



# PACK & PADDLE



Spring  
March 2020

*"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

## Governor Hutchinson Recognized for Efforts to Protect the Buffalo National River

The Ozark Society, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Buffalo River Watershed Alliance and the Arkansas Canoe Club honored Governor Hutchinson for his conservation efforts at the Southeast Tourism Society's conference at the Marriott Hotel in Little Rock on February 11, 2020. At the beginning of last year, Hutchinson established three key goals for protecting the Buffalo River: to buy out the large-scale hog farm that was operating within the river's watershed, to establish a permanent moratorium against large-scale CAFO's within the watershed, and to create a

public-private grant program to support improved water management practices for farmers.

"Because of your support and the support of the General Assembly, we accomplished all three," Hutchinson said. In making the presentation, Alice Andrews, conservation chair for the OS, expressed gratitude for the Governor's timely action: "It's about the quality of life. It is our hope that your example will inspire leaders across the Southeastern region and beyond to protect their precious natural resources for future generations."



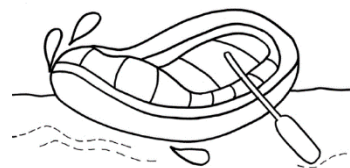
OS President David Peterson; Bob Allen, Arkansas Canoe Club; Gordon Watkins, Buffalo River Watershed Alliance; Governor Hutchinson; Emily Jones, National Parks Conservation Association; and Alice Andrews, OS conservation chair; present Governor Hutchinson with a cute picture of a river otter enjoying a swim in clean water.

## Equipment Available By Stewart Noland, OS Archive Chair



Through a grant from the Shreveport Optimist Club, two 14-foot, self-bailing Hyside rafts have been received by the Ozark Society from One Great River, a Shreveport non-profit. The rafts are residing in Little Rock and are available for use by Ozark Society members by calling Stewart Noland at 501-831-9908.

Wayne Kiefer, Bayou Chapter Chair, identified this opportunity, and several people worked to help make it happen. Thanks to all!



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## Experiencing a Virgin Forest in Arkansas at the Society Fall Meeting

### Fred Paillet, OS Education Chair

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The mention of virgin Arkansas forest conjures up images of massive ranks of white oak columns or soaring canopies of stately shortleaf pine, but ecologists have found virgin forest hiding in plain sight all across America. These are modest forest plots that have remained uncut and undisturbed because they inhabit rough and non-arable land covered by crooked and unmerchantable trees. A decade ago Harvard researchers made news when they documented virgin forest adjacent to the Wachusett Mountain ski area within the metropolitan Boston area. More recently, the UARK tree ring lab showed that virgin chinquapin oak and post oak stands were growing on Mt. Kessler within Fayetteville city limits. Crooked and storm-battered trees there were as much as 300 years old. That was one factor that prompted the city's purchase of the Mt. Kessler property to preserve it for future outdoor recreation.

Ozark Society members recently had the opportunity to experience another Arkansas area of virgin forest – and one that covers a much more extensive area than the limited stand of oaks on Mt. Kessler. This was during our Society fall meeting in November at Queen Wilhelmina State Park lodge, where some of us hiked a five-mile section of trail following the crest of the Winding Stair Mountains from the Oklahoma state line to the Wilhelmina lodge parking lot. I had hiked in the area decades ago while on assignment in eastern Oklahoma and had returned more recently to hike the Ouachita Trail. The stunted oak forest that lines the highest points along the

Talimena Highway grows out of fissures in exposed sandstone ledges and the trees are so crooked and battered that they would never fear the lumberman.



Storm-battered oak

So, this was yet another opportunity to experience virgin Arkansas forest. I had been especially interested in the fact that most of the oaks in this pigmy forest were white oaks – the species we associate with the richest hardwood stands on the deep, well-drained soils of Ozark valleys. We think of post and blackjack oaks as the characteristic trees of exposed rock outcrops and glades. Perhaps this was just a misunderstanding on the basis of limited exposure to these ridgetop trees as I followed trails down into adjacent valleys. This time we

would walk parallel to the highway on the south facing side of the ridge long enough to have a real representative sample of forest composition.

