



PACK & PADDLE



Fall "The challenge goes on. There are other lands and rivers, other wilderness areas, to save and to share with all.
Sept. 2026 I challenge you to step forward to protect and care for the wild places you love best." - Dr. Neil Compton

OS Launches 2027 Youth Grant Cycle

By Lowell Collins, Ozark Society Youth Grants Chair

Ozark Society (OS) is launching the 2027 cycle of Youth Grants to support environmental projects. Grant proposals will be accepted from nonprofit organizations and schools with projects that take place in the region where the Ozark Society is active. Projects must involve elementary or secondary school-aged youth in hands-on conservation activities or environmental engagement.

Project funding between \$500 and \$2500 will be awarded based on the scope and needs of the youth activity. Applications will be accepted from October 1st to November 30th. Award notification and funds distribution will be in February 2027. Projects will have one year to complete their objectives. Final grant reports will be due by March 31st 2028.

projects include gardens and greenhouses, interactive environmental education, community clean-up and restoration projects, watershed conservation, trail building, and more.

Please share this announcement with schools and environmental educators in your area. For the application form and additional information about the Youth Grant, visit: www.ozarksociety.net

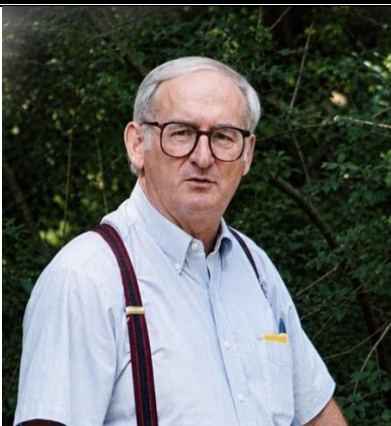


Since 2020, the OS Youth Grants Program has awarded \$73,700 to fifty-one different grant projects. Funded



In Memoriam: Joe Nix

By Brian Thompson, Ozark Society President



Ozark Society lost a giant this past month with the passing of Dr. Joe Nix. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Joe joined Dr. Neil Compton and others in the newly formed Ozark Society to stop a proposed dam from being built on the Buffalo River. Their combined efforts to secure congressional support led to the Buffalo River becoming the nation's first National River. Joe succeeded Dr. Compton as the second

president of the Ozark Society. And of course, Joe led a distinguished academic career and did vital research in water quality throughout the state. I hope you can join us at the Fall Meeting at Buffalo Point on November 13-15th during our Saturday membership meeting where I will lead a special tribute to Joe and read a nice note from Laura Nix addressed to everyone.

In Memoriam: Paul Means

By Stewart Noland, Ozark Society Archive Chair



Longtime Ozark Society member Paul Means recently passed away. I met Paul in 1976 soon after I moved to Little Rock. We paddled, hiked, and camped together on numerous occasions. We were also both members of the Ozark Society.

Paul served on the Ozark Society Board for many years in the capacity of Conservation Chair. Although other issues were pressing at the time (Lee Creek Dam, Bear Creek Dam, Pindall Landfill), Paul's most lasting impact was likely helping with the Congressional passage of the Arkansas Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1992.

Paul's work took him to Washington, DC on occasion, which gave him an opportunity to visit face to face with Arkansas' Congressional delegation and their staffs concerning the proposed legislation to designate the Cossatot, Little Missouri, Upper Buffalo, Richland Creek, Hurricane Creek, Big Piney, Mulberry, and North Sylamore Creek as Wild and Scenic Rivers under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

For several years Paul spearheaded the Ozark Society efforts in this regard. Anticipating a need to send

Ozark Society members to Washington to testify at Congressional hearings on the subject, the Board had saved a significant amount of money to cover travel expenses. I will never forget the phone call from Paul informing me that the bill was likely to pass without the need to appear at any hearings. Without Paul's work, this development would not have occurred.

More recently Paul participated in the Ozark Society oral history effort concerning wilderness and wild and scenic rivers. Plus, he provided input to Bob Robinson for use in Bob's articles on wild and scenic rivers.

The Ozark Society is most appreciative of Paul's service, particularly the pivotal role he played in seminal federal legislation protecting our wild and scenic rivers. Thank you to Paul. The Ozark Society will miss you.

