

# ROCK BRIDGE STATE PARK

How does Missouri geology  
affect life?



## SOME VOCAB

### Weathering

Slow breaking down/dissolving of rocks on Earth's surface. We can see weathering occur in Rock Bridge State Park by the constant slow changes we see in the caves and the karst. For example, the caves are changing and becoming more wide because of the water flow.



### Erosion

Moving of rocks/sediment to another place by water, wind, ice, or gravity (Fast or slow). For example, in Rock Bridge State Park the creek is always wider after a heavy rain. When the creek is going really fast, with a lot of water, it breaks off parts of the dirt and grass making the creek area bigger.

# SINKHOLES

## What ARE sinkholes?

Sinkholes are a huge impact on everyday life because they can happen at any time. These big events happen when the ground can't hold up its weight any longer and collapses into the cavern underneath.



Karst topography is a terrain, composed of bedrock made of limestone or dolomite, in which the topography is carved by groundwater dissolving rock through chemical weathering and is characterized by caves, sinkhole, natural bridges, losing streams, natural springs, and a lot of clay sediment.

## What IS karst topography?

# KARST TOPOGRAPHY



## LIMESTONE

**Limestone** has a huge role in caves

Limestone is a sedimentary rock that dates very far back. Several million years ago, when sea animals died, their bones sank to the bottom of the ocean. Then they slowly piled up and compacted creating the limestone we have today. That's why when you pick up a piece of limestone, you can see crinoid and shell fossils in it. Those fossils help teach us about Missouri and other areas millions of years ago and give us a visual of what life/the geology might have looked like. When limestone is compacted and water seeps through, it starts to dissolve the limestone to make a cave. This process takes some time but whenever it dissolves enough to open up a cave, it's a beautiful sight to see.

# HUMANS AND THEIR AFFECTS



## How we affect caves and the park

When we add a lot of weight on top of weak ground, we help the sinkhole occur faster by accident. But park rangers also can catch those and help prevent it from happening or when it does happen they can make it safer for people to still enjoy the outdoors. A major impact is the amount of littering we do, FOR NO REASON! When we litter it damages the plants and animals living all around and all together it's terrible for not just our park, but all parks. In the caves, our oils from our hands dissolve the rocks faster so when we touch the wall, it can damage the cave. Though we do a lot to harm our park, there is also a lot of good. For example, our park rangers work to bring back endangered wildlife, students are learning how to respect our world through this park, and we are all chipping in to help make this park stay amazing.

## 6 DEGREES OF SEPARATION

How does trash travel?

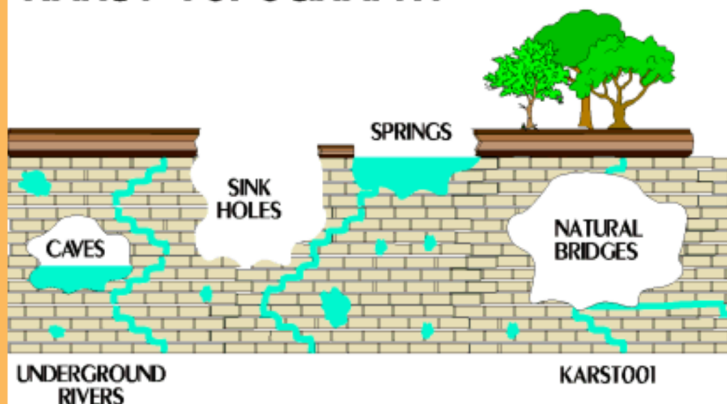


## CAVES, SINKHOLES, AND GROUND WATER

### How do they connect?

Water works into the limestone and causes the limestone to dissolve. After some time of dissolving, the limestone creates a cavern or a room underground. if the ground cant hold its own weight then it will collapse into the room creating a sinkhole.

## KARST TOPOGRAPHY





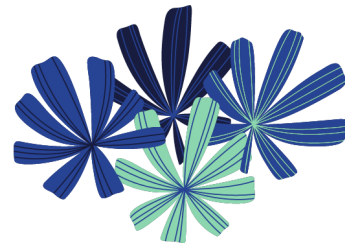


# PLANTS!

So many!



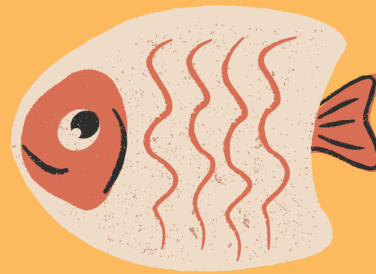
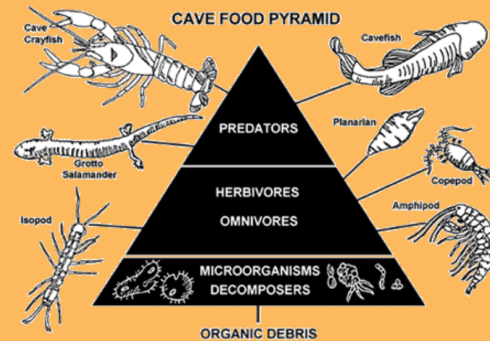
Plants in Rock Bridge State Park range from tall trees, to gorgeous flowers, to itchy poison ivy. Plants affect the karst by being on them. You can see plants coming out of rocks, in cave entrances, and all over the karst landscape.



# ANIMALS!

they live here!

Many animals live in Rock Bridge State Park like bats, deer, snakes, and many types of bugs all live and thrive in our park. These animals impact the karst because they live in it. Just like our house changes because we live in it, its the same for the animals.





# WEATHER AND CAVES

yes it can "rain" in caves!

When its rains or snows above ground, it will seep through the limestone cracks dissolving it even more. Water also creates stalagmites. Where it might not rain as hard as it does above ground, there will be a slight sprinkle from the water that seeps through and down into the cave.



## ROCK BRIDGE A place you have to visit STATE PARK

Beautiful  
scenery in our  
own town

Can teach  
so much

Has many  
different  
attractions

can actually go  
into the caves

Safe for  
all ages

# **WANT TO CHECK OUT MORE?**

## **Website**

<https://mostateparks.com/park/rock-bridge-memorial-state-park>

## **Phone**

Park Office: (573) 449-7402  
Trails Hotline : 573-398-7001, Ext.  
3Park Naturalist: 573-449-7400

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