After a mile or so it was clear that this really was a white-oak-dominated forest with a little bit of black oak and hickory, and no sign of post or blackjack oak at all. The thick-husked nuts on the ground and the consistent 7-leaflet count on fallen hickory leaves showed that the tree was mockernut and not Texas hickory we see so often on dry ridges around the Buffalo River.

The low stature of the forest was produced by the consistently broken tops of the largest trees, where the upper part of the trees had been sheared off by wind or ice storm damage some 15-20 feet above the ground. That made them taller than the truly stunted trees on the highest crest of the ridge, but still dwarfed by comparison to white oak stands we are used to in the Ozarks. We encountered concentrations of cucumber magnolia in small depressions as well as basswood around rocky talus slopes as local departures from the predominantly white-oak forest composition. A vibrant note of color was added by nearly continuous thickets of fall-flowering witch hazel with a bright yellow fuzz of clustered flowers glowing in the fall sunshine. The other common understory shrub was red buckeye, sometimes attaining almost tree status in places even though it was far above its usual streamside habitat.

*Continued on page 3....*

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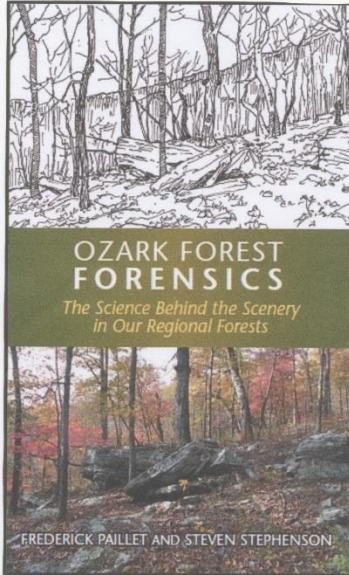
## The Ozark Society and OS Foundation have an Online Store!

Carolyn Shearman, OS Communications Chair

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The Ozark Society website at [www.ozarksociety.net/store/](http://www.ozarksociety.net/store/) now has an online store with a shopping cart that accepts credit card payments. It provides Emily Roberts, our Outreach Chair, with all the shipping information to make shopping easy and delivery fast. No more mail-in forms to fill out! You can now order T-shirts, OS Foundation books, OS books, maps, and CDs all online. Here are some examples:

### Ozark Forest Forensics: \$24.95



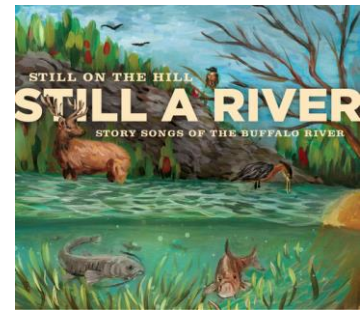
[www.ozarksociety.net/product/ozark-forest-forensics-frederick-paillet-and-steven-stephenson/](http://www.ozarksociety.net/product/ozark-forest-forensics-frederick-paillet-and-steven-stephenson/)

### Ozark Society T-shirt: \$20.00



[www.ozarksociety.net/product/the-ozark-society-t-shirt/](http://www.ozarksociety.net/product/the-ozark-society-t-shirt/)

### Still on The Hill CD \$15.00



[www.ozarksociety.net/product/still-a-river-story-songs-of-the-buffalo-river-cd-still-on-the-hill/](http://www.ozarksociety.net/product/still-a-river-story-songs-of-the-buffalo-river-cd-still-on-the-hill/)

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## Virgin Forest by Fred Paillet .....continued

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The size attained by these shade-loving and slow-growing shrubs attested to the long length of time over which this forest has remained undisturbed. Dense tangles of greenbrier mostly discouraged movement off trail. Coming close to the lodge there were stone walls and an old cemetery indicating that we had entered second growth forest. The main difference here was that sweetgum, a notorious responder to forest disturbance, had become part of the overhead canopy.