In Memoriam: Marcelle Castleberry

By Carolyn Shearman, OS Vice President



Marcelle Castleberry was a longtime member of the Ozark Society, Pulaski Chapter, along with her husband Don Castleberry. She will be greatly

missed and remembered for attending all our special events and especially for the amazing food she always shared with us at parties and potlucks. Don said "she believed in making good food and lots of it!"

Wherever life took her, Marcelle found a way to share her talents. She had a gift for making beautiful things with her hands. In Utah, she designed and handcrafted bridal jewelry. She became an accomplished potter whose unique creations found homes in collections across several states. She later worked as a bank manager in both New Jersey and Virginia before discovering the calling that would become her life's passion.

After settling in Little Rock, Marcelle combined her gifts for hospitality, baking, and cooking by opening Marcelle's Tea Room on Cantrell Road. For ten years, she welcomed guests with delicious meals, beautiful custom cakes, and warm conversation. Her restaurant became a beloved gathering place, earning a devoted following of loyal customers who continued to ask her to reopen long after its doors had closed.

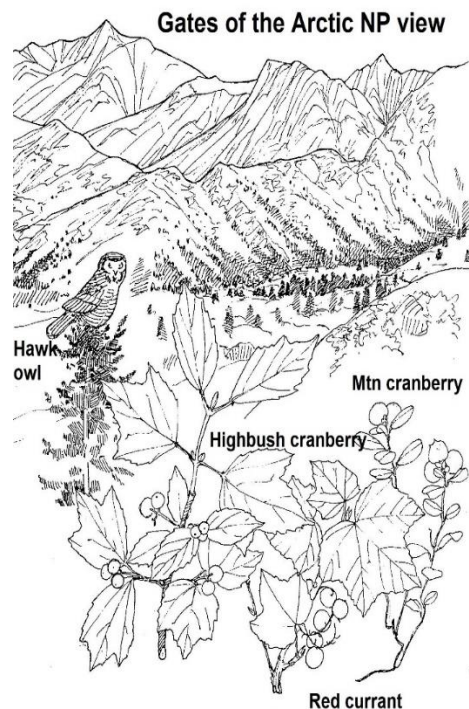
All of us who knew Marcelle will remember her as a spirited woman with a quick wit and heart that made everyone feel welcome.

Polar Amplification - One reference brings it all together

By Fred Paillet, Ozark Society Education Chair

This one new reference arrived with no warning to address my concern about global warming, conflated with both my most treasured outdoor experiences and my most intense ongoing professional interests. That's quite a bit to ask from a young author's first major publication. The book is *North to the Future – an Offline Adventure Through the Changing Wilds of Alaska* by Ben Weissenbach. The introduction got my immediate attention since it squarely addressed the topic of Polar Amplification. As readers must know from my previous work, I anticipate disproportionate distribution of global warming (temperature change amplification at the poles) to have a major effect on weather patterns from the way it decreases the latitudinal thermal gradient. This is going to affect (or perhaps is already affecting) the fundamental nature of the storms and droughts we experience. In this book, a young Princeton graduate decides to travel north to experience the changing climate there while consulting three notable experts investigating three important aspects of climate model verification. These are: permafrost degradation, high latitude glacier dynamics, and northern tree-line expansion. That alone would be of real interest. But the author's experience includes strenuous backpacking and rafting excursions down the wilderness routes I have taken and surveys of a remote

Brooks Range glacier that I personally explored over two decades ago. Being able to recall the effort of bushwhacking through tangled alder thickets and downed timber, climbing steep unstable slopes, tottering with heavy backpack over treacherous tussocks, and navigating unstable pack rafts through wild headwater streams added an extra dimension to the reading experience.



