PACK & PADDLE

Spring
March 2026

"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

Gay and Frank White on the Buffalo River

By Gay White, former First Lady of Arkansas and OS Member

It all began with me, a dewy-eyed newlywed, being called an SOB by the man I had recently pledged my life to. It did not end well. At least in the moment.

It happened on the Buffalo National River in a canoe. My new husband, Frank White, wanted to introduce me to the beautiful outdoors of Arkansas. He loved camping, hiking, and canoeing and wanted to share the joys of those adventures in the Natural State. As a new transplant to Arkansas, it was all new to me!

On my inaugural voyage on the Buffalo River, I was a novice, not knowing "come here" from "sic'em."

As it happens in floating, we encountered a bend in the river and the current headed us for a rather large rock! From the booming voice in the stern, I was not paddling correctly. Of course I wasn't! I was a bit panicked thinking my life was about to end with a faceplant and drowning on that big rock! It seems Frank panicked too because he raised his voice (in fear) and unable to tell me what to do said, "Paddle you SOB!" At that moment, I was willing to lose life and limb at the insult. I turned around in the canoe, threw my paddle at him, and told him "DO IT YOURSELF!!!" Thankfully, the river took pity on me and somehow the "sweet current" delivered us safely around that rock.

It was a frosty finish to the trip and a silent drive back home. Within a few days, I enrolled us in the American Red Cross a couple's canoe class which took place on the Mulberry River. I'll NEVER forget the first words from our canoe instructor! "If you don't hear anything else in the next two days, remember this: YOU PADDLE YOUR HALF OF THE CANOE." Wiser words were never spoken. I'm happy to say that those few days of instruction began many, many years of happy paddling for Frank and me. We enjoyed the Buffalo, the Mulberry, the Spring, the Caddo, the Big Piney, and the Eleven Point in Southern Missouri. Through the years we hosted many friends on these beautiful rivers. For many it was their first time and we delighted in sharing our beautiful state with them.

One year Frank and I planned to take some friends on a day trip on the Buffalo. It was April and spring was abloom! So were Frank's allergies. The morning of the trip Frank told me he just felt awful, and I'd have to take the group by myself. I told him no problem! Now I had never soloed in a canoe. How hard could it be? Problem was I only knew how to paddle my half! We pushed off, I sat in the ***stern*** and for many river miles struggled to keep the darn thing straight. Nearing my exhaustion point, we saw a sandbar up ahead and I yelled for the group to pull over. There was another group on the bank and I heard someone yell my name! It was my longtime friend Bill Steward greeting me. I began to tell him what a hard time I was having and he very gently, quietly advised me to move to the center of my canoe. It worked and he saved the day! I learned a valuable lesson.

Frank and I often canoed alone. He always sang to me from the stern! His favorite serenade was to the tune of "Indian Love Call." He sang the words," Oh I'm loving you, oooooh, oooooh, oooooh, with a love that's true, oooooh, oooooh, oooooh." Well, I hope you get the gist! Ha, just listen to the original by Slim Whitman in 1952! You'll get the idea!

Frank introduced me to camping as well. We camped at Gunnar's Pool on Sylamore Creek, Kyle's Landing, Rush and I can honestly say I've never slept better than in a cozy sleeping bag on the banks of those rivers! Frank also introduced me to America's National Parks. We loved them! Our first adventure was visiting Grand Canyon National Park. We did a small bit of hiking, but something at Grand Canyon lit a fire in me and I returned later to do three rim to rim hikes. I loved it!

Contined on page. 2

Gay and Frank continued……

On Frank's 50th birthday I surprised him with an 8-day rafting trip on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. It had been a longtime desire of his and it one of the most amazing trips we ever did. Sleeping under the stars in Grand Canyon compared with nothing we had previously experienced. The myriad of twinkling stars against the dark velvet sky took our breath away! AND seeing the silhouette of the rising canyon around us against the night sky helped us know just how truly small we were and how large a "cathedral" we slept in. The side hikes each day of the float were amazing! We especially loved Havasupai Canyon. The stunning turquoise blue waters invited us to jump right in.

