

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; Melissa Hutchens Treasurer; Jan Weaver, Sue Tillema, Scott Schulte, Jim Gast, Mark Hahn, Steve Ferguson Board Members.

President's Message

Kevin Roberson

Greetings fellow Park Lovers! What a slog this month has been. I have been hard-put to rouse myself enough to do any outside work. Upper 90's in temps and miserable humidity. That being said, we must "Endeavor to persevere", as a dead author once wrote. In the last week, I did chain-saw a little, brush and limb-chipped a little, mowed the lawn, and went Chantarelle hunting. All were accomplished with minor injuries and numerous micro-tick bites. Joys of Missouri in July!

One of the major Joys of Missouri is our Missouri State Park system. It is emulated throughout this land and deservedly so. We should be proud of what we have built over the last 50 years or so and especially what we have done with Rock Bridge Memorial State Park. Our Park was citizen inspired, developed and largely funded by the local community. We all should be proud of that and keep that memory of what a few good people can accomplish if they "Endeavor to Persevere".

With that in mind, are you planning on what you can do to serve your community or the Park in the near future? I am being allowed to help with the mowing of the firelines in the Karst area. I will start in September, hopefully after it cools down. I also will be continuing to work with the "Save the Gans" group to protect our park and its environs and will present to the Missouri Parks Association annual meeting on our work protecting our Park from the too dense development on our NE corner.

We have an important announcement to make: Melissa Hutchens has joined the Friends of Rock Bridge Board as Treasurer. She will be working with Jan Weaver in the coming months. Welcome Melissa and thank you for accepting this great responsibility.

Naturalist News

Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

We were pleased to host a Water Festival and thank all of our partners who staffed tables and activities. It was well attended with about 250 people, mostly families with children. Activities included using nets in a stream, live box turtle, live stream critters, stream table model, pollution table, artificial fishing, water painting, watershed maps and a guided hike. Jan Weaver of FoRB gave away 32 coloring books. The event was covered by the Columbia Missourian and KOMU.



Devil's Icebox Spring Branch: A boy points to his catch while being assisted by park volunteer Jan Martin.



FoRB Board Member Jan Weaver works one of the exhibit tables.

Volunteer Meeting: I've been hosting a monthly meeting for park volunteers. During the July 24th meeting, nine volunteers learned about tree identification, did some invasive plant control and held a meeting in the cool air of the Rock Bridge.

Turtle Update: In the July Bridge, I wrote about an injured ornate box turtle near the High Ridge area. As the days went by, she seemed to be improving, but 12 days after the injury, she died. We are still hopeful that some of her eggs will survive. While hiking in the High Ridge area on July 3rd, I saw another ornate box turtle, a healthy male about 12 years old! While individuals die, what's important is

that the population/species continues. Based upon these observations, we can conclude that the High Ridge area is providing good habitat for ornate box turtles which is key to their long-term survival. They are part of a natural community which on July 3rd, included a yellow-billed cuckoo and oak trees in the woodland and several butterflies and bees visiting three milkweed plants growing among the tall grasses.

Upcoming programs: On August 13th, we plan to present about bats and caves at the Missouri State Fair on the Woman's Building lawn.

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