As a scientist I could identify with the technical task during each of these journeys but was distracted by the author's repeated angst about his book-learning experience making him ill-prepared for the many practical challenges of each expedition. Then there is the lengthy exploration of the exotic backgrounds of these three

scientists (Kenji, Matt, and Roman) who established rogue status for their unusual careers. I also had to cringe at the inadequate explanation of background details related to how the data collection addressed the physical processes being investigated. A good part of the book describes two long Brooks Range backpacks with Roman and graduate assistants that involved patrolling the northern edge of spruce distribution to count tree seedlings. Simply counting seedlings is not a very good way to assess tree line advance which depends on a sequence of seed dissemination, seedling germination, and longer-term survival against climatic events. Timber lines on Rocky Mountain slopes are characterized by low krummholz thickets of trees that cannot thrive enough to produce seeds or experience temperatures too low to allow seeds to germinate. Such trees propagate by "layering" where branches pinned to the ground by snow generate roots and produce new stems to be beaten back by winter storms. This situation is usually interpreted as produced by climate deterioration where temperatures are decreasing and trees are forced to retreat downward, leaving non-reproducing and stunted versions behind.

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Polar Amplification continued

Ecologists have observed that the northern tree limit in Alaska is very different. Instead of having a border of krummholz, Brooks Range tree line has a scattering of trees of all sizes that progressively thins with distance from the closed forest. That leads many to believe that it is the difficulty of getting spruce seeds to gain a foothold that limits the process. Once the seeds find a substrate that is hospitable in terms of competition and microclimate, they can grow to maturity. This important background context is ignored in the excitement of simply discovering seedlings. It would also have helped to have a precise description of the “seedlings” to understand how they are related to the specific environment that has allowed them to gain a foothold, and how likely they are to survive winter blasts when they grow above the protection of snow cover.

For me, that frustration at the lack of technical detail was more than offset by description of the wild places of my personal outdoor adventures in the far north. These include verbal images of Igipak Peak in Gates of the Arctic NP and the Romanzoff Range in the ANWR. Along with bushwhacking and/or floating in the Ipnelivik, Ulaneak, Ambler, Kelly and Wulik drainages. This brings memories of fighting through soaking alder thickets and over jumbled piles of splintered avalanche debris to shiver by a sodden campsite on the Ulaneak. Then waking up in the morning to

see moose tracks showing how the beast had tipped over a tent peg while we slept in exhaustion. I can look at my old photos of Igipak’s distinctive fishtail summit (meaning of the name in Inuit) taken after climbing an adjacent peak to experience its skullcap-like glacier. I can recall the mutual surprise of all parties involved when floating the Ambler and encountering a swimming bear straight ahead. There were savory meals of entire arctic char each big enough to feed five baked in willow-wood coals on the banks of the Wulik. Recalling those experiences made the book for me despite the frustrating lack of real technical detail.

Of course, that is not the author’s point. The punch line comes through loud and clear: the mechanisms that will act to change climate as the greenhouse gas content of our atmosphere increases are a lot more complicated (with largely unconstrained global model coefficients) than is perceived. For example, Kenji explains to the author that permafrost does not melt like a block of ice in the sun. This means that the assumed addition of frozen stored carbon in the soil adds to the carbon content of the atmosphere in a way that varies greatly from place to place. The devil is in the details and the details are complicated. The same for melting glaciers, which depend on the total mass balance of the ice field. As a warming climate increases the vapor carrying capacity

of the atmosphere, it can cause an increase in ice accumulation that can offset ice loss at the glacier terminus. We expect Antarctica to melt more around the edges, but the moisture flux of the warming atmosphere will likely increase ice thickness in the interior. In the case of Matt’s investigation of the McCall Glacier, he thinks warming may retard ice loss as the insulation provided by the accumulation zone thickness decreases. And that is for only this one particular glacier. The author contrasts his own book learning based on definitive models with the practical issues of generating the coefficients needed to make those models function. These data must be laboriously collected in enough quantity to be effectively integrated into a meaningful representation of those critical driving coefficients. Many readers will not be informed enough to care about the details of the measurements but should appreciate how difficult the provision of these model coefficients is in the model-based prediction process. In the past I have emphasized things from the top down: Polar Amplification will change the way the weather systems operate. Here the author presents the uncertainty from the bottom up via the nuts and bolts of parameter estimation. Both approaches serve to emphasize the way that humanity is taking our climate into the great unknown – where there may be no turning back at all.

Two Important Events Coming Up!

By Carolyn Shearman Ozark Society Vice President

October 24-30th: The Ozark Society's Fall '26 Trail Improvement Campaign for the Buffalo National River

Join us October 24-30th for a day, the weekend, or longer. We'll be based at the Steel Creek ranch house once again, with some tread repairs on the to-do list along with the usual brush removal. As more people adopt parts of the BRT we'll be able to turn some of our attention toward other trails. We will begin preparations at the ranch house October 23. We'll work in the field Saturday the 24th through Friday the 30th, and clean and pack the morning of the 31st.

