



NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

(Maintenance Celebration Edition)

OZARK HIGHLANDS TRAIL ASSOCIATION

OHTA's Mission is to Build, Maintain, Promote, and ENJOY the Ozark Highlands Trail.

– Overseeing the Trail –

OHTA Board of Director for 2023-2024

Phil Brown (President/Eastern Chapter Rep)	Wade Colwell (Interim Boston Mountain Chapter Rep)
Adam Higinbothom (Vice-president)	Miles Jandrasic (Maintenance Director-West Section)
Brent Umphlett (Secretary)	Tiffany Mallard (Social Media and Promotions Coordinator)
Todd Wells (Treasurer)	Peter Cooper (Interim Member)
Chris Adams (Maintenance Coordinator)	

OHTA's Next Board of Director's Meeting

The first OHTA board meeting of the season is on the schedule, and all members (prospective members, too) of the organization are encouraged to attend. The meeting will be held in Harrison in hopes of encouraging folks from both ends of the OHT's vast expanse to attend. The event will include a potluck dinner, so everyone is encouraged to bring some sort of food item/dish. In addition, Elizabeth and Josh Granderson will be doing a presentation (please see below).

Here are the details:

Day and Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023

Time: 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Location:

- John Paul Hammerschmidt Conference Center, North Arkansas College (south campus)
- 1515 Pioneer Drive, Harrison, Arkansas 72601

Event Agenda:

2:30 to 3:45 – board of directors meeting

3:45 to 4:30 – presentation by the Grandersons titled:

- “Intentionally Outside: How we seek to plan our family life around outdoor experiences.”

4:30 to 5:30 – potluck meal and social time

If you have any questions about this board and membership meeting, please feel free to email Phil Brown at brown.philip9@gmail.com.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

– Looking Ahead on the Trail –

Hare Mountain Hike-In Is Just Around the Corner

Can you believe it?! The celebration of OHTA's 39th birthday is all but here. Yes, if your bag is not packed, now's the time to get your gear in it and prepare to head to the top of Hare Mountain. With there being a

potluck dinner the evening of Saturday, November 4, it will certainly be interesting to see just how creative folks can get with camp cooking! Oh, yes, please bring plenty of water for yourself—there’s none at the top.

Now if you’ve never been to the camping area at Hare and wonder about the accommodations, it is strictly primitive, so please bring your own. Oh, and there is plenty of room for lots of tents, so come one, come all!! That said, it’s time to get to packing! Hope to see you there!

- Looking Back on the Trail -

2023’s Maintenance Base Camps

This year’s three Maintenance Base Camps are in the rearview mirror, but the results are out there for all to see! If you missed them, you missed a whale of a team effort to improve trail conditions, eat great food, and the opportunity to spend time around the campfire with the fantastic groups of folks who made it all happen!

In 2022, the first year OHTA had three base camps, we learned a great deal about what is necessary to make the experience productive and rewarding for all who attend. This year’s series of base camps helped

us develop an even better understanding of what it takes to assure the maintenance experience is the best it can be. What has been learned is being discussed among those who are primarily responsible for organizing our base camps, and that knowledge is being factored into the planning for 2024’s maintenance base camps.

2023’s maintenance extravaganza saw some firsts. Specifically, two of the base camps had food preparation/camp tending crews.

At the Mulberry Mountain camp, Bill and Donna Hignite and Dana Cable cooked up and dished out some superb meals and made the camp run effortlessly for those who went out each day to spruce

West OHT- Mulberry Mtn Base Camp			
	# volunteers	Miles of Trail	Volunteer Hours
Friday Totals	30	19.7	220
Saturday Totals	32	29	221
Sunday Totals	17	8	74
West Mulberry CAMP Totals	79	56.7	515
East OHT- Richland Creek Base Camp			
	# volunteers	Miles of Trail	Volunteer Hours
Friday Totals	20	21.5	154
Saturday Totals	27	18	209
Sunday Totals	15	5.5	66
East Richland Creek CAMP Totals	62	45	429
North OHT- Fifty Six Base Camp			
	# volunteers	Miles of Trail	Volunteer Hours
Friday Totals	16	13	109
Saturday Totals	20	13.5	137
Sunday Totals	16	4	61
North - Fifty Six CAMP Totals	52	30.5	307
	# volunteers	Miles of Trail	Volunteer Hours
Overall Totals	193	132.2	1251



Fifty-Six camp crew, Ryenn and Dave

up the trail. At the Fifty-Six camp, Dave Weiss and his 17-year-old granddaughter, Ryenn Lawing, put together some delicious home-cooked meals, kept the showering and toileting facility in tip-top shape, and allowed those doing trail maintenance to kick back and doing nothing more than enjoy the experience when

off the trail. To the five of you, the OHTA owes a huge round of appreciation! We couldn't have asked for more!! THANK YOU ALL!!!

