



PACK & PADDLE



Winter December 2021 *“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*

An Update on Lake Sylvania Recreation Area By David Peterson, Ozark Society President

In 1978, then Pulaski Chapter chair Rose Hogan invited my family to attend our first Ozark Society general meeting, to be held in the Great Hall of the historic girl scout camp at Lake Sylvania. The serene 18-acre lake, built by the CCC in 1936, is located at the eastern end of the Ouachita National Forest, just 38 miles west of Little Rock.



The Great Hall features massive log beams, a kitchen, and austere rock walls. The camp, constructed by the Works Progress Administration (1936-1940), included rustic cabins, a recreation area and a campground. Unfortunately, the lack of a water supply caused the closing of the camp in 1979, and the facilities deteriorated.

Efforts to restore the area began in 1992 when the camp was put on the National Register of Historic Places, but it remained in decline. But help is finally on the way. In July, the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism and the Ouachita National Forest

issued a joint agreement making Lake Sylvania Recreation Area a part of Pinnacle Mountain State Park. 1.3 million dollars were dedicated to refurbishing the Great Hall, making the cabins habitable, repairing the leaky dam, and expanding recreational opportunities, including a 27-mile bike trail around the lake, and a lease of 8,000 additional acres of National Forest directly south of the lake.

The Ouachita National Recreational Trail, which has become a regional “destination” trail, crosses through the expanded park, with two access trails to Lake Sylvania. With improved roads and expanded parking areas, Lake Sylvania is almost certain to become much busier.

Central Arkansas OS members maintain 14 nearby miles of the Ouachita Trail which is foot traffic only right now, so we have a vested interest in the development plans now under consideration.

The camping facilities are good and hiking opportunities on the Ouachita Trail are extensive. Try out Chinquapin Mountain in the new park and North Fork Pinnacle

just several miles west along the OT, see below.



At one time there was a forest tower on North Fork Pinnacle with an access road, which is now pretty well closed off by a large berm. But as a sign of the times, there is an on-line jeep travelogue showing how to surmount this.

To emphasize the Ozark Society’s interest in being a stakeholder in any future development of the Lake Sylvania area, I have sent letters to Governor Asa Hutchinson, Secretary of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism Stacy Hurst, and Arkansas State Parks Director Grady Spann, outlining our conservation involvement together with just a hint of looking to the future for more wilderness additions. And, Tom McClure has put forward documentation of the philosophical underpinnings for expanding the wilderness and maintaining foot traffic-only trails in the state.

Bayou Chapter: Outdoor Wilderness Learning Center Trail Construction

By Marian Howard, Bayou Chapter Newsletter Editor

On Saturday, November 20, 2021 fourteen members of the Bayou Chapter spent the day constructing an equine trail at the OWL Center in Dubach, Louisiana. The Outdoor Wilderness Learning (OWL) Center is 800 acres of rolling hills, beautiful facilities, and programs designed to encourage teamwork, family bonds, character development, education, and fun!



The trail was about 1/3 mile in length

and had to be at least 10 feet wide in order to accommodate a horse with a rider and a walker on each side of the horse. The trail also had to be very smooth with no roots sticking out. The reason for this is that the walkers need to be looking up at the riders and holding onto them and not looking at the ground. First, the area was bush hogged, then we repeatedly ran a tractor pulling a harrow to clear the trail.

Bayou Chapter Ozark Society (BCOS) volunteers then used sharpshooters, rakes, loppers, chainsaws and other tools at our disposal to smooth out the trails. We also hauled dirt to fill in the holes that were left when the roots were dug out. There were several 4 wheelers that repeatedly ran the trail to help smooth it out.

BCOS has done trail maintenance at the OWL Center before but this was our first time to build a trail. The OWL Center was very appreciative of our efforts and sent us the following message.

Message to BCOS: The OWL Center would like to extend a huge "Thank You!" to BCOS for adding a new trail for our therapeutic riding clients to enjoy! The OWL Equine Program uses equine assisted therapies to serve almost 100 clients a week, including at risk youth, veterans, and children with disabilities. Trail riding allows our clients to navigate changing terrain and involves all of their senses - and it's fun! This new trail (called "The BCOS Trail") provides a great opportunity for our riders to easily access a woodland trail.

