

# 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 [FriendsofRockBridge@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofRockBridge@gmail.com)

FoRB Officers: Kevin Roberson, President; Mark Lee, Secretary; Jan Weaver, Treasurer; Sue Tillema, Scott Schulte, Jim Gast, Mark Hahn, Board Members. **The next board meeting is Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the park office.**

## President's Message

### Kevin Roberson

Dear Tree Huggers,

What a wonderful time of year. A lot of us are able to join with family and friends to celebrate the holidays and the beginning of a New Year. This is also such a good to be reflective and look forward to all that a New Year will bring to us.

The work that fellow board members, Jan and Jim, have executed has helped us to get on a solid financial basis through CoMoGives, the board has continued to work hard to support the youth of Columbia through Nature Detectives and UPOP and we have continued to support the Park through two Rock Bridge Renews per year.

The Conservation Federation of Missouri has worked hard to be ever more relevant each year as they strengthen the Affiliate Board Election process.

The Missouri Conservation Department continues to be led by a true visionary thinker, planner, and one of the most unselfish leaders that I have had the pleasure of knowing. With all of this positive back wind, what can we look forward to next year?

Let's vow to keep up the good work and try to, at least, incrementally make all of these groups stronger and better able to complete their missions and continue their good works. Also, let us all be mindful of our impact on our mother and look for ways to truly decrease our impact on her and therefore on our children and grandchildren. Please love your mother and protect and use our Park.

Your servant,  
Kevin Roberson

## Naturalist News

### Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist



*This rare butternut tree fell across Clear Creek due to stream-bank erosion. A nut it produced sprouted and is growing nearby. Missouri State Park photo. Used by permission.*

Butternut trees are rare due to: 1) having a more restricted niche of growing only on rich moist soil, usually along creeks and 2) a fungus usually causes them to die before they grow large and produce nuts. The park has a few butternut trees; known locations are Sinkhole Trail, Gans Creek and Clear Creek. One caught my attention because of how large and healthy it appeared (about 18 inches in diameter and 30 feet tall). I was excited to collect three nuts from it in 2018. I received advice from Missouri Department of Conservation's nursery on how to grow them. One of the three thrived, growing two feet tall in its first season of life! I recently transplanted it back to the park not far from its parent tree. Sadly, the parent tree, while still alive, has fallen due to erosion of the creek bank. Due to this threat, I chose a location for the sprout that was in good habitat but back away from the creek a good distance. (continued next page)

Protecting the creek corridors and their associated trees is another reason, in addition to water quality and animal life, to get involved in the Bonn Lemme Watershed Project. You can start by filling out a short survey at <http://www.cavewatershed.org/spotlight.asp>. The survey will provide information needed for a "Return on Environment" study that analyzes the benefits of natural resources, ecosystem services, and community values through an economic lens, translating these functions into dollar amounts. **Recent Wildlife observations:** Park staff recorded a short video of a river otter in the Gans Creek Wild Area! Park-neighbor Kelly Veach got a

picture of a bobcat with his game cam. Armadillos dig a distinctive round hole several of which were observed in the Deer Run Trail area. Staff were walking that area and others looking for signs of deer. The number of deer seen would indicate that the park is not overpopulated. Missouri State Parks again has the capacity to arrange for helicopter flights over state parks which is a way to get an actual count of deer. It must be done when there is at least 4" of snow on the ground. We have made a lot of bird observations. Some December highlights for me were a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, three Eastern Bluebirds and about 25 Cedar Waxwings.