



# The Buffalo River Chapter

Of

## THE OZARK SOCIETY

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*"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 Oct/Nov Calendar

- Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> Lower Buffalo River Cleanup
- Oct 12<sup>th</sup> Hike to Buzzard Roost
- Oct 18<sup>th</sup> Hike from Low Gap to Steel Creek
- Oct 30<sup>th</sup> BRC Meeting in Gilbert
- Nov 1<sup>st</sup> Hike Round Top Mt and Red Rock Point
- Nov 8<sup>th</sup> Trail Work with Ken Smith
- Nov 9<sup>th</sup> Hike BRT Trail Steel Creek to Hwy 14
- Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> Trail work with Ken Smith
- Nov 29<sup>th</sup> BRC meeting & outing at Murray

### Buffalo River Reflections By Laura Timby

This certainly has been a most unusual year for the Buffalo River. After unusually high water this spring and continued flow all summer, hurricanes Gustav and Ike produced high water again in September. Having lived in this area for the past 30 plus years I can truthfully say we have never seen this much water or been able to float the river this late in the season. Not only has it been good flow, but also, the water has never been clearer. We've managed to get out for a couple of overnight floats the past two weeks and the combination of mild temperatures and clear water has been fantastic. At night brilliant stars form a canopy and the haunting calls of owls and coyotes echo up and down the river. Morning dawns cool, with a heavy fog, leaving trees and tents dripping with dew. Not until mid-morning does the sun burn through, revealing a clear blue sky and another perfect day on the Buffalo. It truly seems like a little bit of heaven here on Earth

*Editors note: the following article was sent to us via email from George Nickas of Wilderness Watch.*

**Computer Models Estimate Impact of Climate Change On Ozarks** By The Associated Press  
September 21, 2008 | 6:09 p.m. CDT

JOPLIN - Models used to predict the impact of climate change suggest that the Ozark forest will change in the future, but they don't agree on what those changes will be. One forecast suggests the oak and hickory that dominate the forest will be replaced by pines, while another says the forest could evolve into savanna or even grassland. A third possibility is a tangle of undergrowth dominated by woody vines, such as honeysuckle and poison ivy, choking out trees by mid-century.

"I certainly would expect forests to change," said John Shannon, state forester with the Arkansas Forestry Commission and a technical adviser to the Arkansas Governor's Commission on Global Warming. The Ozarks region has been forested for 35 million years, said Cindy Sagers, a plant ecology and plant biology teacher at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and a member of the commission.

She said the forest likely will survive, but it will be different. "What we do know is that vegetation zones are shifting," she said, "so that things that grow in southern Arkansas can now be planted in northwest Arkansas. "There is probably going to be some forest here, but whether it is pine or savanna..."

The National Wildlife Federation has put together models that forecast temperature increases of as much as 7 degrees for Missouri by 2100 if global warming goes unchecked, and that would "alter the composition of the state's forests, with southern pines replacing oak and hickory currently prevalent in southern Missouri and the Ozarks."

"Global warming could cause 40 to 60 percent of Arkansas' forests to be replaced by grasslands as slightly warmer temperatures push trees currently suited to the state's climate northward," the wildlife federation concluded. An Environmental Protection Agency analysis

found temperatures rising an average of 1 to 4 degrees in Missouri and Arkansas during the summer and 1 to 7 degrees in winter.

"If conditions become drier, the current range and density of forests could be reduced and replaced by grasslands and pastures," the EPA report on Missouri noted. "Even a warmer and wetter climate could lead to changes; trees that are better adapted to warmer climates, such as (some) oaks and southern pines, would prevail. Under these conditions, forests could become more dense."

"These changes could occur during the lifetime of today's children," the EPA report on Missouri concluded.

In Arkansas, southern pine forests advance northward, and scrub timber and noncommercial varieties of oaks would also expand their range, the EPA noted.

A third analysis, this one in 2006 by Jacqueline Mohan, then a scientist with the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Mass., forecasted that rising carbon dioxide levels will lead to the proliferation of vines, such as poison ivy and Japanese honeysuckle, in forests around the country, which will damage or kill many trees.

