Hiking
More than 9 miles of hiking trails are available at Eldon Hazlet. The 3-mile Cherokee Trail has three separate loops that pass through a mature oak-hickory forest over gently rolling terrain, offering great views of the lake. Loop 3 of the Cherokee Trail is wheelchair accessible to Burnside Cemetery, a restored cemetery with tombstones dating to the 1830's. Pawnee Trail is a 1-mile loop trail running along the highest point on Carlyle Lake. The Kaskaskian Trail is a 2 1/2-mile loop trail that begins near the park office and passes by the Osage Youth Group Area, the Pawnee Trail, various day-use areas and the Eagle Trail, a 3/4-mile loop near the north end of Illini Campground.

The Bluestem Trail, a ¼-mile wheelchair accessible interpretive trail, is located within the 3-acre prairie restoration directly across from the park office. The 1.5-mile Illini Trail, also wheelchair accessible, is located across from the Campground Store and loops around the Illini Fishing Pond. The 1/2-mile Wetland Educational Trail, also wheelchair accessible, winds through a permanent pond and moist-soil habitat. Interpretive signs along the trail educate hikers on the benefits of wetlands. It is an excellent place to view waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds. All trails are closed Wednesday through Sunday during pheasant season.

Natural Features
Wildlife abounds at Eldon Hazlet, in part due to the natural resource management program implemented at the park.

Various types of warm season grasses and legumes are planted to provide supplemental cover and food for wildlife. Brush piles and nest structures, such as bluebird boxes have been placed throughout the park. The restoration of natural habitats, such as prairie and wetlands, also benefits local wildlife populations. Across from the site office, is a 3-acre tall grass prairie with more than fifty species of native plants. Numerous species of wildflowers bloom in the summer, including compass plant, blazing star, purple coneflowers, rattlesnake master, American feverfew and stiff tickseed. Deer, red foxes, raccoons, squirrels, woodchucks, quail, doves and songbirds, including bluebirds, are among the wildlife species to be seen. More than 200,000 waterfowl stop at the lake on their migratory travels north and south each year. Along with waterfowl, other types of birds commonly seen at the park include wading birds, such as herons and egrets, as well as shorebirds, songbirds and raptors.

Picnicking
Eight picnic areas are available in the park, all of which are located near the lake. Tables and grills are provided at all of the picnic areas, and five of the areas have electricity-equipped shelters that can be reserved at www.ReserveAmerica.com.

Sailing
A combination of wide open water, low surrounding terrain and strong winds provides the conditions which make Carlyle Lake one of the Midwest’s most popular sailing lakes. Regional and national regattas are held here, and in 1994 the US Olympic Festival games sailing competition was hosted by Eldon Hazlet State Park and the Carlyle Sailing Association.

A 40-acre sailboat harbor, protected in a deep inlet, is at the south end of the park and is operated as a land-based marina, meaning all boats are stored on land. The sailboat harbor is leased from the park by the Carlyle Sailing Association, which operates it as a concession for members. The harbor complex has a conventional boat launching ramp and three electric hoists which can place sailboats up to 2,000 pounds (in the 16 to 18 foot range) in the water from the harbor wall. For additional information, contact the harbor master at (618) 594-3622 or visit www.csasil.org.

Boating
Because of its central location relative to the lake, the park is a great place to launch a boat. Three boat ramps are available to the public free-of-charge. A four-lane boat ramp with a handicap-accessible courtesy dock, fish cleaning station, two picnic shelters and picnic areas, Allen Branch Day Use Area is one of the most popular boat launching spots on the lake. Apache Day Use Area has a two-lane ramp, picnic shelter, playground equipment, fish cleaning station and privy toilets. Peppenhorst Branch Area has a gravelled, small, boat ramp used by anglers and hunters.

Map Trail Key
- Cherokee Trail (3 miles)
- Kaskaskian Trail (2.5 miles)
- Illini Trail (1.5 miles)
- Pawnee Trail (1 mile)
- Eagle Trail (.75 mile)
- Wetland Trail (.5 mile)
- Bluestem Trail (.25 mile)

Park Entrance
- To Route 127

To Pepperport Branch Boat Access Area
- To Carlyle Sailing Association and Shawnee Chicksaw & Olympic Day Use Areas