

The BRIDGE

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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: Subdivision Plan Goes to City Council

Greetings Friends! As I said last month, "We live in exciting times". The big news this month is that the Parkside Development plan was not approved by the Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission at its 24JAN2013 session. Not the end of this saga, but a good start. As Bill Bryan so succinctly put it, "This isn't over yet!"

The plan was rejected by an 8 to 0 vote. This outcome was secured based on the strength of our presentations and our reasonable objections, especially from Bill Bryan, Susan Flader, Jan Weaver, and Ken Midkiff. I also would like to hope that the plan also struggled under the weight of its own absurdity. This proposed kind of density and this demonstrated lack of understanding of the geology and lack of respect for the Park and its area were hard to understand for someone that cares about the Park and our community.

There will be a city council reading the first week in February and then a discussion in a couple of weeks – see below. It would be a good time to be active and make our voices heard again. We will keep you posted by email. We also should be asking ourselves, "What level of density will we consider appropriate?" This is the question that was on everyone's mind at the end of the P&Z meeting. I think with proper protection for the subsurface and surface water that we can have development in this area. I have a number in mind. Do you? If so, drop me an email at kwrcdr@aol.com. Make sure your voice is heard and support your park. Thank you and enjoy your park.

Best regards, Kevin Roberson - President, FoRB kwrcdr@aol.com

CITY COUNCIL MEETING: Monday, February 18, 7 pm, Council Chamber, City Hall at 8th & Broadway.

Go here for a link to the Agenda - <http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/CMS/webcal/event.php?id=2240>

If you live in the city, please contact your council person and let him or her know how you feel about the proposal to build a subdivision on the border of the park. Go here to find contact information - http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Meet_The_Council/

FRIENDS BOARD MEETING: Tuesday, February 19, 7:00 pm, at the Public Library at Garth and Broadway. Agenda items include reports on the Hickam Cabin renovation and Solar electricity for Rock Bridge Mills Shelter, planning for next spring's Rock Bridge Renewal, discussion of Parkside development.

2012-2013 Officers and Directors

2012 - 2013 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

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 Superintendent News – Jim Gast: Managed Burns and the Subdivision

What a wild weather week we had. 76 degrees for a high on Monday. 6 for a low on Friday and 2 inches of rain, some snow and high winds in between. Makes it hard to conduct prescribed burns with the crazy weather. We're scheduled to burn in the Grassland, High Ridge and Karst trail areas of the park this spring. We need the weather to cooperate. Ideally to burn we'd like mild temperatures (40 to mid-60s), moderate humidity (35% to 60%) and some wind (5-15 mph). The sky needs to be clear so the smoke carries up and away. Depending on where we burn, wind direction is also a factor. We need to keep smoke from blowing across Highway 163.

The Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission voted 8-0 with one member absent to deny a request for R-1 and PUD 5.5 zoning for Southside Estates subdivision. The proposed subdivision borders the park on the west side. Commission members thought the proposal was too dense (64 lots on 35 acres; 12 of the lots would contain two-unit villas). Speaking against the proposal were Missouri State Park director Bill Bryan and representatives from the Sierra Club and Columbia Audubon Society as well as various residents who live near the park. The proposal now goes to the City Council.

Naturalist News – Guest Columnist: Jan Weaver – Reading Nature

In 2006 I taught a class at MU on the Natural History of Missouri. I was going to teach Missouri nature facts, but I also wanted students to learn how to “read” nature so they could continue to learn even after class was done. If anyone is going to master a new skill, the best way is to practice it on a regular basis. To get the students to practice “reading” nature on a regular basis, I decided to have them write in a journal several times a week. Now, I had never done this myself, even though I have gotten notebooks for exactly that purpose. I figured I ought to see how difficult it was to do journaling before I made students do it.

The first thing I did was to get a cheap, small notebook. This may seem counterintuitive, but I found the nice journals with the big pages kind of intimidating. They seemed to demand deep thoughts, and a good deal of them. A cheap notebook wouldn't be expecting too much of me as a writer, and a small page wouldn't look so empty if I didn't have many observations to record.

I kept a journal for two weeks the semester before class began. Here are my observations. Nov 14, A buck and a doe in my front yard at dusk (pretty spectacular beginning, huh?). Nov 15, Windy enough to move the tops of trees (not as cool as deer). Nov 16, Night sky so cloudy can only see the major constellations. Nov 17, Counted 12 bird and 93 squirrel nests on the walk home - squirrel nests sometimes 3 or 4 to a tree. Nov 18, Rock Bridge - 2 layers of trees in woods on a south facing slope, large older oak trees and younger maple saplings- oaks going to be replaced by maples?. Nov 19, Starlings flocking at dusk, groups of 30 to 1000? Nov 20, Left in the dark, home in the dark - no notes. Nov 21, Rock Bridge, circular patch of green grass in a patch of flat woods - remains of sinkhole pond? Nov 22, Driving along 8 in Washington Co. Sycamores have very curvy branches and twigs, and orangey spherical seeds or fruits high in branches. Nov 23, Comma butterfly - late morning, flying in sun. Nov 24, Back up 8, no short leaf pines north of 44? Nov 25, Shrub honeysuckle still has most of its leaves though most other shrubs have lost theirs - they are everywhere along Providence! Nov 26, MKT, yellow orange foam(?) in the Flat Branch, natural or pollutant? Nov 27, Crickets calling Nov 28, Can't think of a thing I noticed today. Nov 29, Sky light enough to ride bike home after sunset without lights.

Some days, there was plenty to notice. Other days I had to work at it, counting things, or working up a description of something I already thought I was familiar with. And some days - nothing, either because I was inside all day, or too tired to notice anything if I did get out. The thing is, making a date with nature worked most days. I saw things I never noticed before, or saw things I took for granted with new eyes. Maybe it would work for you as well. Get a cheap, small notebook. Take five minutes each day to notice something in nature - the color of berries, the interaction of a pair of birds, the shape of clouds in the sky, the way rocks fracture or a what it is a squirrel is trying so hard to reach at the end of a branch. Then, take a few more minutes at the end of the day and write it down. *Read Nature.*

Events

- February 9 - Columbia Crawdads Stream Cleanup - 8:00 am to 11:00 am, Columbia - <http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/CMS/webcal/event.php?id=1747>
- February 10 - 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Blue Note, Columbia 3rd Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival, hosted by Missouri River Relief - www.riverrelief.org
- February 12 - Big Muddy Series: Dendrochronoarcheology - 7:00 pm, Les Bourgeois Vineyards, 14020 W. Highway BB, Rocheport - <http://www.riverrelief.org/updates/entry/big-muddy-speaker-series-rocheport/>
- February 14 - Cardinals & Coffee: A Bird Walk - 8:00 am to 10:30 am, Runge Nature Center, Jefferson City, adults, registration required - <http://mdc.mo.gov/events/location/Runge/heading/Runge-20Nature-20Center>
- February 20 - Audubon Center at Riverlands, Dr. Patricia Hagen, Riverlands Audubon- 7:00 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd, Columbia - <http://columbia-audubon.org/meetings.php>

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!

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Columbia MO 65205-7642

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