Doug Inkley, senior scientist with the National Wildlife Federation, said all of the models for the region find rising temperatures but are not as certain about the rainfall forecast. Less rainfall would mean a drier Ozarks, while more rainfall would cause an expansion of the range for southern pine species, for example, he said.

But even if rainfall increases, soil moisture likely would decline because of warmer temperatures, he said.

If the future is wetter, species of trees now associated with southern states, such as the southern magnolia, might migrate northward, Shannon said. Loblolly pine is another species that might march toward Missouri, he said.

## **BUFFALO RIVER TRAILBUILDING RESUMES IN OCTOBER**

With the arrival of cool weather, so too will arrive the trail builders. Volunteers, most of them from outside Arkansas, will spend two weeks--October 12-18 and 19-25, extending the Buffalo River Hiking Trail across the summit of Spring Creek Bluff.

Ken Smith, coordinator of the project, invites our members and friends to join the "outsiders" for a day of trail work and sociability. The Park Service provides tools and Ken provides any needed instruction on what to do in this low-tech undertaking.

All you need to do, he says, is come to the trail crossing of Spring Creek Road, off Highway 14 about five miles north of Harriet. Find a place to park (there'll probably be

a couple of vehicles there already), and then walk the new trail beginning directly across the road from the trail signboard. From the road to the work area is about a mile on easy trail.

Note, however, that if weather allows they'll work only Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday of those two weeks. (Wednesday is recreation day.) You're also welcome to camp with them. They have five tent sites, plenty of space at Pavilion No. 2 in the Buffalo Point main campground, and they have meals and an evening campfire at the pavilion. If you come, however, you need to bring your own food.

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES: Four trail work Saturdays are scheduled for November and December--Nov. 8th and 22nd, and Dec. 6th and 20th.** The objective will be to clear the trail route extending downriver toward Spring Creek from the South Maumee Road, through an area having high views and two 40-foot waterfalls.

On those Saturdays we'll meet by **9:30 a.m.** where the trail intersects the S. Maumee Road. To get there, take Highway 27 about six miles east from Marshall (or 5 miles west from Harriet) to the Morning Star community, then watch for the brown sign marking the beginning of the South Maumee Road. Take that road about five miles north to the trail intersection, marked with blue tape about a half mile north of the National River boundary.

And if you are going to work on the trail, wear work clothes and hiking boots, and bring a daypack with lunch and drinking water. One other thing: To make sure that the Saturday work schedule hasn't changed, call Ken Smith several days beforehand, 479-443-4098.

Ken and the other volunteers hope you can join them. The scenery is just great--and so are the people you'll meet.

## **Snake Doctor, Horse Killer, Mosquito Hawk?**

By Millicent Phillips

*You are made of almost nothing  
But enough  
To be great eyes  
And diaphanous double vans;  
To be ceaseless movement,  
Unending hunger  
Grappling love.*

*Link between water and air,  
Earth repels you.  
Light touches you only to shift into iridescence.  
Upon your body and wings.*

*Twice-born, predator,  
You split into the heat.  
Swift beyond calculation or capture  
You dart into the shadow  
Which consumes you.*

*You rocket into the day.  
But at last, when the wind flattens the grasses,  
For you, the design and purpose stop.*

*And you fall  
With the other husks of summer.*

*-Louise Bogan, The Dragonfly*

The dragonfly first made its appearance some 300 million years ago, almost 100 million years before the rise of the dinosaurs. It was one of the earliest forms of life to appear and the first to fly. With wings nearly 30 inches across it soared through the air like a hawk and was by far the largest insect that has ever lived.

The dragonfly today may be much smaller than its impressive ancestors, yet it is still large enough to be easily observed. Its fascinating aerial displays, voracious feeding behavior and aggressive matings have been the inspiration of poets, folklorists, artists and even aircraft designers.