Of course, it would be remiss to leave out the Richland base camp experience. Though a team to oversee the food service and camp maintenance end of things could not be put together, several folks stepped up to the plate and pitched in at various times to prepare food and tidy up camp. One person, though, stepped up noticeably in several ways, and that was the East Section's Maintenance Director, Sean Prewitt. Not only did he cook up tailor-made burgers for the entire crew one night, he took on several tasks that made the job for OHTA's Maintenance Coordinator, Chris Adams, much less taxing. So to Sean we say, THANK YOU!!

Saturday evening at Richland gave us all a very special surprise with the arrival in camp of a thru-hiker who traveled all the way from Switzerland to hike the OHT. Her name is Sophie Dumortier, and she spent the evening enjoying dinner with all who were there.

Many of us also had the good fortune of sharing conversations with her and learning about the journey she is on, the life she lives, and what she was experiencing on the trail. It was one of those encounters we are fortunate to have all too



OHTA's Swiss Thru-Hiker and Maintenance Coordinator

seldom. Sunday morning Sophie was up early, and after grabbing a bite to eat, it was trail time for her once again. On Tuesday, Sophie reportedly strolled into Woolum where she caught a shuttle provided by our very own Mike Lemaster, and off to Memphis they traveled for the next leg of her adventure. Word has it, she is back in Switzerland where she is likely planning her next excursion. Sophie, THANK YOU! It was a pleasure for us all to have the opportunity to share some time with you!



Dale White in the field

Friday morning at Fifty-Six brought us all its own special surprise with the sudden appearance of a gentleman by the name of Dale White who introduced himself as a photographer. He went on to say he was hoping to join our crews on the trail and in camp throughout the day and again on Saturday in his quest to cover the natural and human histories of the region and "where we are today and hope to be tomorrow." He clearly explained that what he gained from his interactions with those at the camp he planned to use in producing a documentary.

Since Dale's proposal sounded like a win for everyone, he was welcomed into the fold and spent the next two days on the trail with members of the maintenance team. During the evenings, he filmed, recorded, and observed the folks in camp as we all dined and lounged around the campfire.

His presence did not end with his departure from camp. Since then, he has shared with OHTA well over 100 of the photos he took and gave permission to the organization to use them in whatever manner we choose. Dale, we wish you the best in your quest and want you to know how much we appreciate you! THANK YOU!!

Now you might be asking yourself if those mentioned above were the only folks who made this year's maintenance base camps the amazing successes they were. The answer, of course, is of course not! So who or what else played a role? Well, for starters, the United States Forest Service deserves a round of applause for making it possible for there to be a trail like ours and for all they did behind the scenes in providing OHTA with the necessary reservations at Richland. And while we're on the subject of base camp accommodations, enough good cannot be said about the generosity shown us all by Dewey and Amber Pattin down at Mulberry Mountain Lodging and Events! Saying their place was superb does not do it justice!



Drawing for prizes around the campfire

(photo courtesy of Dale White)

Added to the list of those who welcomed our organization without hesitation are the incredible people at Great Oaks Cabins in Fifty-Six, Arkansas. What a sweet location and remarkably wonderful facility! To you all, we say THANKS!!!



Chris Adams overseeing some sawyer action

(photo courtesy of Dale White)

The list of those deserving special recognition, praise, and humongous sums of appreciation is terribly incomplete if we fail to mention the 62 dedicated volunteer participants who went out on the trail and lopped, trimmed, cut, repaired tread, hung blazes, and removed brush. What this team accomplished in a total of nine days is nothing short of mind boggling. Ya'll were and are special beyond what words can explain!

THANK YOU, ALL!!!!

