

The BRIDGE

Volume 25: Issue 3 March 2012

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, address: FoRB, P.O. Box 7642, Columbia MO 65205-7642 website: <http://www.friendsofrockbridgemsp.org/>

President's Letter - Kevin Roberson: Progress on Four Fronts!

It is a busy time for the Friends group and I have much exciting news to pass on. First off, the board has approved an MOU with the Parks department concerning the Hickam cabin project. After many months it looks like we are making progress on this structure. And through the efforts of past president Susan Haines and of Dottie Stoerker-Peters, we have gotten a good start on getting an acceptable plan in place to restore and protect this piece of history for the park.

Secondly, we are making progress toward a solar electrification project for the Rock Bridge Mill's shelter. The board approved this project, proposed and supervised by board member Scott Schulte, and has pledged funding pending a formal bid for the work.

Third, the board approved both monetary and moral support for naturalist Roxie Campbell's Invasive Plant control project.

Lastly, we have secured a date for the dedication of the Lew Stoerker Memorial Plaque and boulder-April 14, 2012. To support this momentous occasion, the Director of MO DNR, Sara Pauley, the Director of MO State Parks, William Bryan, and Conservation Federation of Missouri Executive Director Dave Murphy will speak at the event. This wonderful dedication ceremony will also be paired with a member activity to help build membership in the Friends of the Rock Bridge Memorial State Park.

As you can see, there is much going on and many activities that can use your help. Think about what you can do to make these activities more successful or more meaningful for others. If you would like to help, contact me or any other board member or RBMSP staff member. Thanks for your time and attention. I hope to see you in the park soon.

Kevin Roberson, kwrcdr@aol.com

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

FRIENDS PROGRAM – Woodcock Walk – This will be scheduled on an *ad hoc* basis, depending on the weather. If you are interested, email President Kevin Roberson at kwrcdr@aol.com to get on the contact list.

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 March and April

- April 5 - Bats of Devil's Icebox Cave and the World - 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm, **Columbia Public Library** - <http://mostateparks.com/event/59440/bats-devils-icebox-cave-and-world>
- April 14 - Lew Stoerker Boulder Dedication - 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, Columbia, Mr. Stoerker was instrumental in setting up the park - <http://mostateparks.com/event/59434/lew-stoerker-boulder-dedication>

Events in the Columbia Area

- March 18 - Spring Clean-up with Show-Me Clean Streams - 2:00 pm, Twin Lakes Recreation Area, Columbia - http://mostreamteam.org/Whats_Happening.asp
- March 21 - Discovering Missouri's Natural Areas, Mike Leahy, MDC - 7:00 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Boulevard, Columbia- <http://columbia-audubon.org/meetings.php#5>
- April 14 - Clean-Up Columbia Day - <https://www.gocolumbiamo.com/CMS/WebForms/form.php?formid=23>
- April 18 - What You Can Do for Missouri Bird Conservation, Edge Wade, Veteran Birder - 7:00 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Boulevard, Columbia - <http://columbia-audubon.org/meetings.php#5>
- April 22 - Columbia Area Earth Day Festival - Noon to 5:00 pm Kids' Area, Noon to 6:00 pm Street Fair, Noon to 7:00 pm, Peace Park Stage - <http://columbiaearthday.org/>
- April 24 - Lecture by Rob Cahill: Community Cloud Forest Conservation - Missouri United Methodist Church, Columbia

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

Park News - Jim Gast, Park Superintendent: What is Your Wish for the Park?

If you could change five things about the management or operation of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, what would they be? I'm looking for your ideas, and while I can't guarantee they'll be implemented, I still would like to get input from members of FoRB. We hold meetings with the public to gather input (and you're certainly welcome to attend these meetings—look for the date of the 2012 meeting in a later edition of *The Bridge*), but I think it's important to get ideas from the people who care enough about the park to join a group dedicated to its preservation. If you have ideas, please send them to me at jim.gast@dnr.mo.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

Park Natural History– Eric Bohle and Roxie Campbell: Invasive Plants Threaten Future of the Park

We're facing a crossroads. For the ecology of the park to be maintained much as it is today will require a cooperative human effort to prevent the destruction of plant communities by certain aggressive non-native plants. Especially in the cities of St. Louis and Columbia, but increasingly in rural areas, bush honeysuckle has invaded and has been observed in and around the park. The park's unique diversity of plants and the wildlife that rely upon them are vulnerable. What one experiences of the landscape when visiting the park is also at risk.

What can happen has already been demonstrated in much of the St. Louis, Missouri area where Asian bush honeysuckles higher than 10 feet tall form thickets that block movements of wildlife and also block sunlight from reaching flora on the ground. Without sunlight, the seedlings of many species of trees as well as wildflowers on the forest floor suffer. Chemical secretions from the roots of honeysuckles directly inhibit other plants and kill mycorrhizal fungi needed by other plants. Moisture and nutrients are also taken from native plants. Over time, the loss of native plants greatly reduces the food supply for wildlife. In the St. Louis area, people trying to enjoy woodlands can no longer see some distance through the woods and find the diversity of plants replaced by a monoculture of honeysuckle. Access to stream banks and hiking off trail is difficult because the bushes form a nearly impenetrable tangle of branches and stems.

Park staff and FoRB want to prevent that from happening to our beloved park. Ongoing efforts within the park to prevent the take-over of invasive plant species have been successful thus far, but will become more difficult as bush honeysuckle becomes established on private lands surrounding the park. Large bushes produce hundreds of seeds that infest nearby areas aided by birds. Restoring heavily infested areas is labor intensive. It is much easier to remove plants when they are young, scattered and not producing fruit.

The FORB board has initiated a cooperative program with local landowners surrounding the park to create a buffer zone. Landowners will be offered information and assistance on how they can manage invasive plant infestations to protect the park as well as their own property. We need volunteers to assist landowners. It's easy to spot bush honeysuckles in March because they put out bright green leaves before our native plants leaf out. When the soil is moist, small plants can be pulled easily.

With a proactive effort, Rock Bridge Memorial State Park can remain a unique remnant of our traditional plant communities that will take on a greater significance as other areas lose their traditional character.

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

March 2012 Issue

President's News: Progress on Four Fronts
Park News: What is Your Wish for the Park
Naturalist News: Invasive Plants Threaten Future of Park