

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, Steve Ferguson Board Members.

President's Message

Kevin Roberson

Greetings Park Lovers!

What a great time of year; cold, clammy, still, muddy, but yet...the days are getting noticeably longer. Can you hear the Morels calling? How long until the Woodcock are peenting? The Chorus Frogs chorusing? The Hazelnuts blooming?

At this time of impending renewal of our world is it time to renew our faith in our community?, neighbors?, support systems?

While we all have been through turmoil the last 12 months, the support of the things we hold dear by the community, neighbors, and support systems is stronger than ever. The Park staff have worked hard to keep our Park open and available to the public, the FoRB board has continued to drive projects that support the Park, the Staff, and the Youth of the community. The public and neighbors have continued to and increased our support through CoMoGives.

Let us take these positive signs and build on them in this coming year to make things better. What would you like to see done to support the Park? Let us know of any good ideas that you have and I guarantee that the Board will continue to work to make good things happen for our Park, the Staff, and the Youth of the community.

See you in the Park.

Yours in conservation,
Kevin Roberson

During the recent CoMoGives campaign FoRB received donations in honor or in memory of: Rob Bartel, Logan Burnam, Roxie Campbell, Susan Flader, Jim Gast, Sue Tillema, Mary Ruth Toalson, Andrew Twaddle, Chris Weaver, James J. Weaver and Nancy Cain Weaver.

Naturalist's News

Roxie Campbell

A new species to science continues to allude description. It lives in tributary streams and dome pools in Devil's Icebox Cave. It's a cave-dweller that was first brought out to the light of day in 2003 when Mick Sutton of the Cave Research Foundation recognized it as different than the common isopod species seen in the cave and noticed that it had features of a troglobite (no eyes, no pigment). Mick collected one specimen and sent it to a taxonomist who reported two things: 1) that it was not one of the known species; it was a new species to science and 2) that he was not able to describe it and document it because he needed a male specimen and this one was female. As the years went by, cavers kept our eyes open for them. We again got lucky on September 19, 2020, when three were seen in the stream of The Rollercoaster side passage before Hollow Dome.

Four members of our group were conducting the Pink Planarian Project (P3) survey of a plot at The Shark. Two others, Anthony Orazio and Justin Sherwood were sent to explore The Rollercoaster passage up to Hollow Dome. They returned with a report of isopods that looked different. Compared to the common isopod, this species is white, more slender and has appendages half as long as the body and the

body is about half an inch long. Roxie sent them back with instructions and a vial for collecting them. They were successful in capturing all three in the vial. We were careful with them as we walked out of the cave and found they made the trip out undamaged. Roxie asked Eli Bunting, University of Missouri-Columbia researcher who was on the trip, to preserve them in the 70% ethanol he had at the lab.

Roxie mailed them to Mick Sutton of the Cave Research Foundation. He determined they were indeed of the same troglomorphic *Caecidotea sp.* that he collected in 2003, but unfortunately and despite odds being in our favor (87.5% chance

that one of the three would be male), all three were female! While this was disappointing, we still made progress because we have evidence that the species is still present, these three specimens are being housed at the park office and more of our cavers know what to look for and where to look for them. Next time we'll make scientific history! Meanwhile, this is a reminder that there is still a lot about the animal life of Devil's Icebox Cave that is undiscovered, unknown or under-known. This reminds me: we had a knowledgeable person report a sighting of a blind cavefish in 2007 but we have not been able to verify that and have not observed any since then.

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