The Emerald Ash Borer is in Arkansas!

By Fred Paillet, Education Chair

In a recent visit to Pea Ridge Military Park, I was interested in seeing progress in eliminating invasive red cedar from the grounds. Cedar is notorious for invading old pastures in our area. Another tree that thrives in old fields is our white ash, a stately tree of upland forests. So, it was not unexpected to see large white ash trees left in the open forest when cedars are removed. What I had not expected to see was that these newly released ash trees (Pea Ridge photo) had large numbers of bare branches. I checked with a park ranger on his rounds and he verified that the emerald ash borer is now present at the park. We knew it was on its way and that all attempts at stopping the advance had been given up as futile (see the chapter of forest diseases in Ozark Forest Forensics).



Pea Ridge 2021

This will be a serious loss to our old growth forests. And it's not just white ash on uplands. Green ash is a major part of forests adjacent to wet prairie environments and stream bottoms. Blue ash is a relatively rare but important tree around limestone ledges such as those along the Buffalo.

My other photo (Ohio 2019) is a scene from along the Scioto River in Ohio where a nearly pure green ash forest has

been infested with the borer for some time.

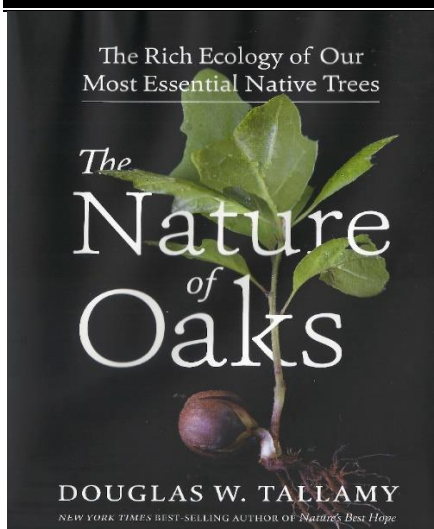


Ohio 2019

The pest does not kill the trees instantly like elm disease, and it takes a few years for the borer grubs to literally eat the trees alive on the inside bark. But the advance continues to have the same dismal result as the borer spreads its way west.

The Nature of Oaks: A Book Review

By Fred Paillet, Education Chair



BOOK REVIEW: *The Nature of Oaks – The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Tree*, by Douglas W Tallamy, 2021, 197 p. In this book an entomologist follows oaks through the year in describing the ecology of the tree. The Ozarks lie in what is nominally the oak-hickory forest zone, and witness trees studies show that oaks composed about 70% of the early historic forest when first encountered by land surveyors. This book presents oak ecology from a caterpillar’s point of view through the eyes of a veteran bug scientist, and there’s a lot going on behind the scenes. One of the most important class of oak predator, the weevil, uses “beaks” to drill eggs into acorns. Maturing larvae then make an exit hole to get into the ground after the acorns fall, while ant colonies use the convenient exit opening after they leave. Retention of withered winter leaves on lower branches of oaks is seen as a deterrent to browsers seeking nutritious buds. The author cites extreme variation of tree host

species and their load of insect (caterpillar) consumers. Oaks have the largest array of such consumers compared to few for tulip tree and black gum. He suggests that the low-grade accumulative toxins (tannins) make it worthwhile for many species to deal with oaks, whereas the need to deal with higher-grade toxins (milkweed) require more intense investment by limited species. In spring, oak gall wasps use their “beaks” to penetrate buds to deposit eggs. Other wasps prey on gall larvae with long “stingers” for injection of parasitic eggs leading to a defensive war where galls adopt hairs, fake compartments and such to deter that predation. Insectivorous birds such as chickadees and kinglets can survive the winter on dormant caterpillars present in large quantities because caterpillar antifreeze allows them to otherwise make it through the winter. Backyard plantings are said to seriously impact brood success for birds through the relation between caterpillars and specific host trees or shrubs. Caterpillar populations are described as at a nadir in June just because so many breeding birds have been consuming them. The bulk of the book is a long list of the diverse and often colorful insects that are hosted by oaks. The interesting species include the hairstreaks, one a mistletoe specialist, and another with a false head on the rear-end tail to deter jumping spider attack. The main late-season defense against insect herbivores in oaks is the thick cuticle of their leathery leaves.

