

The Newsletter of the Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park (RBMSP)

A membership 501 (c)(3) organized to promote understanding, appreciation, enjoyment & preservation of RBMSP & the surrounding area
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From the Friends of Rock Bridge MSP (FoRB) News - from the FoRB President, Jan Weaver

There are two things on my mind for this newsletter. The first is a big thank you to the volunteers who came out November 1st for our Park Stewardship Day. Donald Bay, and Cindy and Alex Keneippe removed barbed wire and fencing from inside the park. John Larkin, Maggie King, and Helen and Alston Steinman picked up trash along 163, and Amelia and Brian Cottle, Alan Loshbaugh, Heather McCreery, and Roger Albee picked up and *recycled* the trash along Rock Bridge and High Point Lanes. Glen Pickett took out about 60 honeysuckle and autumn olive plants from along the Shooting Star Trail.

The other thing is that Get About Columbia unveiled its Providence Trail South project, which could affect accessibility to the park. It will start at Green Meadows and go south along the Providence median to Rock Bridge Elementary. From the school, Paxton Passage connects to the Deer Run Trail in the park. From Green Meadows the "trail" will go north using the shoulder of Providence to connect to the Hinkson Trail at Reactor Field and from there to downtown. It is a bit convoluted, but you could get from the heart of Columbia to the heart of the Park safely in under three hours by foot and much less than an hour by bike. This could significantly change the amount and kind of traffic coming to the park - I believe in a good way.

One of the ways we help the park is with Stewardship projects, adding extra pairs of hands to clean the park, of trash, old fencing or invasive plants. Another way is by paying attention to what is happening outside the park. Providence Trail South will be formally presented to the Council on December 1 at 7 pm during the Council meeting. Let me know if you have any opinions about this trail, concerns about its impact, or ideas about connecting Columbians to the park by the trail.

Just as many hands make light work on a Park Stewardship Day, many minds help make good decisions about how to respond to the changes taking place around us.

Nature Notes: Shagbark Hickory – by naturalist Roxie Campbell

A man, whose cabin was located on the small bluff above Little Dome Cave, wrote in his diary on the day of October 18th, 1891, that he collected a whole bushel of hickory nuts. Hickory trees are a close relative of pecan trees. The flavor is similar but sweeter and richer (some say). He likely collected nuts from the very same Shellbark hickory tree that still stands a short distance from where he lived. Today, it has a diameter of about 2.5 ft. It has the same shaggy bark of its cousin the Shagbark hickory, but has 7 leaflets rather than 5 and its nuts are much larger (4 outer husks fall off and reveal an inner nut that's about 1.5" by 1"). Shagbarks are common, but Shellbarks are rarely found and are limited to the deep soils of river bottoms.

FoRB Membership

Thank you to these FoRB members who have recently renewed! Patrice & Kurt Albert, Dr. Earl Lubensky, and Suzanne Pautler

Renewals due in Dec. 2008: Margaret & Max Berends, John A. Eastman, Glennis Elder, L. D. and R. W. Jones, Dale and Art Karr, Joanne Grady & Mark McGimsey, Cynthia Ann & Thomas Stewart
Renewals due in Nov. 2008: Mary and Hank Clark, Tanya Christiansen & Dan Edidin, Nancy S. Finke, Don Garvin & Jean Graebner, Eleanor Mitter and Rob Hill, Ann and Fred Labrunerie, Jonathon McConathy, Walter and Linda McConathy, and Charles Shipman

From Rock Bridge Memorial State Park

News - from the Park Superintendent, Jim Gast

November marks the beginning of the off-season. During this time, park staff devotes more time to resource management and less time to public contacts especially programs for school groups. Fall and winter are when we conduct prescribed burns in the park.

Not having to mow frees up the maintenance staff to tackle other projects. This month, we hope to re-shingle the pit latrine in the Special Use Area. Last winter, the new Sinkhole Trail-Springbrook Trail connector was completed. This winter we hope to reroute the Deer Run Trail.

During the off-season, we also create new programs and refresh old ones as well as develop the spring Wild Cave Tour schedule. Staff also attends a variety of training courses. Some of them, such as "Natural Resource Management 101: Issues, Trends & Techniques" are designed make us better stewards.

With a new gubernatorial administration starting in January, there probably will be changes made at the department level. There may also be changes at the division level. We'll know more in the upcoming months.

Opportunities (Volunteer and Educational)

Burn crew opportunity - If you'd like to serve as a member of a burn crew, use a hand tool and walk the firelines during prescribed burns (held on weekdays), then contact Roxie at roxie.campbell@dnr.mo.gov or 449-7402. Burns will be held weather permitting Nov. through March.

Honeysuckle Removal - Volunteers are needed at the park to use hand tools to cut bush honeysuckle bushes and paint a herbicide onto the cut stumps. Contact Roxie (449-7400 or roxie.campbell@dnr.mo.gov) to set up a time to receive training on identification, methods and locations.

Trails to Explore by Naturalist Roxie Campbell

Here are some natural features that are available to see all year long by taking a two mile hike on the Shooting Star Trail: views from 100 ft. tall bluffs; an entrenched meandering stream (Gans Creek) with sections of exposed bedrock and gravel bars of large stones; Little Dome Cave (crawl into the one small room if you bring your flashlight); a large Shellbark Hickory tree and native grasses on sunny Coyote Bluff. A map posted (until Dec. 31) on the bulletin boards at Shooting Star Trailhead and Devil's Icebox Trailhead show the route and locations of these features.

Events (reservations are usually required and open 1 month before an event - 573-449-7400)

November Night Sky program, Sat. Nov. 22, 7 to 9 PM. At press time, registration was full, but you could call to see if there are cancelations.

Rock Bridge Memorial State Park is managed by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks, and is funded by primarily by the Parks-and-Soils Sales Tax. It is located at 5901 S. Highway 163, Columbia, MO 65203. Information about the park is at www.mostateparks.com and the park may be contacted by email at rock.bridge.memorial.state.park@dnr.mo.gov or phone at 573-449-7400.

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Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park



\$15 Special (park staff/vol, student, sr.)
\$20 Individual \$35 Family

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