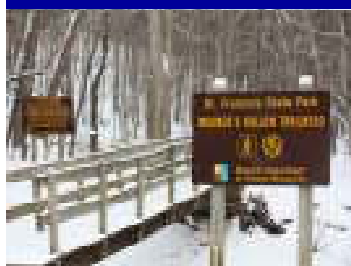
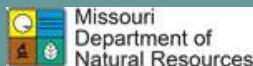


Winter 2011



ST. FRANCOIS STATE PARK

Nature Notes

From the Naturalist



This year has been a busy year for St. Francois State Park. The campground stayed pretty full despite the heat, and several special events kept the naturalist staff busy. Winter time brings on a transition for park staff from the busy camping season, to things like construction projects and resource management. This winter's main improvement project will be replacing some of the campfire grills in the campground. We also had a reroute recently done on part of the Pike Run trail's South Loop. This small reroute was needed to avoid an area that had become badly eroded. Besides that, the park staff will be working most of the winter on resource management. We began a glade

restoration project in the spring that we hope to continue this winter. The park has a large glade complex that over the years has become choked in Eastern red cedar trees. Removing these trees will allow the unique glade plants and animals to once again thrive. The stewardship crew will also be hard at work preparing burn units. Prescribed fire is our main management tool in our state parks, so don't be surprised if you drive into the park this spring and see some black. That is only temporary, though, and soon a lush carpet of grasses and wildflowers emerge as the sunlight is finally able to get to the ground.

All this work means park staff gets to be outside a lot

this winter. But for many visitors, winter means staying huddled up inside. We know that being outdoors is good for both our mind and body, so don't let the cold weather keep you from getting your daily dose of nature.

Winter is one of my favorite times to get outside. No ticks, no gnats and no heat. Put on a few layers and go for a hike. The quiet and peacefulness you will experience is like no other. Last winter I wrote an article on things to do in the winter. I liked it so much, that I ran it again in this issue, just to remind you that you can enjoy nature in any season!

--Jamie Hubert
Park Naturalist

The Legend of Sam Hildebrand Lives on for Nearly Two Centuries

The Civil War bushwhacker Sam Hildebrand, infamous in this region, would be celebrating his 176th birthday on Jan. 6, 2012.

Ask any local in the area around St. Francois State Park, and they will tell you the legend of a man who

endured strife and persecution that led to a life of revenge.

Sam Hildebrand knew this area, then called the Pike Run Hills, very well. He often hid out in the deep valleys and small caves when he made his forays

back to St. Francois County. Learn more about Sam and his life during the "Bushwhacked" program, usually held around September.



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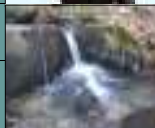
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Missouri State Park Mission

- To preserve and interpret the finest examples of Missouri's natural landscapes
- To preserve and interpret the finest examples of Missouri's cultural landmarks.
- To provide healthy and enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences to Missourians and visitors to the state.

From the Archives: Winter's Hidden Secrets Revealed

Photos courtesy of Aaron Smith



For many people, winter sparks an end to the outdoor playtime we all enjoy during the summer months. It is easy to feel down during the cold grey months of winter, but it doesn't have to be that way!

While you may not feel

like braving the chill to go camping, there are still many activities that you can enjoy in Missouri state parks in the winter.

One way to combat the winter blues is through exercise. Why walk on the treadmill when you can hit the trail in a state park near you? Experts say that exercise is a sure-fire way to boost your mood AND your health. You may think that there won't be anything to see in the winter but that isn't the case! While many animals do hibernate in the winter, there are still a lot of ani-



Deer are crepuscular, meaning they are active in early morning and early evening.

mals that are active when it's cold outside. A favorite of many wildlife watchers is the white-tailed deer. Deer remain active year round, and the best time to view them is early in the morning, or early in the evening.

While hiking through the woods on a cold Missouri day, you are likely to hear the "Peter, Peter, Peter" call of the tufted titmouse, or the screech of a red-tailed hawk soaring overhead. While some of Missouri's songbirds migrate south for the winter, many do not. Winter is a



The white-breasted nuthatch is the only bird that can go head-first down a tree.

great time to see these birds up close when they aren't being hidden by the leaves on the trees. You can hear woodpeckers drumming on the trees, you can see cardinals in their scarlet brilliance, and watch the antics of the white-breasted nuthatch as he hops head-first down a tree. And, of course, our nation's symbol - the bald eagle—is most abundant in Missouri in the winter. In fact, most ea-

gles leave Missouri in the summer to go north to nest. While you aren't likely to see a bald eagle at St. Francois, they are abundant along bigger rivers and lakes throughout the state.

The area surrounding St. Francois County is one of the most beautiful in the state. There are numerous state parks and conservation areas within a short driving distance, making winter outdoor opportunities plentiful.