Strategies to deal with that include cooperative eating, massive mandibles, and internal leaf mining. I am surprised that so little is made of the important root fungal associations of oaks until there’s a discussion the oak’s effectiveness in CO₂ sequestration where the mycorrhizae create glycoprotein substances that remain to bind soil. That stores carbon while improving soil stability and fertility. Hence the advantage of long-lived trees like oaks over poplars and the like that make a lot of wood in the short term only to release stored carbon soon after. The tannin and other tough chemicals in oak leaves incidentally enhance the soil as they slowly decompose providing protection against erosion and habitat for a variety of other creatures that complete their life cycle underneath oaks. Cicada larvae survive on what they absorb from roots of oaks in their underground stage but apparently do little real damage to the tree. The few that emerge regularly between the major cohort years are preyed on by savage looking killer wasps that are big enough to drag the paralyzed bugs to their underground dens for their offspring. Overall, this is an interesting way to look at a side of the genus *Quercus* we rarely hear about in forest ecology studies that should be of special interest for those interested in birds and butterflies.

Available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or your local bookstore.

The Buffalo River Conservation Committee (BRCC)

By Alice Andrews, Conservation Chair

The Buffalo River Conservation Committee (BRCC) met at their quarterly meeting Monday, 11/30/21 in Marshall, AR. Secretary Wes Ward, Director of Agriculture, presided over the meeting. Chris Colclasure, Director of the Natural Resources Division within the Department of Agriculture was also present.

As a reminder, Governor Asa Hutchinson established BRCC on September 23, 2019 to benefit water quality and resource management in the Buffalo River Watershed with emphasis on items that engage local stakeholders and landowners that have a positive impact on water quality and are beneficial for landowners in the watershed.

Membership consists of the Sec. of Dept. of Agriculture; Sec. of Dept. of Energy and Environment; Sec. of Dept. of Health; and Sec. of Dept. of Parks, Heritage and Tourism.

Funding for BRCC efforts is provided by Governor Hutchinson and the member agencies together to financially support BRCC. Members are required to work in cooperation with one another to identify opportunities to leverage each department's unique expertise, relationships, focus areas and funding mechanisms in support of vitality of the watershed.

BRCC includes a subcommittee of key stakeholders representing local landowners, conservation organizations, environmental and

technical experts, representatives of the tourism industry, local county and municipal officials plus federal partners. The Subcommittee assists with identifying opportunities for training, relationship building and specific projects, in service to preserving and enhancing water quality within the Buffalo River Watershed.

A brief summary of Monday's reports: The \$2500 tree planting project is on-going in Marshall Park with sugar maples. The Nature Conservancy provided a \$2500 match to secure more trees; they now have more trees that need to be planted.

The Cane Branch Road work project is complete with additional culverts. Ryan Benefield spoke about the Jasper wastewater project grant/pump-station and the need to provide Jasper with more funds. The failing Marble Falls wastewater treatment plant will also need financial assistance in order to replace it. Septic tank issues near or in the watersheds of Beaver Reservoir (upper white River), Buffalo River and the Illinois River were an ongoing discussion. Sec. Hurst spoke about how important tourism is to Arkansas's economy. Visitors to the Buffalo brought in \$63 million last year. The American Rescue Plan is appropriating \$1.57 billion for Arkansas. Gov. Hutchinson has appointed three working groups to move forward with planning for expanding

Broadband; Wastewater and Municipal water issues, groundwater, floods and levees although wastewater problems are on hold for now.

Chris Colclasure and Wes Ward also spoke about clean water, wastewater, and pipe studies (how much do we have in Arkansas). In coming years \$44.6 million of the American Rescue plan will go to safe drinking water, \$22.7 million goes to "clean water" and trying to work on nutrient problems. BRCC is still studying unpaved road issues in the Buffalo River Watershed.

