



# PACK & PADDLE



Winter 2003

The Ozark Society, Inc.

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

## Buffalo River Float 2004

By Bill Steward

The plan is to start paddling down-river from Tyler Bend at noon on June 8, right after lunch. The trip will end on Saturday afternoon, June 12, at Buffalo City on the White River.

It is 60 miles from Tyler Bend to Buffalo City. We will paddle about 8 miles Tuesday and Saturday, and 12 to 15 miles the other days. There will be a johnboat to carry community gear for each cooking unit of 20-24 persons. However, you should leave room in your canoe for one community ice chest. Each canoeist will be responsible for his or her own canoe and camping gear and everyone will be expected to help with the cooking and camp chores. If you need a canoe, they will be available from our outfitter.

If a person, or couple, will agree to operate one of the johnboats, then there is no charge. It's a good deal. Better yet, if they will furnish the motor, I will pay them \$150! If you are interested, or know someone else who might be, please let me know. If we don't find enough johnboat drivers from our group, I will hire drivers from our outfitter.

We plan to limit the group to 60 people. NO PETS, PLEASE!

The trip fee for Ozark Society members will be \$150 for adults and \$125 for children under 18. If you are not currently a member, the family membership fee is \$15 per year. The fee will include some great food, a car shuttle from Tyler Bend to Buffalo City, johnboat rental, T-shirt, bandanna, etc.

Note: if you can only float for part of the trip, then you're welcome to pad-

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Photo courtesy Laura Timby

## Winter Board Meeting

By John Heuston, Communications Chairman

When geologist - explorer - author Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was paddling his canoe down the upper White River in the winter of 1818-1819, I suspect that he and his companion, Levi Pettibone, would have loved the opportunity to pull into the dock at Jack's Resort north of Mountain View and consume their fill of Jo-Jo's catfish and hush puppies. We sure did!

Well, Jack and his daughter haven't exactly been in business that long, but long enough to know how to run a first class trout fishing resort with good accommodations, great food, and a majestic view of the king of legendary Ozark float-fishing rivers. It may be winter, but that doesn't faze serious trout chasers! We thank Jack and his staff for their cooperation and good service.

It also proved to be a great place for an Ozark Society board meeting and gabfest. Outing opportunities also are plentiful — with the Sylamore District of the Ozark National Forest to the west and the fascinating “Devils' Backbone, Devils' Knob” state Natural Area to the northeast via the Mt. Olive access road.

### Getting Down To Business

At the business session, Treasurer Bob Ritchie reported that we now have 875 members, including 292 life members.

Conservation Chairman Mike Farar reported the disturbing news that the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has yielded to local pressure and taken Greers Ferry Reservoir off the state's list of Extraordinary Resource Water Bodies (ERW's).

(See related article about what to do about it in this issue.)

### Landers Island

Farar also noted that the Friends of the North Fork and White River organization are still fighting unwise developments on these rivers, including the development of Landers Island in White River near Mt. Olive as a place for residential home sites. A once small bridge to the island has since been enlarged and now blocks one whole channel of the White River that once split around the island.

Longtime local residents say that the White River, even though it is supposedly “controlled” by Bull Shoals Dam, has a history of flooding Landers Island near Mt. Olive. They fear pollution from septic tanks and other sources eventually will harm the river if this precarious island subdivision is developed.

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# Meet the President: Alice Andrews



Well folks, the Ozark Society has not had a debate like this in many years. The controversy about extending the Buffalo River Trail/Ozark Highlands Trail is not worth any divisiveness in our loyal and stalwart membership. A healthy discussion, however, of environmental and recreational philosophies is vital. If you did not participate in the Fall Meeting at Blanchard Springs or have not tuned in lately, let me bring you up to date.

Many years ago Dr. Neil Compton suggested and supported the idea of a long-distance trail (a Trans-Ozark Trail) stretching across the Ozarks and eventually connecting to a trail network in Missouri. The Ozark Society has supported this concept for more than 20 years, and actively worked toward that end since 1996, without designating a specific route in the Lower Buffalo River. The National Park Service has also had plans for a trail down the Buffalo River corridor or through wilderness, for more than 20 years. Trails have always been important to us, whether on land or water. OS recreational opportunities bring us new members.

