



OZARK HIGHLANDS TRAIL ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS, INC.

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March 2021 Bulletin

From the President

Wow. To say the last several weeks were unprecedented would be an understatement. I hope everyone managed to survive the extreme cold with no personal and little, if any, property damage. It was certainly pretty, if any of you managed to get out in it. Covid-19 numbers here in Arkansas are improving and we are making progress on vaccinations. I sincerely hope that the Boston Mountain Chapter can resume monthly meetings in September. Now that the official start of Spring is just 2 weeks away, I wish you all many hours enjoying trails wherever you may find yourselves. **Steven Parker, OHTA President**

A little Rock House history

I was excited to learn some history behind the Rock House near Mile 35 and wanted to share.

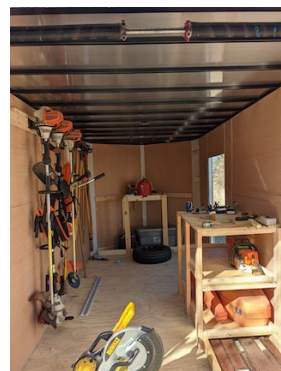
James F. Owen built the rock house on property he owned back in the 1920's. He would stay in it while he cruised his property marking trees to be cut, which were then sent to his brother's railroad tie company in Mississippi. His descendants regularly made pilgrimages to visit the Rock House and later, sold the property to the U.S. Forest Service for inclusion in the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest. Mr. Owen's great-grandson is a member of OHTA today and is an avid hiker and backpacker on the OHT.

Fun Stuff

At the OHTA Board's strategic planning retreat last September, the Board decided we should purchase a cargo trailer to:

- 1) store all the tools, equipment, supplies and paraphernalia OHTA owns to reduce the burden on the Maintenance Coordinator to store this stuff personally; and
- 2) transport such equipment to work sites when needed.

After months of shopping and searching, we recently purchased a trailer and it came back from the graphics shop on March 1st. We are continuing to build out and outfit the interior to meet our needs. But we could not be more pleased with how it looks and the promotional benefits we will receive when others see this out on the road.



April is Take A Kid Hiking Month

Once again, the OHTA Board has declared April as Take A Kid Hiking Month. Outdoor exercise being one of the safer things we can do in these times is all the more reason to take a kid hiking. We are not planning any organized hikes. However, we encourage everyone to introduce a young acquaintance to the pleasures of hiking and backpacking. Be safe, practice social distancing and avoid crowded trails. But do your part to encourage a young person's passion for hiking.

Trail Building Opportunities

We have a couple of trail building opportunities coming up. Ken Smith and his crew began work in 2005 on the section of Buffalo River Trail/Ozark Highlands Trail (BRT/OHT) between US-65 and AR-14. There is one final 1/4-mile piece in the middle - between Red Bluff and South Maumee Road - that was just cleared for construction last November. Once this is done the National Park Service will likely declare the trail to be officially open. You can join in the fun for a day, a weekend, or more with the Ozark Society's Buffalo River Trail crew (aka Ken's Krewe) March 26 - April 2 to push this project to the finish line.

The primary job will be building a .25-mile section of trail near Little Rocky Creek. This will involve digging tread across a slope, building 50-75 feet of steps up and down a slope, and constructing a stone walkway across a perennially-wet area, so there is something for everyone. The National Park Service (NPS) provides the tools though you can bring your own if you prefer. Participants should bring mask(s), hand sanitizer, food, water, work gloves, and a daypack to carry all your stuff. Safety glasses are recommended and will be required for some tasks (like pounding on rocks). While working, a mask will probably be unnecessary if you're able to maintain some distance but some tasks will require working closely with others so a mask will be required then. Participants will need to sign a NPS Volunteer Agreement.

Most of Ken's Krewe will be camping at Tyler Bend and that is an option for you as well. If you're not camping with us you can either meet us there (by 8:00AM) and go the job site with us each day or meet us at the site (exact time & location to be determined soon). Contact Michael Reed merreed@runbox.com for more info or to confirm participation.

Finally, April 10th (possibly the 11th as well), a small crew (6-10) will do some work in the Panther-Robinson area along Lake Norfolk. The team will be scouting trail, doing some trail finishing/lopping/compacting work and planning future work. Depending on time constraints, the group may go by Bean Bluff to do some work as well. Contact James Hodges at jjhodges93@yahoo.com to sign up.

Leadership Opportunities

We will be conducting our annual board elections in a couple of months. If you are interested in possibly serving as a Board member, please send an email to President Steven Parker at slparkerlaw@gmail.com to inquire or to throw your hat into the ring.