Throughout the years the dragonfly has been called some unusual names. I can still hear these words of my grandmother as my siblings and I ran from the kitchen with our hands full of cookies that we had taken from the cookie jar, "You kids better behave or the devil's darning needle will sew your lips together while you're asleep." We didn't really believe her but we sure kept our distance from the darning needle just in case. Since then I have heard the dragonfly called everything from snake doctor, snake feeder, eye pisser, horse stinger, horse killer, finger cutter, mosquito hawk to virgin of the water. Anyone who has spent much time near a pond, lake or river and just watched them could understand how it could attract such a variety of names.

During its first year the dragonfly nymph is a stealth predator lying in the mud and debris on the bottom of ponds and rivers. As a voracious predator the nymph preys on anything smaller than itself. Its hinged lower lip, which is called a mask, has claws at the end, and when not in use the mask is folded back over the nymph's face. When the nymph is close enough to its prey it unfolds the mask and within 25-thousandths of a second darts it out and grabs the prey with the claws. The prey is then drawn back into the mouth and eaten. Larvae of mayflies and mosquitoes make up its main diet but as the nymph grows, tadpoles and small fish are fair game. Larger fish, in turn, seek out and prey on the nymph.

Throughout the summer the dragonfly completes its metamorphosis, changing from a creature of the mud to a creature of the air. This acrobatic flier can out-manuever the best human-designed airplanes. It can fly forward at about 100 body lengths per second; backward at about 3 body lengths per second; it can fly straight up, do loop-the-loop, and even hover for about a minute. It's no wonder that with feats like this, many, including the U. S. Air Force, have studied its flight.

No other insect is so much a creature of the air. It skims through the air, scooping up its prey in a basket formed by its hairy legs, and, without slowing down, eats it on the wing, letting the carcasses fall to the ground. The dragonfly is in turn caught and eaten by birds, lizards, bullfrogs and even snakes.

The male dragonfly has a strong territorial behavior as well as an unusual and brutal mating behavior. If intruders move into the male's territory he will quickly dart out and chase them away. Should a female arrive, he quickly grabs her by the head or thorax; but before they copulate the male must inseminate himself. Unique to the insect world, the male dragonfly has two gonads. His testes are on the end of his abdomen and his penis and pouch for storing sperm are behind his legs. To self-inseminate he must curl his abdomen up to make contact with the pouch. This only takes a few seconds. He then clasps the female behind her head in a vice-like grip with his claspers, an appendage on the end of his abdomen, and they will fly off in tandem. The claspers fit with a species-specific special plate on her thorax. This is like a lock and key that prevents mating with the wrong species. If the key fits, the female will be receptive to his advances and she will curl the tip of her abdomen to make contact with his penis, making them into the heart shape wheel that is known as the Wheel Position. Not only does the male use his penis for the transfer of sperm to the female, but for the removal of sperm left in her storage organ from previous matings. When he curls his abdomen into the wheel position, he is actually using his rigid, spoon like, and sometimes spiky, penis to scrape out rival sperm before he deposits his own. After mating, he will fly with her in tandem as she deposits her eggs in the water while at the same time guarding her from other suitors. Because the dragonfly is a predator, some scientists believe that the male evolved this tandem and wheel position to prevent being eaten by his mate. Other predators, like spiders, have evolved similar methods of transferring sperm to prevent becoming their mate's meal.

Few insects, except for the butterflies, are as beautiful and graceful when on the wing, but because of its unusual behavior from larva through adulthood, the dragonfly is by far one of the most interesting insects to watch. And even with its swift and agile flight, the dragonfly

sometimes becomes another's prey. Yet like many other insects, not long after mating and egg laying, it too will fall with the other husks of summer.

*References:*

*Ackerman, Jennifer. (2006) Dragonflies. National Geographic, 109, 114-116.*  
*Teal, Edwin Way. (1969). Grassroots Jungle. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.*

## **BUFFALO RIVER CHAPTER CHANGES**

I would like to take this opportunity to let our membership know that this past weekend at the Ozark Society Fall Meeting I was elected to the position of Vice President. I am thrilled to have this opportunity to serve the Ozark Society at large. One of the stipulations this position requires is that I resign as Buffalo River Chapter Chair. Of course this doesn't mean that I will wash my hands of the Buffalo River Chapter---nothing could be further from the truth. I hope to continue being actively involved in our newsletter and the planning of outings and events, as well as in any capacity the new chair sees fit.

