

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.

FoRB Officers: Kevin Roberson, President; Mark Lee, Secretary; Jan Weaver, Treasurer; Sue Tillema, Scott Schulte, Jim Gast, Mark Hahn, Board Members.

President's Message

Kevin Roberson

Greetings! Another month, another change in the flora and fauna. Each year I enjoy watching the prairie plants come to life and then to bloom. This month I have had my Purple Coneflowers, Butterfly Weed, Common Milkweed, Purple Prairie Clover amongst others come into bloom. The never-ending cycle of life on this earth. My bees are doing well, the garden is great and I am eagerly awaiting my first Chanterelles to pick. I planted almost an acre of wheat for the deer, turkeys and song birds and they have eaten almost all of it already. We all live in a bountiful area and we all have much to be thankful for.

Part of the way to repay for all this bounty is to volunteer. I assist with some mowing in the Karst Area of the Park. This helps the Park Staff and allows me to contribute to the overall upkeep of the Park. You can help too, if you are of a mind. Just call Sarah or Roxie at 573-449-7402 and offer to help, they will put you to work.

Keep your spirits up and your hopes high. I am looking forward to the world to keep spinning and the story always unfolding each week, month, season. Take care and see you in the Park
Yours in service to conservation,
Kevin

Water Festival at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park at the Gilbert Picnic Shelter on Saturday, July 18th from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

This event is free and is recommended for ages four and up. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. No reservations are required except for the hikes. Several local organizations will have displays and activities for children and families to learn about and enjoy streams and water. This year, the location has been changed to the Gilbert Picnic Shelter in the picnic area and everyone is asked to social distance.

Guided hikes will be provided from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Reserve your spot on a hike by calling in advance at 573-449-7402. The two hikes are the same, and both will feature two speakers: Virginia Trauth, who will speak about her ongoing erosion prevention research, and Lynne Hooper, Boone County's urban hydrologist, who will speak about water quality research findings for local streams. Hikes will be on park trails, will be about one mile and will visit Little Bonne Femme Creek. Activities include: catching aquatic animals in the stream (nets and assistance provided), learning about box turtles, observing aquatic animals and seeing what strange things pollute our rivers.

The event is co-sponsored by Boone County Stormwater, Missouri Stream Teams, Missouri River Relief, the Missouri Department of Conservation and the park.

Naturalist News

Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

In November, 2016, Hog's Graveyard Cave's opening went from being a hole about 24 inches by 18 inches to being about 15 feet across and 20 some feet deep! The previous opening had been housed within a concrete gate shown in the upper right edge. Geology happens!

A fence was erected around Hog's Graveyard Cave for two purposes: to protect visitors from falling about 20 ft. down into the collapsed opening and to protect the cave from unauthorized entry and litter. Posted signs that read "Danger, Dangerous Sinkhole, Entry Strictly Prohibited" had been thrown down into the cave. Those signs are posted again, this time from inside the fence. The fence and signs send a clear message to park visitors who pass by on the nearby Sinkhole Trail. The fence has a locked gate. While we were at it, we removed old fence wire from the farming days that had been rolled up and left in the woods.



We noticed recently that cedar trees which once blocked access had deteriorated and people had created a path leading directly to the 20 ft. drop-off! Photo by park staff.

This project was accomplished because of donated materials and labor and fence-building know-how of park volunteers! Donated supplies included: 100 ft. of chain-link fence donated by LaCrosse's Do It Yourself Center, 100 ft. of chain-link fence donated by Roxie Campbell, 24 T-posts and wire clips donated by Orscheln's (facilitated by Susan Haines) and wire paid for by the Friends of Rock Bridge. The park provided 11 chain-link posts and tools.



A six-foot tall chain-link fence of about 200 ft. in length was built around the opening. Workers included, from left to right: Mike Sutherland, Gerald Myer, Mihai Lefticariu and Eric Seaman. Photo by park staff.

We're fortunate that several people volunteered to help with this project. This project was completed thanks to the hard work of 13 people who contributed a total of 70 hours of labor! Volunteers included: Jim Yancey, Seth Colston, Steve Ferguson, Jonathan Hitt, Eric Seaman, Gerald Myer, Mihai Lefticariu, Jake Pohlman and Susie Johnson. Staff included: Roxie Campbell, Mike Sutherland, Sarah Jones and Anthony Orazio. Mike Sutherland, Director of Missouri State Parks, has been working in the field helping with projects like this one, invasive plant control and cleaning restrooms.

When last explored on February 21, 2003, Hog's Graveyard Cave had a vertical opening of 35 ft. and had about 70 ft. of passageways that went in two directions from the opening. Animal life included six tri-colored bats 15 cave crickets and two spiders. Remains of a dead rabbit and dead raccoon were also found. The name of the cave stems from the practice farmers had of disposing of dead hogs by throwing them into sinkholes. This was a not good for water quality. Water that enters here flows into Devil's Icebox Cave.

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