The biggest surprise of all was to see so much of the uncommon

understory tree gum bumelia (also known as gum bully, *Sideroxylon lanuginosum*). The tree stood out in the deciduous forest along the Talimena highway where other trees had already dropped their leaves because gum bumelia is semi-evergreen. It looks a lot like American holly in shape and growth form, and is just as prickly to approach except that the thorns arise from the base of the leathery, oblong leaves rather than from the leaf margins. I had seen the tree growing along the crest of rock ledges at the Steel Creek overlook along the

Buffalo River, but tree books usually describe it as an endemic of the Texas hill country. This added another interesting footnote to our exploration of an intriguing dwarf forest formation that differed from much of what we see elsewhere in Arkansas. And we had the opportunity to see a small part of what Arkansas was like in the years before Lewis and Clark contemporaries Dunbar and Hunter first visited the Ouachita headwaters in the early 1800's.

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## Bob Cross Receives the Neil Compton Award for 2019

By Lucas Parsch, OS Vice President

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Seventy people gathered at the Butterfield Trail Village Lodge in Fayetteville on Jan. 26 to honor Robert A. (“Bob”) Cross as the 2019 recipient of the Neil Compton Award. The award is given to individuals who embody the inspiration, dedication, and perseverance of the Ozark Society’s Founder and first president, Dr. Neil Compton, in conserving our natural treasures and resources in the Ozarks and surrounding regions.



The room was full, the conversation was at a high decibel

level, and the food and drink were abundant. Tom Perry, chair of the Highlands Chapter which hosted the event, opened the program by welcoming the guests. As Bob was presented with a plaque and handmade wood puzzle, Ozark Society President David Peterson remarked how Bob’s steady investigation and analysis of the handbooks, reports, and data regarding the permitting and operation of the C&H hog farm was key to the dissolution of the farm. Patti Kent, a member of the Highlands Chapter, described her first hiking adventures back in the 1990s with Bob as hike leader. Janet Parsch read the nomination letter that she and Luke Parsch had written to nominate Bob for the award. Luke Parsch, Ozark Society Vice President, presented Bob with a gift certificate.

Text from the nomination letter included: “Over the past 20-plus years, Bob has been indefatigable in promoting and guiding the three-

fold mission of the Ozark Society—Conservation, Education, Recreation.”

Bob was Ozark Society Vice-President for six years and then President for another six years, and has continued to serve on the OS Board of Directors since 2014. He has organized hiking trips to Utah and to the Arkansas Big Woods to search for the ivory-billed woodpecker, and was the Outings Chair for the Highlands Chapter for nine years. “In sum, Bob’s commitment, energy, expertise, and simple presence have refreshed the Ozark Society in specific—and the Arkansas environment more broadly—with a positive, healthier, and more robust outlook for the future.”

Congratulations, Bob Cross, for being named the 25th recipient of the Ozark Society Neil Compton Award.

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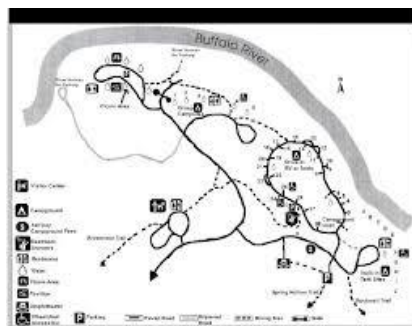
## Ozark Society Spring Meeting April 24-26, 2020

By Laura Timby, Buffalo River Chapter Chair

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The Buffalo River Chapter of the Ozark Society will be hosting the Spring Ozark Society Recreation meeting the weekend of April 25-26. The meeting will officially begin at 8:30 am on Saturday, April 25th at the Group Pavilion at Tyler Bend Campground of the Buffalo National River. This is a recreation-based event. Activities on Saturday will include hiking, boating, and a potluck supper, followed by entertainment by Buffalo River Chapter member Dave Smith. Meeting registration

is \$5/person or \$10/couple or family. A light breakfast and overview of the day’s activities will be provided at the Pavilion on Saturday morning.



Group site #1 at the Tyler Bend Campground has been reserved for the Ozark Society for Friday and Saturday nights, April 24 and 25. The cost for camping for adults is \$10/night and \$5/night for a child for the first two children. There is no additional charge for more than two children.

The Ozark Society Board will meet at Laura Timby’s home, 50 Frost Street, Gilbert, AR at 10 am on Sunday morning, April 26. All are welcome to attend.