The OHT/BRT is complete from Lake Ft. Smith, crossing the Ozarks and then following along the Buffalo River corridor (within the National Park Service boundary) down to Tyler Bend. The Ozark Society's Ken Smith, with many volunteers, built several miles of trail through the Ponca Wilderness. Another portion of completed trail goes from Spring Creek (near Tater Hill) on U.S. Forest Service land, for almost 32 miles, to near the White River at Norfolk. The unfinished segment of this long trail lies between Tyler Bend and Spring Creek (about 9 miles).

The controversy: In early September, Buffalo National River released its Environmental Assessment: Extension of the Buffalo River Trail/Ozark Highlands Trail Alternatives A through E. Briefly:

**Alt. A** is to "do nothing".

**Alt. B** is to "build trail from Tyler Bend to Hwy. 14, continuing to "Loafers Glory Wildlife Management Area"; then make way along county roads through Cozahome to Spring Creek access on NFS land.

**Alt. C** is "full trail from Tyler Bend to Hwy. 14 on the south side of the river, then on to the boundary of and within the Lower Buffalo Wilderness, with the proviso that the trail stay within  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a mile or less of the southern boundary of the LBW, ending at Spring Creek access on Forest Service land.

**Alt. D** uses existing trail from Woolum to Hwy. 65 and would continue to Hwy. 14 on the north side of the Buffalo River.

**Alt. E** is the same as C except that it provides for trail on the north side of the river from Tyler Bend to Hwy. 14 in case there are unexpected geological, archaeological or other sensitive resource issues for trail on the south side of the river.

I received notice in mid-September that the BNR had released the EA for public comment on their website with comments being accepted from September 15 to October 15, 2003.

Pack and Paddle, having been mailed between September 12th -14th, it was too late to announce the alternatives and comment deadline before the Fall Meeting on September 20th. Sensing that the 50 odd page document would not be read by many, I appointed an ad hoc committee to study the alternatives and to be prepared to present them to the Ozark Society to consider or reject.

The committee was composed of six Board members, (three anti-trail in wilderness and three pro-trail in wilderness advocates). After study and deliberation they, ultimately and unanimously, recommended Alt. C/E. Their recommendation was reported to the Board and carried over to the general membership meeting for a full presentation of the Alternatives.

There was considerable discussion,

questions and answers. Several members were adamantly opposed to any trail in wilderness. They noted that many of us fought hard to gain wilderness; that we are not likely to ever get more wilderness; that the total number of wilderness acres in Arkansas is quite small and that supporting new trail in wilderness would be a bad precedent for us.

Many favored completing the trail but pointed out that other routes were available such as Alt. B (going through Cozahome) along county roads to USFS land. Many expressed their fears that this "connector" trail between NPS and USFS would cause greatly increased human intrusion to the LBW, thereby degrading wilderness values. Many agreed that we should think of what the future may bring and development in areas surrounding wilderness.

The main arguments for Alt. C/E were that this route did not cut through the heart of the wilderness; that it hugged the southern boundary of the Lower Buffalo Wilderness, staying within  $\frac{1}{3}$  mile or less of the boundary; that downstream of Smith Bottom and before reaching

Big Creek, the trail would turn south and east away from the river to go around the Leatherwood Wilderness. Some felt that it was not advisable to walk on county roads through Cozahome because residents of Marion and Searcy Counties had passed resolutions opposing a hiking trail through their counties. Another view was that those members who lack map and compass skills would like to see some of the LBW without bushwhacking, by staying on a designated route.

In the end, a motion was made and seconded that the Ozark Society support the committee's recommendation of Alt. C/E. After more discussion, the question was called. The vote was 43 in favor of C/E and 7 opposed. There were approximately 10 abstentions. Consequently, I sent the OS comment in support of Alt. C/E to the BNR office. Many indi-



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vidual comment letters were sent as well. In all, approximately 750 comments were received by the NPS.

The controversy since the Fall Meeting has sparked comments ranging from eloquently stated concerns for possible damage to wilderness values to practical compromises, such as why not accept Alt. B and the facetious – a suggestion that members were so anxious for a lunch break they would have voted for anything.

The Winter Board of Directors Meeting on January 10, 2004 discussed and debated the trail options for almost four hours. The Board voted, by a narrow margin, to endorse the vote of the general

membership.

I believe that most of our members want wilderness values protected for our descendants and ourselves. Who is not thrilled to see an eagle spread its wings to lift off from a high perch or experience that little gasp of excitement when one spots a bear?

