

# The BRIDGE

Volume 28: Issue 10 October 2015

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 website: <http://www.friendsofrockbridgemsp.org/>

### President's News—Conservation Federation of Missouri Resolutions by Jan Weaver, Treasurer

The Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park is an Affiliate of CFM, the Conservation Federation of Missouri. At its annual meeting, CFM invites resolutions from its members and affiliates (us!) . The resolutions are voted on by the membership at the meeting and then CFM works on moving the state forward on resolutions that pass.

Below is a list of the 2015 resolutions. As you read through them, give some thought to resolutions that would be important for FoRB. If you have an idea for a resolution that would help FoRB promote the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural and cultural resources of Rock Bridge MSP and to aid in the preservation of the area, share it! Email Kevin Roberson and we'll take it from there. Kevin - [kwrcdr@aol.com](mailto:kwrcdr@aol.com)

2015 CFM Resolutions: 1. Incentive Program for Private Wetland Owners; 2. Research Rapid White Oak Mortality; 3. Educate About Asian Carp; 4. Native Vegetation for Urban Streams; 5. Increase Hunter Education Certification Requirements; 6. Reconsider the Legal Limit During Archery Season; 7. Designate Set Field for Youth Dove Hunting; 8. Black Bear and Bobcat Study; 9. Discover Nature School Facilitators Available for Schools and Parks; 10. Incentive Program for Warm-Season Grass; 11. Adjust Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Rental Rates; 12. Provide Additional Incentives for CRP with Native Warm-Season Grass; 13. Bobwhite Quail Nest Predation Study; 14. Prohibit Lead Shot on Dove Fields; 15. Prescribed Grazing on Managed Warm Season Grasslands; 16. Additional Revenue for Preservation of CCC and WPA Structures; 17. Recreational Usage of the Waterways of Missouri; 18. Extend MDC Area's Trail Access for General Public Use; 19. Promoting Milkweed and Monarch Populations in Missouri; 20. Promoting the Use of Prairie Strips in Row Crops; 21. Research for Control of Zebra Mussels; 22. Support MDC's 2016 Deer Season Regulations. See complete resolutions here - <http://confedmo.org/2015-2/>

### NEXT FRIENDS BOARD MEETING: Monday October 12, 6:30 pm, Park Office

**Officers and Directors** – 2015 Officers: President: Kevin Roberson; Treasurer: Jan Weaver, Secretary: Sara Whiting ; 2015 Directors: Sue Tillema, Scott Schulte, Jim Weaver

## 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 Superintendent News – Attendance, SPYC Workers, Boneyards, McTurnan Property up for Sale. by Jim Gast, Park Superintendent

Wow, it's already October. These past few months have flown by.

Attendance is way up at the park in 2015 compared to 2014. Through August of this year, we've had 235,655 visits. It was 169,595 from January to August 2014. Quite frequently on weekends, cars are parked along both sides of the driveway headed into the Devil's Icebox parking lot. Cars are also parked on Bonne Femme Church Road at the Shooting Star trailhead.

By the end of September 15<sup>th</sup>, 14 State Park Youth Corps (SPYC) Workers had totaled 2680 hours this year. They have been conducting interpretive programs, helping with the annual Katy Trail Ride, attacking invasive species, helping in the office, mowing, cleaning, trimming trees, maintaining trails and constructing a new bridge on the Sinkhole Trail.

We've been working on cleaning up our outdoor storage areas (boneyards) by getting rid of items we no longer can use such as rotten wood planks and railroad ties, unusable building supplies, scrap metal and surplus equipment. Some of the surplus items were sold on GovDeals.com and brought in \$14,819 for the park system. Items included a New Holland tractor and Tiger mower, two "contact" stations, several culverts and I-beams, a salt spreader, 14 picnic tables, a clam bucket, a small dump trailer, and a backhoe bucket.

The 306-acre McTurnan property is for sale. It is across Highway 163 from the park office. Clear Creek flows through the track. Houses are starting to go up in the Parkside subdivision. The city also installed a sewer pumping station there.

## Park Naturalist News – Pink Planarian Report by Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

On 9/20/15, we conducted our biannual research trip for monitoring the pink planarian (pp) and associated aquatic animals. In the first survey plot, we found four colorful darter fish that while small are capable of feeding upon pp and probably their presence is why we didn't find any pp at that survey plot. Midway through the second survey plot, I was about to be really worried when we found our first one of the day. Then, it kept getting better. The other team reported finding two at different locations along with one egg cocoon and then at the third survey plot, we found five large pp and two egg cocoons! Together, that was eight pp and three egg cocoons. It was encouraging that the pp were large, appeared healthy and they were reproducing. As many as seven young pp can emerge from a cocoon, which would potentially increase the population by 21! Of course, we can't count them yet, but it is encouraging.

The reason for concern was that pp numbers have been low since 2009 and we found none on the spring 2015 count. In spring of 2009, we noticed a major absence of the aquatic animals the pp feed upon. Those animals rebounded by fall of 2009, but pp numbers have stayed low since then. This good fall count suggests that another factor was affecting this spring's count. My leading theory is that because the water level was 4" higher than usual, the pp went down into the sand of the bottom of the stream and we were not able to see them. It's not feasible to monitor enough of the cave stream to determine how many pp exist in Devil's Icebox Cave. Rather, our study is set up to monitor trends over time. For several years, the counts were consistent and tended to yield about 12 pp in spring and about 24 in fall. Let's hope that the pp is well on their way to returning to those numbers again soon.

Also on this 9/20/15 trip, we were glad that we did not notice dead bats. The species that used the cave over the summer was the gray bat which so far has not been found to die from White Nose Syndrome. We measured the guano pile the gray bats left and will estimate their numbers based upon that. By appearances, the gray bat population this year is about the same as in past years (about 2,000), so that is good news as well.



Two pink planarians on a rock that also had an egg cocoon attached to it; observed on 9/20/15.

### Rock Bridge Renewal

Saturday October 24, 8:30 am to 11:30 am  
Devil's Icebox Parking Lot

Help remove invasive plants, old fencing, trash. Enjoy a pizza lunch on us afterwards. Email Kevin at [kwrcdr@aol.com](mailto:kwrcdr@aol.com)

**To join FoRB**, send your name, address, phone and email with a check to: FoRB, P.O. Box 7642, Columbia MO 65205.

**Membership levels:** \$15 park staff/volunteer, senior or student; \$20 individual; \$35 family; \$100 supporting

**FoRB is a 501 (c) (3) organization** and donations (but not memberships!) are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

### Aliens are Invading!

Scream! Run!... No... Stand and Fight!  
Find out how to combat problem plants.

**Saturday, Oct. 31 from 9:30 to 11:30 AM.**

Park naturalist Roxie Campbell will guide you out into the park to learn how to identify several invasive plants and trees. Watch staff demonstrate the best methods for controlling them (equipment, herbicide). Learn why it's important for protecting our ecosystems. Easy hiking of less than one mile, but will involve walking off-trail at times. Free and open to everyone, designed for adults, however children 10 years old and up are welcome if accompanied by an adult. **Call 573-449-7400 to register.**

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President's News: Conservation Resolutions  
Superintendent's News: Boneyards, Among Other Things  
Naturalist's News: Pink Planarians

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