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## Hiking and Camping Trip to Sedona AZ October 18-24, 2020

By Bob Cross, OS Arkansas Director

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The Ozark Society sponsored hiking trips to Zion National Park in September, 2014, and to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks in September, 2017. To continue our visits to the Southwestern US we will hike in the vicinity of the town of Sedona, AZ with an arrival on October 18 and departure on October 24 this year. Of course, you can arrive earlier or depart later on your own. Sedona is surrounded by the Coconino National Forest with its red rock buttes and canyons. There are over 120 hikes within 20 miles of town and 95 of those are within 10 miles with several trailheads in the town itself. These are about equally divided between easy, moderate, and difficult hikes. Hikes will be led by Bob Cross with Roger Keese and possibly Terry Fredrick as co-leaders. We will try to have at least two led hikes per day.

A group campground has been reserved at the Coconino National Forest Chavez Crossing Group Campground (#3, Sycamore). It is

right on Oak Creek (for swimming and wading).



The capacity is 30 campers, primarily tent campers, but a few camping trailers or RV's of less than 25 ft. in length will be allowed. There are fire grates, picnic tables, drinking water, and pit toilets as well as quite a lot of shade. The campground is in the city and not the wilderness so if you prefer not to camp there, there are many motels, resort facilities, and B&B's in Sedona as well as rental rooms. Anyone who prefers not to camp is still welcome. The charge for the trip will be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$50/person for the week for campers

and \$10/person for non-campers. Bear in mind that it is a long drive from Arkansas to Sedona (over 1,100 miles). If you prefer to fly and rent a car, the best destination is probably Phoenix (125 miles and a 2-hour drive from Sedona). The Flagstaff airport is closer but the ticket price will probably be significantly higher.

A unique aspect of the Sedona trip is that you will be able to experience Vortexes. There are seven of these in the Sedona area, believed to be electromagnetic in nature, with the ability of bringing together our spiritual makeup to create balance and harmony in our lives.

To register for the trip, please send an e-mail to Bob Cross [bobcross610@gmail.com](mailto:bobcross610@gmail.com). State how many are in your party, whether you will be camping or not, and if camping, if you will have a camping trailer or RV under 25 feet in length. If you request camping, you will be notified whether there is space or not. Payment will be requested later.

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## John Muir Trail Trip June 26-July 6, 2020

By Steve Heye, OS Pulaski Chapter Outings Chair

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Things are taking shape for our hike this summer on the John Muir Trail in the High Sierras of California. And it's not too late for one more of you to join us! Trip leader Steve Heye has a permit for eight hikers and one spot is still open. You still have time to join in on the training and planning in the months before the hike.

The hike will be from June 29th to July 5th starting from the Onion Valley Campground and end at Whitney Portal. This is a distance of

44 miles over 6 nights. A group of us will be in Onion Valley a couple of days early to get used to the altitude. Plan on a vacation window of June 26 to July 6 to get there, do the hike and get back home.

If you'd like to join us or want more info, contact Steve at [hey@Aristotle.net](mailto:hey@Aristotle.net). If you can't make it, do you know someone who might like to go? Then please tell them. These permits are hard to come by and we don't want to leave any slots empty.



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## High Pointing Part 9: Utah and the Dakotas

By Steve Heye, OS Pulaski Chapter Outings Chair

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This is the ninth in a series of my adventures to visit as many of the fifty United States' highest points as I can. In chapter eight we looked at the trip I took in September of 2018 to visit 7 New England states in one trip. This time we head out west to visit Utah, North Dakota and South Dakota in August of 2019.

It all starts on August 6<sup>th</sup> with a flight to Denver, picking up a rental car and driving to Rawlins, Wyoming, for the night. I would do all my prep work the next morning for my three-day backpack into the High Uintas Wilderness.

On August 7<sup>th</sup>, I drove over to Rock Springs and then spent a few hours exploring the Flaming Gorge region of the Green River before driving over to the trailhead for the night. In the morning I would load up and start my hike towards Kings Peak.

### Utah

Located in northeastern Utah, Kings Peak at 13,528 feet is the highest point in Utah. It barely ekes out nearby points that make up the Uintas range. The range is not unlike the Ouachitas, as they run east-west, only they are way higher.

