park staff restored the



connector areas to the new trail and the Virginia Day Memorial Trail was reopened the following weekend. Trail

work like this would have taken the park staff much longer to complete, keeping the trail closed and unusable for a greater amount of time. OTA and SLAG's willingness to spend a Saturday helping restore one of our most popular trails is greatly appreciated. **Thank You Again!**




**Missouri Department
of Natural Resources**

Visitor Center Hours

April - October: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Wed - Sun.
March & November: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sat - Sun
December - February: CLOSED

Park Hours

April - October: 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. Daily
November - March: 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Daily

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We're On The Web!

www.mostateparks.com/babler

Save The Date!

- April 2012 Night Sky Over Babler

(more information will be available in the Spring 2012 newsletter)

In The Next Issue:

Birding 101

Going Batty at Babler

Check out Missouri State Parks
newly renovated website and
Babler State Park's new webpage at
www.mostateparks.com

and

Follow us on Facebook!

Looking for a place to share your
talents and time? Dr. Edmund A.
Babler Memorial State Park is
looking for volunteers! Please feel
free to stop by or call the visitor
center to learn more about the
opportunities available.

Making Your New Year Great...

(continued from page 1)

few suggestions for including nature and outdoor play every day:

Flash park visits: Build a five-10 minute park or playground stop into your afterschool/work day.

Take-out picnic: Take-out food and pre-prepared meals are a staple of a busy day. These meals can easily be taken to a local park or outdoors at home for a fun picnic and provide time for peaceful enjoyment of nature and family conversations.

Pause to play: Quick trips to and from the car, school or home offer time to play cloud shape and I Spy games with children. This is a great way to get their minds fo-

cused on the world around them rather than their hand-held devices.

Block away drops: Instead of waiting in the school drop-off line, try parking a block away and walking your child to the door. It saves gas and is rarely a loss of time. Another variation: if you live close to school, create a walking school bus program for children and parents to walk together each day.

Weekends often provide a little more flexibility for outdoor play and exploring nature. The following are ways to get out and into nature:

Screen-Free Saturdays or Sundays: Suggested by a visitor this fall, set aside a day for the whole family to be "screen-free". This includes gaming devices, televisions, computers and even phones! Take this

time to explore local parks, nature centers and your own backyard.

Go Local: Check out the state and county parks close to home! Many of these sites provide outdoor activities such as hiking, exhibits and activities at a visitor or nature center, and even nature programs that offer the whole family a chance to learn more about the nature around them.

Short Stay-cations: Trips to farther removed parks can provide opportunities to explore different habitats and natural landscapes. Missouri is home to an amazing variety of natural features to explore—caves, prairies, forest, rivers and streams, desert-like glades and swamps. All of these are just a day or weekend trip away!

Getting outdoors and enjoying Missouri's natural beauty is a great resolution to start and stick with this year! Improve the health and well-being of the entire family in just a few minutes a day or whole weekends away.

Start the new year off right with a winter wonderland hike at Babler State Park! We are offering a First Day Hike at 2:30 p.m. on Jan. 1, 2012. Call the visitor center for more details and to register!

