



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

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MAY NEWSLETTER

– The Trail Ahead –

OHTA Election 2022

The terms of three of our board members expire on June 30, 2022, and the deadline for nominations for candidates to fill those positions was April 23, 2022.

The election to fill the three board positions will be held from May 16 through May 22, and we have three candidates in the running. Each OHTA member for whom our Treasurer has a valid email address will receive one ballot via email. The 12 members for whom we do not have a valid email address, you will be mailed a postcard on May 9 which you can return for the purpose of casting your vote.

OHTA Annual Meeting and Feast

Mark it on your calendar: June 4, 2022; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Buffalo Point Campground – Pavilion 3

Itinerary:

- 10 a.m. to noon – arrive, visit/network, meal preparation
- Noon – brief talk from a guest speaker followed by chow time
- 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. – annual meeting and report to membership
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National Trails Day

National Trails Day is June 4th, 2022, and everyone is encouraged to celebrate trails by taking a kid hiking!! As always, OHTA celebrates April as TAKE A KID HIKING MONTH, but since the OHTA annual meeting is on June 4 this year at Buffalo Point Pavilion 3, there are some great trails for you and the kids you bring along to enjoy. Introducing children to the joys of hiking at an early age is one of the best ways to ensure we spread the joy of the outdoor life to those who may otherwise miss out on this adventure!

– The Trail Behind –

Maintenance Notes

In January 2022, Jim Halpin of Tulsa, Oklahoma, completed 30 years as a maintainer. In honor of his accomplishment, he will receive an OHTA cooler and a \$200 gift card from Pack Rat. Jim, thank you for all you have done for the OHT through the years! We all really appreciate you!!

As is almost always the case, we have sections of trail awaiting adopters. If you're interested in adopting a section of the OHT to maintain, just go to our website (ozarkhighlandstrail.com), click on the Maintenance tab, and you will find the link to the map showing available sections. Or, you can email our Maintenance Coordinator at ohmaintenance@gmail.com if you'd prefer. Spring maintenance is underway, so if you see a maintainer out on the trail, please give them your thanks. They are volunteering their time to make the trail worthy of hiking.

Brewha Bushwhack

On April 9, 2022, Chris Adams, Steven Parker and Norma Senyard staffed the OHTA booth at the Brewha Bushwhack at Byrd's Adventure Center. Hundreds of folks stopped by to say 'hi' and learn more about the trail, and a big bonus for the organization was that our Maintenance Coordinator, Steven Parker, recruited two new maintainers during the event. Thank you Chris, Norma, and Steven for representing our organization so very well!

Adopt-A-Highway

PIGTRAIL CLEANUP – Also on April 9, 2022, four OHTA veteran members descended on our organization's adopted Highway 23 mile running south from Cherry Bend trailhead to the scenic overlook. Nearly 10 large bags of aluminum cans, glass and plastic bottles, and a bunch of assorted trash were plucked from the sides of the roadway and left at a central location for an ARDOT road crew to haul away. We want to extend a huge thank you to Norma Senyard (yes, she was a very busy person that day), Deb LeMaster, Phil Brown, and the event organizer, Mike LeMaster (great job, Mike!). A cameo appearance was made by Chris Adams who stopped by on his way down to Byrd's Adventure Center for the Brewha Bushwhack (Chris was also a very busy person that day). The OHTA is obligated to ARDOT to repeat the one-mile cleanup four times annually, so be checking out the Newsletter for the date of the next big cleanup. The OHTA can and will continue making a huge difference along the Pigtrail with your help!!

Sawyer Recertification/Certification Training

This past weekend, a group of six OHTA maintainers had the good fortune of receiving some great training for sawyers. The training took place at the USFS Office in Ozark, Arkansas, and started indoors with a morning of classroom challenges followed by lunch. The participants then drove to White Rock for some supervised field training followed by tree felling and crosscut sawing demonstrations put on by Steve Parker, OHTA Maintenance Coordinator, and USFS instructor, Matt Ferguson. Altogether, three recertifications and three new certifications were undertaken by OHTA maintainers, and everyone passed! Congratulations to all! Job well done!!

– Heading to the Trail –

Campground Proven Camper – This Could Be Your Ride to the Trail

2000 Ford E-350 Sportmobile camper for sale – \$15,000 (negotiable). This camper sleeps 2 adults, and comes with all sleeping gear. Everything works – propane furnace, fresh and gray water system, air conditioning, and more! Meticulously maintained. Remanufactured engine, very low miles, practically new tires, and original paint in excellent condition. 172,000 miles. Most recent trip was to eastern Missouri in September 2021. Can be seen in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The vehicle has the distinction of being on the scene when the OHT Sylamore section was first explored, and it was there for the entirety of that section's construction. What a story it would tell if it could only talk! Want to know more? Just email Duane at ozarktraveler1@att.net.

– On the Trail –

From the Northeastern End

Most everyone has heard of Lake Fort Smith, the western terminus of the Ozark Highlands Trail (OHT), and many folks have started their OHT experience at that trailhead. On to the east is Woolum, and traveling even further to the east is the Matney Knob Trailhead (TH). But what lies beyond Matney? Not nearly as many of our members know. That is about to change!

Starting with this newsletter, we're all going to learn more about the section of trail nicknamed the Dam to Dawt Mill section. The real name, you ask? Well, it is the Ozark Keystone Trail (OKT). Once completed, it will run for nearly 100 miles and serve as the connecting link (keystone) between the OHT and the Ozark Trail (OT) in Missouri to form what will eventually be the Trans Ozark Trail (TOT).

The Corps of Engineers (COE) is the federal land manager of the strip of publicly owned land heading north from Lake Norfolk Dam in Arkansas to Dawt Mill in Missouri which is located on the North Fork River. And it is the COE that has granted formal approval to the Ozarks Keystone Trail Endowment (OKTE), the public charity overseeing the design, construction, and maintenance of the OKT.

The OKT came to life in 2008 primarily through the efforts of visionary, Jackson Rhoades. Mr. Rhoades is quick to note, though, that his dreams for the trail took on a life of their own as a result of conversations he had with Tim Ernst (known as the founder of the OHT), site visits with Ken Eastin (professional trail architect), and cooperation from Jon Hiser and Tracy Fancher (trail enthusiasts who expertly led the Corps' local office).

More than 30 miles of the OKT have been constructed, and approval from the COE to construct the remaining sections has been granted. In its current state, OKT adventuring includes hiking, biking, running, swimming, paddling, hunting, and fishing. But its primary focus is on partnering with trail-side schools and communities to increase activity on the trail while fostering career, financial, social, physical, and community well-being. For all it is and will be, the OKT shares common ground with the OHT: horses and motorized vehicles are prohibited.

So, here we have a start in our understanding of the OKT. Will there be more to learn? You bet!! And if you want to know more about the OKT and how important it is to assuring continuous trail from Lake Fort Smith TH to the Missouri border, be looking for the “*On the Trail*” section in future newsletters.

For now, here's wishing us a big ol' bunch of good health so we can all HIKE ONWARD!!

Good Break Time Reads

The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees by Douglas W. Tallamy
Adventure Inward: A Risk Taker's Book of Quotes by Jonathan Wunrow