One million dollars was initially allocated to BRCC. Slightly more than \$49,000 remains in funds. Several suggestions have been made on best use for the remaining money, however BRCC will reserve those funds for now. In April, feral hog removal cost Game & Fish around \$50,000 for traps (with corn). 481 hogs were removed from the Buffalo River Watershed.

Sec. Keogh was the last speaker and reminded everyone that the total eclipse in two years will be seen best in Arkansas. The great impact on tourism will require putting many programs in place, considering lodging, parking, seating, trash management. They will share eclipse planning with Buffalo National. River Superintendent, Mark Foust.

Buffalo National River 50th Anniversary Activities

By Stewart Noland, Ozark Society Archive Chair

MARCH 1, 2022:

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the March 1, 1972, signing date, the Ozark Society will host the following paddling and hiking activities on March 1, 2022.

Where to Meet: Ponca Low Water Bridge

Time: 9:30 a.m., March 1, 2022

Hiking: One or more hikes will be conducted depending on the number of participants. All participants should bring their own lunch and water and dress appropriately for the anticipated weather conditions.

Hiking Contact: Please email Luke Parsch at osvp@ozarksociety.net or call 479-442-3817, if you plan to participate in the hike or if you have questions.

Paddling: The first choice paddling trip will be from Ponca to Kyles, water level permitting. If the water is too low, the trip will be moved downstream. All participants should bring their own boat, PFD, water, and lunch. The vehicle shuttle will be conducted that morning by the trip participants before we launch.

Paddling Contact: Please email Stewart Noland at stewartnoland51@aol.com or call 501-831-9908, if you plan to participate in the float or if you have questions.

JUNE 13-18, 2022:

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Buffalo National River and 60th anniversary of the Ozark Society, the Ozark Society plans to conduct a float trip from Highway 65 to the White River, from June 13 – June 18, 2022.

Who is going: There will be several groups of about 15 persons per group. Each group will have a common kitchen and food. Participants will need to provide their personal gear and boat. The boat must be capable of carrying some group gear.

Shuttling: Trip participants can shuttle their own vehicles or call Wild Bill Outfitters at 870-449-6235, to arrange a car shuttle from Highway 65 (Grinder's Ferry) to Riley's Station on the White River.

Cost: The cost for this trip is \$150 per person, not including vehicle shuttle cost, boat, or personal gear. The cost of the shuttle is \$180 per vehicle, and remember to identify yourself as a participant in the Ozark Society float when you book your shuttle with Wild Bill. Payment for the shuttle will be made from the individual to Wild Bill.

Alternative Plans: As an alternative, Alan Nye will lead a group wherein each participant will provide his/her own food. The cost for this trip is \$60 per person, not including vehicle shuttle cost, boat, or personal gear.

How to Sign-up: To secure a spot on the trip please mail a check for the trip fee (either \$150 for the community trip or \$60 for the individual trip) to: Ozark Society, P.O. Box 2914, Little Rock, AR 72203 with the **Buffalo River Trip 2022 Information Form** available www.ozarksociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Buffalo-River-Trip-Form-2022.pdf.

Contact: Please direct questions to Stewart Noland at 501-831-9908, or stewartnoland51@aol.com.

More Buffalo River 50th Anniversary activities will be posted on the Ozark Society website calendar as we schedule them: www.ozarksociety.net/calendar/