Of course, I cannot talk about a Colorado River trip without mentioning the RAPIDS! Frank and I floated in a 4-person raft with an oarsman. When we headed into the rapids our guide always had Frank hanging off the front of the boat…to add his weight so we wouldn't flip backwards! With every rapid Frank would come up laughing at the top of his lungs! The exhilaration of being slapped in the face by those cold, cold canyon waters and just the excitement of the rapids made us feel like two little kids again! We had an absolute blast!

Our love of rivers took us to other raft trips on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River through the River of No Return Wilderness and the Colorado River through Cataract Canyon.

Our love of National Parks took us to Hot Springs, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Zion, Bryce, Channel Islands, Shenandoah, Everglades, the Smokey Mountains, U.S. Virgin Islands, Smokey Mountain, Glacier, Rocky Mountain, Mount Rainier, Cascades, Arches, Acadia, Death Valley and list goes on and on! BUT, it all began with that first canoe trip on the Buffalo National River, right here in our beloved state. I'm happy to say I was never, ever referred to as an SOB again!

Colorado Trip May 2-8, 2027

By Stewart Noland, Ozark Society Archive Chair

The Ozark Society is pleased to offer the following opportunity to join Canyoneers for a 6-night, 7-day motorized raft trip on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon from Lee's Ferry to Diamond Creek on May 2-8, 2027 (next year not this year). The planning for these trips starts early as the demand is high. The trip will originate and end in Flagstaff, Arizona. The cost of the trip is $3375 per person, and up to 24 people can go.

The Ozark Society arranged this same trip several years ago and it was very popular. Canyoneers can take other reservations for this trip so if you want to go, please sign up soon.

For more information and to sign up for the trip please call Canyoneers at 800-525-0924. One group is already filled up but they are offering the trip to a second group so there is still room to get in on this great adventure.

The Grand Canyon is a magical place and early May is a preferred time to be there.

Buffalo River Trail Event March 21-27th

By Mike Reed, Buffalo River Trail Coordinator

Mark your calendar! The Ozark Society's Spring '26 Buffalo River trail maintenance event will be March 21-27 so join us for a day, the weekend, or longer. We'll be based at the Steel Creek ranch house, continuing tread repairs and brush removal in the upper river area.

I will begin preparations at the ranch house March 20. We'll work in the field Saturday March 21 through Friday March 27, and pack up the morning of the 28th. You can get general information at: https://buffalorivertrailcrew.org/brt-maintenance-camp-details/ and ask questions there or contact me. Ultimately, if you want to participate, you'll need to RSVP with me to get final details at: mereed@runbox.com..

Announcements like this are posted on our website at https://buffalorivertrailcrew.org/news/ where you can subscribe to them if you wish. Let me know if you no longer want to get these emails.

Ozark Society Challenge Grants

By Brian Thompson, Ozark Society President

This past fall, several anonymous members offered challenge grants to encourage support for specific programs. One was a $5,000 challenge in support of the Ozark Society Endowment. The other was a $2,500 challenge in support of the Youth Grants program. Both challenges were met handily and in short order. Much thanks to those that offered the challenges as well as to those contributors that stepped up to meet them. The Endowment Fund and the Youth Grants program both ensure that we can be effective in serving Conservation efforts well into the future with our next-generation of leaders.

OS Youth Grants: 2026 Recipients

By Dana Steward, Youth Grants Committee

The Ozark Society Youth Grant committee has awarded ten youth grants a total of $11,922 for the 2026-2027 cycle. Twenty-four schools and nonprofit agencies in Arkansas, Missouri, and Louisiana applied this year for the awards, which offer grants up to $2500 for public and private schools grades K-12 in the areas where we have a chapter presence.

Grantees and their grant awards include

- Red River Quail Forever, Shreveport, $1000
- James River Basin Partnership, Springfield, $1500
- Greater Ozarks Audubon GLADE program, SW Missouri, $1440
- Sonora Elementary School, Springdale region, $1000
- Ozark Bird Conservancy, NWA region, $1790
- Thaden Lower School, Bentonville, $500
- Mount Sequoyah Rainbow Roots Club, Fayetteville, $1500
- Clinton High School Environmental Club, Clinton, $1500
- Forest Park Elementary PTA, Little Rock, $2000.

