

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, December 10th, at 6:00 p.m.** at the park office.

President's Message

Kevin Roberson, FoRB President

Greeting FoRB Members,

A month can make a difference here in mid-Missouri. I was right about the leaves, maybe the best display in my life's time, at least in my memory. The weather has turned colder and even set some record lows a couple of weeks back. And we are all a month older, if not wiser.

As we get ready for my favorite holiday, the family holiday, Thanksgiving, let's get in the thanking mode. Thanks to all the volunteers and staff that helped with the Rock Bridge Renew last month; thanks to the FoRB Board members for all they do to keep making the park a better park and supporting the community youth and citizens; thanks to my family for supporting me in helping the park. I also want to shout out again to Kurt Mirtsching for his and Shakespeare's continued support of the Rock Bridge Renew and the community in general.

As we begin to run to the shortest days of the year, put your thinking cap on for any ideas that you have that can make the park better or ways that you may help in any of the projects that are planned. Best to you and see you in the park!

Yours in service to the Park,

Kevin

Do you like the formatting of this edition of *The Bridge*? Let me know at the email address above. My goal is to make the newsletter easy for you to read.

CoMoGives.com begins November 27th

The board decided to participate in this year's CoMoGives.com campaign as the major fundraising effort for FoRB. The online only campaign runs from November 27th to December 31st. You must use a credit card to donate online.

The board set a goal of \$7500 to be used to fund Nature Detectives and the Urban Populations Outreach Program. These programs provide no cost nature programs to children at the park. Since 2006, over 5,000 children, youth, and adults have attended these programs.

The CoMoGives.com campaign offers several \$1000 and \$2000 challenge grants for first place and \$500 for second place. An organization can win one challenge grant. FoRB is eligible for the highest total amount raised at the end of the campaign; highest number of individual (non-repeated) donors of at ten dollars; highest number of donors under age 35; highest number of donations of \$250 or more; non-profits, not providing premiums, that raised the highest amount at the end of the campaign; non-profit participating for the first time that raised the highest amount at the end of the campaign; all volunteer, no paid staff, non-profit that raised the highest amount at the end of the campaign; and organizations with a budget of \$25,000 or less that raised the highest amount at the end of the campaign. To make your donation, please use this link: <https://comogives.com/product/friends-of-rock-bridge-memorial-state-park/>. Thank you for donating to FoRB.

Dogs & Leashes

Sarah Jones, Park Superintendent

Many of us have furry four legged family members that love to come to the park. Our dogs look forward to being in the park as much or more than we do. I know the temptation is great to let them stretch their legs, but being off leash causes a lot of hazard to them, other visitors and the wildlife that call the park home.

The park has seen an increase in dogs and their people. With this increase we have had a lot of dogs off leash in the park. There has been a spike in lost dog calls as dogs forget their training in their excitement and take off to follow that latest smell or chase a squirrel or deer. Once they slow down, sometimes the dog is lost and the owners are nowhere in sight. This causes distress to the dogs and their people.

The park has received a lot of calls and reports this past year from visitors being scared as dogs come running up on them while they are hiking or mountain biking. Even if the owner is right behind the dog, the other visitors are intimidated and in many cases are jumped on (or in the case of the person getting jumped on, "attacked"). It totally ruined their day and their visit to the park.



Dog owners enjoying the park with their dogs on leash.

Park staff and volunteers will be talking to visitors who have let their dogs off their leashes. We believe educating the irresponsible dog owner of the danger they are creating for not only their dog but other park visitors and their dogs. If you have feedback on this topic or would like to join our effort, please contact the park at (573) 449-7402.

We need everyone's help to help keep our furry four legged family members, the park animals, and two legged visitors safe and happy while they are in the park. A big "Thank you" to all those that practice safe, courteous, and responsible dog ownership.

Happy Trails!

Naturalist News

Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

With the greater emphasis within Missouri State Parks on invasive plant control, we've been asked to report our progress in reaching goals set out earlier this year. The following is a summary of what we have treated April through October, 2018. Staff and volunteers used various methods to control these invasives. Some of these numbers are estimates. In alphabetical order, here is a list of species: 480 autumn olive; 155 black locust; 407 burning bush; 12,000 bush honeysuckle; 136 callery pear; 40 Chinese catalpa; two patches Chinese yam; 5.5 bags garlic mustard; 15.5 bags elephant garlic; one Japanese hopvine; 230 Johnson grass; 49 mullein; 360 multiflora rose; 50 Oriental bittersweet; 525 perilla mint; ten poison hemlock; 147 privet; 18.5 acres spot sprayed, and mowed *Sericea lespedeza*; 102 teasel; three Tree of Heaven; two patches vine honeysuckle and 80 winter creeper.

In addition, in November, we have been taking advantage of bush and vine honeysuckle still being green while almost all of our native plants are dormant and have been doing a lot of spot spraying of foliage which is an efficient way of treating many small invasive plants while protecting our native plants.

Meanwhile, we have been and are preparing fire lines in anticipation of conducting prescribed burns this fall, winter and/or spring. When will depend upon when fire lines are ready, burn plans are approved, personnel are available and the weather is suitable. We intend to burn Grassland West (128 acres), Karst West (90 acres) and a new unit, called Hickory Hills, which is in the Deer Run Trail area (125 acres). Fire is like medicine for our ecosystem and helps to control invasive plants.

The park will be offering several free First Day Hikes on Tuesday, January 1, 2019. Reservations are required; please call 573-449-7400. When you call, you will be given driving directions to the meeting location. To find out if the hikes are canceled due to inclement weather, call 573-449-7400. For all hikes, wear sturdy footwear. Except for the Katy Trail hike, trails are not stroller accessible.

Bird Watching on the Karst Trail

10 AM to Noon, 1.75 miles, moderate

Join members of the Columbia Audubon Society to watch birds while hiking the gently rolling terrain of the Karst Trail through woodlands and grassland. Limited to those of ages 8 and up. No dogs.

Katy Trail at Rocheport

10:30 AM to Noon, 3 miles flat, strenuous

Hike the Katy Trail southeastward from Rocheport alongside the Missouri River and towering limestone bluffs to the I-70 bridge and back. Learn about the history, plants, birds and other wildlife of the area. Not recommended for those four and under unless carried by an adult. Leashed and well-mannered dogs are welcomed.

History and Caves on the Sinkhole and Devil's Icebox Trails

12:30-2:30 PM, 1.5 miles, moderate
A guide will show you hidden historic features and will share about the history of Rockbridge Mills. Also, see Devil's Icebox and the Rock Bridge. If the water level is low, you will have the option to enter the opening of Connor's Cave and go inside the Rock Bridge. Learn about caves. Not recommended for children four and under unless carried by an adult. Prefer no dogs.

Streams and Wildlife on the Deer Run Trail

12:30-3:30 PM 3.75 miles, strenuous

Enjoy the rolling wooded terrain and walk alongside Little Bonne Femme Creek for about .5 mile. Watch for wildlife and learn about streams and aquatic animals. Not recommended for children four and under unless carried by an adult. Prefer no dogs.

Scenery and Ecology in the Gans Creek Wild Area

12:30-3:30 PM 2 miles, moderate

View the scenery from the bluffs and learn about the ecology and management of glades and woodlands we'll visit. Hike one-way and be shuttled back to get your vehicle. Limited to those of ages 8 and up. No dogs.