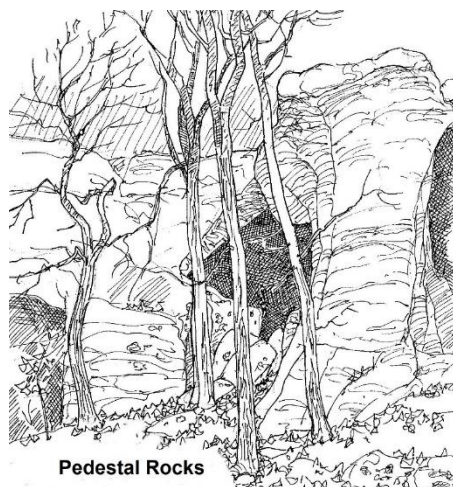
The Great Boston Mountain Delta

By Fred Paillet, Education Chair

Long ago during the Coal Age the rugged Ozarks were the western coast of North America as rising and falling sea levels caused the scene to alternate between shallow tropical seas and coastal swampland. Continental drift had placed ancient Arkansas on the equator and the collision of land masses caused a great arc of rugged mountains to extend from eastern Canada around to become the ancestral Ouachita range. This collision had produced a single continuous land mass (Pangea) extending all the way over the south pole. That, in turn, caused great ice sheets to come and go, as driven by periodic shifts in the shape of the earth's orbit – the same shifts that have caused ice sheets to come and go in our present Pleistocene era. With the gentle slope on the edge of our continent, river deltas extended back and forth between southern Illinois and central Arkansas as ice sheets expanded and contracted. All the while, the advancing continental collision and build-up of sediments derived from mountain ranges being created caused river deltas to extend ever farther into our area. The sandstone deposited by those deltas would become the backbone of the Boston Mountains we hike on today.

The world of that ancient delta was far different from the world we now know. The most common

land fossils found in the Boston Mountains today are imprints of massive lepidodendron stems (literally tree trunks). This was a primitive, moss-like plant (a lycopod) that produced upright stems up to 100 feet tall bearing spore-producing “fruit”. Parts of these stems must have been carried like driftwood in river channels to be buried in sandbars during flood events. We see the scale-like imprints of leaf attachments arrayed in ordered rows on driftwood fossil trunks exposed in sandstone layers in outcrops. These coal age plants formed the thick fossilized peat layers being mined in the Appalachians today. Coal beds are sometimes 20 to 30 feet thick, and the empirical rule that there is a factor of ten compaction applied to generate coal gives an idea of how thick those original plant material deposits must have been.



Pedestal Rocks

Modern peat deposits are building up in the Florida Everglades and Irish fens today. The Boston

Mountain delta swamps were far different from these for several reasons. The cause of the differences lies in the history of evolution. In Carboniferous times some 300 million years ago, plants had developed tough lignin fibers to strengthen their stems, but fungi had not yet found the ability to digest them. That accounts for the great thickness of coal deposits. But that also caused the carbon pried away from CO₂ by photosynthesis to be taken out of the atmosphere. That left oxygen to accumulate in the air. Geoscientists estimate that oxygen comprised as much as 35% of the air breathed by Carbon Age life compared to 20% today. Primitive life on land then had the available energy to grow to prodigious size. There were scorpions the size of German shepherds and dragonflies as big as an albatross. The presence of large amounts of charcoal within coal shows that there was enough oxygen in the air to cause even swamps to burn. Ancient Arkansas was clearly a different place from what it is today. But exactly how big were the rivers that created the Boston Mountain delta? The answer lies in zircons, a crystal derived from zirconium, oxygen and silicon. The original crystals congeal within cooling magma of a volcanic intrusion created during mountain building.

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The Great Boston Mountain Delta....continued

They then have two properties that make them useful to science: their formation excludes lead, and they become one of the hardest minerals known. They are so hard that they survive multiple cycles of erosion and deposition. The initial exclusion of lead means that their lead/uranium ratio can be calibrated to estimate their age because lead accumulates from the radioactive decay of uranium over the time after the crystals first formed. So, we can investigate the Boston Mountain sandstones by aging the zirconium grains they

contain, and then looking for source areas that were erupting at that exact time. Analysis points to eastern Pennsylvania as a likely place of origin. This provides a scenario where rivers draining the high Appalachians along the eastern edge of North America were transporting mineral grains all the way to the southwestern shores of Arkansas. As you hike beside exposed sandstone walls eroded into that ancient delta look for the characteristic concave upward texture of beds (geologists call this crossbedding) laid down

by powerful currents pushing mineral grains up and over the top of large underwater sand ripples so many years ago. When we hike on the lichen-encrusted ledges of the Boston Mountains at places like White Rock Mountain and Pedestal Rocks we are treading on the bed of an ancient Mississippi-sized river, but without ever having to worry about encountering German shepherd size scorpions or avoiding the flames of raging swamp fires.