You can get general information at:

[BRT Maintenance Camp Information – Buffalo River Trail Crew](#)

Contact me, *Michael Reed* with any questions. Ultimately, if you want to participate you'll need to RSVP with me to get final details. My contact information is:

Michael Reed
mereed@runbox.com
479-212-2570



November 13-15th: Fall Meeting at Buffalo Point Campground

The Fall meeting at the Buffalo Point Campground will be November 13th-15th and here is the schedule:

Friday, November 13th

6:00 PM – Board Meeting, Pavilion 1.

Saturday, November 14th

- Breakfast on your own
- 9:30am Meet at Pavilion 1 for shuttle to trailhead for Hill-Hamilton Preserve exploration, continuing from there to Indian Rock House. Consider water shoes for creek crossing. Lead: Ross Noland
- Lunch on your own, on trail or back at camp.
- 1:00pm Angela Boyers, Buffalo National River Superintendent, speaks to membership. Pavilion 1.

- 2:30-3:00pm-ish Membership Meet at Pavilion 1 for election of new officers. Brian updates membership on issues and accomplishments over the past year.
- Lowell Collins gives an update on Youth Grants.
- Loring Bullard gives a short talk on low head dams.
- 5:30pm-ish Pot Luck in Pavilion 1 OS Sugar Creek to provide plates, dinnerware, and serving utensils.
- 7:00pm-ish Musical entertainment – Dave Smith

Sunday, November 15th

- 11:00am – Hike from BRT Spring Creek Road to Spring Creek, return. 4 miles. Lead: Luke Parsch



A History of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

By Paul Means, Reprinted from Pack and Paddle Summer Edition 1994

On Earth Day 1992, which fell on April 22, President George Bush signed into law the Arkansas Wild and Scenic Rivers Act which added 8 streams to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. In all 195 miles of rivers are covered by this designation which protects them from development that would impair their wild or scenic character. Unlike the bitter political battle over the Arkansas Wilderness Bill, the Arkansas Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was passed without controversy. This achievement can be attributed to the hard work of Senator Dale Bumpers, Rep. John Paul Hammerschmidt, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Ozark Society. It all began with a bureaucratic process initiated by Congress in 1963.

That year Congress authorized a nationwide rivers inventory. Work did not actually begin until the early 1970's and the inventory was not completed until 1982. This inventory listed rivers and streams which were relatively natural or undeveloped. Once the inventory was complete, the U.S. Forest Service declared that the streams in the inventory which were within National Forests were eligible for study for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system.

Both the Ouachita National Forest and Ozark-St. Francis National Forest incorporated this study into their Land and Resource Management Plans. The streams were studied by Forest Service staff and a recommendation on whether or not they should be added to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System was developed. These studies and recommendations were incorporated into an Environmental Impact Statement and circulated for public comment and the subject of a public

hearing. Finally in 1990, some 27 years after it was begun, the bureaucratic process was complete. Eight Arkansas streams had been recommended by the U.S. Forest Service for addition to the System. They were as follows:

Ouachita National Forest

- Cossatot River (including Cossatot River State Park)
- Little Missouri River

Ozark National Forest

- Richland Creek
- Big Piney Creek
- Buffalo River (above Boxley)
- Mulberry River
- North Sylamore Creek
- Hurricane Creek

For a stream to become a National Wild and Scenic River, there must be an act of Congress signed by the President. Thus, the only way to implement the recommendations was for someone to step forward and introduce a bill. In politics there is an old saying, "Timing is everything." The timing would prove to be right for wild and scenic rivers in Arkansas.

On the porch of Hubert and Mary Virginia Ferguson's cabin at Boxley, several Ozark Society Board members held a discussion in January of 1991. President Stewart Noland brought up the Forest Service recommendations for scenic rivers and suggested the Society ought to do something to get them added to the national system. The Society had a couple of natural allies in Senator Dale Bumpers and Rep. John Paul Hammerschmidt who were long-time supporters of the Buffalo National River. Conservation Chairman Paul Means also happened to be a lobbyist for Arkansas Power & Light and he travelled to Washington and worked with the Arkansas delegation on a

regular basis. He volunteered to raise the subject next time his job took him to Washington.

