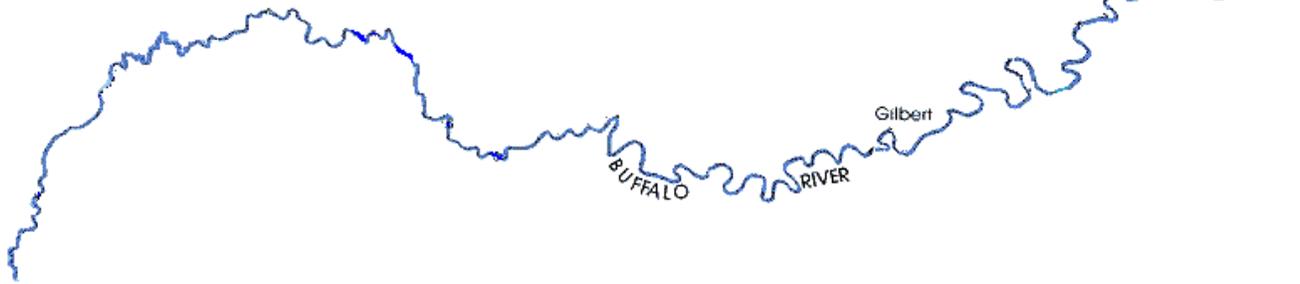


# Buffalo River Ramblings



Newsletter of 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 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 Reflections

By Laura Timby

Happy New Year to one and all! This is the quiet time of year up here in Buffalo River Country. All the excitement of the Holidays is over, the company has all headed home, local businesses and restaurants are boarded up until sometime in March, and just a few tourists venture (intentional or lost) down the tree lined road into Gilbert. Walking downhill to the River the other day I was struck by the deep quiet and sense of peace that pervaded our town. It won't last too long but its lovely for the time being.

The new Superintendent of the BNR, Mark Foust, attended the Gilbert town meeting in December—fortunately we got his visit in before the shutdown. Superintendent Foust made a very favorable impression on the folks in attendance that evening speaking at length about issues facing the Buffalo and what we all can do to help our beloved river. He spoke fondly of the rivers and parks he has worked at in the past and made it clear that he and his family plan on being here for the long haul. I certainly hope that is the case.

The lawsuit against C&H continues. Please contact your state representatives ASAP and let them know how important a clean, safe Buffalo River is to you and to our state. Several high water events this fall and winter have flushed out the algae mats, so once again we can enjoy the beautiful turquoise green waters of the Buffalo. Next summer, warmer temps and low flows will most assuredly cause the return of the algae, and unless our elected officials do something

about it, the increased nutrient load entering the river guarantees that this will be the new normal.

There have been lots of updates and changes to the Ozark Society at large and to the BRC. Check out the updated OS web site, and read about interesting events and fun outings. The BRC has a new Communications Chair, Linda Eddings. She has volunteered to help out posting content on our new face book page: Ozark Society Buffalo River Chapter, as well as posting impromptu events, hikes and floats throughout the month. Be sure to check it out!

## 64 Acres Acquired, Opening the Buffalo River Trail! By Jim Liles

On November 17, 2018, more than 70 contributors to the Buffalo River Foundation's *Roberts Tract Campaign* gathered at the trailhead on the South Maumee Road to hike 2 miles of the Buffalo River Trail (BRT). The hike upriver crossed a tract of land recently purchased by the Buffalo River Foundation. There the group assembled for remarks by Ross Noland, the Foundation's Director. After recognizing and thanking the many donors (162) to the project, Ross invited comment from a few "major players," after which he introduced the National River's recently appointed Superintendent, Mark Foust, who thanked the Foundation for its accomplishment. After the return hike, many regrouped to the outskirts of Big Flat, Arkansas, for an amiable gathering at the Gravity Brew Works and music by the Creek Rocks—a good way to wrap up a beautiful day. Here are the "high-and-low points" of the acquisition story:

When Buffalo National River was established by Act of Congress March 1, 1972, a maximum 95,730 acres was authorized to be acquired by donation, purchase or exchange. Within the boundary were 87.75 acres in Searcy County owned by J.I. Roberts of Shreveport, La. That parcel ran from the centerline of the river south to the park boundary.

