



PADDLE TRAILS



THE OZARK SOCIETY
PULASKI CHAPTER



July 2009

www.ozarksociety.net

JULY PROGRAM

July 7: Our presenter will be Jacqueline Morgan from the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission. Her topic is historic wetlands of Arkansas - what's going on now, and what's coming up.

Bring a friend!

MEETINGS

First Tuesday, each month, at 7 p.m. in Room 65 of the Second Presbyterian Church, located at 600 Pleasant Valley Dr., Little Rock. Enter the church grounds on Pleasant Valley Dr. and park on the west side nearest I-430. Go upstairs and down the first hall on the right to Room 65. Bring a friend!

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Conservation Victories - Good News!

Two recent developments have given conservationists in Arkansas reason to celebrate.

Last week, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee voted 12 to 7 to advance the Clean Water Restoration Act. This victory brings us one step closer to passing this bill, which would restore protections to many of our nation's waters. Below is information from the press release from National Wildlife Federation, and for more information, please visit www.nwf.org/waters.

"The National Wildlife Federation today praised Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and the members of the Environment and Public Works Committee who voted today to restore Clean Water Act protections for all of the nation's lakes, streams and wetlands. The Committee voted 12 to 7 to advance an amended S. 787, the Clean Water Restoration Act to the full Senate.

"America's waters are closer to again having the comprehensive Clean Water Act protections that Congress intended," said Jan Goldman-Carter, Wetlands and Water Resources Counsel, National Wildlife Federation. "This bill restores critical protections for our nation's increasingly-precious fresh water resources while respecting private property rights and continuing longstanding Clean Water Act exemptions for agriculture and forestry."

The Clean Water Restoration Act would clarify Congress' intent to extend Clean Water Act protections to all the nation's wetlands, streams and other waters. Supreme Court decisions in 2001 (SWANCC v. Army Corps of Engineers) and 2006 (Rapanos v. United States) threatened Clean Water Act protections for thousands of miles of streams and rivers and millions of acres of wetlands. These legal decisions and federal agency guidance to implement them have created confusion and uncertainty nationwide, undermining efforts to enforce the Clean Water Act. This has left millions of acres of waters vulnerable to pollution and destruction, and has creating long delays in obtaining permits for work in wetlands and other waters due to confusion over the scope of the Act's protections.

Senators Baucus (D-MT), Klobuchar (D-MN) and Boxer clarified through an amendment to the bill that broad, existing Clean Water Act exemptions for agriculture and forestry were to be retained. While other amendments to create new and broader exemptions for agricultural pollution were offered, none were accepted by the committee.

"The bill, as amended today, represents a balanced approach to ensuring the integrity of the nation's waters into the

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June Meeting Recap

By Judy Parker

The Pulaski Chapter June meeting hosted 31 members and 2 guests, Roger Payne and Don Castleberry of Little Rock. Steve Whisnant arranged the program on Arkansas Water Trails presented by Kirsten Bartlow of the Game & Fish Commission. Thanks to the 1/8 cent Conservation Tax passed by voters in 1987, a state Watchable Wildlife Program was funded and developed. Kirsten has directed this program and helping develop Arkansas Water Trails geared toward the non-fishing and hunting outdoor folks. She stressed the importance of "nature tourism" as a great way to observe wildlife. Kirsten noted that paddling sports (not the fraternity kind-the water kind) is one of the fastest growing recreational activities in the U.S. with over 90,00 water miles in Arkansas alone. If you drop bread crumbs to find your way back on a hike, this will not work on a water trail. But they are not needed thanks to the reflective blue and white signs placed 1/2 mile apart on the stream or creek trail. Most trails are fairly short and can be paddled back upstream for a round trip. These trails may utilize public or private lands and must offer public access points, natural or historical features, and some nearby facilities (food, gas, Starbucks). The Wattensaw Bayou WMA and Dagmar WMA provide water trails built by G&F Commission. Future plans for considered water trails include Arkansas Post, Cache River, Bayou Bartholomew, Fourche Creek (jointly with Audubon Arkansas) and Bayou Meto (partnering with Jacksonville High School). Kirsten emphasized the need for outdoor groups to partner with G&F in building and maintaining these water trails and signboards. The possibility of the Ozark Society helping with trail signs

along the Little Maumelle was discussed. Debbie Doss from the Arkansas Canoe Club concluded the program with some fine nature photography which included a close up view of that elusive ivory-billed woodpecker.

Bob Cross, Society President, focused the business meeting on the positives and negatives of becoming a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization. He explained it is the only type of non-profit that allows tax deductible contributions and dues. Should the Foundation (publishing arm of the OS) ever dissolve itself, its remaining funds can go only to a non-profit organization. Some limitations of becoming a 501 (C) (3) are that the OS cannot endorse specific political candidates, and we are limited to spending no more than 20% of the combined Society and Foundation budgets on lobbying. Becoming this type of non-profit requires amending the OS Articles of Incorporation, and each chapter must vote YES or NO on this. There will be a final vote tally at the annual all chapter meeting in September. There must be 75% or more YES votes for passage. We almost stood and sang "Hail to the Chief" as chapter chair Bob Hogg lead us thru this rare democratic process. Bob Ritchie made the motion to amend the Articles of Incorporation; there were 28 YES votes and ZERO NO votes.

