

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.

The next board meeting is Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 6:00 PM at the Gilbert Shelter.

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

President's Column

Dear Friends,

We finally got a break in the weather, with lower humidity and high near 80 degrees. I hope that you all have been able to take advantage of this reprieve. I have! I just started mowing *Sericea lespedeza* in the Karst area. This is my big volunteer project where I can help the Park while enjoying being in the Park. Roxie lets me know what needs to be done and I can follow directions. It is hoped that mowing these invasive plants annually will help keep them somewhat in-check.



Kevin Roberson mowing the Karst Trail. Photo by Kevin Roberson. Used by permission.

Sericea is a good idea that went wrong. The plant was brought to our State on purpose for wildlife cover/food and erosion control. It has a nice size seed and seemed like it would be great for quail and song birds. Its habit of growing so thick that animals had a hard time traversing it did not show up until after it had been planted along many of our State's roadways. We must always be mindful of unintended consequences

or our actions. Things that look good for the Park or our Community may have harmful results, when all had best intentions. So please, be thoughtful and think of future outcomes.

Take care and be kind. I hope to see you in the Park.

Yours in Conservation,
Kevin Roberson

Naturalist News

Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

The frequent heavy rains during the first week of August caused me to have to keep adjusting plans for Jr. Naturalist Day Camp, but we still managed to have a great time enjoying the park. We got to catch critters in Clear Creek before it came up. We only got drenched one time (and no lightning). I told this group that they were the wettest of any Jr. Naturalist group! Seventeen kids earned their Jr. Naturalist badges.



While high water kept us out of Connor's Cave, the Jr. Naturalists really enjoyed exploring under the Rock Bridge and in Little Dome Cave, shown here. This and the following three photos were taken by park staff. Used by permission.



While hiking in the wild area, some of the kids enjoyed sitting on a fallen tree at lunchtime.



The view from Coyote Bluff was misty – an unusual sight for an August 4th date.



Twelve volunteers helped with seed collection in the Grassland area. We'll have to wait to collect seed from the compass plant shown here in bloom, but it was good timing for collecting lead plant and sensitive briar.

Nature Detectives

Sara Jimenez, Coordinator

In August, Nature Detectives learned about the animals that share the streams with us. The creek was teeming with crayfish of all sizes, and we learned how to gently scoop them out of the water for observation. We were fascinated by using the magnifying lenses to count their many legs, and laughed at the way they move backwards to scoot away from danger. Little ones got to practice lots of scooping and pouring, and other fun sensory activities for fine motor development. We also got to meet several frogs, who begrudgingly did their part to teach the Nature Detectives about creek life, and then happily returned to their homes in the water. There were so many young families out at the park, hiking and enjoying the beautiful weather, and several of whom joined in the fun of learning and exploring the creek with us.



Photo by Charity Quinn used by permission.

We will meet at the Billy Gilbert Shelter on September 27th to wrap up our summer activities with a free play and litter pick up event. More details will be announced soon on the FoRB Facebook page. Thank you to the families who attended, and to the volunteers for all your help with our events, as well as to all those who support our efforts to promote increased understanding and enjoyment of our amazing park.