It's been said time and again that a team is only as good as its leader. Well, in the case of the OHTA, our team is nearing greatness, but we have a ways

to go before we manifest the quality exuded by our leader, our Maintenance Coordinator, Chris Adams. He defies description! Were you to attempt a conversation with him about what it is that makes him what he is, he would likely steer your attention toward the examples of leadership shown him by his mentors, the late Roy Senyard and OHTA's immediate past maintenance coordinator, Steven Parker. Were those two incredible maintenance coordinators? Without a shadow of a doubt the answer is YES! Chris was a very observant, diligent student who learned well from the best and is taking the role of maintenance coordinator to new levels. In the process, the OHT is becoming a better trail, and the OHTA is becoming a stronger, more productive, and enjoyable organization! Chris, from the depths of OHTA's soul comes a super huge

THANKS!!!

We really appreciate you!!

And the Maintenance Rolls On

So, you may find yourself thinking that all of the OHT's sprucing-up issues are resolved till next year's maintenance events. Well, that couldn't be further from reality. We have a long and ever-expanding trail, and this beast has some hygiene needs that are unbelievable! With that awareness in mind, several crews

headed back to the trail the Saturday following culmination of the Fifty-Six base camp to tackle issues along stretches of the trail that would be part of the course for the Hare Mountain 100. Three sections were attacked by teams that started at the two ends of each section and worked their way toward one another till they met. The experience revealed that the task was much larger than had been imagined and that to whip the trail back into an acceptable state would require crews performing maintenance throughout most of the following week. Once again, maintainers rose to the occasion, and what was accomplished is nothing short of remarkable! Over 100 deadfalls were cleared from the trail, and stretches that had not been groomed since who knows when were restored to look as good as new. It was a herculean effort put forth by a group of folks among whom were six who really, really stepped up to the plate. Since we're acknowledging extraordinary efforts put forth by any and all in this special maintenance issue, we want to say **THANK YOU** to Steven Parker, Wade Colwell Bob Robinson, Mike Lemaster, Bob Cable, and Jim Warnock. Ya'll are a team of super individuals!



Stephen Lagasse making it look great

(photo courtesy of Dale White)

And one more note of recognition is due, and that goes to Stephen Lagasse who attended all three of OHTA's 2023 maintenance base camps and the maintenance event on the Saturday following the Fifty-Six base camp. That's real dedication given he lives clear down in Heber Springs! Finally, it is important not to forget one more special person, Sarah Johnston, who traveled all the way from Little Rock to participate in each of the three base camps! In fact, she traveled all the way from down south to participate in each base camp despite the fact that twice she had to be back for work the very next day in Little Rock. To each of you, OHTA cannot express enough gratitude, so we hope a heartfelt **THANK YOU** from us all will suffice!

Tiffany Mallard gettin' it done

(photo courtesy of Dale White)



Maintenance Tips From an Old Pro

Bob Cable is a long-time member of OHTA and has volunteered as a maintainer on the OHT for more than 10 years. So when he asked if he could share a few tips on how to more effectively control the abundance of saplings growing on or too near the trail, was anyone going to object? The answer is, no one did, so here's some very useful information from Bob to consider when you're out maintaining your section of trail:

These are just some observations I've made over several years of trail maintenance that apply to brush cutting using a weedeater, rambo, or hedge trimmer. These are not meant to be rules or even recommendations.

Trees start growing in the spring, using energy stored in their roots or seed or nut if it's their first year. They do almost all their growth in the spring then absorb sunlight, water, etc., through the summer, storing energy in their roots for the next spring. They go dormant in the fall and winter and wait for the correct temperature, amount of sunlight, moisture, or whatever it takes to help them decide to continue the cycle. If a small tree is cut in early spring, it will continue growing and a week or three later it will regrow as if it was never cut. Cutting the tree in late spring when most of the growth is finished will kill it

because there isn't enough energy left in the roots to keep it alive, and there are no leaves to create more growth. Cutting saplings mid-summer allows them time to build stores of energy in the roots, and that is apt to produce regrowth the following spring. So, by maintaining in late spring (yes, it's hotter and buggy) the trail is more likely to stay open longer, and there will be less growth, overall.

Now as for fall maintenance, it is much easier to perform after a heavy frost because the frost kills the grassy stuff that is typically unnecessary to cut. Unfortunately, the hiking season usually starts before we get that first hard frost.

