

# The BRIDGE

Volume 21 : Issue 4 October 2008

## *The Newsletter of the Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park (RBMSP)*

A membership 501(c)(3) organized to promote understanding, appreciation, enjoyment & preservation of RBMSP & the surrounding area  
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### **From the Friends of Rock Bridge MSP (FoRB) News - from the FoRB President, Jan Weaver**

Last week (October 7) I went to the second public meeting on the Gans Road Extension. The goal is to connect Hwy 63 with Providence south of State Farm, by extending Gans Road across Clear Creek and then to Providence. At the first meeting, many citizens expressed concern for protecting Rock Bridge Memorial State Park. The plans presented last week reflected those wishes. The road would be a parkway/pedway (bike lanes and sidewalks) with a central median planted with native plants. More importantly, it would provide limited access and use roundabouts instead of traffic lights at quarter mile intervals to handle cross traffic. This makes the roadway unappealing for commercial development. By planning the roadway well in advance of development pressure, the county and city are able to better consider the interests of local residents and existing users. We are lucky to have elected officials with such foresight (even if it does not mean we always our way). However, it is up to us to let them know what we want. So make good use of public meetings to express your opinions!

### **Opportunities (Volunteer & Educational)**

#### **Park Stewardship Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup> 1:00-3:00 p.m**

Join us at the Devil's Ice Box parking lot to give back to the park for part of an afternoon. Wear long sleeves and pants, sturdy shoes and gloves. We will be doing litter pick up along 163, and Rock Bridge Lane, and fence and invasive plant removal in the park.

### **Nature Notes:**

**Fall Colors** - The brilliance and timing of Fall foliage turning shades of red, yellow and brown varies with the weather. Some, like the Virginia creeper vine seen high in the trees, will turn red around the end of September. The bright sugar maples provide some of our best color, usually around the middle of October. Oaks follow, sometimes as late as the end of October. It's a beautiful time to hike in park woodlands. The shorter days and cooler temperatures of Fall cause leaves to stop producing chlorophyll. The green chlorophyll no longer masks the yellow carotenoids that have been present all summer. Red and purple colors are created by a different group of pigments called anthocyanins. These are caused by sugars in the leaves that are produced on warm sunny days but can't move out of the leaves due to cool nights. These two groups of pigments can combine to give us shades of orange and bronze.

**Bat Hibernation** - Many bat species begin hibernation around mid October. Those we are expecting to return to Devil's Icebox Cave to spend the winter are: hundreds of federally endangered Indiana bats, E. Pipistrelle bats and Little Brown bats along with a few Gray and Big Brown bats. The vast majority of the gray bat population that spent the summer here migrated about 300 miles to a few caves in Southern Missouri. They prefer to hibernate there because the cave temperatures are in the upper 40's rather than the Icebox's 55° F. Hibernation causes bats' heart rate to go from about 400 beats per minute to 25, breathing to be almost imperceptible and their temperature to be within one degree of their surroundings. This adaptation enables bats to survive until Spring when flying insects are once again available to eat.

### **Thank You's and Kudos**

Thank you to Linda La Fontaine, Nancy Rezabek, Cammy Ronchetto, Jim Ronchetto, Meredith Donaldson, Nanci Johnson and Jan Weaver for their efforts to plan and host the OMeet and Eco Hike on Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to Rosemary Stevens and Hazel Breitenbach for getting the Bridge delivered to members via email and snail mail.

**FoRB Membership** Thank you to the following FoRB members Jim Rathert, Dr. & Mrs. Arthur Rikli, Pat and Phil Sachs, Judy and Jerry Schermer, Helen & William Steinmann, Diane & Tom Mendenhall, David Sapp, Ruth & Russell Thompson, Debs Harmon, Nanci & Randy Johnson, Lynn & George Montgomery, Jim Carrel & Jan Weaver for renewing their FoRB membership. FoRB welcomes our newest member Tim Drennan.

Oriented to Nature



### **Orienteering Meet- Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup>**

Forty-nine participants converged on Rock Bridge Memorial State Park for the OMeet and Eco Hike. Everyone enjoyed the glorious fall weather as they collected maps, compasses, pencils and cards to document the markers found. Nineteen people chose the Eco Hike, while 19 and

11 respectively chose the Orange and Red Orienteering courses. Check out the web page for finish results:  
<http://rockbridge.missouri.org/o-meet.htm>

## From Rock Bridge Memorial State Park News - from the Park Superintendent, Jim Gast

October is a busy month at the park with special events planned every weekend. On October 4th, there was a workday for the Trail Summit Conference. Participants worked on a reroute of a trail in the Gans Creek Wild Area. Wild Cave Tour season ended on the 8<sup>th</sup>. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, FoRB sponsored its annual Orienteering Meet and EcoHike (see web page). The park will host the Rock Bridge Revenge Cross Country meet on the 19<sup>th</sup>, which will be sponsored by the Columbia Track Club and Show-Me State Games. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, the Cedar Creek Therapeutic Riding Center will use the Gans Creek Wild Area for a fund-raising event. There are also several interpretive programs that park staff will be doing for the public (**see below**) as well as school groups.

You should also come out to the park to see what the Rock Bridge looks like without the boardwalk in front of and underneath it.

Off-season office hours begin November 1<sup>st</sup>. The park office will not be open on weekends until April 1<sup>st</sup>. Office hours are 9:00 to noon and 1:00 to 4:00 although there is usually someone in the office from 8:00 to 5:00. It's a good idea to call (449-7402) before coming out.

### Opportunities (Volunteer and Educational)

**Honeysuckle Removal** - Volunteers are needed at the park to use hand tools to cut bush honeysuckle bushes and paint a herbicide onto the cut stumps. Contact Roxie (449-7400 or [roxie.campbell@dnr.mo.gov](mailto:roxie.campbell@dnr.mo.gov)) to set up a time to receive training on identification, methods and locations.

**Burn Crew Training** - Learn how to help with prescribed burns while enjoying the fall colors, prairie flowers and sunset on the Grassland Trail. Practice using fire control tools. Roxie will provide training on how fire benefits some natural communities, how fire behaves, how we manage fire and how to stay safe during a burn. This rare training opportunity is available to anyone interested in considering volunteering to help with burns (conducted on weekdays Fall, winter and spring). It's being offered one time, Tues. Oct. 21 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. (snacks provided). Contact the park to register (449-7400)

### Events (reservations are usually required and open 1 month before an event - 573-449-7400)

**Wild Area Adventure Saturday, October 18, 12:30 –4:30 p.m** Join the park naturalist for an adventure in the Gans Creek Wild Area. Enjoy the fall colors, explore two small caves and learn a bit about forests, glades and streams. Recommended ages: 8 to adult

**November Night Sky Saturday, November 22, 2008 7:00 – 9:00pm** Learn all about the night sky: identify constellations, listen to myths and Native American star stories, and understand how city lights affect stargazing, plants, animals and people!

Rock Bridge Memorial State Park is managed by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks, and is funded by primarily by the Parks-and-Soils Sales Tax. It is located at 5901 S. Highway 163, Columbia, MO 65203. Information about the park is at [www.mostateparks.com](http://www.mostateparks.com) and the park may be contacted by email at [rock.bridge.memorial.state.park@dnr.mo.gov](mailto:rock.bridge.memorial.state.park@dnr.mo.gov) or phone at 573-449-7400.

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\$15 Special (park staff/vol, student, sr.)  
\$20 Individual \$35 Family

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