

The Bridge

Volume 33 Number 3 March 2020

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.

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, March 9th, at 6:00 p.m. at the park office.

President's Message

Kevin Roberson

Greetings FoRB members!

I hope that you are all well and warm. I know that this weather has thrown many of us for a loop. Sun-shiny and warm one day and cold and rainy/snowy the next. It seems like this has been the pattern for the last 8 weeks. We all can have hope knowing that for sure Spring is coming. Hope Springs eternal, after all.

Speaking of hope; I just got my garden seeds in the mail this week. Planting a garden expresses hope for the future and a belief in the future. I know in these times it can seem like hope can be beyond grasp for many. There is COVID-19, the impeachment, the Russian interference, the election, the intolerance, the hate and the fear. If we look locally; to our friends and neighbors; the Park goers and the Park supporters; the fine Professionals that run our DNR, Parks, Conservation Department and local agencies, we can find many reasons for hope. The kindness of a neighbor, the dedication of the conservation professionals, the support of our friends and families will give us reason to hope and reason to keep on dreaming of a better place and time for us and our loved ones.

So go out into our Park and say "Hello" to fellow tree-hugger and be thankful. Tell them to enjoy the space and think of all of the good people that have worked to make this possible for them. See you in the Park.

Yours in service,

Kevin

Park Programs and Events (see Roxie's article on next page for more events)

Randal Clark will be leading weekly wildflower walks again (his 38th year) on Thursdays from 5:30 p.m to 7:00 p.m. starting March 26th and ending May 14th. No reservations needed; just arrive at Devil's Icebox parking lot.

Saturday, April 11th, 8:00 to 12:00 p.m.: Annual spring Rock Bridge Renew. Help clean up the park and Highway 163. Assist with removing invasive species. Meet at the Devil's Icebox Parking Lot. Wear sturdy footwear.

Saturday, May 9th, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Stream Critters and Health

Catch aquatic animals, conduct chemical tests of the water quality and check on the health of park streams as part of an on-going citizen science project. No prior training necessary because new volunteers will be placed on teams with experienced Stream Team volunteers. Six teams will be created so that six sites can be monitored. Free lunch afterwards for those who helped. This stream monitoring blitz is held each spring and fall and is co-sponsored by Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, Boone County Stormwater Management and Missouri Stream Teams. Registration is not necessary. Meet at Devil's Icebox Parking lot. Bring something to drink and wear weather-appropriate clothing and boots or other water-appropriate shoes.

Share what natural resources are important to you in the Bonne Femme Watershed. Complete the survey at: www.cavewatershed.org/spotlight.asp.

Naturalist News

Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

Because invasive plants are a serious threat to ecosystem health both inside and outside the park, I'm in the midst of giving several presentations to make people aware of the threat and to train them on how to do invasive plant control whether it be on their own property or as a volunteer for the park. **You are invited to join me on Saturday, March 14th, from 10 AM to 3 PM. It's free, but because space is limited, we ask that you call 573-449-7402 to sign up.** We'll start at the park's meeting room with a PowerPoint, then take a driving tour of Columbia to see how bad it can get and then take a hike in the park to see what's at stake. We'll get to see several invasive plant species in person, learn tips for identifying them and see treatment methods demonstrated.

Other presentations in February and March include: Ten very interested people who own a total of over 360 acres attended a presentation in the area of Graham Cave State Park. See the article in the Fulton Sun on February 23rd. (https://www.fultonsun.com/news/local/story/2020/feb/23/getting-root-invasive-plant-problem/817832/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook_Fulton_Sun)

I will be giving a presentation at the Mid-MO Expo on February 29th and at the **Bonne Femme Watershed Partnership's landowner workshop. It's on Saturday, March 7th, from 8:30-12:00. Call 573-886-4330 to sign-up.** The workshop also offers sessions on organic gardening, soil health and water management. Naturalists/interpreters from around the Missouri State Park system received training in February and several plan to give presentations at their locations to make their park visitors and communities more aware. In addition, staff of each Missouri State Park continues to work to implement its park's invasive plant management plan. Staff of the Missouri Department of Conservation have released new outreach audio messages and posters about invasive species.

It's good to see more people joining the fight to protect our lands from invasive plants. People caused the problem and people are the solution. It is manageable if the amount of investment by people matches the amount of invasion and we're wise about priorities. Because Missouri State Parks hold some of the finest examples of Missouri's natural resources, protecting them from invasive plants should be a high priority.