



## 2025 Arkansas Legislative Update

By Brian Thompson, Ozark Society President

In November of 2024, just prior to the legislative session, we were advocating for public notification language to be restored to Rule 5 for permitting large swine CAFOs. There was strong public response (thanks to many of you). Rule 5 was finally withdrawn by the Department of Agriculture for "additional review." The rules review process was then suspended as a result of the start of the legislative session, which apparently is standard protocol. The question of public notification in Rule 5 would go on hold, to be addressed following the adjournment of the 2025 legislative session.

The Arkansas Legislature then went into session. Almost immediately, Senator Blake Johnson of Clay County, introduced SB84 *"to prohibit a moratorium on the issuance of permits in watersheds."* The specific target of SB84 was the moratorium on hog CAFO permits near the Buffalo. Our coalition of conservation organizations (Ozark Society, Buffalo River Watershed Alliance, Arkansas Canoe Club, and the National Park Conservation Association) all mobilized members to oppose SB84 by writing the Senate Agricultural Committee members. The bill would appear on the Senate Ag Committee's agenda each week, with plenty of attendees present to testify. Senator Johnson would consistently fail to show, pushing it forward to the following week. The committee chair

eventually placed SB84 on the "deferred" list.

Just when we thought it might be dead, Senator Johnson filed SB290. Where SB84 would simply outlaw moratoriums, SB290 required that all existing moratoriums be subject to review by the House & Senate Rules Committees, a different avenue for getting them eliminated. After a similar string of no-shows, Senator Johnson appeared for testimony requesting a "do pass" of SB290. Members of Senate Ag suggested that SB290 would run afoul of the Administrative Procedures Act. It was at this point that Senator Johnson mentioned in his testimony that Arkansas Farm Bureau had crafted his bill, perhaps deflecting responsibility. As it turned out, the elimination of the moratorium in the Buffalo watershed, was a top Farm Bureau priority.

Johnson withdrew SB290, submitting an amended version placing expirations on existing moratoriums. This passed a voice vote in Senate Ag, though we later learned that it would have failed with a roll call vote. It then passed the House Ag Committee by a single vote. In response, conservation organizations began asking their members to write appeals to Governor Sanders. We know that a whole lot of you did!

Governor Sanders halted the process and pressed Johnson to accept "cut-outs" for existing



Senator Blake Johnson, providing SB290 testimony.

moratoriums, suggesting that she would veto the bill in its current form if he did not work with her. Under pressure, Johnson accepted the cut-outs, allowing the Buffalo River moratorium to remain intact. Governor Sanders deserves the credit for making this happen.

Now that the legislature has adjourned, Rule 5 is again up for review by the Legislative Rules Committee, still with all public notification language removed. Ozark Society members have been recently writing appeals to Governor Sanders asking that public notification language be restored as it originally appeared in Rule 5. The good news is that Rule 5 has been recently withdrawn once again. We are hopeful that Secretary Wes Ward and Governor Sanders are reconsidering the addition of public notification options. Fingers crossed.

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## Join Us for a Celebration of David Peterson's Neil Compton Award

By Carolyn Shearman, OS VP and Pack & Paddle Editor

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### It's a Big Ole' Party Ya'll!



The Pulaski Chapter is planning to celebrate David Peterson receiving the Neil Compton award on June 28<sup>th</sup> at Alan and Janet Nye's House from 2-4pm.

**Everyone is invited - all Chapters and its free!** Just RSVP to Mary Schlatterer at:

[pulaskichair2@ozarksociety.net](mailto:pulaskichair2@ozarksociety.net)

so we can get a count for the food.

We will have catered hors d'oeuvres, cakes, music by the Peterson's son Everett, a special song by Alisa Dixon and Linda VanBlaricom, Pictures, Video,

and plenty of ways to celebrate David's accomplishments.