I had spent the night in the car, so when I got up, I checked my gear and began walking the 8 ½ miles to Dollar Lake. This is where I would set up camp for the evening. You follow the Henry's Fork River upstream as you hike in typical western forest and meadow terrain. I took my time and arrived late afternoon at the lake. I set my tent up and got things ready for the day hike in the morning that would take me to the top of the peak. I had dinner, enjoyed a beautiful sunset and went to bed early, as I had to leave by 6am to cover the 15-mile

round trip to King's Peak and back to camp.

I got up about 5:30, ate breakfast and started off for Gunsight Pass about 6. The route to the base of Kings Peak is quite circuitous. An unnamed peak and scree slope, that lay north and west of Kings keeps you from taking a more direct route. I am camped to the west of Kings, but I had to circle the unnamed peak and come in from the east side to reach the mountain's base. This makes the round trip up to 5 miles longer. Gunsight was the first waypoint you had to go through to reach Kings.



One thing I hate is giving up elevation to get to a higher place. Having to give up what I gained to go over Gunsight was not an option, unfortunately. You drop into another drainage on the east side of Gunsight and walk over to the drainage coming from the north face of Kings. You follow this drainage up to a trail that will take you to the top of Kings Peak. I reached the base of Kings about 12:30pm and ate lunch. I also needed a rest after a 6-mile walk to get where I am.

About 1pm, I put my daypack back on and started scrambling up the 1,600-foot-high stack of large house-sized boulders that make up the mountain. The 1 ½ mile long trail basically follows the ridge line. There are 3 false peaks on your way to the top and the last scramble is very

vertical, a lot like the east side of Pinnacle Mountain. Nine hours and 20 minutes after I started, I made it to the top of Kings Peak at 3:20pm. Thoughts of Katahdin flashed in my mind as Kings was similar in structure and Katahdin was my last attempt at a high point. But this time I won! Or did I?

I took about 20 minutes on top and knew I had a long return walk coming, so I started back down all this granite while the sun was shining. You have to make sure of your footing. Any of the rock you are using is loose and it can be steep. My toes were constantly ramming themselves into rocks and fatigue didn't help conditions either. It was two hours before I made the regular trail at the base of the peak.

I still had a 6-mile trip ahead of me, back over Gunsight and down to camp at Dollar Lake. My feet were also very sore from the hike so far and it was hard to keep a pace. Sunset was around 8:45pm that night and I made it to the Gunsight trail about then, but the pass was still more than a mile ahead of me. It was also time to get out the headlamp. Dinner was a small sandwich I ate while I walked on my totally trashed feet in the dark. And then the rain came. OH JOY! Whose idea was this trip anyway?

I crossed Gunsight about 10:45pm and still had almost 2 miles to go, but at least it was all downhill. I got back to my tent just past midnight, collapsed into my sleeping bag and slept well past sunrise. In the morning I packed everything up and headed down the trail slowly to the car parked 8 miles away.

*Continued on page 7...*



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## High Pointing Part 9 ..... continued

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The thought of a warm shower at a motel and a warm meal that night kept me going and I made it back to Rock Springs about 7pm that night. I was worse for wear, but on August 9<sup>th</sup>, Utah became my 39<sup>th</sup> high point. Time for a day of rest.

### North Dakota

After a great night's rest, I did some laundry and cleaned up my camping equipment and put it up. The remainder of my trip would be long car rides and day hikes throughout Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Colorado. I had rented a Toyota 4 Runner which would allow me to travel safely on to backcountry roads and haul all my gear. I spent most of this day, August 11<sup>th</sup>, exploring the historic Oregon Trail as I worked my way towards Sheridan, Wyoming, for the night.

I also made a stop at the world's largest hot spring in Thermopolis, Wyoming. It's free to the public and I was in need of a good soak. I came through the glorious Wind River Canyon to get to Thermopolis. This is a wonderful area to check out if you can.

Still on my way to make an attempt at North Dakota's high point, the next day I left Sheridan and explored the Little Bighorn battlefield site in eastern Montana. I had been here as a kid and never really got to understand what all took place here.

By the time I was done, I was impressed by what had taken place over the couple of days of the battle. I left Little Bighorn and headed north for Custer, Montana, to catch I-94 east and my stop for the night, Medora, North Dakota.

My plan was to stay in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The campgrounds were full here, so I got one at nearby Sully Creek State Park.