Satisfying the grant mission of hands-on student participation in environment awareness and conservation, the ten grantees proposed projects to involve some 1879 students who will engage with pollinator habitat and gardens, water monitoring and conservation, bird and bat data collection and observation, owl nesting, building and conserving an all campus and community trail, and educating ecology leaders.

This makes the OS Youth Fund committee's sixth grant cycle with 52 projects totaling $73,389 awarded. Original funding was awarded by the Ozark Society Foundation and then the Ozark Society board, and presently the OS Youth Fund solicits funds from enthusiastic supporters and donors in and beyond the Ozark Society membership with a goal of self-sufficiency and growing the amount available for distribution. The increasing popularity of the fund across our geographic regions, as well as the diverse applicants and projects speak for the success of the youth grant program. You are encouraged to be a part of our support.

The committee members representing every chapter region are: Lowell Collins and Roslyn Imrie, co-chairs, Susan Hubbard, Barbara Lucks, Sandy Rodriguez, Dana Steward, Mary Schlatterrer, and Laura Timby. They meet several times a year to publicize, solicit, review and award grants and to promote the Grant Fund.

Climate Change – It's Not Rocket Science

By Fred Paillet, OS Education Chair

"Rocket Science" has for a long time been taken as a catchword for the ultimate in technical complexity. That's usually in the context of comparison with computations that ought to be guided by common sense. In that vein, the title of this piece might be interpreted as suggesting that all the fuss about global warming is being given way too much hype. The weather is something we all experience every day, and climate is just the average of that experience over longer time intervals. The temperature changes by tens of degrees during the average day. Why all the worry over an average degree or two? Here I am taking the same trope in EXACTLY the opposite sense. Climate change as a study is NOT rocket science only because it is MUCH more complex. Let me explain how that is, along with reflections on my own specific battle with that subject. If you remained unconvinced about the complexity of the atmospheric carbon cycle you can get the full story in glorious detail from: The Story of CO_2 is the Story of Everything, by Peter Brannen (2025) reviewed here in this Pack and Paddle issue.

The basic issue is one of extrapolation. Machine learning is a process whereby we use computers to examine data sets to find reliable patterns that we can use to predict trends in future events. AI is just the extension to bigger and faster computers learning from so much larger data sets. Newton formulated his laws of motion and gravitation by finding patterns that could be rigorously extended to predict new measurements according to specific formulae. Using those equations can involve some complicated computations, which NASA once handed to groups of young ladies collectively called "computers", but are now easily carried out by inanimate digital machines. Today, we are used to seeing astronauts placed in orbit and satellites providing precise global positioning information. There are robots driving around on Mars, and space probes streaming information from the far reaches of the solar system. Although you may not think about it, these efforts require extending our technology to places where humans had never gone before. The issue is that Newton's laws may have fit to our earthbound data set, but they do not extrapolate to outer space environments and orbital velocities. Relativity gets in the way. Our GPS systems require corrections in time-of-travel measurements attributed to local relativistic variations in velocity and gravitation (time dilation). When signals travel at the speed of light, these few microseconds in correction make all the difference. If we had extrapolated our rocket science to these unexperienced conditions using Newton's laws, our rockets might not make it. In the case of climate change we know that climate is very sensitive to atmospheric composition, and we recognize that we are headed for conditions where we have no data without any fundamental theory to guide us. That's why climate change is not just rocket science, but something much more complicated.

The magnitude of this disconnect is encapsulated in a probably fictional statement attributed to famous physicist Werner Heisenberg. When asked by a colleague late in life what mysteries he hoped to see explained upon reaching his ultimate reward, he supposedly replied: Why quantum mechanics? Why turbulence? The turbulent mixing of atmospheric gasses and the thermal energy transported by water vapor are the driving forces behind our weather patterns. We have established laws of relativity to extrapolate computations about rocket performance in remote outer space but have no such reliable and fundamental laws about turbulent mixing along developing weather fronts.