Catching the sweet fragrance of wild azalea, discovering a lady slipper, coming upon an ancient sycamore or climbing a high bluff to see blue-purple rolling horizons – these things inspire a profound desire to stay connected to wild places. Simply listening to new sounds is often enough to satisfy the seeker of solitude.

The scars of old roads, mining and homesites are fading in the LBW.

Are we risking loss of wilderness values by supporting a boundary trail in wilderness? Some members believe that we are; some believe there will be little change. You must examine your own beliefs about wilderness, what it means to you and to our future. The Ozark Society has a noble 40-year history of endeavoring to conserve our streams, forests and wild places. We have every reason to be proud of our history. Because we have accomplished so much together, I expect this tradition will continue for many generations.

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## The Uneasy Chair

By John Heuston,  
Communications Chairman

The lively discussion at the recent Ozark Society winter board meeting at Jack's Resort over the issue of connecting the under construction Ozark Trail in Missouri with the Ozark Highlands Trail in Arkansas, then routing it anywhere inside the legal boundaries of the Lower Buffalo Wilderness on its long journey from St. Louis, MO to Fort Smith, AR, raised a lot of unanswered questions.

Since the job of a Communications Chairman is to communicate, I decided to learn as much as I could about the current status of this OT trail project in Missouri and the impact it might have on Arkansas. That wasn't hard to do.

The Ozark Trail Association has an excellent Web site ([www.ozarktrail.com](http://www.ozarktrail.com)) that is complete with detailed color maps of the existing trail, its 26-year history, and a lot of information on what organizations are involved in building it, and what you can do and not do on the trail. Very interesting! Check it out.

For example, we have been assured that the Ozark Trail is just a "hiking trail" by its proponents. However, the OT web site makes it very clear that the OT is actually a multiple use trail that is open to trail bike riders and horse clubs as well as

hikers, except within the boundaries of state Conservation Areas where only foot travel is permitted. In fact, representatives of trail bike and equestrian organizations are helping build portions of the trail.

For example, there is this notation on the Courtois Section of the OT. "The trail from Harmon Springs to Hazel Creek is in good shape and is very popular with mountain bikers and equestrians." Obviously, the OT is not just a hiking trail!

Being curious about exactly where this trail is expected to enter Arkansas, and when, I was directed by officials of the Missouri Conservation Commission to a person who is closely involved with the project.

Nancy Feakes is the recreation and wilderness manager for the Mark Twain National Forest, where much of the OT is being built.

She said the present goal is to have the Ozark Trail pass by Willow Springs, Mo and enter Arkansas at Lake Norfolk.

However, it now appears that the Missouri trail builders have run headlong into one of the most immovable obstacles known to man - irate Ozark landowners!

So far, they have not been able to

obtain any easements from private landowners in Missouri to cross their properties. It has been that way for months.

"We don't force federal easements," Feakes explained. "It has to be voluntary and people generally are reluctant to get involved with federal easements."

Sounds familiar! If they think it's tough to get federal easements on private land in Missouri, just wait until they get to Arkansas!

Feakes says it might be possible to find a route somewhere through state DNR lands, but the DNR has its hands full right now and it is not a high priority.

Obviously, then, if the necessary Missouri private land easements cannot be obtained, it may be "the highways or no way" if the Ozark Trail is ever going to continue on its journey across the border to that vast "wilderness" south of St. Louis known as Arkansas.

The board has spoken, but before we actually start hacking hiking trenches through the LBW, perhaps it might be prudent to wait and see if the OT actually makes its way across our border.



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# Conservation Corner

By Michael Farar,  
Conservation Chairman



## Even In The Wilderness!

Have you ever seen the Arkansas Game and Fish brochure warning of mercury, contained in your favorite fishes here in the state? And depending on where you land that catch, you could get more than you bargained for.

Here in Arkansas, we've got 20 mercury-in-fish advisories, covering 260 miles of our rivers and 3,659 acres of our lakes, stretching from the Ouachita River in southern Arkansas to Shepard Springs Lake in the north.

Some of this mercury pollution comes from coal-fired electric generating plants and is one of the most persistent, toxic and harmful agents in our environment knowing no boundaries.

We've got three of these coal-fired plants here in Arkansas, which reportedly produce 800 pounds annually. (Editor's note: Entergy Arkansas' coal-fired plants burn low sulphur coal from Wyoming, which contains far less pollutants than eastern coals)

These coal-fueled plants are subject to various state and federal controls.

