



PACK & PADDLE



Fall "The challenge goes on. There are other lands and rivers, other wilderness areas, to save and to share with all.
Sept. 2025 I challenge you to step forward to protect and care for the wild places you love best." - Dr. Neil Compton

A New Trail at Lake Maumelle

By Carolyn Shearman, Ozark Society Vice President and Pack & Paddle Editor

At the Central Arkansas Water (CAW) Board meeting on Thursday, August 14th, Bryan Rupar, the Watershed Protection Manager, presented for approval the plan to build an additional 13.5 miles of trail on the south side of Lake Maumelle from the Bufflehead Bay Trail to Pinnacle Mountain State Park. The plan was unanimously approved by the Board of Commissioners. When interviewed after the meeting Bryan Rupar stated that he would be asking conservation organizations such as the Ozark Society and Sierra Club to

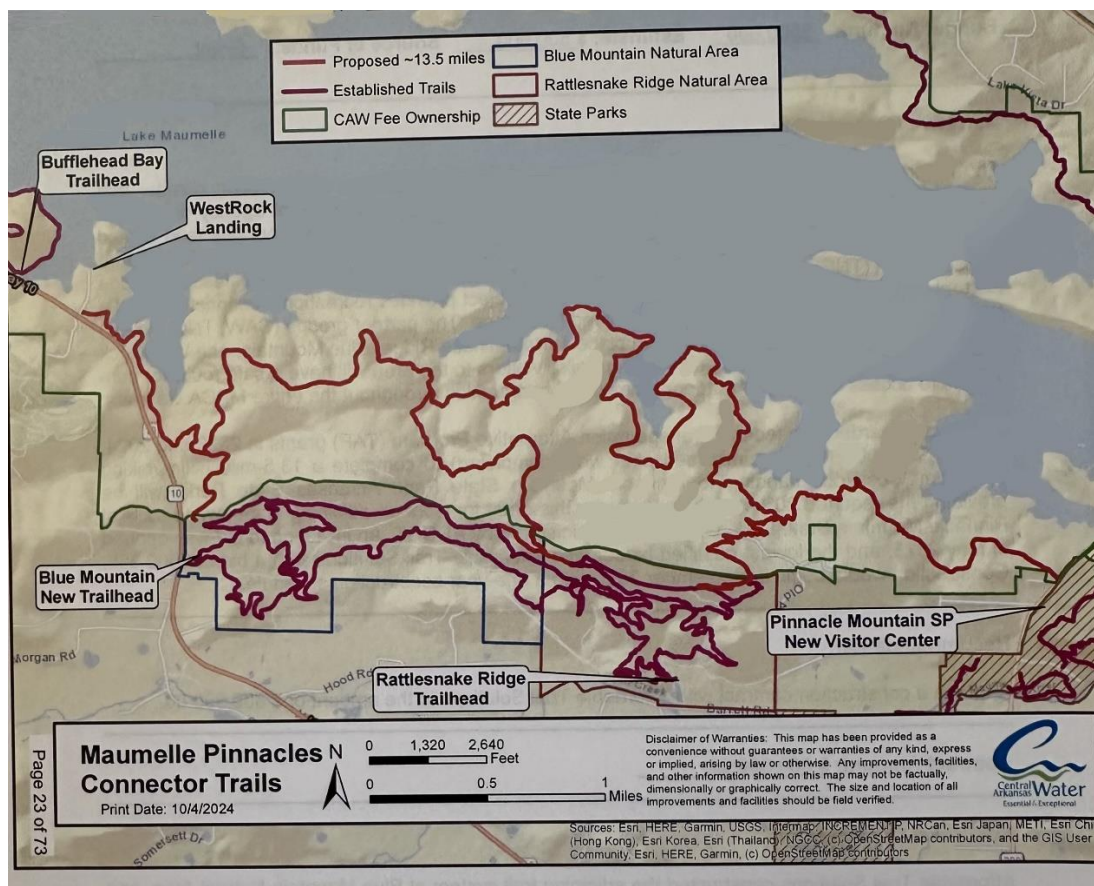
help with the volunteer efforts to complete the connections at each end of the new trail. The main portion of the trail would be contracted out at a cost of \$500,000.

