

# The BRIDGE

Volume 24: Issue 12 December 2011

*The Newsletter of the Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park*

## News from the Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park (FoRB)

Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park is a membership supported 501 (c)(3) organized to promote understanding, appreciation, enjoyment and preservation of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park and the surrounding area. email: [weaverjc@missouri.edu](mailto:weaverjc@missouri.edu), address: FoRB, P.O. Box 7642, Columbia MO 65205-7642

### President's Letter - Kevin Roberson, President: Decision Time!

Greetings Friends! It is a rainy night on the edge of paradise and in the aftermath of plenty. I have spent more time with friends and family relaxing and visiting in the last month than I have in the previous year. This deer season and Thanksgiving have been blessed by abundance of both friends and bounty. As I basked in the glow of this cornucopia I often found my thoughts drifting to the park and the Friends group. After serving for a few months, I have a much greater appreciation for the effort of those who previously have worked tirelessly to make this group and the park stronger and more relevant. One of my major tasks as the president of the Friends group is to guide and lead our group in the execution of our duties.

A common refrain from current and past board members has been a lack of decisiveness on issues that languish for too long. At the last board meeting Monday, November 21, we made strong decisions that will further our group and strengthen our Park. The board:

- Decided not to become involved in preserving the Hickam Cabin structure because of the potential for long term responsibility for its maintenance falling on FoRB. However, we will look into the feasibility of disassembling the cabin and preserving the timbers in the event they can be used for interpretation some time in the future. Jim Gast was asked to see if this would be ok with DNR. Jan Weaver will investigate storage options and costs.
- Requested Jim Gast and Scott Schulte develop cost estimates for providing electricity (possibly with solar power) to the Rock Bridge Mills shelter to enhance program capability at the Devil's Icebox location.
- Requested Jim Gast get cost estimates for constructing a handicap accessible path to the Rock Bridge Mills shelter from the Devil's Icebox parking lot to improve access to park programs for all audiences.

These small first steps of the new board are to the Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park as crawling is to a baby; just the beginning of stronger, bigger actions. We have voted to align ourselves with the positive future and I am excited about the planning that is commencing for the activities in the coming year and the projects we plan to support.

I hope that you all have been blessed in this holiday season and that I can count on your support and energy in the wrap-up of 2011 and following through into the New Year.

**FRIENDS BOARD MEETING: Monday December 19, 6:00 pm, at the Park Office, 5901 S Hwy 163**

### FRIENDS PROGRAM - January 1, 2012 - Annual New Year's Day Hike - Led by Scott Schulte

Join the Friends of Rock Bridge for a New Year's Day hike in Rock Bridge Memorial State Park from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. The featured hike will be the eastern part of the Gans Creek Wild Area. Depending on the turn out, at least one other hike of shorter distance and time will also be available for those who do not wish to go on the featured hike. Meet at the Devil's Icebox parking lot by 12:45 to divide into groups. Maximum number of participants is 60. Reservations are not required.

### Rock Bridge Memorial State Park Closed Dec. 10 and 11, 2011

Rock Bridge Memorial State Park will be closed Dec. 10 and 11, 2011, to allow for a managed deer hunt.

### New FoRB Website: <http://www.friendsofrockbridgemsp.org/>

Please update bookmark folder and point your Friends of Rock Bridge link to the new address!

**REMINDER:** The **NEW ADDRESS** for FoRB is: **Friends of Rock Bridge MSP, P.O. Box 7642, Columbia MO, 65205-7642.** Calls can be directed to Jan at **573-424-9438** and emails can go to [weaverjc@missouri.edu](mailto:weaverjc@missouri.edu) .

