

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, February 13, 2024 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, Robin Rotman, Board Members

President's Column

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the New Year and new beginnings. Last week we went down to Big Muddy and watched and listened to the Ice Atolls moving downstream. We had the first warm day today and I can already hear birds singing to set up their territories. The Fox and Gray Squirrels are having young now and the Coyotes will be howling and breeding along with the Woodcock peenting before you get my next missive. Get ready...it is upon us! Make the most of the coming spring. Get outside. It is good for your insides!

One way to get outside is to come and help us with our first 2024 Rock Bridge Renew. It will be held on April 13th. We will meet at the Devil's Ice Box parking lot at 8:30 and have pizza for lunch. This is a great way to meet with fellow, like-minded tree-huggers and do a good deed all at once. I hope to see you there.

Keep up with what is going on at the FoRB website: <https://www.friendsofrockbridgemsp.org/>
I hope to see you in the Park.

Yours in Conservation,
Kevin Roberson

CoMoGives Update

Although FoRB did not win any of the three "Happy Hour" incentives, we did win a bonus \$1000 Challenge Grant. This grant was a random drawing of all CoMoGives participants who did not win one of the other Challenge Grants. The total raised is now \$8540. We couldn't have done this without our tremendous supporters.

Naturalist News

Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

First Day Hikes were popular again with 101 people participating on three types of hikes (one offered twice). The hikes were 1) History and Caves on the Sinkhole and Devil's Icebox Trails, 2) Deer Run Trail (vigorous hike) and Bird Watching on the Grassland Trail.



*Winter scenery in the Grassland area on January 1, 2024
Photo by Eric Reuter. Used by Permission.*

Level 1 Burn Training was improved and customized to Missouri State Parks this year. Roxie and the regional ecologist co-taught a class at Rock Bridge for eight volunteers and six staff. It was a good thing to do on a cold winter day.

Other January activities included making plans with teachers for schools to bring their students on field trips in the spring and planning training for the Devil's Icebox Cave Institute members. We have a hibernating bat survey trip planned for this winter. Work continued on cutting and stump treating bush honeysuckle and other woody invasive plants in the Gans Creek Wild Area.