This new section of trail is part of a long-term plan to have trail access completely around the lake. Currently, the Ouachita National Recreation Trail runs the full length of the north side of Lake Maumelle and portions of trail are present on the south side with the Bufflehead Bay Trail, the Blue Mountain Trail

system, and Rattlesnake Ridge trails.

The Pulaski Chapter of the Ozark Society has worked with CAW in the past to clear and define the adjacent Bufflehead Bay Trail while CAW provided tools, boxed lunches, and drinks. Thursday, Bryan agreed that CAW would again provide food and tools if Pulaski Chapter members volunteered for this section too.

That's enough of an incentive for the Pulaski Chapter!



2025 Ozark Society Buffalo River Float

By Charlie and Rhoda Transue, Highlands Chapter



The long tradition of the Ozark Society Buffalo River float continued this year with a float during the first week of June. The float occurred in the midst of an unusually rainy spring that began in the middle of April and had not quite relented when we started our float. One word would describe this year's float, and that word was "luck" because the float occurred between river rises and floaters only had to bear two morning showers.

The float began at Carver with the arrival of a varied mix of watercraft that included rafts, canoes, kayaks, and a dory. The license plates reflected Ozark Society members from the heart of the Ozarks and beyond from Louisiana in the south, Indiana and Iowa in the north, and Texas and Oklahoma in the west. Once trip leader Stewart Noland arrived on the gravel, the logistics operation began. The large group of 32 was divided into two groups, and equipment and provisions were divided between them. Once the watercraft were loaded, the shuttle to Dillard's ferry at Highway 14 was made on a Wild Bill's school bus with padded seats and seat belts.

The 58-mile float commenced with a short float from Carver to Copper Bluff downstream of Mt.

Hersey. The two groups made camp on their respective adjacent gravel bars. The first business after landing on the gravel bar across from the bluff was completing the group tasks of erecting the tarp, setting up the kitchen, and placing the groover. Dinner was a group effort from its making to its cleanup. As happened each evening, a Dutch oven dessert delivery was made from Group 2 to Group 1. On Monday evening, the Dutch oven was filled with delicious lemon bars. Desserts on following nights included brownies, pecan pie, pineapple upside down cake, and oatmeal cake.

Breakfast was another group effort with English muffins and oatmeal alternating with pancakes every other day. After breakfast, the camp was broken down and the day's float began. Lunches were simple affairs with lunch makings set out on tables by each group.

Tuesday's camp was made at Jamison Bluff a couple of river miles below Woolum; Wednesday's camp was made at Arnold Bluff above Arnold Island; Thursday's camp was made just below Ezell Hollow after finding the idyllic gravel bar at Red Bluff already filled; and our last camp on Friday night was made at Spring Creek Bluff, whose shape is that of hill instead of the usual flattop.

On the float to Thursday's camp, lunch was enjoyed on the Gilbert gravel bar where ice was obtained at the historic Gilbert General Store. Floaters recalled their childhoods with purchases of ice cream bars and sodas. The departure from the Ezell Hollow camp on Friday morning was delayed by a morning shower

during which the groups huddled under tarps and enjoyed conversations. Skies cleared by Friday afternoon, and a lovely last camp was made across from Spring Creek Bluff. On Saturday morning, thunderstorms were forming to the west, and a dash was made to the take-out at Highway 14 after breaking camp early. The thunderstorm caught us before reaching the take-out, and one tremendous clap of thunder made the crescendo of the storm.



Leading down to the gravel bar below the Highway 14 bridge, the road was muddy, slick, and eroded, making driving and walking a challenge. Again, group effort made the loading of boats and gear an enjoyable and quick task.

Driving home to Tulsa, we observed the Illinois River out of its banks east of Siloam Springs. Those western storms contributed to a rise on the Buffalo that traveled downstream. With lucky timing, the Ozark Society missed a river rise by only a day. Quoting trip organizer Stewart Noland, "I'll take the luck." With luck and camaraderie, the Ozark Society Buffalo River float tradition continues.

Little Sugar Creek to Run Free

By Beth Keck for Sugar Creek Chapter

In a victory for the environment and our communities, the Bentonville City Council unanimously voted on May 27, 2025, to remove the remnants of the Lake Bella Vista dam and let Little Sugar Creek flow free.