When it comes to lopping, things are a bit different in that we're often trimming limbs that are beginning to encroach on the trail space. The time of year isn't as much of a factor for this. As is true with saplings, so it is with lopping a tree that is an inch or so in diameter – it is best when done in late spring. Cutting it in early spring will result in the stump sending up a bunch of new shoots, and those can be more difficult to deal with on later maintenance trips. To reduce the maintenance problems posed by those shoots, it is important to lop the tree as close to the ground as is possible. When lopping a limb that is sticking out over the trail it's best to cut it where that limb forks from a larger limb or from the trunk of the tree. Cutting it mid-shaft is unsightly and leaves a stick poking out that could snag someones pack or worse yet, injure an eye or face.

Now, go forth and have a safe and productive maintenance trip!

Desiring to be a Maintainer

Are you considering becoming a maintainer and adopting a section of the OHT you can whip into shape and feel good about? Well, to help you along in your deliberations, here are some requirements for making that dream become your reality. Requirements, you say? Yes, if you want to be an OHTA maintainer, and you're willing to comply with these, you're just the person we're looking for! Here are the requirements:

- Be a member of the OHTA
- Attend and participate in an OHTA Maintenance Base Camp and/or a maintenance workday OR help a "veteran" OHT maintainer work on a section for a day . . . or more if you desire
- Commit to maintaining your adopted section at least twice a year – once in late September or October, once in the spring, and again in times of need (i.e. ice storms, heavy snow, tornado)
- After each maintenance trip to your section, submit a [Maintenance Report](#) (please bookmark this for future use)
- Read and follow the maintenance guidelines found in the [Adopter's Handbook](#)



Preparing to learn the fundamentals of maintenance

(photo courtesy of Dale White)

– Looking At the Trail –

Maintenance Opportunity with the OKTE

Chances are that when someone considers adopting a section of the OHT, not one thought is given to that section being located somewhere along the 85 miles of the OHT Norfolk Lake section. Yes, there is such a thing, and it is comprised of the Norfolk Trail (13 miles), Ozarks Keystone Trail (construction in progress), and David's Trail (18 miles). Yes, believe it or not, there is a section of trail in the easternmost expanses of the OHT that could be yours to adopt and maintain!

Oh, so you know nothing about the area, let alone where the trail exists? Well, there's an event coming soon that will introduce you to the trail and area just in time for your entire existence to become exponentially more robust! Here's the info sent to us by Jackson Rhoades of the Ozarks Keystone Trail Endowment (OKTE):

You are invited Saturday morning, 8:30-noon, November 4, to a special trail maintenance gathering. A sack lunch will be provided. Invite your friends, and please forward this email invitation.

Ozarks Keystone Trail Endowment (aka David's Trail Foundation) is slowly constructing and completing the eventual 85-mile hiking trail along the Norfolk Lake shoreline and adjacent forest from the Norfolk Dam to Dawt Mill, Missouri. This is the section that will connect the Ozark Highlands Trail (OHT) in Arkansas and the Ozark Trail (OT) in Missouri for what will eventually be the TransOzark Trail (TOT).

OKTE is hosting this event to discover and encourage a community of individuals and groups interested in adopting sections of the trail to keep clear for kids in grades K through 12 and for public enjoyment.

Individuals and groups will rendezvous between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. at the FSIS Group – Raymond James parking lot (Financial Services & Investment Strategies); 1216 Highway 62E; Mountain Home, Arkansas 72653 (across from Pizza Hut) to coordinate efforts and pick up OKTE trail tools, if needed.

A dozen nippers, loppers, shears, and a weed whip (no digging or gas powered tools at this event) are available for your use. Of course, if you choose to you can bring your own!

The objectives for this event are:

- Develop community fellowship
- Clear weeds, sticks, stones, and encroaching plants from the trail to encourage K-12 hikers
- Enjoy being active, outside, and on the trail!

Please RSVP if you want a sack lunch: ozarkskeystonetrail@gmail.com (870-701-5160)

Return borrowed tools to the FSIS Group parking lot on Saturday between noon and 1 p.m.

This event is an opportunity to meet some great folks from the community and surrounding area, contribute to the beauty of the OKT and David's Trail, learn more about our remarkable trail and the surrounding area, and have what is certain to be a wonderful time!. Hope to see you there!

On behalf of Jackson Rhoades, the OHTA thanks you all for your interest in this project, the OKTE, and the OHTA!!

