

The BRIDGE

Volume 27: Issue 1 January 2014

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: Help FoRB with 2014 Projects!

Greetings fellow FoRB members! As I write this note on this cold winter night, I am hoping that you and your family are warm, safe, and want for nothing. I know that many of us are comfortable and do not want for much as far as basic necessities and comforts. This good fortune to be beyond the "Nature, red in tooth and claw" struggle allows us the opportunity to help others and not focus entirely on ourselves and our families.

In recognition of this good fortune, I am once again going to request that you search in your heart to see if you can spare some time and effort to help us help the park. This coming year we will have many projects that support the park, its staff, and the community at large. All of these could benefit from your time and support. The biggest need and most pressing time-line is the finalization of the Hickam cabin restoration. This project was taken on by a FoRB member initiative and great strides have been made in rallying community support and getting the plan together. We are now in the final stage of fund-raising followed by the rapid commencement of actual restoration. It is vital that this project be finalized by the end of June 2014 to allow for the beginning of construction of the Rock Bridge Elementary Nature School.

Other notable projects that could use your support, whether donations of time or money, are: UPOP, Nature Detectives, and the third biennial Rock Bridge Renewal work day.

Come join with us in these good works so you, too, can say that "There is grandeur in this view of life" and you are part of something making a difference in an evolutionary, if not revolutionary sense.

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: Monday January 20, 6:30 pm, Library at Garth and Broadway, Conf A

Officers and Directors

2014 Officers: President: Kevin Roberson; Treasurer: Jan Weaver, Secretary: Brennan Van Matre

2014 Directors: Bill Hobbs, Sue Tillema, Scott Schulte

2013 FoRB Children and Youth Programs are a success!

Every year, FoRB supports a pre-school Nature Detectives program, and with the help of the Missouri Parks Association (MPA) and Missouri Master Naturalists, an Urban Population Outreach Program (UPOP) for low income children and youth. This year Nature Detectives, provided programs for 133 children and 103 adults, showing care givers how to enjoy nature with young children so that they will be willing to take them outside on their own. The Urban Populations Outreach program introduces kids to outdoor skills and experiences in the park, compass reading, hiking, outdoor cooking, and of course, caving. All of this is coordinated by FoRB member Meredith Donaldson. Meredith's 2011 report is featured on the MPA website at http://parks.missouri.org/portals/30/Documents/UPOP_ColRep2011.pdf

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: Nature School, 1st Day Hikes, Park Attendance

Fifty people attended a planning meeting for the new nature school to be built at the park. The meeting was held on December 12th at the Columbia Public School's administration building. The public gave ideas on building design and materials; external environment; park activities for students; public use of the building and potential partnerships. The school is scheduled to be open for the 2015-2016 school year. 100 fifth graders will attend the school. I presided over the building design group. Most people wanted an energy-efficient building that looks like a rustic CCC building.

Sixty seven people attended the First Day hikes at Rock Bridge and 32 attended the hike on our section of the Katy Trail. I led the Katy hike, which went from McBaine to Columbia Wetland cell #2. We identified 25 bird species. Roxie Campbell and Scott Schulte led the Rock Bridge hikes. They were on the Karst and Grassland Trails.

Park attendance for 2013 was estimated at 260,973. In comparison, the estimate for 2012 was 314,372. The ten-year average from 2004 to 2013 is 229,866. The busiest month is May. We average more than 31,500 visits. The month with the lowest average is December with 8760 visits.

January 15th marks my 22nd anniversary at the park.

Naturalist News – Peter Hayes, Seasonal Interpreter: New Years – New Tracks.

While I was hiking the Grassland Trail with ice gleaming on all the tall grasses as the sun reflected through, I came across wild turkey tracks stamped and frozen deep in some mud. With closer inspection I concluded that this lone pair of tracks was a heavy adult male. I can imagine this Tom's featherless blue head and red wattle ("beard") down to his chin move as he strutted down the trail leaving imprints in the mud. I'm glad the ice and cold came along and froze his footprints for me to find.

Just the next week, on New Year's Eve, I saw a flock of 15 wild turkeys foraging right next to the Park Office. This time I didn't have to use my imagination as I could see this flock had five adult females while the rest were all juveniles. These wild turkeys escaped the recent hunting season by taking refuge in our state park where they can continue to be a part of our woodland wildlife community. Just as we get to experience a brand new year of nature at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, they will get to experience another year of leaving their tracks behind.



Photo: Tim Engleman, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

The Park in the News

Nature School Article - http://www.columbiatribune.com/news/education/columbia-nature-school-concept-piques-interest-at-open-house/article_742bee8a-642a-11e3-8031-10604b9f6eda.html

First Day Hike - <http://www.komu.com/news/state-parks-host-new-year-s-day-hike/>

Upcoming Events

January 9 – Dealing with nuisance animals around the home and garden – 6:30 pm, Runge Nature Center, Jefferson City

January 14 – The People's Expedition: Janet Moreland – 7:00 pm, Les Bourgeois Vineyards Bistro, Rocheport (Janet kayaked from the source of the Missouri down to the Gulf this year)

January 15 – "Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative" – 7:00 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd

February 11, 13 & 15 – TreeKeepers training dates -

<http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Volunteer/Opportunities/treekeepers.php>

February 19 – "Beyond Feathers and Song, Impressionistic Birding" – 7:00 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd

March 19 – "The Connection Between Native Plants and Birds" – 7:00 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd

April 6 – The History of Missouri Birds – 10:00 am, Arrow Rock State Historic Site

April 6 – Tree Care and Identification – 1:00 pm, Arrow Rock State Historic Site

April 16 – "Ecosystem Restoration and the Natural History of the CAS Wild Haven Nature Area" – 7:00 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd

FoRB

P.O. Box 7642

Columbia MO 65205-7642

January 2014 Issue

President's News: 2014 FoRB Projects

Superintendent's News: Nature School, 1st Day Hikes, Attendance

Naturalist News: New Years – New Tracks