The decision came after more than a decade of advocacy by the Friends of Little Sugar Creek and The Ozark Society Sugar Creek Chapter. City officials originally planned to spend millions of taxpayer dollars to replace the dam which formed Lake Bella Vista.

Water quality in Lake Bella Vista had been problematic since the creek was dammed in 1925. The huge 56,000-acre watershed overwhelmed the tiny 22-acre

lake which had been off limits for swimming for many years.

As with any advocacy effort, there were many twists and turns. In an early win, using a grassroots grant from Patagonia, the Friends sued the Corps of Engineers and stopped the re-issuance of the permit needed for dam construction. When the City Council was on the verge of voting for a free-flowing stream in 2018 Cooper Communities, who had given the lake to the city, threatened a lawsuit. The Friends provided the City of Bentonville legal support resulting in a ruling in favor of the City.

The final hurdle was a consent agreement the City entered into with Cooper Communities that required unsound side

impoundments. The Friends and Ozark Society vigorously protested. In May 2024 Cooper Communities transferred the consent agreement to BV Developers who in turn renegotiated the terms. Sugar Creek Park will now be an “environmentally friendly, an aesthetically pleasing, and financially sustainable public park” with a free-flowing stream (and no side channels).

In the course of the decade-long campaign, the Friends built a coalition of like-minded citizens and organizations, organized letter writing campaigns, educational seminars and webinars, maintained a Facebook page and activated large crowds for city meetings



Keep Bossier Beautiful Event with Bayou Chapter Support

By Jenny and Gary Hackman, Bayou Chapter Ozark Society BCOS

In a powerful display of community spirit and environmental stewardship, Keep Bossier Beautiful (KBB) led its first-ever large-scale water-based cleanup this past Saturday along the scenic shores and inlets of Lake Bistineau.

Partnering with nearly 35 volunteers and several local organizations, KBB launched an ambitious effort to remove debris from the lake's ecosystem. The event marked a significant milestone for the group, which has traditionally focused on land-based beautification projects.

"This is the first water cleanup of this scale for Keep Bossier Beautiful, and we are delighted with the outcome," said Lynn Bryan, Executive Director of KBB. "The success of today's event proves just how much can be accomplished when people come together with a shared purpose."

Volunteers from the Bayou Chapter of the Ozark Society (BCOS) played a central role in the initiative, co-hosting the event alongside KBB. They were joined by conservation-minded members from Sisters on the Fly, Sister Corps, and community supporters from

Advanced Air Conditioning & Heating.

Armed with kayaks, boats, and determination, volunteers scoured the lake's inlets and shallows for discarded items, retrieving everything from tires and buckets to fast food containers and other debris. The waste was ferried back to shore using a custom-designed 24-foot by 8-foot trash-hauling boat, where it was loaded into roll-off dumpsters.



Ozark Society Fall Meeting Nov. 7-8th – Save The Date

By Lowell Collins, Sugar Creek Chapter Chair

The Fall meeting of the Ozark Society will be November 7-8th in Bentonville, Arkansas. The OS Board will meet on Friday evening. On Saturday, November 8, there will be recreation activities including an urban walk, a trail hike, and a greenway bike ride. Members also

will have an opportunity to gather in the newly updated Putnam-Compton home and visit the exhibit detailing the life of Neil Compton, the founder of the Ozark Society, and the history of the Buffalo National River.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Courtyard Marriott at

a group rate of \$109. Members can make reservations at [Book your group rate for Ozark Society Fall Meeting](#). Last Day for group rate Friday October 24.

Nearby campsites are also available at Blowing Springs and Coler MTB Preserve.

OS Youth Grants: Engaging Families with Backyard Habitats

By Lowell Collins, Youth Grants Committee

TrailMix NWA, a community of environmentally-minded folks, and recipients of an Ozark Society Youth Grant award, is hosting a program series entitled: *Ozark Society Backyard Habitat Builders*, throughout NWA this summer. The program is unique in that it offers an opportunity for parents and children to explore the surprising myriads of native species to be found in their very own backyards, coupled with creating their own customized habitat features in support of butterflies, toads, bees and birds. The grant provides

funding for the supplies for five backyard habitat workshops in the series.