Weather forecasts have gotten noticeably more accurate over the years as machine learning has become better at identifying patterns in expanding data sets provided by proliferating atmospheric soundings and satellite information. How long can we rely on application of these data-derived extrapolations to conditions where there are no reliable measurements? In high school math you probably did a little regression, fitting a straight line to run through a group of points. You can often get a much better fit to the set of points by allowing the linear fit to have some curvature. But that curvature allows the line to wander farther away from the general trend when extended beyond the established set of data points. This is the problem we face when extending empirical weather data algorithms into unknown climate territory. Let me start by relating my own first disconcerting encounter with the theory of turbulence.

Continued on page 6

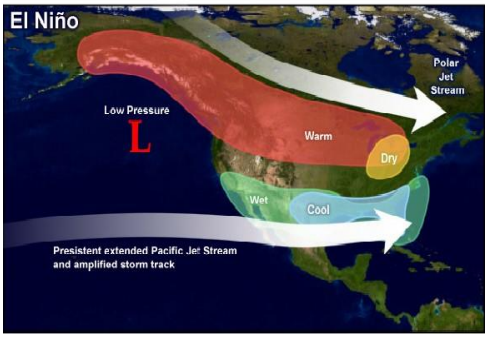
Rocket Science…continued

Having survived freshman classes in mechanics and sophomore classes in electrodynamics, I approached a junior year class in fluid mechanics with confidence. Our initial class problem was computing the flow inside a pipe with a simple balance between the resistance of viscosity and the driving force of a pressure gradient. The governing equation was easily integrated to get the parabolic distribution of flow velocity across the width of the pipe. No Problem! Then the instructor indicated the problem was not solved. He said we cannot accept the solution without proving it stable to all possible infinitesimal disturbances. After years of study of differential equations, it was disconcerting to discover that the solutions of perfectly sound equations may not always be trusted. We learned that pipe flow is not always stable, and the relation between pressure gradient and flow depends upon the difference. If the flow becomes unstable (turbulent) then the consequences can be significant for practical applications ranging from water distribution to chemical processing. Furthermore, the properties of the flow system must be determined by experiment since we have no universal underlying theory of turbulent transport to rely on. The general study of turbulence is described as "chaos theory" with nothing analogous to Newton's laws or their extension into relativistic velocities. Our best global climate models deal with this by using empirically derived "mixing lengths" to estimate the way that energy is transported around the globe by our weather systems. What guarantee do we have that parameters experienced under the present climate will be valid in the future?

So far, I have discussed just theoretically possible miscalculation in extending empirical climate data into new conditions. Climatologists describe the "butterfly effect" where the flutter of a butterfly's wings in one hemisphere can cause a weather disturbance in another. Is there real proof that such small disturbances can create "bifurcations" of events as seen in chaos theory calculations? In the case of pipe flow, Reynolds (of Reynolds Number fame) was able to keep stable flow at unexpectedly high rates going in carefully cushioned pipes, but applause and stomping of feet in an adjacent Cambridge University Hall reliably resulted in transition to turbulence. Later theoretical studies proved that the parabolic pipe flow was stable to ALL possible infinitesimal disturbances, so must require a small but finite jar to trip into chaos. Exactly how that happens remains a mystery. Now, think of how many possible climate regime-shifts there could be in a complicated atmospheric flow system fueled by the energy density of water vapor, with a flow field geometry influenced by the path of oceanic currents and the trajectory of jet stream boundaries. With global warming we are headed into unknown territory without a useful scientific map with which to plan our journey. How can we rely on advanced AI to learn from climate data that applies to an environment we have yet to experience?