However, our mercury producing garbage incinerators reportedly are subject to more stringent emission requirements than are coal plants.

This invisible poison accumulates in fish and threatens public health and outdoor recreation. Despite, this threat to our health and, way of life, the Bush administration announced recently that it will push to overturn Clean Air Act protections and allow release of as much as five to six times the toxic mercury pollution that is allowed under current law.

This is bad news for Arkansas's \$445 million-a-year sport fishing industry and anyone who eats mercury contaminated fish. Exposure to mercury can damage your brain, kidneys and cardiovascular system.

It is especially harmful to children whose brains are still developing and to the unborn whose brains are exposed if their mothers eat contaminated fish. Nationally, approximately 300,000 newborns each year are exposed to dangerous mercury levels, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Common sense tells us that to

make fish fit to eat, we have to keep toxic mercury out of the environment and out of the food chain by cutting mercury production from the under-regulated coal-fired power plants.

The Bush administration's own scientists have found that by using current technology, mercury emissions can be reduced by 90 percent over the next five years.

Also, it's been proven in Florida that when tough mercury emission standards are enacted, mercury begins to leave the food chain almost immediately. Arkansas fishermen, and anyone else who eats fish regularly, urgently need real action to protect the public against the debilitating impact of mercury poisoning.

The link between fishing, our culture, and our economy is far too prominent to sit idly by and watch President Bush put the wishes of campaign contributors in the utility industry before the health of the Arkansas public and the environment.



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## Greers Ferry Lake ERW Status Nixed

Despite a fair amount of controversy, all of Arkansas' formerly listed "Extraordinary Resource Water Bodies," (ERW's) made it into the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality's draft revised Water Quality Standards, reports both Bill Saunders and Ainslee Gilligan, conservation chairman for the Buffalo River Chapter.

That's the good news. Sadly, however, one proposed new ERW was kicked off the draft list by ADEQ Director Marcus Devine - Greers Ferry Lake near Heber Springs.

Fortunately, it 'is believed that Greers Ferry Lake could be put back on

the draft ERW list if DEQ receives enough written public support for it. We can help see that they do. Write and thank them for upholding their former ERW listings, roundly hated by development interests, and urge them to reinstate Greers Ferry Lake as a new listing.

Last year, the agency stated that the lake's well-oxygenated water layers allow a "unique opportunity to create a multiple-use fishery."

Greers Ferry Lake has undergone heavy development recently, and ERW designation would allow its many new shoreline owners opportunity to apply for aid in preventing runoff to its waters.

Address your letters to Doug Szenher, Customer Services Division, ADEQ., P.O. Box 8913, Little Rock, AR 7221.9-8913, (A copy to Marcus Devine probably wouldn't hurt either!.) The e-mail address is:

[reg-comment@adeq.ar.us](mailto:reg-comment@adeq.ar.us),

Comments will be accepted no later than 4:30 p.m., Feb. 5, 2004.

If we residents of Arkansas had to sacrifice the Little Red River's fine smallmouth bass float-fishing attractions for another lake, then the least we can do is help keep 'it a healthy water body.



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# An Imaginary Conversation with Dr. C

By Laura Timby and Anslie Gilligan

Dear Dr. C: We wonder if you are happy where you are. And we really do miss you. It seems like a short time since you've been gone, but it some ways it's been a long time. When we look at your beloved Buffalo River Country, it seems like it's really changing under the hand of man - what with all the new summer homes being built, and the logging and the land clearing.

Dr. C: Well, from up here everything has a really different perspective. What seems like a long time on Earth is just a drop in the bucket. When I think of the thousands of years it took the Buffalo River to reach its present magnificence, I know a lot of thought has to go into ways to preserve its wonders. We can't protect all of the Ozarks, but we must work hard together to protect the River. I know a lot of people want to use it and I can't blame them, but the old saying is, you can't have your cake and eat it too, and when you start dissecting its wilderness like a piece of pie, there won't be much left. You have to save it, put it on the shelf and look at it, and not make any rash decisions that could spoil it all.

Well, Dr. C. we have noticed that Arkansas has now been fully "discovered." Recently, Backpacker Magazine featured the Glory Hole as a hiker destination on a level with the Half Dome of Yosemite. Every weekend during the floating season, the Buffalo River becomes one big traffic jam, and the hiking trails get so crowded that right-of-way becomes a real issue. Was this part of your vision when you fought so hard to protect the Buffalo River country from dams and other exploitation?