Remember, nature's beauty does not end when the leaves drop in the fall. Many of nature's secrets can be discovered in the winter. The area around St. Francois County is one of the most beautiful in the state. Even I did not realize the awesome beauty that existed here! Put on a stocking hat and coat, and get out and enjoy your state parks, conservation areas and forests. You may be the only one out there, but the solitude and one-on-one time with nature is one that you aren't soon to forget.



Visit mostateparks.com or mdc.mo.gov for links to places near you to enjoy nature in any season.

Winter Photography Tips

One of the hobbies that knows no season is photography. Winter brings out photography opportunities that are unique, and unlike anything you will find during any other season. One tip to remember: the sunlight during early morning and late afternoon offer the best lighting. So get an early start, if you can.

Photography is a fun and relaxing way to discover nature. Your senses are

heightened as you walk through the woods looking for the perfect photo opportunity. You don't have to be a professional or spend a lot of money on equipment to pull amazing shots.

Technology in digital cameras today allows for high quality photographs even in a point-and-shoot camera. I, myself, use a Canon S5 IS, a mid-range camera.

Finally, photography "field trips" are a great family activity. Children don't get a lot of "outdoor time" during the winter. This is a

way to enjoy some time outside as a family. Besides, children love playing with the camera. You'll probably be surprised at what they see from their level, and the things that catch their attention.

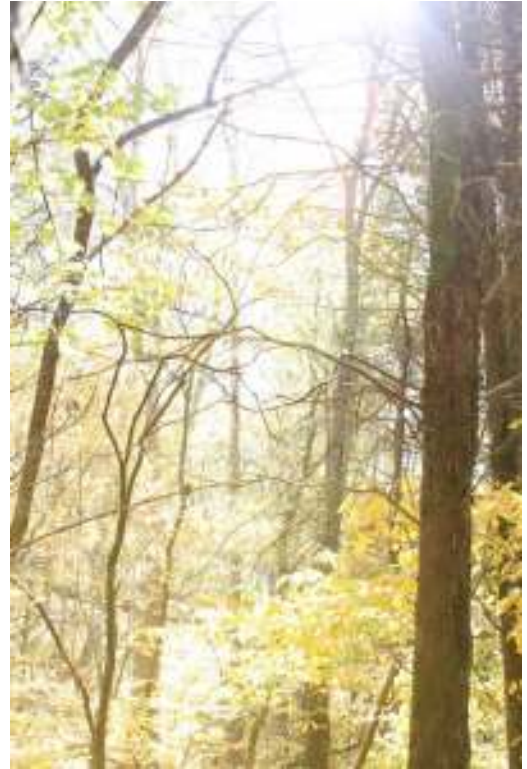


“Fall into St. Francois” Photo Contest Winners

This fall, the park held a photo contest through the Facebook page. Visitors were encouraged to come out to the park during the fall and take photographs. There were five categories: Discovering Nature, Inspiration, Fall Colors, Family Fun and A Closer Look. Each person could submit photos in any category, and a survey was held for fans of the page to vote on their favorites. The winning photographs from each category will be featured on the park’s webpage. Congratulations to the winners!



“Fall Colors” category winner. Photo by Brian Spohn.



Above: “Inspiration” category winner.
Left: “A Closer Look” category winner.
Photos by Stephanie Hawkins Lauman.



Above: “Family Fun” category winner. Photo by Brian Spohn.
Left: “Discovering Nature” category winner. Photo by Brian Spohn.

ST. FRANCOIS STATE PARK

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Check us out on Facebook

Search for Missouri State
Parks and Historic Sites

Camping Rates for the Winter 2011-2012

Camping Season (Off Season Rates)

Basic Campsite- \$12.00

Electric Campsite- \$19.00

Electric/Water- \$19.00

Sewer/Electric/Water- \$22.00

\$2 discount for seniors and persons with disabilities.

*St. Francois State Park has only BASIC and ELECTRIC campsites.
To make a reservation, call 1-877-422-6766.



The Amazing Frogcicle

Each winter, animals do what they have to do in order to survive the cold temperatures. Many do it through hibernation. Cold-blooded animals like amphibians are especially vulnerable to cold temperatures.

The common misconception is that frogs burrow into the mud at the bottom of a pond for the winter, similar to turtles. The truth is, the frog would

suffocate if it did this. What they do is even more amazing.

Frogs will sit at the bottom of the pond, and their body temperature will decrease, even to the point where ice crystals will form on the skin and in the bladder. How can the frog survive this?

Antifreeze! Frogs produce a large amount of glucose (a sugar) in the frog's vital organs that prevent freezing. The frog's heart will stop and it will stop breathing, appearing to be dead, but as soon as the pond begins to warm, the frog's frozen portions will thaw, the heart and lungs start to work, and the frog "comes back to life". Amazing!



What about terrestrial frogs?

Even more amazing is that land frogs just bury under leaf litter. Up to 70 percent of the water in their body can be frozen solid, but when the weather warms, this frogcicle thaws out and lives to reproduce another year.

