

# The ROCKSPIRIAN

July, 2011

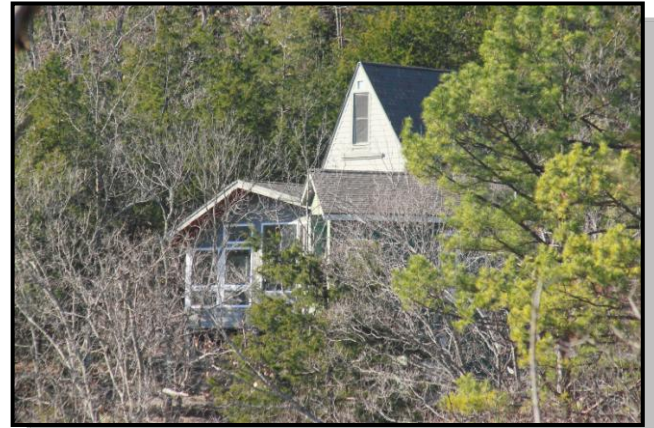
The Quarterly Rockspire Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 7

**B**ETTY'S **B**IRDHOUSE **C**ABIN is our first guest house designed expressly for welcoming visitors to Rockspire. It is in the perfect setting for those who would like to spend some quiet time, enjoying the wonders of nature or making day trips to some of Northwest Arkansas and Southern Missouri's travel destinations. Nearby Eureka Springs is replete with art galleries, shops, live entertainment, and restaurants, while Branson is only one hour away.

Built deep in the woods on two cliffs with a deck spanning the chasm between, the cabin can accommodate up to 8 people. There is one bedroom plus a third-level loft in the main cabin, and the screened porch offers the true camping experience without the inconveniences of "roughing it". Across the deck is an additional bedroom suite for those who prefer more privacy.

Using passive solar design principles, we operate the cabin with minimal need for heating/cooling mechanical systems. We heat the cabin in winter by natural solar gain in the daytime coupled with wood burning stove-generated heat at night, supplemented only when needed by propane fuel. In the summer the cabin is cooled by natural ventilation from the cool draft off the stone cliffs underneath. Small window a/c units cool during the late-afternoon on hot days. During much of the year, simply opening windows and doors allows Mother Nature to do the job.



Betty's Birdhouse Cabin Southeast Elevation  
As seen from the Upper Nature Trail through a telephoto lens  
Photo by A. Bevil 11.26.09



Betty's Birdhouse Cabin  
Living Room Interior  
Photos by G. Myers 10.05.10



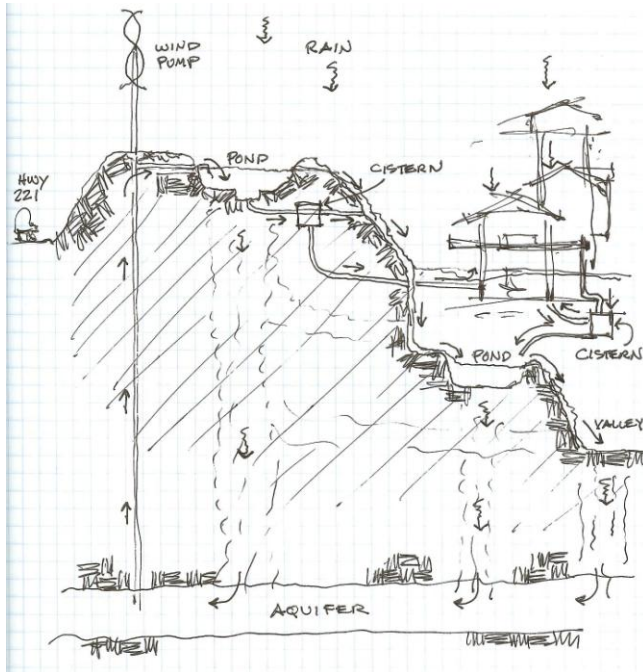
Betty's Birdhouse Cabin  
North Elevation  
Photo by G. Myers 6.23.09



Betty's Birdhouse Cabin  
Deck from below the cliffs  
Photo by G. Myers 7.28.07

Water for Betty's Birdhouse Cabin is rainwater collected on top of the mountain by the MobbyMac Carriage House roof and then piped down the mountain to the cabin. This rainwater catchment system is the first installation in what will be the Rainwater Collection Scheme described on the next page.

It is our wish that each of you will find time to be our guest at Rockspire and enjoy the natural setting of Betty's Birdhouse Cabin. Several of our guests have reported that their stay at the cabin has produced some of the most restful sleep they have experienced in years!



Rainwater Collection Scheme  
Section through mountain - not to scale  
Sketch by G. Myers 6.28.10

**R**AINWATER **C**OLLECTION at Rockspire is the primary source of potable water while a water well and natural springs provide backup. Water is known as a transient resource, and as water flows steadily, our collection system must integrate with surrounding water environments such as mountain streams, rivers, and springs. By design, Rockspire's Rainwater Collection Scheme allows us to use the water for our homes while it continues to flow from the sky (as rainwater), down the mountain (as streams, rivers, and springs), and eventually into the aquifer where it is naturally collected and transported below ground to other regions. At certain points along its route we intend to collect the water (temporarily) through a system of ponds and cisterns for our basic water needs and recreational purposes.

Many experts believe that fresh water supply will be the number one environmental issue of this century. And as part of our attempt to create a sustainable lifestyle at Rockspire we are meeting this challenge head-on. For more details, see the Rockspire Manifesto at [Rockspire.com](http://Rockspire.com).

**G**ARDENING fresh vegetables and fruits at Rockspire presents its own set of challenges as native wildlife compete for the fruits of our labor.

Martin Fortenberry, Rockspire's Director of Maintenance and Security has planted three vegetable gardens this year, producing potatoes, squash, tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, bell peppers, onions, green onions, green leaf lettuce, jalapeno peppers, banana peppers, egg plant, cabbage, and carrots. The old orchard that was part of the original homestead on the property continues to produce pears, apples, persimmons, cherries and walnuts.

Our master plan at Rockspire includes building a three-story greenhouse. This greenhouse will double as a research facility for developing "verticulture" where we intend to grow organic crops with as little impact on the environment as possible. You may have heard of horticulture experiments in cities and even in artificial environments like the Biosphere and the oceans, but few are aware that the conversion of virgin land to agricultural farmland represents a looming challenge to meet the needs of an ever-growing population. Because rural land is thought to be so plentiful, current crop production methods threaten rural environments if new techniques are not found to manage food supply responsibly.



Vegetable Gardening  
Martin Fortenberry in one of three gardens  
Photo by G. Myers 6.24.11