At the same time, the U.S. Forest Service personnel in Arkansas were thinking along the same lines. They were working through their organization in Washington to bring the recommendations before the appropriate committees in Congress. (See *The Battle for the Buffalo* by Neil Compton.) Needless to say, the Arkansas Legislature was not enthusiastic about this idea and the proposal went nowhere. As a U.S. Senator, Bumpers had chosen to become chairman of the Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks, and Forests. His committee would have jurisdiction over any Arkansas Wild and Scenic Rivers legislation. Bumpers was obviously the best possible sponsor for scenic rivers legislation.

In February, Paul Means raised the issue of scenic rivers with Deborah Estes, the person on Senator Bumpers with responsibility for environmental legislation. She mentioned that the Forest Service staff had recently brought up the same subject. Deborah went on to say that Dale was interested in sponsoring legislation to make the streams recommended by the Forest Service a part of the national system. Not wanting to pass up an opportunity, Paul committed the Ozark Society to take the lead on rounding up support and responding to opposition.

The addition of a river to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System is typically a political hot potato. The experience with the Buffalo River and the Arkansas Wilderness Act are examples of how controversial this issue can become.

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A History of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act continued

The timber companies and landowner groups are almost always vehemently opposed because they think restrictions on development of the river corridor will cost them money. In 1991, however, the situation was not typical.

Perhaps the biggest factor was that the rivers were primarily on National Forest land and adding them to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System did not have widespread impact on private landowners. The Forest Service had also done an excellent job of implementing the Arkansas Wilderness Act. Their tactful handling of wilderness had gone a long way towards reassuring their private landowning neighbors that preservation did not mean the end of civilization.

In fact, three of the proposed streams flowed through national wilderness areas. Because of existing wilderness protection, there was no basis for generating controversy over Richland Creek, Hurricane Creek, and the Upper Buffalo in the Ozark Forest. The portion of the Cossatot River immediately downstream of the Ouachita Forest had become a state park and designating the headwaters in the forest as wild and scenic again was not likely to generate controversy. A local recreation industry was springing up at Albert Pike with a focus on the Little Missouri, thus attracting local support for designation. Because of its proximity to Blanchard Springs cavern and tourism, the N. Fork of the Sylamore was similarly non-controversial.

The two potentially controversial streams were the Mulberry River and Big Piney. Both have significant numbers of landowners along their banks whose property is within the forest boundary. Many of these landowners had opposed

the wilderness act and some had been hostile to canoeing on the river.

The Forest Service recommendations on these eight streams were accompanied by environmental impact statements. An appendix to these statements contained copies of all comments made during public hearings. A long and tedious review of all these comments revealed that no individual or organization had made negative comments about these eight streams. That may have been because the organizations who oppose river conservation were focused on other matters.

The Ouachita Watch League had mounted a very successful challenge to clearcutting in the Ouachita National Forest and created fear and trembling in the Ozark Forest. The usual opponents of river conservation had all their attention focused on preserving clearcutting. The Farm Bureau, Arkansas Forestry Association and big timber companies were devoting all their resources to the Ouachita Watch League.

The Tri-County Water District had also proposed a water supply reservoir on the North Fork of the Illinois Bayou. The Ozark Society, Arkansas Canoe Club, and other environmental organizations had been fighting this project every step of the way. Consequently, all the comments filed on the Wild and Scenic Rivers Study for the Ozark National Forest were about whether or not there should be a dam on the North Fork. In terms of sheer numbers of comments, there was overwhelming opposition to designating the North Fork as a wild and scenic river.

Perhaps because they were preoccupied with clearcutting and dams, no one voiced opposition to the eight

rivers proposed for protection. In the official comments were strong letters of support from environmental organizations and their individual members.

Paul carried this political research back to Deborah Estes in Senator Bumpers office. Bumpers reached the conclusion that the timing was right. With the attention of developers focused elsewhere, the Arkansas Scenic Rivers Bill might be passed before anyone could notice. Bumpers referred to it as "stealth legislation." Paul made the rounds of the other Arkansas Congressional offices to seek support and smoke out opposition. They were all supportive.