Ozark Society Foundation News

By Marvin Schwartz, Ozark Society Foundation Chair



The OZARK
SOCIETY
FOUNDATION

News from the Ozark Society Foundation

Youth Grants:

The Grants Committed has identified 11 of 16 highly qualified applications. Because of a high number of very qualified applications, the Committee has requested and was approved for an increase in program budget from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The Committee grant selections and awarded budgets will be presented to the OSF board for final approval soon.

Documentary Film

West Creative Group is in final stages of the film production. A premiere showing of the film will be in Bentonville in March. This will be a private showing, but OSF will have a number of tickets to disperse. A similar showing will be scheduled in Springfield. Discussion has begun regarding distribution and promotion of the film, including Arkansas PBS television for a state-wide broadcast of the film. Missouri PBS broadcast is also planned.

Sassafras Award for Excellence in Environmental Writing

Four finalist manuscripts were sent to finalist judge Davis McCombs. His selection is expected by January.

Book Publication:

As a reminder, the OSF is receptive to manuscript submissions for publishing consideration. Please contact osfchair@ozarksociety.com with book project ideas.

High Points Part 12: The Ticks Win Again!

By Steve Heye, Pulaski Chapter Outings Chair

This is the Twelfth episode of my trips to visit as many of the fifty US States' highest points. In chapter eleven we looked at the trip I took in August of 2020 to Idaho and Nevada. This time it's a coast-to-coast endeavor to bag Maine and California in the summer of 2021.

The goal for this year was to make a second run at Katahdin, Maine and then six weeks later to backpack on the John Muir Trail with Mt. Whitney, California as the highlight of that hike. Both trips were advertised as trips for the Ozark Society and required a lot of permit applications and logistics to pull them off. There was also a lot of physical conditioning required as both peaks would present challenges. By mid-May, most of the planning and prep had been done, so it was time to concentrate on trip one, Katahdin, in the Baxter State Park of Maine.

Maine

In Episode Eight I recalled my trip to the North Eastern states in September 2018. Among the peaks I attempted was Katahdin, Maine. It was a tough hike and I had to turn back because I ran out of time to make it safely to the top and back before it got dark. For my second attempt, I scheduled the hike on one of the longest daylight days of the year, June 16th which had nearly 18 hours of daylight to use.

I attempted to get some Ozark Society members to accompany me on the trip, but no one could make their schedule fit the days my

Baxter State Park permits were good for use. I flew to Boston on June 11th and rented a car to visit not only Maine, but two other state high points to use as warm up hikes for
Katahdin.



On Saturday morning, June 12, 2021, I began my quest by driving west on the Mass Turnpike to Great Barrington, Massachusetts. I was on my way to re-hike the Connecticut high point located just southwest of town. I grabbed lunch and drove to the trail head for Mt. Frissell. The first time here, I could not find the state line marker that denotes the highest point in Connecticut. This time the conditions were much better than the cold rain of 2018, sunny and mild. After ninety minutes or so I reached the top of Frissell, which is in Massachusetts. From there I had to take a trail leading to the Tri-state point for New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut. About ten minutes down the trail I found the marker that represents the highest point, a green colored survey pin for the state line. I took my photos and enjoyed a great view. A couple hours later I was on my way north on US 7 to a lean-to

at a campground in southern Vermont for tomorrow's warm up hike.

Sunday's warm up hike would be on Mt. Mansfield, Vermont, home of the Stowe ski resort. I was left a few hundred feet short of the top of Mansfield on my first attempt in 2018. High winds kept me from the summit that day. Today was much calmer and warmer. I drove the access road to the top of the ski runs and hiked the three miles over and back to the high point. Once on top you could see three other state high points from Mansfield: Marcy in New York, Greylock in Massachusetts and Washington in New Hampshire. The Mt. Washington area is where I was headed next, to do some hiking around Pinkham Notch on Monday. I went back down to Stowe for lunch and hit the road east.