Dr. C: You can't protect the Buffalo River if you don't protect its bottoms, hills and hollows. Even in my wildest dreams, I can't say I ever imagined this many people wanting to share the countryside with the chiggers and ticks. But those folks are sure out there and sometimes they make a mess of it. They love it to death.

Now take the Lower Buffalo Wilderness, where they want to put the trail. That's a string of steep hills along the River, a long, skinny wilderness strip sometimes only one-seventh mile wide. Those hills are very rugged - one

hiker in hundreds would traverse them with a compass. But between hills there are drainages to draw hikers to the Buffalo - drainages that beg for social trails and tents and fire rings cramped into narrow hollows.

There are hilltops with no room to by-pass bluffs that beg for paths to scenic overlooks. There's no way on Earth to keep a wilderness wild this way! No way to keep its beauty, its sense of solitude. There are plants and animals there that have lived totally undisturbed since who knows when this is their home. And, for some species, there is nowhere else for them to live.

The National Park Service knows it's a day late and a dollar short, and it wants the trail to bypass the Lower Buffalo Wilderness. Whether all the folks using it now want the real wilderness experience or not, generations to come should have that choice. So it's really up to us - meaning YOU - to make sure this wilderness paradise is protected and preserved intact.

Now, Dr. C, from your perspective looking down on all this, is there any reason to worry that if the trail skirts the Lower Buffalo Wilderness, to go on county roads, it will bring on a situation something like Deliverance?

Word has spread that women especially might be in trouble in the wilds of Cozahome. But we've found people here tend to be polite and generous. Though some of them are not happy about the National River, we've never seen them take that out on strangers. We live here in God's Country day in and day out and we've never experienced such problems anywhere, let alone walking down the road past someone's house.

Dr. C: This reminds me of the good old days, when the Battle for the Buffalo was really raging. But it's 2004 now and you'd better have your wits about you anywhere. You'd better be careful, whether you're in downtown Little Rock, in Hot Springs Village, in a little Ozark town, or in your own home. Bad things can happen and life is chancy and always has been.

Cozahome is like hundreds of places in rural America. Just because some people have a bunch of hound

dogs, ATVs, and a couch on the front porch doesn't mean they're not good folks. One thing I learned after all my years as a doctor is, underneath their clothes, people are all the same, the bad ones and the good ones. And those roads around Cozahome, they're country roads with almost no traffic and really nice views.

One last question, Dr. C: Now that you have so much time for pure reflection, what future do you see for the Ozark Society? Is it all you once thought it could be? Is there more that we, its members, could do?

Dr. C: It's like this, there's always more to do. As I used to say, "The challenge goes on. There are other lands and rivers, other wilderness areas to save."

But I know now it's a hard job to protect what we've already got. It's a never-ending battle. When we came up with the sassafras leaf and the three lobes that stand for conservation, education, recreation, we looked at it as a symbol of nature, as a balanced whole, and any time you look at one part alone you're in danger of losing it all. We can't just look at our Buffalo National River as recreation.

We have to look at what it takes to keep the designated federal wilderness we've got here alive and healthy. This is all a lot like life. You have to pay your dues. It's not just about what you get, but what you give, to keep the process going. It's like I once wrote:

"With the power that we now find in our hands it is imperative that we exercise that ability to know and manipulate the truth of things, which has finally come to us, not for the betterment of ourselves alone. We must include as well an understanding and protection of this whole glorious process so well revealed here in this lovely and provident land." - Amen  
(Editor's note: Laura Timby is chairman of the Buffalo River Chapter of the Ozark Society, headquartered in Searcy County, and Ainslie Gilligan is Conservation Chairman. Both are residents of Searcy County and ardent explorers of the Lower Buffalo Wilderness).



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# PHOTO FEATURE

Editor's note: Ainslee Gilligan, conservation chairman for the Buffalo River Chapter, headquartered in Searcy County, recently made a solo photographic safari into the rough and rugged Lower Buffalo Wilderness to give people who have never been there an idea of what's to be seen "down in hollers." Here are her notes:



This is the view descending an old road along Fishtrap Hollow (through private land) to Horseshoe Bend. It illustrates the rough terrain of the general area, but only the hill to the right is within the LBW, because the wilderness is only 1/7 mile wide at Horseshoe Bend. Any trail would have to descend an old road that cuts down the hill's northeast slope from elevation about 900 feet to 500 feet at the river, as best I can tell from the map in the Sept. 18, '03 ad hoc committee report.