In that they are part of the Department of Agriculture which reports to the President, the Forest Service officials in Arkansas were somewhat constrained by their own chain of command. President George Bush was also supportive of scenic rivers; however, he hoped to develop an omnibus bill including rivers from many states. Not wanting to contradict the President, the Forest Supervisors could not exactly call up Bumpers and encourage him to introduce an Arkansas only bill. In the time-honored tradition of government, Mike Curran, the Ouachita Forest Supervisor, and Lynn Neff, the Ozark Forest Supervisor, were able to let Bumpers know of their support without violating policy.

The Arkansas Canoe Club, Arkansas Wildlife Federation, and American Rivers also weighed in with statements of support. Over the summer, Bumpers worked behind the scenes to draft a bill and line up his support.

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A History of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act continued

In September, the Arkansas Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1991 was introduced into the Senate with Dale Bumpers and David Pryor as sponsors. An identical bill was introduced in the House with John Paul Hammerschmidt as sponsor. This historic event was reported in the Arkansas papers and we all held our breath. Weeks went by and there was a deafening silence from our traditional opponents. Either they missed the article or were pre-occupied with other matters.

Moving quickly, Senator Bumpers convened his committee on October 15 and held a hearing on the Arkansas Act. Supporting statements were made by Paul Means of the Ozark Society, Don Hamilton of the Arkansas Wildlife Federation, and Elizabeth Norcross of American Rivers. Now that an Arkansas only bill had been introduced, the Ouachita and Ozark Forest staffs were also free to endorse the legislation publicly. No one stepped forward in opposition to the legislation.

In January, the full Senate passed the bill and it was referred to the House. Unlike the Senate, no one from Arkansas held a seat on the committee that would handle Scenic Rivers legislation. Both John Paul Hammerschmidt and Beryl Anthony did contact the committee chairman, Bruce Vento of Minnesota, and encouraged him to move promptly on the bill. Accepting their request, Chairman Vento held a hearing on February 18 and Paul Means once again testified for the bill on behalf of the Ozark Society. With the support of Rep. Vento and the quiet influence of Hammerschmidt, the bill was passed by the House on April 2. Twenty days later it was signed into law by the President.

Legislation moves through the U.S. Congress with the speed of a glacier. Progress is measured in years. The Arkansas Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1991 took eight months from its introduction to become law. Not once was there a statement in opposition to the bill from anyone. Like a stealth bomber, it passed through Congress before anyone knew it was there.

Congratulations are due to Ouachita Forest Supervisor Mike Curran and his staff, Ozark Forest Supervisor Lynn Neff and his staff, Senators Dale Bumpers and David Pryor, and Rep. John Paul Hammerschmidt and Beryl Anthony. There should be a big cheer from the Ozark Society which was the catalyst that got it all started.

The Forest Service has been quietly working to establish plans for management of these eight streams in the two years since passage of the legislation. The act is a general guideline and it is the responsibility of the Forest Service to establish the actual boundaries of the river corridor. There are actually three classifications within the National Wild and Scenic River System. These are wild, scenic, and recreational. A wild river is essentially a wilderness river. An example is Hurricane Creek which is within the Hurricane Creek Wilderness Area. A scenic river has some development, but is primarily undisturbed. An example of a scenic river is Big Piney Creek. A recreational river has considerable development on the shoreline. The Mulberry River below Redding campground is an example of a recreational river with a road along the bank and numerous structures.

In establishing the river corridor boundaries, the Forest Service

considered these classifications. The corridor is wide in wilderness areas and limited to the high-water mark in recreational stretches. As the Forest Service was considering boundaries, the private landowners along the Piney and Mulberry suddenly woke up. In a somewhat tardy fashion, they began to organize against the corridors for the Piney and Mulberry. The Forest Service is to be complimented for how it handled these landowner groups. The Forest Service explained the various classifications to the landowners. Within the National Forest, the corridors are fairly wide for Forest Service management purposes. Where there is private land, the corridor extends only to the high-water mark. This is in keeping with the scenic and recreational classifications which include roads, structures, and agricultural activities. The Ozark Society made a public statement in support of the classifications made by Congress and recognizing private landowners in establishing the corridor boundaries. The Forest Service staff has reported that the Ozark Society's statement was helpful in diffusing the landowner group's concerns. In fact, in May of 1994 there is good support from the private landowners scattered along the eight streams.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act may be law, but it will take continued cooperation between the Ozark Society and National Forest Service to make it a reality.