After another night in a lean-to at Moose Brook State Park, I did a couple miles at Pinkham Notch on the east slopes of Mt. Washington. From here I drove down to Conway, N. H. to the REI store. Somehow, I had forgotten to get my boots into my bag before I left. I found a pair of Merrill MOABs that would be perfect for my hike in Maine. I drove over to Bangor to get the last of the supplies I would need to do the three-day backpack trip at Baxter State Park.

I drove up to Millinocket the
Continued on next page...

High Points Part 12: The Ticks Win Again! continued

morning of June 15th and on to Roaring Brook campground in

Baxter State Park. From here I would backpack that afternoon up to yet another lean-to at Chimney Pond, on the east side of Katahdin. I set up camp and went to bed early for my day hike to the top of the mountain, two miles away.

I got up at sunrise, ate breakfast and started up the Saddle Trail from Chimney Pond about 6 am. The climb is steep and rocky, up a valley and col on the side of the peak. The first mile you gain over 1000' to top out onto the Tablelands. This is a sloped plain on the mountain's flank that takes you the rest of the way to the top. The walk over the Tablelands, though not as steep as the first mile, is still very rocky. I was glad I had my new boots and not the tennis shoes I used on the warm up hikes.

At 9:30 I finally reached the famous sign proclaiming the summit and the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. I had the place to myself for about five minutes and enjoyed the solitude. On June 16, 2021, Mt. Katahdin became my 44th state high point, 5,267 feet. The weather was starting to degrade, so I left all those celebrating on top and descended back to Chimney Pond for the day. The next day I would hike out to Roaring Brook and drive on to Boston for a flight home.

It was now six weeks until I would be joining seven others on my quest to visit the John Muir Trail and Mt.

Whitney. I was pleased with the conditioning I had done and felt no ill effects from the Katahdin trip. In fact, I was optimistic. I was going to have a great outing, since my pack was going to be as light as I had ever carried on any other backpack trips. Less than 40 pounds. It could have been 100, it didn't matter. A tick in my back yard had other plans for me, something I did not see coming.



California

I was counting the days leading up to the second hike and doing the prep work to my home and yard so I could spend two weeks on the road. One thing I did was to take advantage of lower temps in early July to clean up the downed wood and yard trash to burn it. This included a dead tree and it has to be when I was bitten by a tick and, unbeknownst to me, infected with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

A couple of weeks before I left for the west, I was getting gut pains and headaches. I should have checked with my doctor then. I did get a Covid test and that came up negative. I put it off to pre-trip jitters. I also didn't want to throw a last-minute delay in the trip for the

others. I was responsible for several pieces of the trip.

I had advertised the John Muir Hike since November and had several folks express interest. With the help of Brian Thompson, we managed to procure nine permits for our group to hike the trail and visit Mt. Whitney. We made campground reservations for two nights at the trail head, Onion Valley. The campground had an elevation of 9200 feet and would help us acclimatize before we hit the trail.

By May, our group had been set at eight participants. All of us had been training since Christmas and we all had experience at long distance backpacking in mountainous terrain. We had five Ozark Society members: Brian, Tim Mason, Ellis Gregory, Bob Ordeneaux and myself. The other three were friends we knew: Ron Dumoff and Steve Pruett from the San Diego area and John Collins from Dunlap, Tennessee.

Brian, Ellis and I rented a car and drove out. We made a side trip to Death Valley on our way to Lone Pine, California. None of us had been there before and found the place to be utterly unreal. We met up with the rest at Onion Valley on Wednesday, July 28th with all our permits in hand.

We spent the next two days getting used to the altitude, shuttling cars and picking up last minute items for the hike. I was still not firing on all cylinders, in fact we had stopped a couple days earlier in Flagstaff, *Continued on next page....*

High Points Part 12: The Ticks Win Again! continued

Arizona to see why I still had a gut pain. Nothing was diagnosed by the Doc in the Box, so I carried on with all the pre-hike activity and got ready to go on the morning of Friday, July 30th.