On a recent Sunday in July, fifteen families, with children ranging from infants to teenagers, gathered to create puddling trays for butterflies. The leader described the components to be added to each tray as the children excitedly prepared their own “puddler” to take home. Children, as well as parents, chattered about newly observed butterfly activity in their own yards, taking a fresh interest in the plants that attract

them. The event was an ideal opportunity to provide an educational connection for families and children to their environment on a brilliant summer morning in the Ozark’s.

The Ozark Society Youth Grant program is an outreach to engage youth in hands on conservation and is fully supported by the donations of our members. Please consider donating.

www.ozarksociety.net/donate/



Ozark Society Recruitment

By Fred Paillet, OS Education Chair

Enjoyment of the Ozark landscape and the activities available here in our region is a common factor uniting Ozark Society members. Outdoor recreation will always be a strong pull on attracting future members to our ranks. With the Buffalo National River a thriving tourist attraction in NW Arkansas, it is time to consider the ongoing

mission of our society and the way to attract a new generation of members dedicated to the protection of that valued resource. As a relatively recent arrival in the Ozark area my own experience is probably representative of others attracted to opportunities in the Ozark region. Simple word of mouth reference to the Society from neighbors and colleagues

caught my interest, and publicly announced programs and hikes provided a convenient introduction. Advertised society activities including hikes, lectures and social gatherings were an obvious way for those of us interested in the outdoors to learn about the opportunities available.

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Ozark Society Recruitment...continued

Activities such as hikes and floats continue to be a vital part of encouraging appreciation of the value of the Buffalo River and its Ozark surroundings. Advertisement of those activities must be an important part of our recruitment effort. Shared interest in the natural environment, opportunities for exploring those interests and the desire to preserve the landscape that provides those opportunities remain the basic elements that attract new Ozark Society members while ensuring the continued involvement of established members.



Buffalo River Floats and Picnics

Constant vigilance in the face of environmental threats must remain an important part of ongoing society programs – but that needs to be embedded in a wider range of efforts to enhance appreciation of what we have, and to understand the environmental processes that govern the forces acting on our landscape. Hence the continued relevance of the refrain expressing Ozark Society activities as “Conservation, Education and Recreation”. Conservation is the bedrock

mission here but can only be sustained through active appreciation of the recreation value inherent in the Ozark region, along with knowledge of the often subtle and technologically complex processes (environmental, social and political) at work in the background.

After more than fifty years of environmental activism the Ozark Society, founded in 1962 remains an active force in the protection of the natural environment of the Ozarks in general, and the free-flowing Buffalo River in particular. The society had its beginning when the relentless course of development threatened to destroy that river as a recreational corridor at a time when so few such continuous river corridors remained in our midcontinent region. Local resident Dr. Neil Compton worked with a cadre of like-minded Ozark outdoor enthusiasts to convince Senator Fullbright and the National Park Service to consider park status for the river instead of creating yet another giant Army Corps reservoir. After a full decade of effort, common environmental sense prevailed, and Congress passed legislation to create the first National River here in the Ozarks. The popular resonance of that action was soon demonstrated by creation of many more national rivers in the years since that fateful legislation was passed. This was an

idea whose time had clearly come.



Volunteers Doing Trail Work

Conservation has continued to be a primary emphasis in Ozark Society activities. Lobbying for preservation of the Buffalo River in the face of relentless development has been more than just simply advocating preservation of the river. Active efforts to familiarize government officials with the scenery and ecological values of the river were a dramatic part of the process. The newly formed society's effort to mobilize the wider outdoor community of the region was every bit as important as targeted political pressure. At the same time, society pioneers began assembling a data base that would be critical in monitoring the health of the river in the transition to Park Service management.



Lobbying to protect Lands and Waterways

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Ozark Society Recruitment...continued

continued conservation thrusts include preservation of other regional Ozark watersheds such as the Meramec in Missouri and the Illinois in Oklahoma, and creation of wilderness areas within the USFS holdings. You can read further details about these efforts and many others on the society web page.



