

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, November 14, 2023, at 6:00 PM in the Park Office.

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,

This month is for giving thanks. I am especially thankful for my friends and relations that give me love, support and meaning for my life.

Another group of friends that I am thankful for are my fellow FoRB Board members. The members bring a wide range of experiences and expertise to bear toward the goal of supporting and protecting the Park. We have members that were at the forefront of the beginnings of the conservation movement in the Missouri; a member that has been working in youth outdoor education for decades; former State Park Superintendents who bring decades of experience in development, protection and promotion of the Park; a retired service member with a love for the out of doors; a doctor, an attorney and a tenure-track professor in environmental science and gifted executive in information systems. All of these extremely talented people have come together to meld their skills together for one powerful goal: protecting and supporting the park and the community through service. I am so thankful and proud to be associated with this team and to help them to be successful in their desires to make things better for the Park and the community. If you know a FoRB Board member, thank them for their service and support.

It is with regret that I inform you that a long time FoRB Board member, Meredith Donaldson, is retiring from the Board and moving to the Kansas City area to support her family. We will miss her knowledge, support, and positive attitude at our meetings and in our activities. Best of all to Meredith in the future. Take care and be kind.

I hope to see you in the Park.

Yours in Conservation,

Kevin Roberson

Naturalist News

Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

Usually, I have good news for you, but this month, most of what I have is bad news. Research conducted by the Missouri Department of Conservation and reported on by Robbie Doerhoff finds that some herbicides used when it is above 85 degrees out under humid conditions (Missouri in the summer!) result in the chemicals vaporizing (after the spray and drift has settled) and then the vapor can be moved miles from the source and affect the health of people, native trees, plants, etc. If you have noticed cupped or deformed leaves, this may be the cause. This webinar sponsored by Grow Native can be viewed at:

[Dicamba & 2,4-D: Old Herbicides Causing New Problems - YouTube](#)



Pink Planarian. DNR photo by Scott Myers. Used by permission.

I mentioned last month that the numbers were down from our Pink Planarian Project survey (P3). Here's a quick look at the numbers and how they compare with past surveys (all of these are fall survey numbers): Pink planarians (pp): 2023 – 2; 2022 – 18; 2021, 2020, 2019 – 3 or 4. So, while we're way down from last year, last year was unusual and we're not far off from 2019-2021, so not alarming. Also, we saw two

pp the week before the survey at a location where none were counted during the survey, so those two were probably present and just missed somehow. The pink planarian's prey animals:
Isopods: 2023 – 519; 2022 – 1,923; 2018, 2017 – 620 to 650 so again low but not unprecedented.
Amphipods: 2023 – 33; 2022 – 336; 2020 – 48. Many years are at about this level.
Snails: 2023 – 268; 2022 – 29; 2019 – 380. A pattern exists that when isopods and amphipods are low, snails are high, presumably because there is more food available. It's not easy to make sense of the data. We are trying to get the data analyzed by a statistician, especially since we have gathered 20 years of P3 data! Another factor this year was the low water level. Anecdotally, it seemed there was less flow through Devil's Icebox Cave than when we had the drought of 2012. The stream riffle at the Big Room which provides good habitat conditions and is one of our survey plots, had about half of the width of water that it normally does.

There is some good news! For many years, there has been a partnership of people working toward restoring and protecting streams, caves and water quality in our area. That partnership has been expanded, gained a wider perspective and had a fresh start recently. It's now called the Greater Bonne

Femme Watershed Initiative and you can learn about it at www.cavewatershed.org. Funding for the "implementation phase" of the Watershed-Based Plan was approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency on June 12, 2023 with a dual focus on restoration and protection of streams in the watershed.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, November 4th: Rock Bridge Renewal, 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM. Meet at the Devil's Icebox Parking Lot. Bring gloves, water and sturdy footwear. Free Shakespeare's pizza and soda afterward to those who volunteer.

Friday, November 24th: Second Annual Black Friday Hike from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Meet at the Special Use Area at the end of Raylea Lane (located between S. Fox Lane and Bonne Femme Church Road). There will be two hikes: one starts at 2:30 PM and the other at 3:00 PM. There will also be a campfire with S'mores.

Tuesday, November 28th: CoMoGives campaign begins and lasts until December 31st.

**FORB
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