



# The Buffalo River Chapter

Of

## THE OZARK SOCIETY

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MAY/JUNE/JULY 2008

VOLUME: 11 NUMBER: 3

*“The challenge goes on. There are other lands and rivers, other wilderness areas to save and share with all. I challenge you to step forward to protect and care for the wild places you love best.” -Neil Compton*

### **BRC May-July Calendar**

- May 18<sup>th</sup> Low Gap to Steel Creek Hike
- May 29<sup>th</sup> BRC Meeting at Gilbert Café
- May 30<sup>th</sup> Birding Float Bridge to Gilbert
- June 3-7<sup>th</sup> BNR float Carver to Hwy 14
- June 8<sup>th</sup> BNR New Trail Dedication
- June 22<sup>nd</sup> Cave Mountain Cave Trip
- June 26<sup>th</sup> BRC Meeting at Gilbert Café
- June 28<sup>th</sup> BNR Cleanup
- July 13-18 OS Colorado Trip
- No BRC Meeting in July

### **Buffalo River Reflections** by Laura Timby

This past April, the Buffalo River Chapter hosted the annual spring meeting for all Ozark Society members. The event took place along the Buffalo National River at the Tyler Bend Pavilion and Campground. The weather was made to order with sunshine and mild temperatures, with only the wind being somewhat troublesome at times. Although participation was a little on the light side, almost all of the various chapters had someone in attendance.

Registration and the morning’s general meeting went off without a hitch, helped along with fresh brewed coffee and the famous Ferguson’s cinnamon rolls generously donated by Wayne and Peggy Thompson. The rolls alone make it worth the cost of registration!

At noon everyone broke for lunch while the Ozark Society Board met to address pressing Society issues. It was a welcome sight to see several Ozark Society members sitting in on the meeting, at times offering comments or suggestions. The input from members is

always valued and is necessary for the healthy functioning of an organization.

The afternoon’s agenda started off with several speakers. BNR Superintendent Kevin Cheri addressed those gathered, speaking of his background in the NPS and the current challenges facing the Buffalo National River, including the effects of the recent flooding on park facilities, and the financial hardships that the BNR is faced with in these times of increasingly tight government budgets. Cheri is a gifted speaker and soon put the crowd at ease with his friendly manner and outgoing personality. He responded in a forthright manner to questions from several Ozark Society members and stressed the importance of all of us working together in a positive way.

The next speaker was Marc DePoy, NPS Chief of Resource Management and Fire. Since his arrival almost a year ago, everyone who has met Marc has been pleased to find someone with an obvious passion for his work in this park. His willingness to communicate with individuals and actively involve them in various programs and projects goes a long way towards cementing a positive NPS/community interface. Saturday at the meeting was no exception. Marc spoke at length about different projects, most notably the Centennial Initiative, as well as the ongoing All Taxa Bio Survey. He thanked several Ozark Society for their help with the Lower Buffalo Wilderness cleanup and asked for our help in the upcoming Buffalo River Cleanup on June 28<sup>th</sup>. There were plenty of questions from the crowd and Marc did an admirable job answering them at length. Afterwards, both Kevin and Marc stayed and visited informally with Society members, proof again that this park and the Buffalo National River for them is more than “just a job.”

Our third speaker was Bert Turner, who brought materials and information on the upcoming National Trails

Symposium to be held this November in Little Rock. Bert had been patiently waiting for his turn, so when it was his time he launched into a very energized talk, doing a fantastic job promoting the event. It definitely sounds like something worth visiting or perhaps working at as a volunteer. It's really exciting to think that such an event will be held here in Arkansas. Additional information can be obtained at their web site [www.americantrails.org/2008/](http://www.americantrails.org/2008/)

While some folks were listening to speakers, others took the opportunity to enjoy wildflower hikes along the trails at Tyler Bend or visit the river. This is an especially beautiful time of year to be in the Ozarks and the Buffalo River had good flow, running clear with its characteristic turquoise hue.