Mr. Roberts refused to sell to the National Park Service, and on January 19, 1979, the Attorney General filed a complaint in condemnation of the Roberts land. An area bordering the river, comprising 23.62 acres, was thereby acquired in fee simple, while the remnant, 64.13 acres, was to be retained in private ownership, subject to a scenic easement that listed eleven restrictions on its use (eg. no dwelling construction, no timber-cutting) and a twelfth covenant that read, “This agreement shall not be construed to grant the public any right to enter or use the land for any purpose.” Trial by jury awarded payment to Mr. Roberts of \$20,000 (for the 23.6 acres and the scenic easement acquired NPS on the 64 acres.) The final filing in U.S. District Court occurred on August 3, 1983 – (by coincidence, the date the writer of this piece reported for duty as Assistant Superintendent, Buffalo National River). By that date all land acquisition for the national river had been completed except for land exchanges within the private use zone (including Boxley Valley, Richland Valley and the BSA Camp Orr.) The Roberts Tract was not within a private use zone, but was treated as such, perhaps to expedite the conclusion of the 10-year land acquisition era, 1972-1982.

Fast forward 25 years, when many volunteers (including the writer, 8 years retired) were working with Ken Smith on completion of 28 miles of the BRT between Grinders Ferry (Hwy. 65) and Dillard's Ferry (Hwy.14) As trail construction was progressing from each of those trailheads, it became clear that the 64 acre Roberts tract, with a deed reservation prohibiting any public use, constituted an effective barrier to completion of the BRT. In March 2008 we approached recently arrived Superintendent Kevin Cheri about the upcoming impasse, whereupon he requested the NPS Midwest Regional Director, in Omaha, to pursue acquisition of the Roberts tract. The regional office's staff obtained an appraisal and made an offer to purchase the property. But some of the Roberts family “held-out,” and the effort soon stalled when federal budget problems ensued, resulting in the government “sequestration” and a “freeze” on spending. In a letter to this writer, dated April 5, 2013, Superintendent Cheri stated, “2008 was the last contact the agency has had with the Roberts and we do not, in fact, have any money for land acquisition at this time.”

## **Orphea's Fence** By Ken Smith

In 1959 when exploring the upper Buffalo River, I found a scene to photograph, just below the Hwy 21 and Hwy 43 junction at Boxley. Here a board fence did a right-angle turn past a big tree. The fence was designed to enhance the scene. Between the posts were cross boards forming distinctive “Xs”. So, I photographed this tree and fence.

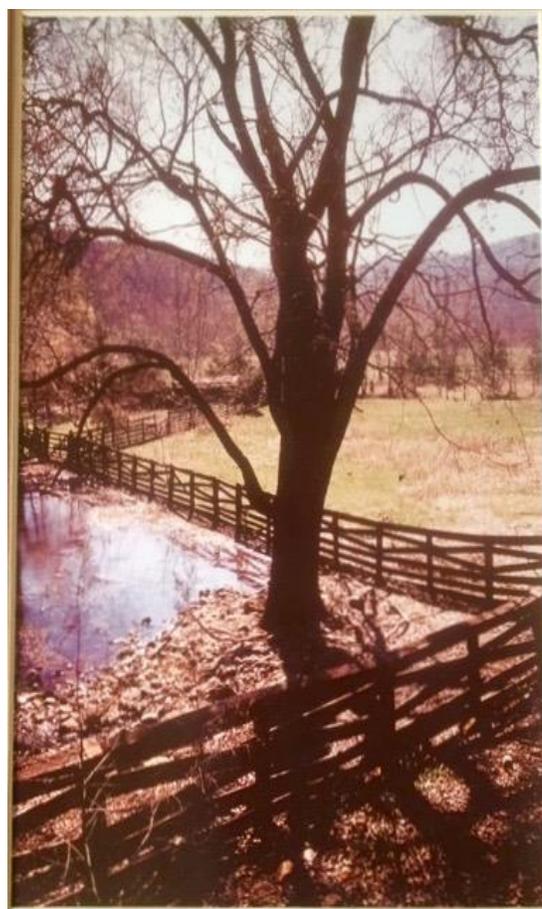
Years later I met the person who designed that fence, Orphea Duty, the landowner. “Orphey”, as friends called her, knew her place in the world. Her Father, Ben McFerrin—teacher advocate foe public schools, state legislator, lieutenant

governor—had acquired this land with its two-story facing Hwy 43 and Orphea had inherited the property. After her husband Fred Duty had died, she stayed there as Boxley's postmistress, community leader, and pillar of the Boxley Baptist church.

