

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/>

Board News, Kevin Roberson, President – Trails, Parks, Soils and Water

Greetings, my fellow tree-huggers. I hope this message finds you well and happy. This is my favorite time of year and one that I hope that you can get to enjoy in the park. With the temperatures falling and plenty of moisture in the ground, we have a strange autumn starting out. I have never seen the trees and grass so green at the end of September. We have also been finding a plethora of mushrooms for our consumption. We have gotten a big mess of Oyster mushrooms and several pickings of Blewits. They are both top notch mushrooms with very different flavors.

With the falling temperatures we can expect the deer to start moving quite a bit more...so be careful when you are driving.

Don't forget the Rock Bridge Renew that is scheduled for the 22nd of October this year. We are teaming up with Stream Team and getting some good work accomplished on many fronts. There will be pizza and drinks for those that want to stay after and commune with nature and kindred spirits. I hope to see you there.

Best to all! Enjoy your park! Kevin, kwrcdr@aol.com

FoRB Officers and Directors – 2016 Officers: President: Kevin Roberson; Treasurer: Jan Weaver, Secretary: Sara Whiting ; 2016 Directors: Sue Tillema, Scott Schulte, Lynne Hooper

NEXT FRIENDS BOARD MEETING: Monday October 10, 6:30 pm, Park Office

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

A Superintendent's View of the Park, Sarah Jones – Underworld Trip

We have a beautiful park with rolling hills, cool streams, prairie fields, and wooded paths. Sometimes it is easy to forget there is a whole other world under the Park. Did you know Missouri is home to more than 6,000 caves? It makes us second to only Tennessee in natural caves. Even though we have a fascinating world in the sunlight, there is an amazing world underneath. Some of Missouri's caves are home to species that only live in one of those many caves. Devil's Ice Box Caves is an excellent example of the underworld that has some of those one of a kind species.

The Fall Research Trip into the cave gave me a firsthand look of how the barren rock landscape of the Devil's Icebox was carved out by water and fertilized by bats. Life in the cave holds on in a delicate balance. The quality of water flowing through the cave can bring life giving nurturance or chemical harm, just by what happens to the water before it drains into the cave.

The other piece to life in the cave is the bats. The bats use the cave as a place to raise their young, hibernate for the winter, or just a place to rest for the day. When they enter the cave, they bring with them remnants of what they ate by leaving their guano. One species' waste is a feast for many others in the cave. I watch beetles happily chow down alongside other insects. These in turn feed other cave creatures. If we didn't have the bats in the cave, we wouldn't have as many other species living in this barren underground world.

As part of the Park's stewards, we do the best we can to protect the water coming into caves and providing a safe haven for the Bats. But we can't do it all ourselves. Each and every person has to do their part in protecting the natural resources in our area and around the state. So make sure you dispose of whatever you are using properly, pick up your own trash and the person's before you, and teach the next generation how to protect the natural resources we have here at Rock Bridge and beyond. By taking care of the world above, we help ensure the world below stays healthy as well.

Passing the message on!

Till next time, Happy Trails! Sarah

Naturalist News, Jan Weaver – Fall Color

Fall is one of the busiest times in the park. Sometimes the parking lot at Devil's Icebox is so full, visitors start new rows of cars in the center of the lot, leaving just enough space for cars to navigate between the center and the periphery. The main reason is probably the break in the hot weather of summer, which starts in late September. Days are still sunny and warm, but crisper (and more comfortable) than the muggy heat of August. Another reason, especially in October, is that the trees begin to change color.

As the days become shorter and temperatures, deciduous trees like oaks, elms, maples and ashes, form a layer of corky cells closing the leaves off from the tree. The chlorophyll that gives leaves their green color is used up and the yellows and oranges that were masked by the green of summer leaves becomes visible. The yellow comes from xanthophylls and the orange from carotenoids. These dominate in hickories, ash, some maples, sycamore, cottonwood, sassafras and alder.

The reds and purples of fall leaves come from anthocyanins. These are not present like the yellow and orange pigments, just waiting to be unmasked. Instead, their production is triggered by bright sunny days and chilly nights. These appear in oaks, some maples, dogwoods, and persimmons.

One easy fall craft is to collect leaves (it is ok to collect plant *parts* in the park, but not plants) and preserve them between two sheets of wax paper. You need wax paper, newsprint and an iron. Lay a sheet of newsprint on an ironing board, table or counter. Lay a sheet of wax paper on the newsprint (which keeps wax from getting on your surface). Collect the leaves, arrange them on one sheet of wax paper leaving a few inches between each leaf and around the outside edge. Then put another sheet of newsprint on top (this protects your iron). Set your iron on a cool setting and run it over the layers of newsprint, wax paper and leaves. Peel back the newsprint and check to see that the two sheets of wax paper stuck to each other. You can hang it on the wall or tape onto a window to add a little fall color.

Autumn Creek Hike – October 7, 5:15 pm to 7:00 pm

Come on a guided hike of the 2.25-mile Spring Brook Trail. Learn about streams and factors that affect water quality. Enjoy beautiful scenery, fall color and potential wildlife sightings. Lynne Hooper, urban hydrologist for Boone County, will lead the hike.

Meet at the Devil's Icebox parking lot. This hike is recommended for ages eight years and up. Be sure to wear appropriate shoes for wading across Little Bonne Femme Creek (water level permitting).

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

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