The evening's potluck was splendid with a well-rounded variety of dishes. There was plenty of food for everyone and I heard more than one person complaining about being stuffed afterwards. When it all looks so good its hard not to try a little of everything!

The evening's entertainment was provided by Newton County singer/songwriter, Shawn Porter. Not only is Shawn a wonderful musician with a great voice, but also his songs truly reflect on life here in the Ozarks and the environmental concerns that we are faced with in this modern world. He was certainly "singing to the choir", as Ozark Society members, young and old alike, listened with rapt attention to his sometimes poignant, sometimes humorous lyrics. It provided the perfect ending to a great day.

Sunday activities included a float trip on the Buffalo River from Woolum to Bakers Ford. The level was perfect and everyone enjoyed the scenery and the chance to see first hand some of the changes to the river since the recent flooding. The day passed without incident except for some smoke that blew in during the afternoon that reduced visibility and made for some vision and breathing discomfort. No one seemed to know where it was coming from and more than one question was posed as to whether the Forest Service was doing a prescribed burn somewhere. By late afternoon everyone was off the river and had said their goodbyes and headed off to their respective destinations, a good time had by all.

Last but not least, thank you to all the Buffalo River Chapter members who helped make this a memorable event. We couldn't have done it without you!

## **Dog-day Cicada** by Millicent Phillips

As the days lengthen and the sun warms the earth we will be witnessing one of nature's most wondrous events, the emergence of the annual cicada. It is sometimes referred

to as the dog-day cicada because of its emergence during the hot "dog days" of summer, July and August. During this time it will break through the earth and climb up any vertical plant or object and split its nymphal skin along its back. The adults will pull themselves from the old skin and hang there for a couple of hours while pumping blood into their wings. As the sun dries out the insect it will harden, turn greenish black, then climb to the upper branches of the tree and prepare to mate. Male cicadas will serenade the females with their loud buzzing drone and soon die after mating. Females will then cut slits in a branch to deposit their eggs, follow suit and then die of exhaustion. The tiny wingless nymphs the size of a grain of rice hatch from their eggs, fall to the ground and burrow into the soil where they attach themselves to the tree roots and draw nourishment from the tree. This is North America's largest and most conspicuous insect.

Depending on which species they are they could spend from two to eight years underground. Spending most of their life there is a survival strategy. There are about 155 species of cicadas found in North America and nearly half are found in the eastern regions. So far, only eight species of the annual cicadas have been identified in Arkansas. They range in length from about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch to 2 inches. Because of overlapping generations some adults appear every year during the hot days of summer. A smaller group is the species called the periodical cicada, which includes the 13 and 17-year cicadas, though no 17-year cicadas are found in Arkansas. The periodical has a much smaller blackish body, striking orange legs and wing veins and reddish orange eyes that were said to be red from staring into the fires of Hades. Another superstition claims that their sudden appearance foretells war---indicated, they say, by the black **W** formed by certain veins of the insect's wings. Broods of the 13-year periodical cicada are due to emerge in Arkansas in 2011 and 2015.

Anyone who has seen a cicada may have wondered why nature has made such a large, stout-bodied, bug-eyed creature with a prominent bulging head. The male's mating call, a loud pulsating buzz, is produced by a pair of timbales or drum-like membranes on the sides of the abdomen. This large hollow abdomen acts as an echo chamber that greatly amplifies the sound, making this the loudest call in the insect kingdom. It can be heard almost two miles away. But why the bulging head? Cicada nymphs develop underground, sucking the nutrient-poor xylem from the roots. Xylem sap is 99% water and 1% nutrients and moves upward from the roots to replace the water as the leaves transpire, unlike the nutrient-rich phloem which is 30% nutrients and 70% water, flowing under pressure from the leaves to the roots. The prominent bulging head contains large muscles and a powerful pump to draw up the xylem and into the cicada's mouth.

In the three months spent above ground as adults they become a bonanza for wild turkeys, chipmunks or any wildlife that can eat a large insect. Predator swamping is another survival strategy. When they emerge in great numbers the animals that feed on them eat nothing else and soon become satiated, giving the remaining cicadas a chance to breed.