If you think that the theoretical bifurcations in the application of chaos theory to climate are vague, consider the one definite bifurcation we have seen in action and its serious consequences. El Nino events are well documented as abrupt shifts in the turbulent transport of heat energy via ocean currents such that the desert coast of Peru suffers catastrophic flooding and eastern Australia experiences drought and fire. This seemingly spontaneous reorganization of the Pacific's wind-driven current is just such a bifurcation. When I hear on the TV that meteorologists are spotting signs that an El Nino event might be developing, I think of Roman augurs seeking portents by inspecting chicken entrails. Both Romans and meteorologists were being handicapped by not knowing the fundamental laws governing their prognostication. The El Nino events are even more puzzling because dated geological sediments indicate that El Nino events have been absent in the recent past when climatic conditions were not so different from today. My personal feeling is that a lot of complacency about global warming is based on the wonders of our technical accomplishments.

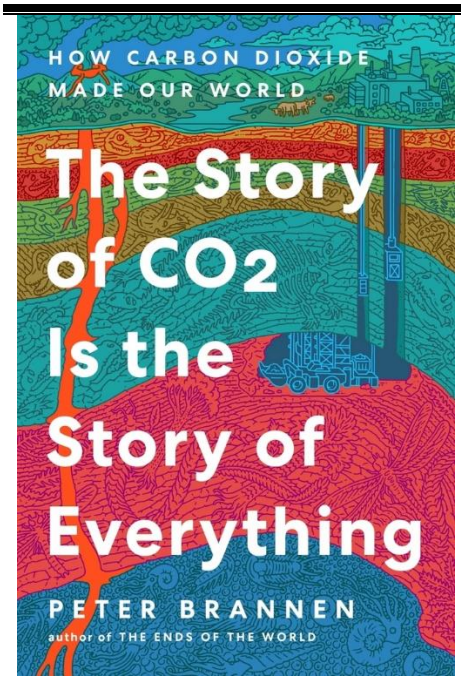
Typical Climate Pattern for the U.S. during El Niño



If we can provide precise GPS coordinates, put robots on Mars and image the distant galaxies, we can certainly use our technology to find our path forward no matter what the climate has in store for us. In that sense our confident conquest of the once seemingly insurmountable world of rocket science generates a false sense of security. In WWII Nazi Germany started out as the most technically advanced society in the world, which is why its army was so confident that it could overwhelm the Bolshevik chaos of the USSR. We all know how well that worked out.

Book Review: THE STORY OF CO2 IS THE STORY OF EVERYTHING, Peter Brannen, 2025, 489 p.

By Fred Paillet, OS Education Chair



The global warming issue remains a great environmental concern, but so much has been written about the subject that only deals with a small subset of the topic. Here at last is a truly complete presentation of the carbon cycle that puts our current CO_2 problem in perspective from the premise that carbon is the essential element for life on earth. In a universe trending towards heat death by increasing disorder (entropy), evolution represents the selective process of creating ordered life by redirecting the natural flow of energy to offset increases in entropy. At the very beginning, life probably originated in an early O-free environment through hydrothermal circulation in travertine pinnacles where H-rich alkaline fluids entered acidic metal-rich waters – a process called serpentinization. Natural chemical energy release created organics, then natural processes found ways to funnel energy into tighter spaces, developing enzymes to accelerate things – with the higher energy release the better the survival (that's evolution). An initial oxidation event at 2 billion years ago came from cyanobacteria enhancing photosynthesis but then fell back in a "boring billion" until the Cambrian "explosion" of life. That created an energy capacitor where earth's crust separated combustible carbon below from reactive oxidizer above. The energy stored in this disparity is what drives life in the face of the 2nd law of thermodynamics.

Photosynthesis acts as a unique creator of organic carbon, driven in two steps by partnering purple and green sulfur bacteria to synthesize the substance of life. Why does a later jump of O_2 to 20% then coincide with appearance of multi-cell animals?

