

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: Steady, Supportive Stewardship

I hope this message finds all the Rock Bridge friends happy, healthy, and secure in this holiday season. I hope that all had family and loved ones to share the just-past Thanksgiving holiday. Family and friends make everything better: more memorable, more engaging, and more meaningful. This is a lot like the Friends of Rock Bridge State Park and the park. In our activities and works we strive to make the park more memorable, more engaging, and more meaningful.

This is displayed not as over-the-top showmanship, but by steady, sturdy support and stewardship. The Lew Stoerker memorial, the electrification of Rockbridge Mills shelter, the stopping of an inappropriate development on our park's borders, partnering with landowners to remove invasive plants: all working toward the same goal of making the park more memorable, engaging, and meaningful.

Our next major accomplishment will be the stabilization and repair of the Hickam cabin. This project now has everything aligned to allow for successful completion early next summer and will one more step in the betterment and support of our park. You will be called on to support this project. Please give a little of your time or money to help wrap this up. Many pulling together make daunting tasks approachable.

If you wish to work with us to improve our community and help support the park and park staff, drop me an email and we will sign you up. kwrcdr@aol.com Enjoy! Kevin Roberson - President, FoRB Board

FRIENDS BOARD MEETING: No meeting in December. Next Meeting Monday January 20. Location TBD.

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

Support Columbia Downtown Optimists this Holiday Season!

The Optimists support our programs so please consider buying your **tree** at their lot this year and/or purchasing **Koeze Nuts** products for family, employees, clients, teachers, coaches and other folks. The tree lot is open from 1 pm to 8 pm at the Optimist Clubhouse at 1201 Grand (just off the business loop). <http://www.downtownoptimistclub.org>

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

Naturalist News – Roxie Campbell: The park's natural communities are diverse.

A project that park staff are currently working on is to better classify and map the terrestrial natural communities (TNCs) of the park. There is a lot of diversity and complexity to natural resources of the park and these TNCs help us to classify and communicate about them and enable us to evaluate their importance on regional and statewide levels and also help staff decide upon management that may be needed. Here are a few basics and highlights:

- A TNC is a community of plants that support certain wildlife, all of which are dependent upon and influenced by the parent rock, soils, terrain, streams, amount of moisture, amount of exposure to sunlight, etc.
- When classifying a part of the park, staff visit the site and consider the terrain, soil type, amount of moisture in the soil, species of trees and plants present, evidence of flooding, etc. The Missouri State Park soil scientist recently completed an evaluation and mapping of soils that is more detailed than what's currently available through the Boone County Soil Survey.
- The park has a lot of diversity of TNCs (about 20). For example, in the western part of the park, starting at the hill top, you can find **dry-mesic limestone** woodland. Then, on the lower level of the hills, is **mesic limestone woodland**. Mesic means more moisture. Both have soils that are influenced by the limestone bedrock, which is different than what is found in some other parts of the state. This hillside faces south and gets more sunlight than north-facing slopes, so it is dryer than some of the other hillsides in the park. The tree species change too. On the dry-mesic portion, are chinkapin oaks, blue ash and shagbark hickory, but in the mesic area, we found Kentucky Coffee trees and pawpaw trees that are dependent upon a higher moisture content of the soil. Then, just a short distance away, the terrain changed dramatically and was a nearly flat bottomland along side Little Bonne Femme Creek. Here, we found **wetland meadows** that lack trees and have sedges and grasses due to the relatively constant wetness of the soil. Surrounding the wetland meadow, is **mesic bottomland forest** with its deep, moist soil and tall trees such as walnut. Closer to Little Bonne Femme was **riverbank forest** which is more impacted by flooding and characterized by trees such as cottonwood and sycamore.
- Other parts of the park have very different TNCs such as **cliff faces**, **glades** (very rocky, dry and grassy like Coyote Bluff) and **sinkhole ponds**. There's two or three different classifications of sinkhole ponds depending upon how much water they hold, which in turn affects what plants grow there.

**Park Superintendent
News –Jim Gast:
Park News in
Photos!**



**New Nature School
Brainstorm Meeting**

Thursday December
12, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Columbia Public
Schools
Administration
Building, 1818 West
Worley St.

Bring Your
Thoughts, Wishes
and Ideas.

Bring Kids and their
Ideas Too!

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

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President's News: Steady, Supportive Stewardship
Superintendent's News: Park News In Photos!
Naturalist News: Diverse Natural Communities