The Nye's Address is:  
Alan and Janet Nye  
80 Belle River Point  
Maumelle, AR 72113



### House Concert - After the Party

For folks who are interested, Everett and his band, **Big Love Car Wash**, will be performing the same evening at a house concert. Doors open at 6pm, Concert at 7pm at the home of:

Ann and Rick Owen  
2501 Pierce St.  
Little Rock, AR 72207

**This concert is \$20** and you can mail Ann a check or pay her at Venmo @Ann-Owen-6. To contact Ann, call 501-960-0063.

[www.biglovecarwash.com](http://www.biglovecarwash.com)



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## Arkansas Times: Climate Watch Newsletter

By Carolyn Shearman and Phillip Powell

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Phillip Powell, Arkansas Times reporter and one of Pulaski Chapter's newest members, has encouraged all our membership to sign up for the Arkansas Times new newsletter Climate Watch. It is free and will feature in-depth articles on how climate change is affecting Arkansans. **Sign up for the newsletter here:**

<https://arktimes.com/climate-watch-opt-in>

Climate Watch is the first free newsletter in Arkansas dedicated to exploring how Arkansans are adapting to climate change. From the growth of renewable energy sources, to the adoption of more sustainable agriculture, to efforts by communities to become more resilient, Arkansans are tackling one of the globe's most pressing challenges and the Arkansas Times and

Phillip are dedicated to writing about it.



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## Ken Smith Receives the Ranger's Coin March 2022

By Janet Parsch, Highlands Chapter

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*[Janet says: This news item is tardy by only three years (!), but it is still worthy of some attention.]*



On March 31, 2022, the Ozark Society Highlands Chapter and the Ozark Society Sugar Creek Chapter hosted a celebration called “Buffalo River ... and Beyond” at Mt. Sequoyah Center in Fayetteville to

commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Buffalo National River. During the event Mark Foust, the National Park Service Buffalo National River Superintendent at the time, presented Ken Smith with a Ranger's Coin. Foust recently described more about the Ranger's Coin to me.

The Ranger's Coin project, which started 20 years ago, is not an official National Park Service coin, as it is done by folks in their private capacities. Every year rangers nominate parks to be considered, so Mark nominated the Buffalo National River for 2022. The coin is

produced in recognition of excellence in “rangering.” The ranger duties listed around the edge of the coin bring attention to the wide variety of work rangers do in, and on behalf of, national parks. The coin can be purchased to collect or distribute. Mark thought it fitting to present a Buffalo River Ranger's Coin to Ken Smith. Others at the event agreed with Mark!



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## The Latest Sassafras Hiking Award Recipient

By Brian Thompson, Ozark Society President

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Chris Dixon, a native Arkansan from Sheridan, is a recent recipient of the Ozark Society Sassafras Hiking Award, which he qualified for by completing the Ozark Highland's Trail, the Buffalo River trail, the Ouachita Trail, and the Ozark Trail in Missouri. Chris is in his forties, works two jobs, plays competitive golf, and has five teenagers, so “it really does me some good to get away every so often.”

Chris has actually hiked the Ozark Highland's Trail and the Ouachita more than once, section hiking them the first time around. But, it is notable that his most recent outings on the Ozark Trail, Ozark Highlands, and Ouachita, have all been through hikes, meaning he organized resupply points so he could complete them end to end. “I hiked all three of them in the Spring. On the Ozark trail, I would hear

turkeys every morning. This went on 13 days in a row. They were my alarm clock.”

When asked about weather, Chris said that he actually had pretty good luck, except that on the Ozark Trail, a tornado had come through the West Plains area on March 14th, the day before he started. As a result of the tornado's path, on miles 10 and 60, he encountered a half mile wide swath of downed trees that he had to scramble through, “very tough hiking.” This would hike approximately 15 to 20 miles a day. “After 15 miles or so, it's not real fun.” He would carry up to five days of food.

