

The Bridge

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

P.O. Box 7642, Columbia MO 65205-7642 <http://www.friendsofrockbridgemsp.org/>

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.

Send your submissions to Jim Gast, editor at jgast@socket.net

FoRB Officers: Kevin Roberson, President, Lynne Hooper, Secretary, Jan Weaver, Treasurer; Sue Tillema, Scott Schulte, Jim Gast, Board Members. **The next board meeting is Monday, October 8th at 6:00 p.m. at the park office.**

President's Message

Kevin Roberson, FoRB President

Greeting Parksters,

Fall is here and I say welcome. We will be having some of the best weather of the year over the next couple of months, weather so good that I like to say, "If it was this nice all the time, we couldn't afford to live here". So, thank goodness for the heat, humidity, chiggers, and slush. I am glad we are neighbors.

As you all know, it is a great time to get in the Park. Watch the squirrels working the red oak and the bur oak acorns, listen to the wrens calling at sunset, and watch the teal fly over heading north from the river going home somewhere to roost for the night. Two nights ago my wife and I got to watch a pair of gray fox foraging around us as the sun went down. They were spectacular. That we can see this kind of beauty 10 minutes from town is mind-boggling.

Part of the contract that we have with the Park is that just as it gives so much to us, we will give a little back to it. We have a Rock Bridge Renew coming up on Saturday the 27th of October, and this is one way that we can give back to the Park. If you are not physically able at this time, can you recruit a friend or a relative to help out? Every hour we volunteer is an hour of pay back for all that we have received from the Park. I will be there and will try to bring a friend or two with me...if I can find any. I hope to see you in the park soon.

Yours in service to the Park,
Kevin

Board Actions

The board heard a report about Clear Creek Estates, a new subdivision planned for approximately 150 acres on the old McTurnan property. The tract is located across the picnic area of the park on Hwy 163 and west of Clear Creek. Part of the parcel is adjacent to the park's High Ridge Trail area. Clear Creek, which flows through the park, currently has healthy aquatic life and is used for recreation. The plat indicates plans for about 45 homes each on at least 2.5 acres per current Boone County zoning. Through a pre-annexation agreement with the City of Columbia, plans are for sewage treatment to be done via the City's sewage treatment system. Restrictions will be placed on the number of trees that can be removed. Storm water practices will be implemented.



For the 50th anniversary of the park, FoRB donated a bench to honor the original board members. The bench is located in the grass on the south end of the Devil's Icebox parking lot near the dedication boulder. Photo by ©Jim Gast

Naturalist News

Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

On September 22, a group of staff and volunteers accomplished several research goals in Devil's Icebox Cave. In spring and fall each year, we conduct the Pink Planarian Project (P3), following a protocol developed in 2003. We identify and count aquatic life in three five-meter survey plots in the cave stream. This year the count was four. For the last five years, the fall count has been three or less. In comparison, during the four fall surveys from 2004-2007, we counted an average of 29 pink planarians! Spring surveys have also shown a reduction over the years. Only one of the six spring surveys since 2010 had numbers above three and that was five on April 16, 2016; whereas, the three surveys 2005-2007 yielded an average of eight pink planarians.

We don't know why numbers have decreased, but we continue to monitor, take and test water samples, collaborate with biologists and work with the Bonne Femme Watershed Project one of the goals of which is to prevent polluted water from entering the cave. In spring of 2009, we observed a dramatic drop in numbers of the isopods and amphipods that pink planarians feed upon, however those prey animal numbers bounced back within a few months. Pink planarians exist within a complex ecosystem that includes a number of other aquatic organisms. The numbers from the last two fall P3 surveys are given below.

Date	Pink Planarian	Amphipods (not including <i>Bactrurus brachycaudus</i>)	Isopods	Snails	Snail Eggs	<i>Bactrurus brachycaudus</i>	Crayfish	Darter Fish
9/24/2017	0	54	649	37	73	5	1	4
9/22/2018	4	115	620	70	16	1	1	2

Something unusual was also observed: a total of eight spiders found at two of the survey plots. In addition, there were two encouraging observations: 1) two of the four pink planarians were large (1.7 cm and 2.5 cm in length) indicating a fairly long life span and 2) a pink planarian cocoon was seen so we know they are reproducing! *Macrocotyla glandulosa*, the 1975 landmark paper describing pink planarians, reported that cocoons yield four to seven young.

Events

Saturday, October 13, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Stream Monitoring Blitz Volunteers will partner with experienced Stream Team volunteers to catch and identify aquatic insects in several streams in the Park, recording valuable data about the health of streams in the Bonne Femme Watershed. Chemical analyses of water quality parameters will also be performed using field kits and Stream Team techniques. Afterward, lunch will be provided for those who volunteered. Registration is not necessary. Meet at Devil's Icebox Parking lot. Bring something to drink and wear weather-appropriate clothing and water-appropriate shoes.

Saturday, October 27 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Rock Bridge Renew Volunteer to pick up litter along Hwy. 163, remove invasive plants or take down old fence wire. Equipment provided. Wear weather-appropriate clothing and shoes (no flip-flops) and bring water to drink. At noon, enjoy free pizza and soda. Meet at Devil's Icebox parking lot. Recommended for ages 8 and up. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is not necessary. If you have questions, call 573-449-7400. This event is co-sponsored by FoRB.