Move over Lewis & Clark as Alice and Charlene prepare to lead a corps of the sassafras militia (that IS a sassafras leaf in the center of our logo) down the Buffalo River June 9-13. Alice informed us a date will be announced for the farewell reception honoring Mark DePoy of the Buffalo River staff who is relocating to a new assignment in Iowa. She also stressed

the importance of the new Buffalo National River management plan which will be presented in July (date TBA) at G&F Commission. The dedication of a windmill at Dunbar Community Garden is June 3 and emphasizes the importance of energy issues. On June 13 a reception will be held at First United Methodist, Little Rock, for Arkansas legislators. The dam score seems to be tied with Lee Creek and Pine Mountain. The Corps of Engineers plans a new Environmental Impact Statement related to damming Lee Creek for a water supply. Alice noted but could not confirm that the Pine Mountain dam may be de-authorized by Congress. We must keep batting away! Recently retired (32 years with National Park Service) and returned Little Rock resident Don Castleberry informed us that two NPS representatives will visit Arkansas June 16&17. Here's a chance to join them and share information. Bob requested suggestions for hikes during the upcoming fall hiking season. Seems summer hikes will be reduced due to a bumper crop of chicks and tiggers. Get your ideas to Bob so we can continue to explore the woodland and water trails of our Natural State.

GREEN TIP: Think focal and buy local. Now is a perfect time to buy local home grown foods and produce. Patronize restaurants, stores, and markets that sell or use them.



Conservation Victories (Continued)

future,” said Jim Murphy, Wetlands and Water Resources Counsel, National Wildlife Federation.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 59 percent of stream miles in the continental U.S. are intermittent or ephemeral and many of these have been losing Clean Water Act protection since 2006. These streams provide important drinking water, flood control, and aquatic habitat functions. An estimated 20 million acres of wetlands – or 20 percent of all remaining wetlands in the lower 48 states – are already losing Clean Water Act protection, and many more are at risk. EPA estimates that more than 111 million Americans get their drinking water from public supplies fed in whole or in part by intermittent or ephemeral streams vulnerable to pollution under these decisions.

“Today was the first step for this important bill. Now the full Senate and the House of Representatives need to finish the job and ensure the health of our nation’s wetlands, lakes and streams for current and future generations of both wildlife and people,” said Goldman-Carter.

And in another turn of events, the Arkansas Court of Appeals has overturned Public Service Commission approval of a permit allowing construction to begin on the John W. Turk Power Plant in Hempstead County. The Court found that the state regulators had misapplied the “plain language” law requiring that the whole project be reviewed by the PSC at the same proceeding. They also ruled that the commission had not sufficiently demonstrated need for the plant. In an article in the June 30 Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, SWEPCO President Paul Chodak was quoted as saying the ruling puts the project in jeopardy. Other reactions:

Ken Smith, Audubon Arkansas:

“We are delighted but not surprised that the Court of Appeals has affirmed what we have contended all along. Alternatives do exist to the coal-fired plant but were not considered by the PSC. Audubon's economic study shows that the state's energy needs both now and in the future can be met through energy efficiency, renewable energy and the use of natural gas.

Additionally the placement of the plant in the pristine and wildlife rich Little River Bottoms watershed was a huge miscalculation on the part of SWEPCO in our opinion.

Arkansas needs to look forward: there are thousands of jobs we can access for every corner of our state if we embrace energy efficiency and renewable energy as our future. We look forward to a rehearing of this issue in front of the PSC and to the true economic and environmental costs of this plant being revealed to the public. ”

Glen Hooks, Arkansas Sierra Club:

“Today is a tremendous victory for Arkansans. The Court of Appeals stopped an incredibly dirty coal-burning power plant proposed for the Natural State. By doing so, the Court protected our environmental, public, and economic health. Coal is a risky investment in 2009 - Arkansas shouldn't gamble her future on it.”

There will be more litigation on this project, as SWEPCO has asked the Arkansas Supreme Court to review the decision, but for now, this is wonderful news!

Ozark Tracker Society Workshop Coming Up

Date: July 10-12

Location: Hurricane Creek Wilderness Area

Cost: \$175

The Edible & Medicinal Plant Series: Summer Workshop will immerse you in local flora unlike any local program available. You will be introduced to local plants that are Edible, Medicinal, or have unique Survival-Utilitarian use value.

For further information, contact Carl Keller, Executive Director; Email- info@ozarktrackers.org; Phone: 479.841.8132

Notice from Steve Whisnant

If you have a special topic you'd like to see covered in a meeting, a presentation you would like to share, or have a suggestion for a speaker, please contact Steve at buf71riv@yahoo.com; or you can speak to him at the next Ozark Society meeting.

Please note the following important dates:

- July 19-25:** The 2009 Colorado High Adventure Trip - PLEASE NOTE THE COLORADO TRIP IS FULL.
September 1: Pulaski Chapter Meeting: Potluck dinner at Pinnacle Mountain State Park.
Sept. 19-20: Fall General Meeting hosted by the Bayou Chapter at Lake D'Arbonne, Louisiana.

Hike Leaders Needed

Please contact Bob Hogg at 501-280-0712 or email him at hoggmann2@yahoo.com if you would be willing to lead some group day hikes or overnight trips in the next hiking season.