In regard to which trails he prefers, he says it is not an easy pick. “On the Ozark Trail, I didn't see another soul for eleven days. I'd say the Ozark Highlands Trail is the most

scenic...incredible water features. But at the end of the day, I'm partial to the Ouachita Trail. I live pretty close to it and I really enjoy the community around the Ouachita.

Finally, Chris noted how lucky we are to have trails like this in our region. We agree. Thanks for sharing Chris!





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## OS Youth Grants Awarded Across All Regions

By Dana Steward, Youth Grants Committee

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The Ozark Society Youth Grant Committee has announced its grant awards for this year. Nine school and non-profits agencies have received \$11,700 in grants ranging from \$370 to \$2,500. Students in kindergarten through grade twelve from the Ozarks Region and chapter regions are eligible for Ozark Society Youth Grants, with this year's nine recipients coming from Arkansas, Missouri, and Louisiana.



The Ozark Society initiated its Youth Grant awards in 2020. Recognizing that education in hands-on conservation and environmental sustainability is critical to our future, the Society determined to inspire the next generation to take part in protecting the Ozarks and nearby natural areas. With the addition of this year's awards, since its inception, the Youth Fund has distributed \$62,482 to 42 schools and non-profit groups, which have involved 9,500 children and youth engaged in building gardens and greenhouses, community clean-up and

restoration, interactive education, watershed conservation, trail building, and more.

This year's winners and their exciting projects include:

**PTA Arkansas Congress  
Pulaski Heights Elementary,**  
\$2200...Birds In Our Backyard

**Ozark Natural Science  
Center,** \$970...Turtle Tracking

**Leverett Elementary School,**  
Fayetteville, \$573.85...Native  
Plant Pollinator Garden

**Trail Mix NWA,**  
\$2531.47...Backyard Habitat  
Builders Series

**Old Main Middle School,**  
Bentonville, \$533...Wings and  
Things (Butterfly) Pollinator  
Garden

**Fayetteville High School  
Environmental Science,**  
\$1,750...No-Mow Pollinator  
Garden

**Ozark Resource Center,** West  
Plains, MO, \$700...Farm  
Unfixed (Restoring springs)

**Dickerson Park Zoo,**  
Springfield, MO,  
\$1500...Songbird Habitat

**Caddo Parish, LA 4-H,**  
\$1,500...Environmental  
Awareness Project.

The Youth Grant Fund is supported by The Walton Family Foundation and the Ozark Society membership.

Applications for the next cycle of funding begins in November, 2025. You can help the Grant Committee in two ways in supporting the Youth Fund Grants. First, please promote the grant to your local youth groups and schools and encourage them to think of worthy projects that fit the criteria of youth involvement in environmental education and conservation. And second, help this project grow by supporting the Youth Fund with your gifts, so that more grants can be awarded. Gifts to the fund make excellent honorariums or memorials. Pass it on.



Information about the how to apply for a grant or how to give are on the Ozark Society Youth Grants Web Page.

[www.ozarksociety.net/ozark-society-awards-grants-scholarships/ozark-society-youth-grants/](http://www.ozarksociety.net/ozark-society-awards-grants-scholarships/ozark-society-youth-grants/)

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## American Lotus – A Little Bit of Oriental Mystery Right Here in the Ozarks

By Fred Paillet, OS Education Chair

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The mention of lotus blossom conjures up images of Chinese maidens strolling under decorative umbrellas beside garden ponds in the Forbidden City. Or an Egyptian river boatman dressed in white robe and red fez wading in the Nile and handing a freshly plucked blossom up to an English matron waiting aboard her tour boat. Lotus blossoms frequently appear in oriental art, such as the pedestal for images of the Budha or decorative carvings in Hindu temples. My own first direct encounter with the lotus was in the form of small slabs of sparkling white and pleasantly crunchy vegetable served at a formal reception dinner during an academic exchange at the University of Beijing. The oblong slices of these root vegetable pieces were punctured with round tube-like holes that were handy in picking them up with the heavy steel chopsticks provided as our only utensil. When I asked my host, Prof Zehao, what exactly this condiment was, he called it lotus root. The crisp feel of the exotic root seemed like a real taste of the orient. A few times before that, any thoughts of exotic lotus on these American shores were assumed to be related to formal planting situations in public gardens and private estate ponds. Besides, the lotus was just another water lily, and we had plenty of our own. Except that I was to find both premises wrong. We do have an American lotus, and it is very different from other water lilies.