Medora is the town where young Teddy Roosevelt learned to be a cowboy, got inspired by the outdoors, and helped him become conservationist he was. The town has been rebuilt to resemble what it was like in the 1880's when he was there. By the way, this part of North Dakota is far from being flat. Knolls, gullies, canyons, hills and other odd formations make up the area's terrain. I got up the next morning for the 90-minute drive south to White Butte, North Dakota's highest point at 3,506 feet above sea level.

White Butte is located about 6 miles north of Bowman, North Dakota, near US 85. You take a series of farm roads to reach the trail head. You leave your car and start walking about a mile along a fence row to a gate where the butte begins to rise from the surrounding flat farmland.



After another mile or so of climbing over eroded chert and clay, you reach the top. It's a very easy trip. I passed a family walking in on my way back. The view is miles of nearby farms and a few other higher points of land like this one. It is privately owned, but the landowners have made this trail to keep folks in a controlled area and off the nearby farmland. On August 13, 2019, North Dakota was my 40<sup>th</sup> high point.

### South Dakota

I made it back to my car after the hike up White Butte about 11am and started south on US 85 to the South

Dakota Black Hills, home to Black Elk Peak. On the way I made a detour over to Devil's Tower National Monument in northeast Wyoming. Always a pleasure to visit this site. I arrived at my hotel in Keystone, South Dakota, about 8 that night. It had been a long day on the road, so I passed on seeing Mt. Rushmore at night and hit the sack. I would see it in the morning on my drive over to nearby Black Elk Peak.



Black Elk Peak, or Harney Peak as it was previously called, is about 6 miles to the southwest of Mt. Rushmore. It's in the Custer State Park and has a well-developed trail to the top of the peak, 7,242 feet above sea level. The hike is about 8 miles total and takes a couple of hours each way. At the top is a Forest Service lookout tower that is a joy to explore. I had lunch on top and noticed the afternoon storms were moving in. On August 14<sup>th</sup>, South Dakota was my 41<sup>st</sup> high point.

I continued that day exploring the rest of Custer State Park and headed south to Sidney, Nebraska, for the night. Along the way I saw Wind Cave National Park, Carhenge in Alliance, Nebraska, and caught a distant view of Chimney Rock on the Oregon Trail. From Sidney I would leave for Denver and a plane for home.

In Episode Ten we will look at the three points in the Appalachians that I did back in 2017: West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania.



## The Ozark Society Membership Application/Renewal



**Join us, or renew now!** Dues are for one year, January-December, and they include a subscription to the Society's newsletter, *Pack & Paddle*. To join or renew, go online to the Ozark Society website at [www.ozarksociety.net](http://www.ozarksociety.net). Or you can fill out this form and send it with a check written to "The Ozark Society." See below for our address.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, and ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Old Email (if changed) \_\_\_\_\_

Email 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Old Email (if changed) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like *Pack and Paddle* sent to my home address instead of by email. (Default is email.)

### Please check one:

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member  | Start at <b>Section A</b> for your OS and Chapter Membership      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal     | Start at <b>Section A</b> to renew your OS and Chapter Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LIFE Member | Start at <b>Section B</b> to renew just your Chapter Membership   |

### Section A: Please specify both the Level of Membership and the Chapter you are joining:

#### Level: (choose one)

- |                                      |         |                            |
|--------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend:     | \$30    | = \$20 OS + \$10 Chapter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate:  | \$50    | = \$40 OS + \$10 Chapter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter:  | \$100   | = \$90 OS + \$10 Chapter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor:    | \$250   | = \$240 OS + \$10 Chapter  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron:     | \$500   | = \$490 OS + \$10 Chapter  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor: | \$1000+ | = \$990+ OS + \$10 Chapter |

#### Chapter: (choose one)

- ☐ Bayou (Shreveport, LA)  
☐ Buffalo River (Gilbert, AR)  
☐ Highlands (Fayetteville, AR)  
☐ Mississippi Valley (Missouri)  
☐ Pulaski (Little Rock, AR)  
☐ Schoolcraft (Springfield, MO)  
☐ Sugar Creek (Bentonville, AR)  
☐ No chapter, all to central Ozark Society

