

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, Meredith Donaldson, Board Members.

President's Message

Dear FoRB Members,

What a year we have just passed through! I knew in March of 2020 that this virus was a big deal, but I did not have the vision that it would shape our world this much. Who knew we would have 2 New Year's Eves with the virus hiding under the mistletoe and in each champagne glass? While the pandemic has been a mild inconvenience to me so far, I know that it has been devastating/life-changing for many families and areas. Let us hope that this last surge will be the last and we can put this plague to be once and for all.

The end of the year is a good time for reflection on what we have accomplished: We have continued to have meaningful outreach to the community's underserved youth with our Free-Range Eco Explorers program; we have managed a Rock Bridge Renew this year with excellent participation; we have at least stalled a development threatening the Gans Creek Wild Area and the Park watersheds; and we have had very positive financial support of our programs through CoMoGives. We raised \$7650 during the 2021 campaign. Let's hope that we can continue this success and expand it in the coming year.

As for next year, we will take it as it comes and roll with the punches. We are working with the City and the County and many NGOs to protect the Park as much as possible. Let us hope that we can continue to support the youth, the Park and the Park staff in the manner that we have become accustomed to.

Please search your heart to see what you can do to support the Park in even more meaningful ways next year, I know that I will.

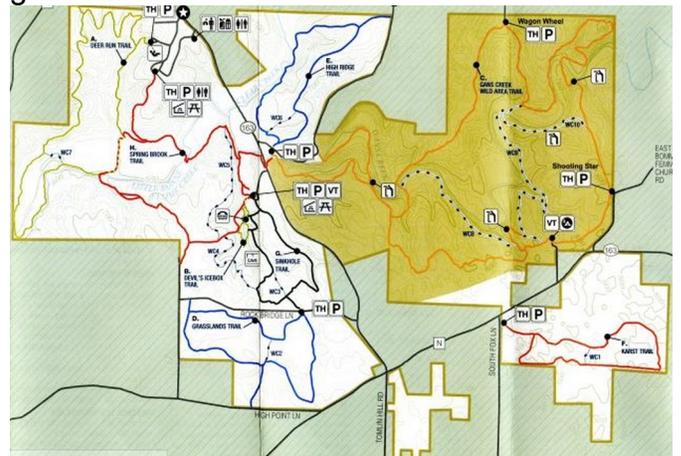
Happy New Year to you all and I hope to see you in the Park!

Yours in conservation,
Kevin Roberson

Naturalist News

By Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

Many find that taking a hike is a very invigorating, relaxing and enjoyable experience. Your body is active at whatever paces suits you, yet your mind can relax and is occupied with the varied sights and sounds along the way. Even if you took the same trail regularly, often things change – different birds, a new scat deposited, a tree has fallen, there's ice on the creek or the weather is different. The park has six designated trails that make loops of 1.5 to 3.75 miles and are marked with plastic blazes/cards attached to trees about every 100 ft.; each trail being blazed in one color so you can be assured that you are still on the right trail.



The park also has a 5 mile outer loop and additional white connectors totaling 8 miles of trails in the Gans Creek Wild Area. Hiking in the wild area is for those who can do some map reading for finding their way around and are seeking a more remote experience. You can obtain a recommended 2-mile route/loop from the park office. Some of the best relief and scenery of the park is found in the wild area and winter is a great time to see it because it is not hidden by tree leaves. Winter is a great time to hike because you can see the shape of the land, the rocky outcrops, the creeks with ice and bubbling brooks, branches of the trees... and

there are no ticks out and it's not hot! There are still some plants with green leaves close to the ground such as certain ferns and sedges, but the brown plants left over from the growing season are interesting too with their different shapes and textures. Colorful birds occasionally brighten the scene or share their songs. The white bark of the tall sycamore trees really stands out this time of year. They prefer to grow along creeks and form a curved line as seen from the bluff tops. The view from the bluff tops is spectacular, providing wide vistas of natural beauty. I hope you will get out to the park this winter and enjoy hiking.

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