American lotus and Rose mallow as seen at Osage Park in Bentonville



Lotus awareness dawned shortly after I arrived in Fayetteville to join the staff at UARK Geosciences. I had organized a department field trip to the Tulsa area offices of a geophysical contractor I had worked with over the years. The company graciously provided a catered lunch along with demonstration of equipment and software. During the van trip to and from Tulsa I had a front window seat and could look at the landscape while the driver kept eyes on the road. The Cherokee Highway runs through some very rural rangeland where you would never expect formal water gardens. But I clearly saw shallow ponds filled with the foliage and seed pods of lotus. That prompted a check of my handy *Hunter Wildflowers of Arkansas* volume to find there is a

listing for American lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*) as a native wildflower. But even there, the presentation is deceptive. The photo displayed alongside that of the familiar fragrant water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*) makes them look very similar. You see an attractive rosette of many petals embedded in a background of round leaves. Also shown on the same page is the yellow pond lily or spatterdock (*Nuphar luteum*) with its smaller and not very open form that is compensated by the brightness of its yellow.

When seen in the field, American lotus provides a distinctly different aspect as its larger round leaves are often protruding way above the surface of the water and nowhere near the horizontal floating form of other water lilies. In fact, lotus colonies often are located adjacent to standing water where ground is only water-logged during the spring runoff but left high and almost dry during the summer season. Their large, round leaves can be seen floating flat on the surface of the water early in the year, but then stand upright in virtually closed rank as water levels recede during the summer. One especially notable characteristic of the American lotus is the rampant way in which it grows. The leaves often appear in dense patches covering acres of ground in wetlands.

*Continued on page 6.*

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## American Lotus...continued

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This was a contrast to the sedate and charming nature of small rafts of fragrant water lily leaves and the few scattered blooms seen while paddling along canoe trails in the Minnesota Boundary Waters. Carol Gracie in her *Summer Wildflowers of the Northeast* suggests that our lotus can be downright invasive. She notes that lotus corms can expand outward by as much as 45 feet in a single growing season. Lotus planted in a large but shallow pond could completely cover what had been scenic open water in just a year or two.

American lotus can probably be labeled as another demonstration of the Asa Gray disjunct phenomenon where nearly identical plant species are located in southeastern North America and southeastern China as isolated enclaves of a former widespread Arcto Tertiary flora. In fact, *N. Lutea* is sometimes considered only a subspecies of the Asian *N. nucifera* because of the close similarity between the two versions of lotus. The Latin name for Asian lotus (“nut bearing”) is derived from the fact that the hard-shelled seeds embedded in the holes in showerhead-like pods can be roasted and eaten like a tree nut. The seeds develop inside the distinctive upright pods in sockets where they can be heard rattling around after the pods ripen and the seeds fill out. Later on, the pods rotate downward from their erect position and drop into the water to disintegrate. The seeds are thus released to be moved about by waves and current to new locations. There they can remain

viable for a very long time, as demonstrated by successful propagation of lotus seeds upon discovery more than a millennium after they were entombed in Egypt. Seen up close, the lotus leaves are completely circular with the stem connected at the center and without the wedge-shaped openings on fragrant water lily or spatterdock. All three have stomata located on the upper surface of leaves so that they can exchange atmospheric gases when floating on water. But most lotus leaves grow up and out of the water by as much as three feet, with initial tubular leaves unfolding like a scroll – not to mention the erect, showerhead-like seed pods. This adds a rather unique look to lotus infested marshland compared to the sedate rafts of other water lily colonies.