Horseshoe Bend on Buffalo, looking west. The old road that the trail might possibly follow would drop from the south (left) of farthest bluff outcrop (on right) pictured here and then swing east down to the Buffalo River. It would then proceed along the grassy verge apparent here, turn into Fishtrap Hollow, and follow the hollow's 1/3 mile of wilderness. The trail would then cross a stream at a road, and then proceed up the other side before cutting up Warner Mountain.



The approach to the Devils' Tea Table (a peak experience spot in the LBW), is an irresistible attraction that has at least 200 feet of an incredible array of delicate moss and plants, whose future would be imperiled by regular through traffic. Bob Cross said the width of the LBW north of Devils' Tea Table is only about 1/8 mile; no way hikers won't go there.



The view of the Buffalo River west from the Devil's Tea Table is spectacular.

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## Spring, Fall Meetings – Mark your calendars!

The Spring Ozark Society general membership Meeting is scheduled for April 17-18 at Devils Den State Park in Arkansas and will be hosted by the Highlands Chapter. The pavilion has been reserved.

Devils Den is located 8 miles south of Fayetteville on I-540. Take Exit 53 to West Fork. Then travel 17 miles southwest on Highway 170. Or, you can take I-540 to exit 45 at Winslow, then go 7 miles west on Highway 74 (West Fork, AR). Watch for signs.

Telephone: (501) 761-3325. The e-mail address is [devilsden@arkansas.com](mailto:devilsden@arkansas.com).

The Fall general membership meeting, hosted by the Bayou Chapter, is scheduled for Sept. 11-12, 2004, at Daisy State Park on Lake Greeson in the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas. Daisy State Park is located .25 mile south of Daisy off U.S. Hwy. 70, near Kirby. The park telephone is: (870) 398-4487). The E-Mail address is [daisy@arkansas.com](mailto:daisy@arkansas.com).



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## Winter Board Meeting

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### Lee Creek Update

Farar reported that Lee Creek Dam proposal is still under study and therefore Lee Creek is still endangered. One wonders: why is there never enough money to remove serious log jams from our navigable rivers, but there is always enough money to fund planning another dam somewhere?

### The Good Doctor Would Be Proud!

Bob Cross reported that the Dr. Neil Compton Scholarship Fund is now a reality (but always in need of additional donations!) and it will be implemented during the next fall term. Ozark Society veterans and other supporters gathered at the Mullins Library on the UA campus at Fayetteville on Nov. 1, 2003 to formally celebrate the establishment of The Neil Compton Scholarship in Natural Sciences. The scholarship is designed to "advance the study of Biological Sciences and Geosciences." The first scholarship recipient has yet to be chosen or announced, so we will report on that development when it happens.

### The Liability Question

The recurring question of what to do about liability insurance to cover any injuries that might occur on Ozark Society led outings was again discussed, at length, but no decision was made. So far, no impetuous young outing participant has decided to dive off of Big Bluff to see if he or she can hit the water in the Buffalo - but one never knows. The gut level consensus is that we probably need such insurance, but don't know quite what to do about it. Stay tuned.

### Neil Compton Award

There was a discussion of who deserved to be nominated for the Neil Compton award for conservation work. A few names were mentioned, but no individual has yet been selected. Any suggestions?

### Costa Rica Beckons!

President Alice Andrews brought up the subject of an Ozark Society outing to Costa Rica next summer or in the early fall. She has been there and says it is spectacular. We'll have more information on this trip if and when it can be arranged.

### Saving The Best Views!

There also was a discussion of the growing problem of retirement and vacation homes cropping up on bluff tops and other scenic bits of private land that are visible from the Buffalo River, but that are not within the federally protected boundaries of the Buffalo National River.

Ken Smith, who has experience with such issues, explained that the BNR can swap land, but cannot increase its boundaries without Congressional approval. It seems that working with some sort of "land stewardship fund" to acquire such properties, when they come up for sale, and then donating them to the NPS might be the best option. This idea will be explored more fully. So, if you've got some money to spare for such a fund, think it over.

### The Ozark Trail Discussion

As expected, the most contentious discussion of the day concerned the long-held desire of a Missouri-based group (the Ozark Trail Association) to, in their own words, "build a scenic and varied route through the Ozark wilderness (they really said that!), stretching from the St. Louis metropolitan area southwestward to the Arkansas border, eventually connecting to the Ozark Highlands Trail - creating a 700-mile "through-trail." The OTA reports that almost 550 miles of trail have been completed, with 350 miles of it in Missouri.