Orphea had a sense of style (so she must have designed that decorative fence at isolated Boxley). She and Fred were married (in 1920) on horseback. A photograph shows her in a classy riding habit. Her dress for social occasions was always tasteful, at times elegant. And anyone visiting her home for a meal, or even for coffee, found her table already set with china, crystal and silver.

Orphea enjoyed opportunities for a wider view of the world. So, in 1969, she accepted an invitation to go to Washington, DC, to testify before Congress concerning legislation to create the Buffalo National River. Her testimony: “Yes I favor Senate Bill 855 that all America might enjoy the mountains, the bluffs, the free flowing river, and beyond that—the peaceful way of life.”

Orphey was slightly built, and thin, never overweight. But with a positive outlook, in peaceful surroundings, Orphea lived for 104 years. In three centuries! She was born before the end of the nineteenth century, lived through all of the twentieth, and even a couple of years into the twenty-first.



### **Buffalo River Geology, Part III** By Jim Liles

Two previous issues of “Ramblings” presented my attempts to explain the geology of the Ozarks. This final article on Buffalo River geology deals specifically with the river itself. While trying to date the river’s origins is a futile exercise, it’s safe to say that today’s Buffalo River is a relatively modern structure, in relation to the rocks through which the river has cut its winding way, from the highest “Boston Mountains,” to join the White River, on its way to the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico.

The Buffalo River and its cohort streams likely arose to approximately the configuration they present today during the last uplift of the old beveled Ozarks plateaus, 2-3 million years ago. They were rejuvenated during the retreat of the North American ice sheet, 10,000 - 17,000 years ago. That was a time when warm moist air from the Gulf of Mexico met the melting front of the continental glacier (present-day Nebraska, Missouri, Kentucky, etc.) resulting in hundreds of years of steady rainfall – the so-called pluvial age of widespread raging rivers, south of the receding ice-front. With difficulty, we try to visualize the ferocity of such volumes of run-off plunging off all sides of the ancient Ozarks plateaus, vigorously carrying away 300-plus million years of prior deposition, leaving the much-dissected Ozarks hills (Ouachitas and Appalachians as well, because the continent’s Interior Highlands share the same history of mountain building-and-destruction with the southern Appalachians.) And geology knows of a time when neither the rivers nor the mountains that nourish them existed, and the ocean flowed over the land. Over “earth-time,” rivers are like the rocks beneath them—they come and they go.

I grew up in the latter mountains, and spent my boyhood within range of what some consider the oldest rivers in North America: the New River, flowing to the Ohio via the Kanawha; and the French Broad and Little Tennessee Rivers, also flowing to the Ohio River via the Tennessee River. One reason these rivers are believed to be of such antiquity is that they appear to predate even the Appalachians. Their direction of flow is not

easterly, toward the nearer Atlantic, but westerly, via long circuitous routes, and then northerly, to the Ohio River. All three of my boyhood rivers cut across—not between—ridge after ridge of hard high Appalachian bedrock, to ultimately discharge their waters, along with their sediment loads—into the same depositories as do rivers of the Ozarks—via the Mississippi, to the Gulf.

My earliest memories are of our home in Glade Valley, in northwest North Carolina, where originate the headwater tributaries of the New River. When I was 8 years old, my family moved to Asheville, North Carolina, within easy walking distance of the French Broad River and within 80 miles by mountain roads to mother’s home in Macon County, N.C. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, grand-dad Bryant had carved out a homestead on steep, isolated mountain land, above Burningtown Creek Falls, where my mother and her siblings were raised. I spent parts of many summers there, often accompanying my grandfather in his quest for blight-killed chestnut trees, along the upper reaches of Burningtown Creek, which flows to the Little Tennessee River. Granddad had a long-running permit to remove standing dead chestnut trees from Nantahala National Forest, using crosscut saw and a team of huge draft horses. (The same foreign fungus that destroyed the once mighty chestnut decimated our Ozark chinquapin.)