Even humans enjoy the tasty morsels. If you are looking for an interesting, yet tasty dish to take to a potluck this summer consider the large annual cicada. The best time to find them is on a warm evening between sunset and dawn when they have just emerged. When freshly shucked they're ghostly white and tender. And no, they do not taste like chicken, more like cold canned asparagus. Microwaved they smell like roasted almonds. The Native Americans roasted them like popcorn.

Here is a quick and easy main dish recipe that should take only a few minutes to prepare:

Ingredients:

2 cups blanched cicadas with husks removed  
Butter to sauté  
Two cloves crushed garlic  
2 tsp finely chopped fresh basil, or to taste

Your favorite pasta

Directions:

1. Melt butter in sauté pan over medium heat.
2. Add garlic and sauté for 30 seconds.
3. Add basil and cicadas and continue cooking, turning down the heat if necessary, for 5 minutes or until the cicadas begin to look crispy and the basil is wilted.
4. Toss with pasta and olive oil. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese if desired.

Yield

4 servings

## **DEDICATION, HIKE SCHEDULED FOR BUFFALO TRAIL EXTENSION**

On Sunday, June 8, a dedication ceremony at the public use area at the Highway 14 Bridge at the Buffalo National River will formally open 6.1 miles of new trail extending upriver from the bridge. This addition to the Buffalo River Hiking Trail and Ozark Highlands Trail has been built during the past two and a half years, according to construction coordinator Ken Smith.

Dedication events, to be sponsored by the Ozark Society and the American Hiking Society as part of National Trails Day, will begin at 10:30 a.m. After recognition

of volunteer workers and the National Park Service trail crew who built the trail, there will be a brief dedication ceremony. Those attending can then remain for visiting and an informal potluck picnic lunch.

Following lunch, those attending can choose either to hike a portion of the trail beginning at the bridge, or through-hike the entire trail. For a nominal charge, through-hikers can take a shuttle bus to the far end of the trail at Spring Creek Road, then hike back to their own vehicles left at the bridge.

The trail crosses over three major bluffs having panoramic views of the Buffalo River. Though one hillside has many intermittent flights of steps, the trail is generally designed to avoid steep grades. Hiking is rated as moderate.

Originally set for Saturday, June 7, the dedication was rescheduled for June 8 because of heavy recreation traffic expected at the bridge on June 7. Those coming for the dedication and hike may want to make a weekend of it, maybe canoeing the river on Saturday.

In case of rain, the dedication and hike will take place at the bridge beginning at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 15.

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## **Meetings and Outings...**

*Editor's note: Please contact the trip coordinator prior to the day of the hike to check for any last minute changes or cancellations. Thank you.*

### **Low Gap to Steel Creek Hike Sunday May 18th**

Meet Farrel at 10 am at the Steel Creek launch area. This is a scenic little known hike and is approximately 6 miles long and is rated moderate. Contact Farrel at (479) 200-2621 if interested.

**Buffalo River Chapter meeting Thursday May 29<sup>th</sup>** at the Gilbert Café. Come early for dinner, the meeting will start at 7pm. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Dan Scheiman, Bird Conservation Director for Audubon Arkansas, and he will be presenting *An Overview of Arkansas Birds*.

**Birding Float with Dr. Dan Friday May 30<sup>th</sup>.** Dr. Dan Scheiman has agreed to join us for a float from the Hwy 65 Bridge to Gilbert in search of birds on the Buffalo River. We will meet at 8am at the Hwy 65 Bridge. Bring binoculars, water and lunch. This should be lots of fun and the last time we did this we saw a couple of unusual birds for this area. You don't need to be an expert birder or boater to join in the fun. Contact Laura Timby at [ldtimby@ritternet.com](mailto:ldtimby@ritternet.com) or (870) 439-2968 for more information.