A controversy has arisen over the fact that the Lower Buffalo Wilderness is in the path of this proposed trail extension.

Some Ozark Society members believe building a developed hiking trail through the LBW would be a great asset, cause no harm, and improve recreational access. Others believe it would set a dangerous precedent for further development in Arkansas' wilderness areas.

The NPS budget is not overflowing with money for additional staff and there is only one ranger to patrol this entire wilderness!

After considerable passionate debate on both sides, and much application of Roberts Rules of Order, the board, by a narrow vote of 10 for the trail extension and 8 against it, voted to endorse either trail Alternative C or E.

President Alice Andrews said several proxy votes were offered, but they were not counted in the total, since all were for building the trail and therefore would not have changed the outcome of the vote. The board did allow the proxy votes to be entered in the minutes of the meeting.

Both of these approved alternatives provide for a full trail. Alt. C would be located south of the Buffalo River, from State Hwy. 65 to State Hwy. 14; Alt. E is north of the river, from state Hwy 65 to Hwy. 14. Both alternatives reportedly would follow the same route through the Lower Buffalo Wilderness.



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## Buffalo River Float 2004

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dle along and camp with us, we just can't feed you! And for that matter you can paddle the whole trip with us and do your own cooking, shuttle, etc.

You can secure a spot on the 2004 trip by sending me a check for \$50 after January 1, 2004, and the balance by May 1. The check should be made out to the Ozark Society and mailed

to me at PO Box 15188, Little Rock, AR 72231. If you need any additional information, you may contact me as follows: e-mail: Bill Steward@Millandminesupply.com; my fax number is: 501-372-5569, my work phone is 501-375-0224, and my home phone is 501-835-3390.



# Two Heroes Gone

Arkansas and the nation lost two conservation heroes in recent months. Editorial cartoonist George Fisher, 80, and Political consultant Jerry Russell, 70, both of Little Rock, worked in separate fields, but both men were nationally recognized conservationists who passed on way too soon.

Fisher's sharp editorial cartoons punctured those who would destroy our state's natural environment and outdoor recreation heritage with various dam and ditching projects and excessive clear-cut timber harvesting practices.

Russell, a leader in both local and national Civil War battlefield preservation organizations, fought to stay one step ahead of the bulldozers and the real estate developers who would otherwise have obliterated our state and country's endangered Civil War historical sites, from Gettysburg to Pea

Ridge. All of these hallowed places are also great hiking destinations, and once you get hooked on hiking through history, it's a lifelong addiction!

A combat infantryman in Gen. George Patton's 76th Division during World War II, Fisher was as skilled with an M1 rifle as he was with a pen, earning the Bronze Star. He began his future career by drawing cartoons for his regimental newspaper and met his late wife, Rosemary, while in England.

After the war, Fisher worked at the West Memphis News and later moved to Little Rock to open a commercial art service. A decade later, he began drawing cartoons for the North Little Rock Times, then moved to the late and much lamented Arkansas Gazette, and more recently to the Arkansas Times. He died at home at his drawing board of a heart attack

while working on one last Times cartoon.

Russell was famous for his zany, effective, and unforgettable political jingles, such as "Pin a Rose on Me" for the NLR Rosamond mayoral campaign, but his Ozark Society friends will remember him most for his Civil War battlefield tours, conducted with his friend and associate, Ed Bearss, the former combat Marine and retired chief historian for the National Park Service, who is a walking encyclopedia of the War Between The States.

Conservationists like Fisher and Russell are not easily replaced. We will miss them.

Our heartfelt sympathies and respect go to George's close friend and business partner, Judi Woods, and to Alice Ann Russell and the Russell family.



## DUES REMINDER

Ozark Society dues are for the calendar year and include a subscription to the Ozark Society's quarterly magazine, "Pack & Paddle," and conservation action updates via the Ozark Society's website.

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Individual/Family - \$15      Affiliated organizations (schools, clubs, etc.) - \$25  
Contributing - \$25      Life (one-time payment) - \$200.

## Stay Informed on the Web!

Members who are Internet users can stay updated on Ozark Society issues and activities by checking our website:  
[www.OzarkSociety.net](http://www.OzarkSociety.net)



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