Native Americans made use of lotus lily in their diet, consuming roots, seeds and even the stems. Roots and stems contain hollow, gas-filled openings which must help aerate them in water-logged mud. Lotus roots are a nutritious source of food for such marsh inhabitants as muskrats. Gracie cites vast areas of lotus on the shores of Lake Michigan that were once prized for waterfowl hunting before trapping regulations and the depression of the fur market caused muskrat populations to sharply rebound, but now are much more limited in extent. Of course, the main attraction for us is the lotus flower. Like other water lilies, the flowers have a two-day blooming cycle. On the first day the male flower parts (stamens) are furled and

unexposed, so that female parts (stigmas) are exposed to cross-pollination by insects attracted to the nectar within the blossom. On the second day, the female parts have been pollinated and visiting insects are dusted with pollen to take to nearby flowers at the earlier female receptive stage. Self-pollination is sometimes possible, but this sequence makes cross-pollination much more likely.

After all this hype you may want to see American lotus in its natural habitat here in the Ozark region, especially where a boardwalk trail provides close access to otherwise treacherous swampy ground. One of easiest access points is at Osage Park adjacent to the Bentonville city airport on state route 102 just south of the city square. The park has an extensive boardwalk trail around and through a large beaver swamp embedded in wet prairie. Peak flowering season starts in mid-July and extends into August. At that time, you can also catch the great display of rose mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) full of large white flowers with deep red centers, growing in abundance around the edges of the lotus patches. Late season prairie flowers such as Arkansas ironweed, swamp milkweed, and tickseed sunflower will also be starting to appear in August. If you visit, there are picnic tables and shelters, food trucks and even a local brewery immediately in the area. Flowers, food and beer – what more could you ask for?



## 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)

and click "MEMBERSHIP."

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)

### 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:  | \$60   | = \$50 OS + \$10 Chapter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter:  | \$110  | = \$100 OS + \$10 Chapter  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor:    | \$260  | = \$250 OS + \$10 Chapter  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron:     | \$510  | = \$500 OS + \$10 Chapter  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor: | \$1010 | = \$1000 OS + \$10 Chapter |

#### **Chapter: (choose one)**

- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bayou (Shreveport, LA)                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buffalo River (North Central, AR)        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highlands (Fayetteville, AR)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pulaski (Central, AR)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schoolcraft (Springfield, MO)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar Creek (Bentonville, AR)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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)

- |                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 | Bayou (Shreveport, LA)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 | Buffalo River (North Central, AR) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 | Highlands (Fayetteville, AR)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 | Pulaski (Central, AR)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 | Schoolcraft (Springfield, MO)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 | Sugar Creek (Bentonville, AR)     |

### Section C: Donations to our Funds

(Choose any amount)

- |                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ | Conservation Fund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ | Endowment Fund    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ | Legal Fund        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ | Youth Grant Fund  |

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

**Please remit to: The Ozark Society, PO Box 166, Fayetteville, AR 72702-0166.**

You will receive a Thank You email from the Ozark Society. Please contact [ozarksocietymembership@gmail.com](mailto:ozarksocietymembership@gmail.com) for questions.



Ozark Society  
P.O. Box 166  
Fayetteville, AR 72702-0166

Please Note: If you would like to save a tree and receive *Pack & Paddle* by email, not through US Mail, please contact Carolyn Shearman at [oscomms@ozarksociety.net](mailto:oscomms@ozarksociety.net).

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## The Officer, Director, and Chair List

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**OZARK SOCIETY ARCHIVES:** Stewart Noland, [stewartnoland51@aol.com](mailto:stewartnoland51@aol.com)

**OZARK SOCIETY DEPOSITORY:** Special Collections Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, AR 72701, (479) 575-5577.

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