**The Annual Ozark Society Buffalo River Float Trip** this year will take place from **June 3<sup>rd</sup> –7<sup>th</sup>**. Plans are underway and the trip will begin at Carver and end up at the Hwy 14 Bridge. Visit the Ozark Society web site at [www.ozarksociety.net](http://www.ozarksociety.net) for more details.

**BNR Trail Dedication Sunday June 8<sup>th</sup>** Read Ken's article in this newsletter or visit the Ozark Society web site at [www.ozarksociety.net](http://www.ozarksociety.net) for information about this event celebrating the completion of the newest section of the BRT/OHT extension from Spring Creek to Hwy 14 Bridge.

**Cave Mountain Cave Trip Sunday June 22**

Meet Farrel at the pull off across from the Lost Valley Road in Boxley at 10 am. This cave has an intriguing history as well as some very interesting features. The trip is rated easy to moderate. Everyone should bring at least two reliable sources of light, as well as water and lunch. Wear appropriate footwear and clothes suitable for caving. This is a cool place to explore while avoiding the heat of Arkansas summer! Call Farrel at (479) 200-2621 for more info.

**Buffalo River Chapter Meeting Thursday June 26<sup>th</sup>**

Meet at 6pm for dinner or 7pm for the meeting at the Gilbert Café. Our guest speaker will be Tony Collins, NPS Wilderness Coordinator. Tony's presentation is titled *Wilderness Along the Buffalo*. If you want to learn more about the Wilderness System and how it relates to wilderness areas along the Buffalo River, than this meeting is one not to be missed!

**Buffalo National River Cleanup, Saturday June 28<sup>th</sup>.**

In Commemoration with the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Ozark Society in collaboration with the National Park Service, Arkansas Canoe Club, Sierra Club and other conservation organizations will participate in a cleanup of the middle district of the Buffalo River. On Saturday June 28<sup>th</sup> meet at 9am at the Tyler Bend Pavilion. From there, groups of volunteers will be organized and sent to different areas of the river to begin cleanup efforts. Since the flooding this past spring there is more trash than ever visible along the Buffalo, especially tires. Lets all join in to help keep our river beautiful. Contact Laura Timby at [ldtimby@ritternet.com](mailto:ldtimby@ritternet.com) or (870) 439-2968 or visit the Ozark Society website at [www.ozarksociety.net](http://www.ozarksociety.net) for more details.

**Ozark Society Colorado Trip July 13-19<sup>th</sup>.**

The 2008 Colorado high adventure trip this year will be Sunday July 13 thru Saturday July 19. The campground reservations have been made at the Cascade Campground in the Collegiate Peaks area of the San Isabel National Forest. The campground is located on County Road 162 west of Nathrop, Colorado. The trip is limited to 60 people so if you want to go you need to send in your reservation in by June 15, 2008.

You should plan to arrive at the campground by mid afternoon Sunday July 13. The first meal will be that evening. All meals will be provided through dinner on Friday July 18 as part of the trip. If you prefer motel accommodations to camping, you can make reservations at nearby Mount Princeton Hot Springs Lodge, 15870 County Road 162, Nathrop, Colorado, 719-395-2361. Meals at the campground will be provided for all trip participants, regardless of whether you are camping or staying at the lodge.

There will be a variety of outings to choose from: rafting or boating on the Arkansas River, hiking, fishing, mountain biking, horseback riding, or sightseeing. All participants must be Ozark Society members. You can confirm your place on the Colorado outing by sending a check made out to the Ozark Society for Ozark Society dues, \$15, and a trip fee of \$150 for campers and \$100 for non-campers to: Bob Ritchie , 707 Pleasant Valley Dr. #10, Little Rock, AR 72227

If you have any questions concerning the Colorado outing, contact Bob Ritchie, (501) 225-1795, [BRitchieAR@aol.com](mailto:BRitchieAR@aol.com)

There will be **no** BRC meeting in July. Meetings will resume in August.

Have a safe and glorious summer and remember to take time to smell the flowers and float the river.

See you on the River.

LT

*The last in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant "What good is it?"*

*---Aldo Leopold*

