

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 Friends,

It has been a pretty cold and snowy February this year with a little warmer weather mixed in. Not a good time for much outdoor activity, but a good time for generating "cabin fever." I hope that you have been using your time inside, like I have, planning on what to do in the coming warmer seasons in the Park. I am definitely looking forward to getting out in the Park to forage for mushrooms. I have some new places to try for morels and I can always find chanterelles and hen of the woods. The oysters are hit or miss, even though I have found some old ones recently near the Park office. A couple of things that I look forward to each year is the frogs calling in rousing chorus and the "peenting" of the woodcock. The Karst area is just full of both of these wonderful sounds when the timing is correct.

Some of the things that I look forward to includes working for the Park to support it and the staff. We will be planning a Rock Bridge Renew and will put an announcement out when it gets scheduled. We are also working to set up our educational programs for the summer. Meredith Donaldson is the board member that has accepted the responsibility of overseeing these educational programs and will bring her excellent experience and education to bear in making these programs the best we have ever had.

We expect that the developer will resubmit the Canton Estates project this month and we will be looking forward to seeing what has been planned. We are very disappointed that we have not been able to work with the developer to get a

plan that will meet the expectations of all for protecting the Park and its watersheds and streams.

Keep smiling and I will see you in the Park.

Yours in conservation,

Kevin Roberson

Naturalist News

By Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

Sometimes, people ask park staff, "What do you do in the winter time?" It seems that they can't imagine what there is to do when there are not a lot of visitors in the park. Well, I can answer that question pretty well by talking about what we did in the last month!

Sarah and I attended 16 hours of RS2 training. RS2 is our on-line reservation system and cash register system which was upgraded statewide. We conducted interviews to try to fill our vacant full-time maintenance worker position for Rock Bridge. The first attempt did not yield a hiring and we just completed interviewing the second group of candidates.

Although the weather has not permitted us to conduct any prescribed burns yet this season (fall 2021 - spring 2022), I led volunteers in several work sessions to complete fire lines. I worked on plans for spring field trips by communicating with teachers and volunteer naturalists. (we are back to normal). FoRB's Bethany Haid and I met to coordinate ways to reach out to our community and educate children about the park. I prepared a PowerPoint and was scheduled to present it at the Missouri

Natural Resources Conference, but due to a snow storm I didn't attend or present. Volunteer Steve Ferguson and I worked with volunteers on how to use the web-based system for signing up and recording hours and we have planned two sessions to introduce new volunteers to the opportunities available to them. I met with three seasonal employees who are lined up to work the summer months to discuss work plans.

Sarah submitted budget requests complete with specifications and ordered toilets and other supplies (harder than it used to be). She conducted an assessment of the condition of all 56 bridges on our section of the Katy Trail. She requested bids for replacement of the roofs of the two maintenance buildings and planned the public meetings for all four of the parks she manages. Sarah provided chainsaw training for several volunteers and supervised volunteers in doing trail maintenance.

There is not space to list it all, but this gives you an idea of the kind of tasks park staff have to do in winter in order to take care of park resources and be prepared to provide services to visitors during the rest of the year.

April Park Events

Water Monitoring Blitz

Saturday, April 9th, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
A registration link will be provided later.

Public Meeting

Saturday, April 23rd from 9:00-9:30 a.m. Meet at the kiosk/table area next to Devil's Icebox parking lot. Staff will present news about the park, and attendees can ask questions and give suggestions. An optional wildflower walk will be provided from 9:30-11:00 am on the Spring Brook Trail. A registration link will be provided later (needed for the walk but not the meeting).