An Interview with Kurt Bachman, a 2026 Sassafras Hiking Recipient

By Don House, OS Highlands and Buffalo River Chapter Member



I attended school in the United States, so by definition, I am ignorant of all things geographical. Proof of this hypothesis, is that after my first telephone conversation with Sassafras Hiking Award recipient Kurt Bachmann, I had to resort to maps and atlas to put into perspective what I was hearing. “Last year I hiked the Continental Divide Trail from southern Montana to Mexico, and this year I’m starting in Montana and doing the northern section to the border with Canada.” Those words do not compute in my catalogue of outdoor activities. I consider myself a hiker. I spend considerable time doing just that, but my conversation with Kurt made it clear how circumscribed my range is. And while I measure my distances in single digits, his tend to the hundreds and thousands. He is a hiker of another level, as nonchalant and soft-spoken as he may be about his accomplishments.

We spoke from his room in a hostel in East Glacier Park just off the Continental Divide Trail at the southeast corner of Glacier National Park. The connection was iffy, we both expected it to go out at any moment, but

it held. This year he has had to deal with snowstorms and freezing rain (which he considers more dangerous than the frozen-solid version)—and lately with smoke coming over from the devastating fires in Washington, smoke that is blocking the view of the mountains as we speak. The high Montana section of the trail is a rough one, it follows the divide at 8,000 feet elevation or so, there is little water available, and he has to carry more than usual to get through the dry areas. An Ozark hiker might be forgiven for feeling water-flush—it is a rare outing that does not offer a chance to filter and refill canteens along the way if needed. But Kurt makes it clear that the two big questions on any long-distance hike, anywhere, anytime, including sections of the Ouachita Trail, are: where is water, and where are resupply options.

On some trails, like the Appalachian, resupply options are a short hike or hitch from the main trail, but out west, he’s had to hitchhike thirty miles off-trail and back, to the closest town for food and fuel. And in the Ozarks, he has had to send supplies ahead to post offices along the way. He speaks fondly of the Bluebell Cafe’ in Story, Arkansas, about 15 miles northeast of Mt. Ida, and Lori, the *mother* of the Ouachita trail who cooks for and shuttles exhausted hikers, and receives and stores resupply packages.

Raised in Indiana, he has called Norman, Oklahoma home for the last quarter century, where he taught high school: Physics, Astronomy, and Electronic Circuits, before retiring recently. I was rude enough to ask his age—66, which he considers on the low end of old. He was kind enough not to ask my age, which I would have to define as *middle* old age perhaps. When

I asked the standard question of what brought him to long distance hiking, he laughed and said he became serious after his wife left him, with the first excursion in 2012-- the 500-mile Camino de Santiago in Spain, then the 300 mile Long Trail in Vermont. Until his retirement from teaching, he was having to schedule hikes to correlate with summer and Christmas breaks. Now he has more control of his own schedule, and the itinerary has expanded accordingly.

There have been so many long-distance hikes, that when I ask about them, he has to ponder a while. That list includes the trifecta of Pacific Crest, Appalachian, and Continental Divide Trails, the Ouachita Trail six times, the 300-mile Lake Superior trail, Isle Royale trails, the 400-mile St. Olav’s Way in Norway, the Ozark Highlands Trail three times, and the 1,100-mile Florida Trail. “Pardon me,” I said, “did you say 1,100 miles?” “Well,” he said apologetically, “it was pretty flat.” He includes half the Arizona Trail, a hike that was cut short by the appearance of the highly contagious Norovirus, that had hikers using plastic bags as makeshift gloves to touch gates, pump handles, and shelter surfaces, and the roughly 300-mile Ozark Trail in Missouri.