Since everyone was experienced, we drifted out of camp and up the trail to Kearsarge Pass when we were ready. I hit the trail early and was moving quite well with a light pack and very well laid out trail. Compared to Maine, this trail was a freeway to me. But as I continued throughout the morning, I was not hiking as fast as I should have been.

I was not winded and my muscles felt strong. Something was not right, however. All my joints were hurting and I had to stop with the weight off my back to regain my strength.

As time went on, those who had started behind me began to pass me. My stride was becoming forced. My nerves were keeping me from walking with a steady gate and I kept having to stop to let things catch up. About one o'clock a storm was brewing over the pass and I knew this would be a couple hour wait. I set up a shelter and sat down to wait it out. I had some

lunch and had a lot of time to think things over.

Everyone had passed me by lunch, but I received word from other hikers that a couple of the guys would wait for me at the pass, still two miles ahead of me. That was another problem, I had only gone 3 miles in 6 ½ hours. Even that is unusually slow for me. I still was feeling a bit tight in the gut and the joint and nerve pain was bothering me from a safety standpoint. As the rain was ending, I realized that my attempt to hike the trail would be ending too. I decided to call it. For the first time in my hiking career, I would turn around and return to the campground. I sent word up trail to those waiting for me at the pass to go on, loaded up and headed back to town. I would make it to Lone Pine that night about 8:30 thanks to two rides, then spent a couple days at the Mt. Whitney Motel, our unofficial headquarters, recovering.

The next day while resting, I retrieved our rental car from Whitney Portal. At least I had transportation. I wish Ron had left his key at Onion Valley, I could have driven his car back to Whitney Portal and had that shuttle out of the way for next week. Later that day, I heard a knock on my door. There was Bob Ordeneaux! He too, had turned around after spending the night on the other side of the pass. He decided his conditioning was not good enough for some of the tougher sections ahead of him. The next day we retrieved his truck from Whitney Portal as well.

After two days, I realized I could still do things using the car. I had to stay out of the heat and limit my hiking. Since I had never seen Yosemite before, I took the next three days of waiting for the backpackers by driving over the Sierras to see it. It was well worth the trip. I also checked out Manzanar Internment Camp, Mono Lake and several other places north of Lone Pine. I made it back in time to pick up a couple of the guys who came out a day early at Whitney Portal. On Thursday, August 5th, the remaining three hikers came out after completing the schedule I had laid out. We all gathered up gear, vehicles and said our goodbyes as we started back home. I will let Brian relate the story of those who completed the planned hike in a story by him.

Brian, Ellis and I made it back to Arkansas on Saturday night. I was glad to be back home, but I still had my headaches and gut pains. It took a week for me to get in to see the doctor, but he ran his tests and confirmed I had a tick-borne illness. It's been a couple of weeks of antibiotics and I am finally starting to feel better. I guess ticks and me just don't see eye to eye. Two bouts of RMSF and Lyme would tend to keep one out of the woods. Don't count on it ticks! I didn't make it to Whitney this time, but there is always next year. So I'm stuck on 44 high points for now and planning ahead for maybe more.



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. 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:

- 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: \$50 = \$40 OS +\$10 Chapter
- Supporter: \$100 = \$90 OS +\$10 Chapter
- Sponsor: \$250 = \$240 OS +\$10 Chapter
- Patron: \$500 = \$490 OS +\$10 Chapter
- 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
- \$ _____ OS Endowment Fund

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 for questions.



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

Please Note: If you would like to receive *Pack & Paddle* ONLY by email, not through US Mail, please contact Carolyn Shearman at oscomms@ozarksociety.net.

The Officer, Director, and Chair List

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BUFFALO RIVER TRAIL COORDINATOR: Michael Reed, mereed@runbox.com

OZARK SOCIETY STORE: Brittany Plouch, outreach@ozarksociety.net.

OZARK SOCIETY ARCHIVES: Stewart Noland, bosshq@aol.com.

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

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