There would be little change in atmospheric O_2 unless an equivalent amount of C had gone somewhere. Perhaps this ended up as the great bank of carbonate deposits that once ran diagonally across supercontinent Rhodinia from Argentina to Greenland. Maybe this had something to do with the way burrowing worm bioturbation of the seabed fundamentally changed carbon storage there. Regardless, something important in carbon cycling occurred about 580 million years ago as indicated by a spike in light carbon isotopes (the Shuram event). After the Cambrian "explosion" in diversity, the steady plateau of O_2 needed more carbonate sedimentation (sequestration) to offset O_2 sinks of mineral oxidation and volcanic CO_2 additions, with shifts in atmospheric oxygen and carbon storage related to first the effect of plant roots on rock weathering, and then the great storage of carbon in coal that followed. Several extinction events resulted from CO_2 spikes from continental rifting (basalt outpouring) and polar glacier ice sheet development, with the most severe at 260 million years ago (end Permian). The latter event included accelerated erosion in an extreme hothouse atmosphere, oxygen starvation in putrid sediments, and anaerobic poisoning with massive H_2S emission. At that time Siberian rifting had caused volcanic eruptions to set fire to vast fossil fuel deposits that dwarf our modern use of petroleum and coal. No reassurance there, because our rate of release is a thousand-fold greater than the rate then which was spread over hundreds of thousands of years. Some idea of the long-term resilience of the carbon cycle is given by the relatively modest carbon excursions after the Chesapeake Bay impact crater (36 million years ago) and the Columbia Basin basalt flood (16 million years ago). Overall, there's a long slow downward trend in CO_2 and temperature after the dinosaur killing impact event (65 million years ago), from >1000 ppm Eocene spike (55 million years ago) to 400 ppm in Pliocene (3 million years ago) with 3-4° C warmer and sea-level 70 ft higher.

We can track the correlation of CO_2 and sea-level thanks to Exxon's elaborate sea-level plots created as a byproduct of seismic sediment layer analysis in petroleum reservoir exploration. There's still the Pliocene mystery as to why it was so relatively hot and humid with higher sea-level and yet the same 400 ppm CO_2 as today,

Continued on page 8

CO2…continued

highlighting how little we know about short-term versus long-term change in the carbon cycle. We can find little reassurance in the long-term stability of life in general if there's a short-term extinction of mankind. Over almost all of earth's history life existed with photosynthesis as the sole energy source while slowly evolving ever better channels to focus that energy as a ratchet of increasing order in the face of the natural drain of energy to increasing entropy. Humans ultimately made the great leap by adopting fire, providing a new jolt to brain capacity in metabolization of nutrients. This lighted a long "fuse" of development as "mental buffering" focused the capacity for extracting energy from resources through social structure leading from tribal bands to organized nations.

The author maintains that human consumption now devours one third of all photosynthetic energy production with the help of fossil fuels providing so much fertilizer and mechanized cultivation.

The fundamental theme here is that energy flow allows life to find ever evolving ways to funnel energy into structures that allow ever higher levels of order to offset increased disorder elsewhere. Comparisons with CO_2 excursions in the past remain difficult because humans can never produce the net total change in CO_2 emission volume that triggered past extinction events, but additions are now being released at a thousand-fold greater rate. This is so far from any such rate occurring in the past and the short-term variables within carbon cycle function so uncertain that we are taking the very basis of life into completely unknown territory. Modern fossil fuel consumption is thus an inverse of the Cambrian explosion of life – back then the sudden increase in atmospheric O_2 lead to a sudden diversity of life; now a reversal by reuniting the below ground carbon with airborne O_2 for perhaps an equally dramatic (but as yet undetermined) effect.

