

The Bridge

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The Newsletter of the Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park (FoRB)

Send your submissions to Jim Gast, editor at FriendsofRockBridge@gmail.com.

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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.

FoRB Officers: Kevin Roberson, President; Mark Lee, Secretary; Melissa Hutchens Treasurer; Sue Tillema, Scott Schulte, Jim Gast, Steve Ferguson, Meredith Donaldson, Robin Rotman, Board Members.

President's Column

Kevin Roberson

Editor's note: Kevin is on vacation, but he wanted you to welcome Robin Rotman to the board. Robin teaches in both the the School of Natural Resources and the School of Law at the University of Missouri.

Superintendent News

By Benedict Nagy, Park Superintendent

After starting work on June 7th, it has been a whirlwind of activity here at Rock Bridge and out on our section of the Katy Trail. Unfortunately, on day one, we had to deal with a graffiti "artist" that decided to use our self-guided interpretive trail signs as their canvas. I spent the morning with our new ranger, Collin Maier, documenting the damage. One of our wonderful volunteers, Steve Ferguson, was able to clean up the damage within a day or two and, for now, the "artist" seems to have moved on. Collin seems to be a very motivated ranger and I've had to work with him on several incidents at the park so far, and it is great to have him here. I've been spending time with staff and volunteers in the office and in the field. Roxie has been especially informative and I can tell that she has a wealth of knowledge to share.

Each day has been different. With the dry weather, we have been able to open our equestrian and mountain bike trails and they have been being well used and enjoyed, especially on the weekends. In2Action held their trail run recently and they had the course

cleaned up the very next day. Well, all but the painted arrows which were painted with actual paint instead of spray chalk, just in case anyone was wondering what the big pink arrows on the ground were. On Sunday and Monday of the Juneteenth holiday, most staff were off except for seasonal maintenance person, Evan, and myself.



Ben working on clearing a large fallen tree on the Sinkhole Trail. Photo by Nate Smith. Used by permission.

I'm glad that we were here since there were several trees that needed chainsaw work both in the park and on the Katy Trail. Variety is the spice of life they say!



Members of the Como Composite Raptors youth mountain biking team learn about raptors and trails. Photo by Mike Burden. Used by permission.

On Wednesday, June 22nd, we hosted a group of youth mountain bike riders and members of COMOTA our trail maintenance volunteer group. The young people learned about all aspects of trail design and maintenance and, since their mascot is “The Raptors”, they also learned about and got to handle some interesting raptor specimens such as a Red-Tailed Hawk skull and owl pellets.

I’m super excited to be working at a park that I love deeply and am extremely appreciative of volunteer groups like the Friends of Rock Bridge. My door is always open and please reach out with any questions or concerns. Thank you!

Naturalist News
Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

On June 21st at Coyote Bluff, we heard and saw a male summer tanager. Indigo buntings are commonly seen especially in the Grassland area. Turkey vultures have been nesting on the bluffs in the wild area. Several box turtles have been seen. The list could go on.

Work has included control of bush honeysuckle in the northwest part of the wild area by seasonal and full-time staff, volunteers and a troop of Boy Scouts. While doing that, the scouts also received a hike/adventure and interpretive information about the role of people in nature and

history of people who lived here in 1850-1930. School groups received tours; frog and toad surveys and butterfly counts were conducted; and staff was trained.



Ben Nagy, new park superintendent, was able to get out and learn more about park. Here, Ben, Taylor Hurley and Abby Harper, seasonal stewardship crew members, enjoyed the view from Coyote Bluff and learned about glade plants from Roxie. Photo by Roxie Campbell Used by permission.



The purple prairie clover has increased in number on Coyote Bluff Glade and were in bloom on June 21st, as was lead plant, scurfy pea and whorled milkweed. Photo by Roxie Campbell. Used by permission.

Youth Outreach and Educational Programs
Bethany Haid

The bulk of our FoRB youth education programs happens from mid-June to mid-July, and therefore, we are right in the middle of hosting

field trips and teaching classes! Ally Akol and I spent the week doing activities ranging from playing "I Spy at Rock Bridge" with preschoolers, teaching kids how to find and identify macroinvertebrates, and leading tours of Connor's Cave. As always the most popular activities are holding crawdads, using flashlights, and scampering after frogs.

We have 31 programs scheduled between June 21st and July 15th, reaching an estimated 450 people! We will have several programs in August, which could bring another 100 visitors to the park. About half of the visitors are kids under seven years old. They are enthusiastic and naturally curious.

Upcoming Programs and Events

Nature Detectives: Stream Features and Creatures: Sunday afternoon July 10th, Thursday morning July 14th, and Friday morning July 15th. Use this QR code to register.



Water Festival

Saturday, July 16th, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at Devil's Icebox parking lot area. Registration is not needed. The park is looking for volunteers to help with the event. If you're interested, contact Roxie at 574-449-7400.

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