

# 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](mailto:FriendsofRockBridge@gmail.com).

**The next board meeting is Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 6:00 PM at the Gilbert Shelter.**

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

## President's Column

Dear Friends,

Greetings and salutations. I hope that this letter finds you happy, contented, and able to get outdoors to enjoy our weather. I will be more hunting later this week and, like always, have more excitement and hope than is generally warranted by my skill in finding these delicious morsels.

This month I wanted to spend a little time saying farewell to two longtime board members. Meredith Donaldson and Sue Tillema have left the board. Meredith and Sue both were very experienced, capable board members when I joined 12 years ago.

Meredith is very well-known throughout the Park and Conservation Community as a highly respected Outdoor Educator. Meredith ran our youth education program for many years, and it was a blessing to never have to worry about any part of the Nature Detectives and UPOP programs. Under her tutelage, you knew it would be well-executed. Meredith even made sure that we were left in good hands with the training and guidance that she gave to Suzan and Sara. She will be missed greatly by FoRB and Mid-Missouri in general.

Sue left the FoRB Board after many helpful years to be able to spend more time on other special activities. Sue was a jewel of a Board Member to help us protect a jewel of a Park. Sue has been active in conservation in Missouri for decades. She has been a big part of or instrumental in many things that make conservation in Missouri and especially our Park, special. She actually was part of the team working to have part of our Park designated as a "wild area." Whenever talk

turns to the "Elders" in Missouri conservation, Sue's name is right there, and we will continue to be in awe of all she has been part of and all that she has accomplished to make sure that Missouri Parks and DNR are as good as they can possibly be. The generations to come owe much to her and I thank her for always being the "rock" on the FoRB Board that I could count on. Thanks!

A good way to get outside and to work to protect our Park is to come and help us with our 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 Rock Bridge Renew. It will be held on April 13<sup>th</sup>. 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

## Naturalist News

### Roxie Campbell, Park Naturalist

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Roxie provided training for 25 members of the Devil's Icebox Cave Institute (DICI). Ten in attendance are new to the DICI. After classroom topics were covered and equipment reviewed, we walked to two sinkholes in the Karst area where a few members crawled in to see whether they had opened up any since last checked. One had and now has an estimated 25 feet of passage – enough to qualify it to be called a cave, bringing the park's total number of caves to 13. We also visited the swallow hole in Bonne Femme Creek and talked

about the cave discovered last year that lies under the bridge and stream at Hwy. 163. The swallow hole isn't quite as distinct as it was and includes some area upstream which isn't surprising since we understand that water loses to the underground in a section of stream about one mile in length.



*Pablo Islas at a sinkhole that did not have a passageway.*

Volunteers led by Becky Bohlmeier, conducted surveys for the American Woodcock. Results were: Picnic area – 0, High Ridge – 15 and Grassland – 15. Volunteers also conducted the first frog and toad survey. Two of the ponds were dry; numbers were down overall.

Because we lost so many ash trees in the picnic area, I transplanted nine little native trees from the Karst area to the picnic area. We prefer this approach because we are not introducing trees of non-local genetics (and it didn't cost anything except some time). Most are white oak, an important species to many species of insects and birds. For the trees to survive, one must move them when quite small, so be patient please as it will take time for them to grow!



*Given enough years, the little trees planted in the picnic area will grow up to look like this, the parent white oak tree.*



*A little white oak tree has a new home. The fence will help protect it from mowers, people, deer and rabbits.*

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