- Getting and Keeping Yourself on the Trail -

Are you longing to become part of something larger than yourself, say an organization, perhaps a trail organization? Well if you are, the OHTA may be just the one you're looking for? To learn whether this could be the case for you, simply click on: <https://ozarkhighlandstrail.com/membership/>, and explore—find what OHTA has to offer you! Doing so could put you just a step or two away from becoming a member of this fine organization! Go ahead; you have nothing to lose! It could very well prove to be the best step you've ever taken!

You say you're already a member but cannot remember whether your membership is current and don't have records of when you last paid membership dues? Well, we can help you figure this out. All that's necessary for you to do is click on: ohata@ozarkhighlandstrail.com, and ask us to figure it out for you. We'll get back to you promptly with the information necessary for you know whether your dues are current or past due.

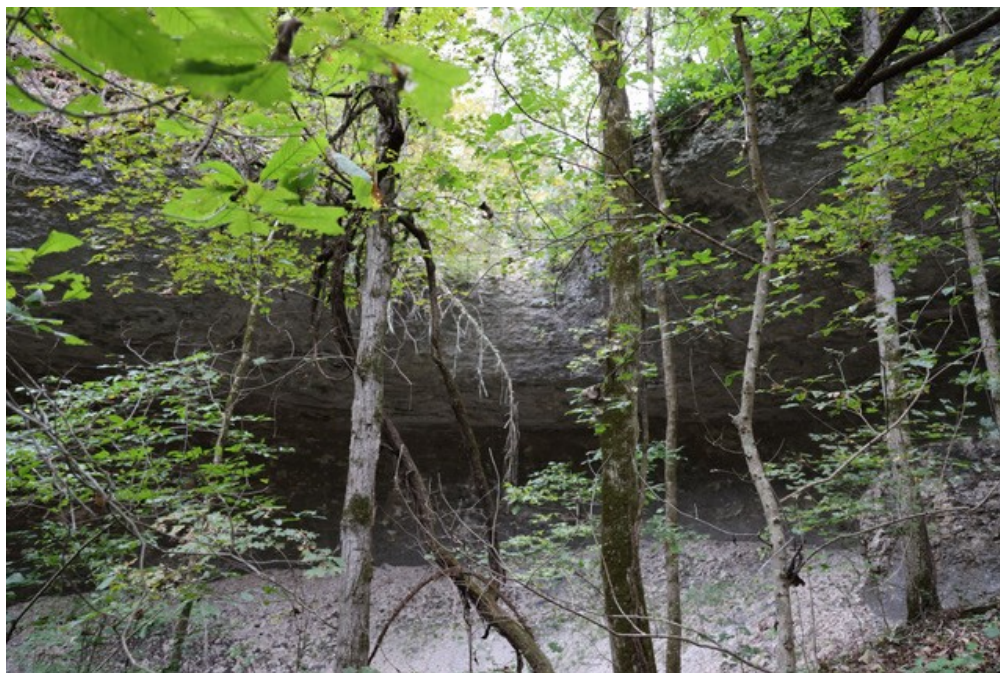
If you want to renew your membership, simply click on: <https://ozarkhighlandstrail.com/membership/>. It's that easy! Go ahead; give it a shot. You won't regret renewing your membership!

- Relaxing Trailside with Interesting Breaktime Reads -

Thru-Hiking Will Break Your Heart: An Adventure on the Pacific Crest Trail – Carrot Quinn

Outsider: An Old Man, a Mountain and the Search for a Hidden Past – Brett Popplewell

PLEASE NOTE: If you have a read or two you'd like to share with others who enjoy trail time, please send the title and author's name to ohata@ozarkhighlandstrail.com, and it will appear in the next edition of the OHTA Newsletter.



Somewhere in the Sylamore section of the OHT

(photo courtesy of Dale White)

**As you weave your way through the colors of the season,
be mindful to set aside the time to stop and become one with that in which you are immersed.
You may just want to share the memory of it with others on your journey through life.**

Quotes for the month

“Live your life by a compass, not a clock”

Erica Jong

“Travel far enough to meet yourself!”

Unknown

Until the trails we travel alone become the trail that brings us together,

HIKE ONWARD!!

**YOUR ASSOCIATION WITH THE OHT MAKES THIS THE ASSOCIATION IT IS!
THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING A PART OF THE OZARK HIGHLANDS TRAIL ASSOCIATION!!**