There's no doubt that the intensity of human wellbeing has been enhanced by fossil energy consumption. But expect continued growth by progress against entropy at the cost of even more energy use to provide information and computation needs in the coming AI age. Our present climate change crisis is made so critical because CO_2 is the story of everything – our energy use is deeply entangled with the very basis of life. In the past economic growth was tied to increase energy use, but increases in use efficiency failed to prevent increasing energy demand. For example: since 1975 the US doubled energy use efficiency but consumption went up by 20%. We must get off fossil fuel as soon as possible, but experience shows we will still need more energy to do so – especially in the mining of conductive copper and rare earth minerals needed to equip the transition to clean energy. Then the huge energy costs of mitigation programs such as crushing basalt or scrubbing CO_2 from the air. But degrowth must be a deeply traumatic experience. Think of progressive but elite scientist Lavoisier and the way the starving Paris mob dealt with his progressive ideas in the face of dire economic stress. Survival will be like threading a needle to keep human passions at bay while restricting fossil energy use. If recent experience is an example, decrease in energy use has only been achieved by economic collapse. The free market economy of unrestricted capitalism that has propelled us to this carbon emission condition can't lead to a solution since it never looks beyond the immediate time frame. The author ends up hoping that the human mind's evolved ability to cope with the world around it will find a way out of this crisis but provides the reader with scant evidence that this is going to happen. We are left with the vision of humanity taking earth's climate to some place it has never been while we have no firm understanding of the dynamics of the process or the effect on life that it will have. Maybe our carbon-based future is even scarier than we thought.

OHTA: Buzzard's Roost

By Jackson Rhoades and Phil Brown

The Ozark Highlands Trail Association (OHTA) and the Ozarks Keystone Trail Endowment (OKTE) are excited to announce a joint volunteer effort to construct approximately 19 miles of new single-track trail through the dramatic OHT–OKT Buzzard Roost Gap.

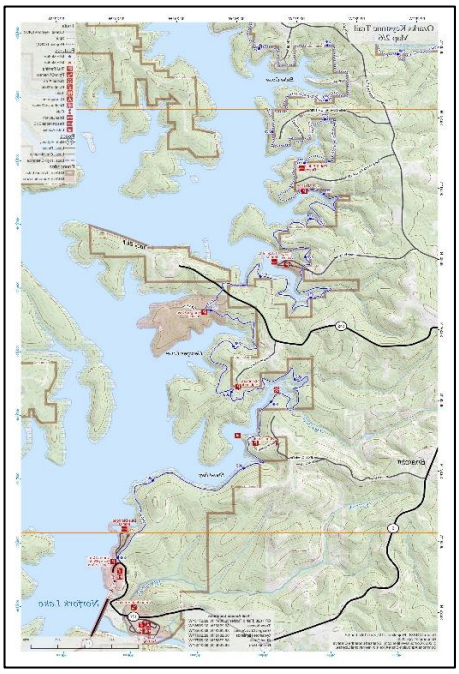
This new volunteer-built trail (VBT) segment will extend north from the current northern terminus of the Norfork Trail at CR 1028 (Fish & Fiddle Road), tracing the rugged west shoreline of Norfork Lake to the Panther Creek bridge on CR 396. Once completed, it will form the final link in a spectacular and highly anticipated continuous trail section from Norfork Dam to the Arkansas–Missouri state line.

The original Buzzard Roost route was expertly flagged by volunteer James Hodges in 2019. While much of that early flagging faded over time, a skilled team of OHTA volunteers has recently reflagged the entire corridor, completing the first major milestone toward construction.

Volunteer crews will begin the initial clearing of leaves, limbs, and debris along the route, allowing hikers and trail runners to preview the alignment late spring/early summer 2026. Once the full corridor is cleared and finalized, work will transition to building the trail bed itself.

Trail construction will be led by trained section leaders, with recruitment and training currently underway. While a formal groundbreaking date has not yet been set, corridor construction is officially underway, marking a major step forward.

This VBT collaboration represents an exciting milestone for both OHTA and OKTE and another significant stride toward completing a continuous, world-class trail system across the Ozarks from Lake Fort Smith to the Arkansas/Missouri border. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us at ohta@ozarkhighlandstrail.com.



The Walter Jacobs Nature Center

By Tammy Jernigan, Bayou Chapter of the Ozark Society (BCOS) Chair

When the Walter B. Jacobs Nature Center reopened this year after an extensive, years-long reconstruction, visitors stepped into a revitalized space filled with modern exhibits, accessible trails, and renewed purpose. But beneath the fresh timber, new classrooms, and updated interpretive displays lies a story that began more than half a century ago — one in which the Bayou Chapter of the Ozark Society played a defining role.