### 2011-2012 Officers and Directors

2011 - 2012 Officers: President: Kevin Roberson; V.P.: Jeffrey Friel, Treasurer: Jan Weaver, Secretary: Brennan Van Matre  
2010 - 2012 Directors: Bill Hobbs, Sue Tillema  
2011 - 2013 Directors: Scott Schulte

**Park Events in December - None are currently scheduled**

# News from Rock Bridge Memorial State Park

Rock Bridge Memorial State Park is managed by the Department of Natural Resources, Missouri State Parks, and is primarily funded by 1/2 of 1/10 of a per cent State Parks-and-Soils Sales Tax. It is located at 5901 S. Highway 163, Columbia, MO 65203. phone: 573-449-7400; Website: <http://www.mostateparks.com/rockbridge.htm>, email: [rock.bridge.memorial.state.park@dnr.mo.gov](mailto:rock.bridge.memorial.state.park@dnr.mo.gov)

## **Park News - Jim Gast, Park Superintendent: December Deer Hunt**

Rock Bridge Memorial State Park will be closed on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> for a managed deer hunt. This will be the first hunt in the park in five years.

Normally, hunting is not allowed in Missouri State Parks. Managed hunts are permitted when deer populations exceed 25 deer per square mile. Too many deer can cause problems to vegetation and can lead to disease. We count deer by flying over the park in a helicopter. In order to do the count, there must be at least four inches of snow on the ground. This past winter we counted 118 deer, which is 34 deer per square mile.

Over a hundred (103) hunters have signed up for the hunt. They will be using muzzleloaders and are permitted to take three antlerless deer each. (Antlerless deer includes does and button bucks—young male deer with spikes three inches or less or no spikes at all.) The park is divided into two hunting units. We split out the Gans Creek Wild Area in an attempt to draw more hunters to that area. Hunters cannot hunt in both units. Hunting is not allowed in the area bordered by Highway 163 and Tomlin Hill Road.

Hunters apply to the Missouri Department of Conservation and are chosen by a random drawing. Four other state parks—Ha Ha Tonka, Knob Noster, Pomme de Terre and Watkins Woolen Mill—will be conducting managed deer hunts this year.

## **Park Natural History/History – Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist: The Sin of Omission**

Why is Roxie writing about the sin of omission? Well, it relates to park management. Years ago in the early days of the Missouri State Park system, the philosophy was to “let nature take its course.” It wasn’t long before scientific research informed us that the hands-off approach had its problems, primarily because it allowed conditions that were induced by people to go uncorrected. Thus, the result was not natural in the sense of what nature had been in Missouri for thousands of years. Not managing was actually causing harm.

Therefore, it was decided that park staff should conduct some management – for the purpose of protecting all of the natural resources and overall ecosystem health. One example is a case of people adding something that doesn’t belong – invasive plants. We control/kill invasive plants because people have moved them here from other continents and, without their natural controls, they spread aggressively and cause ecological problems like preventing oak and hickory saplings from growing, which in time will affect wildlife food and habitat. Also, if invasive plants take over, people will not be able to view an authentic Missouri landscape. Even walking off-trail through the woods will become a challenge.

The second example is a case of people removing something that does belong – fire. Prior to European settlement, wildfires traveled across the landscape and maintained openness in the woodlands as well as on the prairies. Cedar trees with their flammable needles were restricted to sites such as bluff edges. Modern land use and fire suppression efforts have prevented fires and allowed cedar trees to become abundant (which they are in the park). Cedars create shade and secrete chemicals that inhibit the growth of other plants, so in some areas of the park, we have cut cedars to favor trees and plants that are characteristic components of Missouri’s terrestrial natural communities, as we did recently in the Karst Trail Area. We also manage some areas with prescribed fire in order to return this force that people had banished from Missouri’s ecosystem.

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**FoRB Membership - To join, *Clip and Mail* this section with check made out to FoRB, P.O. Box 7642, Columbia MO 65205-7642**

\$15	Park Staff/Vol, Student, Senior	Name _____
\$20	Individual	Address _____
\$35	Family	Phone _____ Email _____
\$100	Supporting	

**FoRB is a 501.c.3 organization. That means your donations to us are tax deductible!**

**FoRB  
P.O. Box 7642  
Columbia MO 65205-7642**

## **December 2011 Issue**

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