Last spring, Suzie and I retraced some of my boyhood wanderings, driving the steep single-lane road to the falls of Burningtown Creek. The rhododendron were in full bloom, but we failed to reach my mother’s old home-site as the road was gated above the falls, and our view of the waterfall was much impaired by the trophy-home looming near its brink—an affront to the once-pristine setting. As the North Carolina author Thomas Wolfe wrote more than 80 years ago, “You can’t go home again.”

We returned home to the Buffalo River, among my favorite waterways as the entire river and adjacent lands are protected from development over the entirety of its free-flowing length – unlike so many other oft-dammed and industry-disturbed rivers.

Lest we become complaisant in that seeming security, we must be ever mindful that no river's future is "guaranteed." All rivers are at the whim of both man and nature. And while they are flowing freely they are set upon by mankind in its quest to control or alter them to meet the demands—for crop irrigation, for power generation, for domestic consumption—of the Planet's expanding human population. Protected though it may be as a unit of the National Park System, the most worrisome vulnerability of the Buffalo River remains, addressed but scarcely mitigated—its relatively narrow zone of federal protection within the vastly broader watershed.

### **Please Read: Dues are now Due for 2019!**

In case you are wondering about the above statement please allow me to explain. In 2017 the OS Board at that time voted to change our dues structure from a calendar year (due every January 1<sup>st</sup>) to an Anniversary (or date-joined cycle). This past October the OS Board voted to return to the Calendar Year structure-hence the above notice. I apologize for any confusion or inconvenience created by this reversal and ask that you continue to support the Buffalo River Chapter and the Ozark Society. It was also decided that all dues would be collected online or by mail by the Ozark Society at large. Individuals are then asked to select a chapter (one or more) for a portion of the dues collected. An updated application is included in this newsletter or can be accessed from the Ozark Society site online at [www.ozarksociety.net](http://www.ozarksociety.net)  
Thank you for your understanding.

### **Welcome New Members!**

*Editors note: there have been lots of changes in how we keep records so please forgive me if I have added you as a new member and you've been a member already or if you are a new member and didn't make the list. I value each and every one of you and with heartfelt gratitude thank you for your support of the Buffalo River Chapter of the Ozark Society.*

David Smallwood  
Rebecca Glasscock

Larry Silman  
Tom Tyler  
James Hilner  
Steve Davis  
Jason McDonald  
Tom Perry  
David & Donna Peterson  
Michael Reed  
David Kosofsky  
Jim Cash  
Deb Bartholomew  
Camille Gollon

 **Hikes ...** *Editor's note: Please contact Farrel at [wildsofa.fc@gmail.com](mailto:wildsofa.fc@gmail.com) or 479.200.2621 prior to the event to sign up or to check on any changes. Don't wait too long as the hikes tend to fill up quickly. All hikes have a 15-person limit and require you to sign a release waiver. Thank you.*

#### **Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, Wolf Creek**

**Bushwhack.** Meet at the store in Deer AR at 9:45 am to shuttle to our starting point. Rated moderate, approximately 5 miles, possible wet crossings, with waterfalls and caves to explore. Hike leaders are Judy Nail and Robert Medley. Call Farrel for more details and to sign up.

#### **Wednesday February 13<sup>th</sup>, Boxley Trailhead to the Hedges Homeplace.**

BRC member Linda Eddings will be leading this mid-week hike. Approximately 4.5 miles, rated moderate. We will meet at the BRT trailhead parking area in upper Boxley Valley at 9:30am. Contact Linda for more information and to sign up at [trailhiker4ever@gmail.com](mailto:trailhiker4ever@gmail.com)

#### **Sunday February 17<sup>th</sup>, Hemmed-in-Hollow Rim Trail.**

Meet at the Compton trailhead at 9:00 am for this 6-mile strenuous hike along with great views and wondrous old Juniper trees, Please don't participate if you are afraid of heights! Contact Farrel for more information and to sign up.

**Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Indian Creek top to bottom.** Meet at Kyles Landing Campground at 9:00 am to shuttle to the upper parking area to start. Rated strenuous, a very rugged 6-mile bushwhack to some of the most beautiful country along the Buffalo River, including waterfalls and unique geologic formations. This is *mostly* a downhill trip. Contact Farrel for more information and to sign up.

**Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, BRT Wildflower Hike.** Meet at the Grinders Ferry parking area just up from the Hwy 65 Bridge at 10:00 am. Rated moderate approximately 4-mile hike downriver on the BRT from the Bridge to an access point on an old farm road. No limit. Bring your wildflower guidebooks and join Laura Timby for an early spring walk along the Buffalo. For more information contact Laura at [laurab2053@gmail.com](mailto:laurab2053@gmail.com) or (870) 504-2688.

**Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup>, Cecil Cove Hike.** Meet at the intersection of Hwy 206 and Hwy 7, south of Harrison AR at 10:00 am at the White Oak Station. From there we will shuttle to the Cecil Cove Trailhead. This 6-mile hike is rated moderate and may have wet crossings, but they are worth it! Fantasy Falls, Broadwater Fall, Paige Falls, and the Devil's Hole are just some of the sites you'll see. 15 limit.

## Upcoming Events...

**Buffalo River Chapter Meeting, Potluck and Hike, 12 Noon, Sunday March 31<sup>st</sup>.** Meet at David and Maria Smiths home in Fox AR. There will be a short meeting during the potluck followed by a hike to a nearby area-possibly the Arlburg Natural Arch if permission can be obtained (there is a picture and description of this arch in Dr. Compton's book "The High Ozarks". A limited number of Ken Smith's, "Buffalo River Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition", *updated and expanded*, will be available for purchase at the meeting for \$30 a copy. One of the copies will be given as a door prize at the meeting so plan on being there! For directions contact Dave or Maria at [bearpenfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:bearpenfarm@yahoo.com)

## Ozark Society Spring Meeting May 3<sup>rd</sup> –5<sup>th</sup>

The Pulaski Chapter of the Ozark Society will be hosting the Spring OS Recreation meeting the weekend of May 3-5<sup>th</sup> at the Gilbert RV Park. Activities on Saturday will include hiking and boating, a Potluck supper, followed by entertainment. Sunday morning there will be an OS Board meeting at the Nye's place in Gilbert-all are welcome to attend. More details to follow on the OS website but here is what we have to date: The Ozark Society will meet at the Pavilion at the Gilbert RV Park. There are eleven RV sites available (electricity and water provided) Cost: \$20 for 4 people and \$5.00 for each additional person per night. Walk in tent sites- unlimited, \$5.00 a person per night. There are a couple of Platform Tents available as well, ask Jim for details. Contact Jim Clontz at Gilbert RV to reserve a site (870) 439-2111, payment preferred by cash or check. Leave a message if you don't reach Jim, he'll get back with you.

**The June 20<sup>th</sup> Ozark Society Trip on The Middle Fork of the Salmon with Aggipah** is full with a waiting list. Contact Stewart Noland at [bosshq@aol.com](mailto:bosshq@aol.com) to enquire about any slots that may open up.

**The 2019 Colorado High Adventure Trip** will be held from Sunday thru Saturday, July 14 – 20 at Cascade Campground, located in the Collegiate Peaks area west of the community of Nathrop, Colorado. There will be a variety of outings from which to choose: hiking, fishing, mountain biking, horseback riding, sightseeing, and rafting or boating on the Arkansas River. If you plan to canoe, kayak, or bike, you should bring your own equipment. For rafting, you will need to make your own arrangements with a local outfitter. If you have any questions about the trip, contact Catherine Tolson by phone at 318-680-9280 or by email at [catherine.tolson@comcast.net](mailto:catherine.tolson@comcast.net).

## BRC Jan-April 2019 Calendar

- Sunday 1/27/19 Wolf Creek Bushwhack
- Wednesday 2/13/19 Upper Boxley to Hedges Place
- Sunday 2/17/19 Hemmed in Hollow: Rim Hike
- Sunday 3/3/19 Indian Creek: Top to Bottom
- Sun. 3/31/19 BRC Meeting, Bear Pen Farm in Fox
- Wednesday 4/3/19 Wildflower Hike Grinders Ferry
- Sunday 4/7/19 Cecil Cove Hike
- May 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> OS General Meeting in Gilbert

*"We are still in the transition from the notion of man as master of the earth to the notion of man as part of it."*

~ Wallace Stegner

See you on the River. LT