Ozark Society Meetings

The ongoing actions of the Ozark Society today are vital to the continued health of the Buffalo River and its environment because the creation of the national river was not a “one and done” event. Conservation must, of necessity remain the bedrock foundation of the society. Official protection status for parks, rivers and wilderness is just not a one-time thing in a democratic environment where political sentiment and commercially driven action committees can always reverse protective status. It is a sad fact of life that a single action such as opening public land for development can destroy a pristine area, whereas such an area must continuously defend against projected development over time as economic and social sentiment evolves. Regional development,

changing land use practices, non-point-source contamination, and expanding recreational opportunities created by National Park status continue to provide new threats to the scenic river. The recent sustained effort to remove a concentrated hog raising facility (CAFO) from a major tributary of the Buffalo is an outstanding example of what our vigilance entails. The fact is that such a facility should never have been permitted on karst terrain by the state environmental approval system – regulations specifically state that fact. Then opposition arose from the organized industry against allowing the precedent of destroying such a large investment on the part of the project owners. It took relentless pressure from the public to convince our state governor to do the right thing – adequately compensate the investors to make up for a fundamental regulatory mistake.



Workshops on Wilderness
Protections

Ozark Society action made a vital contribution to that result. But vigilance is still required because the economic forces in the industry that make concentrated animal feeding operations profitable still come into play. At the same time, our society’s efforts need to recognize the importance of agriculture and forestry to the regional economy to avoid creating an image of hostility to those communities. That’s where education and the presentation of informed proposed solution to environmental problems comes in.



Adventures On The Trail

Beyond the satisfaction of helping to preserve a vital part of our Ozark environment, what does the Ozark Society have to offer new joining members? Recreation is often the hook that pulls society members into the fold, with education eventually causing recognition of the need to conserve resources. The society has a series of local chapters that can provide entry into locally available recreational opportunities for new arrivals to the area, or just existing member seeking new ways to experience.

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Ozark Society Recruitment...continued

Here, conservation is not the simple process of placing pristine areas off limits to all but elite environmentalists.

Conservation must be informed by the science needed to avoid environmental degradation in an ever more complex community of expanding population and developing facilities such as housing, industry and transportation networks. It's not just setting land aside, but also paying attention to habitat fragmentation and disruption of migration corridors. Nutrient flux and eroded sediment originating outside the nominal watershed corridor can degrade the Buffalo. Education is critical to informed publications in support of conservation while recognizing the fact of necessary competition for limited resources. Here, resources include funding sources for environmental advocacy, operational funds for established parks like national rivers, and the limited extent of relatively undeveloped lands available for protection.



Hiking Award Recipient

The background education involved would include topics like the science of impending climate change, the intricacies of non-point-source contamination, the influence of sediment influx from land use practices, and the ecology of creatures that migrate into and out of the Ozarks. Our society can play an important role in getting the specific science behind decisions related to environmental regulation out to the public as well as the politicians or regulators who will make the decisions.



Young Conservationists

Generating a curiosity about the natural world among those who will be the environmental advocates of the future would also be an important part of Ozark Society education, as exemplified by the current program of youth grants. In these times of intricately interconnected environmental issues, education is indeed an integral part of conservation.

That gets us back to the beginning of this piece. In my personal case, recreation in the form of hiking and wilderness experience in the Ozarks is the hook that reeled me in. I selected the area for its university community, but even more for the surrounding rural outdoor environment with extensive national forest areas on the map. The Ozark Society has regional chapters in Arkansas and Missouri, and Louisiana along with followers of society activities in adjacent states who have deep Ozark roots. Each chapter has social and recreational activities keyed to local geography and specific local environmental conditions. The following composite of society members actively enjoying outdoor activities in the Ozarks and the comradery that brings with it shows what still brings us together.



Whitewater Action

After the recreation (and the appreciation of the environment comes with it), the education and conservation will naturally follow.



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

The Officer, Director, and Chair List

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

MEMBERSHIP: Dues for membership in the Ozark Society include the overall Society and one Chapter of your choice. The levels are Friend \$30; Associate \$60; Supporter \$110; Sponsor: \$260; Patron \$510; and Benefactor \$1010+. You can join more than one Chapter however, by just adding an additional \$10 for each extra one. www.ozarksociety.net/membership or mail your check including our Membership Form to: Ozark Society, P.O. Box 166 Fayetteville, AR 72702-0166.