A Vision Begins: 1971

In 1971, long before the first boardwalk was built or the first school group arrived, the 160 acres owned by Walter B. Jacobs were little more than a quiet patch of Caddo Parish woodland. Its potential was clear, but its future was uncertain. That's when members of the newly formed Bayou Chapter stepped forward.

At the request of parish officials, Bayou Chapter volunteers conducted the initial land assessment to determine whether the property was suitable for a nature center. Armed with maps, notebooks, and a deep respect for Louisiana's natural heritage, they surveyed the forest, cataloged its plant and wildlife communities, and evaluated its suitability for public access and environmental education.

Their conclusion was unequivocal: this land was special — ecologically rich, diverse, and worthy of protection. Their report became the foundation for what would become the Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park.

A Lasting Conservation Impact

The Bayou Chapter's early assessment did more than green-light a project. It set the tone for how the land would be managed for decades to come. The chapter emphasized:

- Preservation of native habitat
- Opportunities for environmental education
- Low-impact public access
- Long-term stewardship over short-term development

Those principles guided the park's creation in the 1970s and continue to shape its mission today.

Full Circle: A Reopening Rooted in History

The Nature Center's December 4, 2025 invitation-only ribbon cutting brought together parish leaders, community partners, and conservation advocates — including the Bayou Chapter of the Ozark Society, representing the very group that helped launch the project more than fifty years ago. I was fortunate enough to attend this ceremony and view the original assessment study. Our invitation to this event underscored BCOS' enduring connection to the land and its legacy of stewardship in our area.

We are excited about the opportunity to work with the Nature Center. Getting out on the trails to keep them clear and working with the Walter B. Jacobs staff on other facility needs help us achieve our recreation, education, and conservation mission.

As the Nature Center reopens in 2026 with new facilities and expanded programming, it stands as a testament to what thoughtful conservation can achieve. Generations of schoolchildren, hikers, birders, and families have enjoyed the land the BCOS members first evaluated — and now a new generation will experience it with fresh eyes.

Looking Ahead

The Bayou Chapter remains committed to supporting the Nature Center and the broader conservation efforts of our region. As we celebrate this milestone, we also honor the members whose boots-on-the-ground work helped launch a legacy that continues to inspire.

The forest they walked in 1971 is still teaching, still thriving, and still welcoming all who seek to understand the natural world — a living tribute to the Ozark Society's belief that protecting wild places protects our future.

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:

- ☐ New Member — Start at **Section A** for your OS and Chapter Membership
- ☐ Renewal — Start at **Section A** to renew your OS and Chapter Membership
- ☐ 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)*

- ☐ Friend: $30 = $20 OS +$10 Chapter
- ☐ Associate: $60 = $50 OS +$10 Chapter
- ☐ Supporter: $110 = $100 OS +$10 Chapter
- ☐ Sponsor: $260 = $250 OS +$10 Chapter
- ☐ Patron: $510 = $500 OS +$10 Chapter
- ☐ Benefactor: $1010 = $1000 OS +$10 Chapter

Chapter: *(choose one)*

- ☐ Bayou (Shreveport, LA)
- ☐ Buffalo River (North Central, AR)
- ☐ Highlands (Fayetteville, AR)
- ☐ Pulaski (Central, 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 (North Central, AR)
- ☐ $10 Highlands (Fayetteville, AR)
- ☐ $10 Pulaski (Central, AR)
- ☐ $10 Schoolcraft (Springfield, MO)
- ☐ $10 Sugar Creek (Bentonville, AR)

Section C: Donations to our Funds

(Choose any amount)

- ☐ $_____ Conservation Fund
- ☐ $_____ Endowment Fund
- ☐ $_____ Legal Fund
- ☐ $_____ Youth Grant Fund

My Total is: $_____

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

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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MISSOURI: Curtis Millsap millsapfarms@gmail.com; Dan Chiles danchiles@mac.com
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BUFFALO RIVER TRAIL COORDINATOR: Michael Reed, mereed@runbox.com
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OZARK SOCIETY ARCHIVES: Stewart Noland, stewartnoland51@aol.com

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.