### Section B: For Members who wish to join more than one Chapter or Life Members renewing their Chapter Membership only

(Choose as many as you wish and add \$10 for each chapter)

- ☐ \$10 Bayou (Shreveport, LA)  
☐ \$10 Buffalo River (Gilbert, AR)  
☐ \$10 Highlands (Fayetteville, AR)  
☐ \$10 Mississippi Valley (Missouri)  
☐ \$10 Pulaski (Little Rock, AR)  
☐ \$10 Schoolcraft (Springfield, MO)  
☐ \$10 Sugar Creek (Bentonville, AR)

### Section C: Donations to our Funds

(Choose any amount)

- ☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_ General Conservation Fund  
☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_ Legal Fund  
☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_ Compton Scholarship Fund  
☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_ Hedges Scholarship Fund  
☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_ OS Foundation

**My Total is: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please remit to: The Ozark Society, PO Box 2914, Little Rock, AR 72203**

You will receive an email Thank You from the Ozark Society. Please contact [oscomms@ozarksociety.net](mailto:oscomms@ozarksociety.net) for questions.



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## The Schoolcraft Chapter is Back!

By Carolyn Shearman and Fred Paillet

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We want to thank Loring Bullard and Dan Chiles for all their efforts to revive the Schoolcraft Chapter of Springfield MO. It now has 23 members and counting. In honor of their work, Fred Paillet, OS Education Chair, has a story about Henry Schoolcraft, their namesake.

### Fred's Story:

The legacy of one of the earliest Ozark explorers is chronicled by a modern annotated edition of Henry Schoolcraft's winter trip across the broad divide between the Missouri and Arkansas rivers in: ***Rude Pursuits and Rugged Peaks – Schoolcraft's Ozark Journal 1818-1819***, Henry R. Schoolcraft and Milton D. Rafferty, 1996, 170 p. The book contains the original journal with annotations and maps, plus a biographical sketch of Schoolcraft and his career. The journey takes about three months and was made in early winter (November through January).

The route is over the headwater tributaries of the Meramec River, across the headwaters of the Current River to follow down the North Fork of the White River. Then, down the White to the Black River, going up to cross over into the St. Francis River on the way back to the Meramec drainage. Rather mild weather at the beginning and streamflow so reduced that a few dry camps were unavoidable. Much of the countryside in the Meramec and Current headwaters is described as rough and barren.

Lots of descents into and out of steep ravines. Much of the landscape described as barrens with scrub oak. Extensive plains on the crest of the uplands. Here the description is definitive – a general resemblance to the prairies around Chicago, but with much less luxurious grass on account of the infertility of shallow soil, and the apparently level expanse interrupted by rough topography belied by the level-looking scene. Lots of bare exposed rock on promontories, with juniper at least mentioned as present in such locations. Open stands of yellow pine on uplands mentioned but not further described.



Schoolcraft is impressed by how poor the soil in these “plains” appears while noting the narrow but fertile corridors along stream bottoms. But the alluvial areas are tough going with nasty tangles of greenbrier and spicebush, and dense thickets of cane almost everywhere. He remarks pretty definitively that

the 38<sup>th</sup> degree of latitude marks the northern limit of cane. Giant sycamores figure prominently in his description of rivers. Buffalo and elk are identified as present but most of the game is in the form of deer, bear, and vast flocks of turkey. The extreme clarity of streams and rivers is noted.

Schoolcraft is especially concerned with minerals but much of his description is hard to relate to modern usage. “Secondary limestone” apparently used to distinguish sedimentary from granitic basement. Not clear what he means by “spar” and “jasper” – perhaps some form of chert. Most of the oaks described correspond to modern usage but have to search to find that *Quercus tinctoria* noted as the most abundant tree on the Black River is now classified as black oak (*Q. velutina*). At that early date it is interesting that there is so much settlement already on the lower White River, with those on the south side of the river being displaced as the land between the White and Arkansas was being designated for the Cherokee migrants being forced out of their eastern homeland. On the final leg of the trip Schoolcraft is greatly impressed by the granite boulders and cliffs in the bedrock core of the Ozark uplift. Makes the upper St. Francis River gorge a place for Ozark Society hikers to visit in the future.



Ozark Society  
P.O. Box 2914  
Little Rock, AR 72203

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