The past twelve years have seen our chapter grow tremendously. The fellowship we have enjoyed together, the friendships that have been forged and the hundreds of beautiful places we have explored, all add up to an unforgettable experience. Even though distance separates us, we are close in our kindred spirit and our love of the Buffalo River and the Ozarks. I feel confident that this spirit will live on and flourish, even as new leadership takes the helm of the BRC.

With this in mind I would like to ask our members to submit in writing or via email their nominations for the office of chapter chair. If you have any questions feel free to call me at (870) 504-1647. We will plan to have discussion of nominations and an election at our November meeting. The new chair will take charge January 1, 2009.

Thanks to all of you for letting me be your chapter chair for all these years. It has been a great experience. I look forward to the continued progress of our chapter and the changes that new leadership will bring.

With heartfelt regards,  
*Laura Timby*

### **Meetings...**

**The BRC will meet Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 6PM at the Gilbert Café.** Even though Melissa is officially closed for the season she will open for our meeting with a limited menu featuring soup, sandwiches and salad. After dinner we plan on watching the film documentary "Fighting Goliath", a story about community activists'

attempts to halt coal-fired plants in their region. This is timely information considering that plans are proposed to construct a coal plant here in Arkansas. Come for dinner or just for the film, but do come and bring a friend or two.

**The BRC November Meeting is at 1 PM on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>** at the Murray Community Building. Shawn Porter will be our guide and host for the day and planned activities include a walking tour of Shawn's farm, a hike to area geologic attractions, an evening potluck and meeting, including the election of the new BRC chair, followed by an informal musical. So do come and bring a dish and an instrument and spend the afternoon and evening with us in Staymore! Call Shawn at (870) 446-6126 for directions.

### **Outings & Events...**

#### **Buffalo River Cleanup, Saturday Oct 4<sup>th</sup>.**

The Ozark Society will join the Arkansas Canoe Club and other organizations to clean up two sections of the Buffalo—from Maumee to the Hwy. 14 bridge and from the Hwy. 14 bridge to Rush. Wild Bill will furnish canoes to those who don't have them and will provide shuttles. Wild Bill will also provide a barbecue at 6:00 p.m. **Meet at Pavilion #2 at Buffalo Point at 9:00 a.m.** Call Mark dePoy at (870) 741-5443 for more info.

#### **Buzzard Roost & Natural Bridge, Sunday Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>.**

Meet Farrel at Hawkins Store in Pelsor at the intersection of Hwy 7 and Hwy 123 at **10 AM**. This hike is approximately 4 miles and is rated moderate. Call Farrel at (479) 200-2621 for more info.

#### **Low Gap to Steel Creek, Saturday October 18<sup>th</sup>.**

Meet Farrel at the Steel Creek launch area at **9AM**. This part trail/part bushwhack hike is approximately 7miles and is rated strenuous. If interested call Farrel.

**Round Top Mountain and Red Rock Point, Saturday Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>** Meet Farrel at the Round Top Mt. trailhead south of Jasper on Hwy 7 at **10 AM**. Hikers will first climb Round Top and then car pool over to Red Rock Point. The views will be fantastic and there is a good chance that the fall leaves will be at their peak. Both hikes are rated moderate and the combined distance is approximately 6 miles. If interested call Farrel at (479) 200-2621.

#### **BRT from Spring Creek to HWY 14, Sunday Nov 9<sup>th</sup>.**

Meet Tom Longwell at the Hwy 14 Bridge parking lot at **9:30 AM**. This hike will traverse the newly completed section of the BRT/OHT extension and the views of the river are absolutely tremendous. It may be hunting season so be sure to wear hunter orange. The hike is approximately 6 miles, rated moderate, and is limited to 10 hikers. Call Tom at (870) 656-6577 to sign up.

See you on the River, LT