He sometimes stays in hostels—a frugal alternative in some places, especially out west, that helps keep costs down—and also routinely makes use of busses to get to his hiking destinations and back. He knows the routes and the companies well: Greyhound (recently bought out by the German company FlixBus), Jefferson, and Peter Pan, and the interesting characters he meets become part of the whole experience. *Continued on page 10.*

An Interview with Kurt Bachman, Sassafras Hiking Recipient continued

A cross-country trip on a bus is something he thinks that every voter should consider doing, an introduction to real people, perhaps. He ranks states by how good the bus system is, and to my disappointment, considers Arkansas a *bus-unfriendly* state. He doesn't like to fly, he finds the restrictions and rules onerous, rules that had TSA confiscating his camp stove on one flight—enough to change a person's attitude about flying. Buses are more humane, more understanding, more logical in these matters.

When it comes to advice for folks who might be thinking of the long-distance experience, he recommends the FarOut maps because of their consideration of critical water and resupply information, and real-time feedback from hikers. He carries 4 small portable battery chargers to keep his phone up and running, and recharges them all at the next hostel. He considers himself the polar opposite of an ultra-light packer, more of an *ultra-heavy* one, he says. He likes to have enough clothing and equipment to handle the nasty surprises and emergencies that can develop in rough, isolated situations, where help may be at a considerable distance and time. "It can be dangerous out here," he says, "last week six hikers died of falls, exposure, and lightning (a form of exposure). "Falls," he says with emphasis, are the greatest danger." And he had his own reminder this past April when he slipped off a rain-soaked trail near Blanchard Springs, slid down a steep incline and into the creek, luckily uninjured except for the destruction of his phone. I am reminded of *the rule of threes* from wilderness first aid courses, a way to remember what is most likely to kill you, what you need to consider first: 3 hours exposure, 3 days water, 3 weeks food. You dismiss exposure at

your peril. Perhaps one of the most important aspects of being an experienced long-distance hiker like Kurt, is knowing when to stop and turn around, when not to go.

He hikes alone. He says that on a trail like the Appalachian, he is never really alone, but on some western trails, he can go days without seeing another human being. He is a loner by nature, and slower by choice. He meets a lot of hikers that are fast and athletic oriented, *doing* the trail, *conquering* the trail, setting records for time and distance. "I guess they don't actually *see* anything," he says. "I am not an athletic hiker. I am a scenic hiker." He describes wildflowers, bear, deer, big horn sheep, goats, and *squeakers* that he defines as all the unseen and unidentified, but loud birds and rodents that add to the hiking soundscape. He takes photographs and posts them on Facebook, including this image of the Chinese Wall geologic phenomenon in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area in Montana:



And this image of *Squaretop* from last year's hike on the Continental Divide Trail in the Wind River Range in Wyoming:



And this photograph of a Grouse, a species he finds in several mountain ecosystems, east and west:



Kurt tells me that his first long-distance hike choice had been inspired by the 2011 film *The Way*, a comedy/drama starring Martin Sheen, that follows a man whose estranged son has died while hiking the El Camino, and who, in response, decides to walk it as a tribute, and distribute his son's ashes. A story of love and loss, a closure and a starting over, a changing of the path one's life is following. It feels too intrusive to ask Kurt directly the begged question of whether his first trek was undertaken for therapeutic reasons, perhaps the end of a marriage, and whether it was successful in that regard. I draw my own conclusions from the rest of the conversation, and when we hang up, I reach for my laptop and issue a friend request. I want to keep track of this man.



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 ozarksocietymembership3@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

SOCIETY OFFICERS: President: Brian Thompson, ospres1@ozarksociety.net; Vice President: Carolyn Shearman, osvp@ozarksociety.net; Financial Chair: Neil Shipley, ostreasurer2@ozarksociety.net; Recording Secretary: Tommie Kelly
; Past President: David Peterson, ospastpres@ozarksociety.net; Co-Conservation Chair: Alice Andrews, alice209ok@yahoo.com; Co-Conservation Chair Tom McClure caddo716@hotmail.com; Education Chair: Fred Paillet, education@ozarksociety.net; Community Engagement Chair: Lowell Collins ossugarcreek@gmail.com,
Membership Chair: Martha Morris osmembership3@ozarksociety.net
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MISSOURI: Alyssa Lindsay alyssalindsay@gmail.com
LOUISIANA: Sandy Roerig sandra.roerig@lsuhs.edu; Karen Pitts, tuffenufchuck@aol.com.
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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, 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.