



DECEMBER 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 Jandrsevich (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

As was noted in the OHTA November Newsletter, 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. Again, the meeting will be held in Harrison in hopes of making it easier for folks from both ends of 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: (please take note of the changes in the order in which things will occur)

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 5:30 – all you can eat from the potluck spread
- 4ish to 5ish – the Grandersons will give their presentation titled: “Intentionally Outside: How we seek to plan our family life around outdoor experiences.”

We will have access to the conference room and its resources at 1:30 p.m., so if you have food you need to warm up, there is a microwave, or if you have a crock pot, we can plug it in and get the food to warming. There is also a refrigerator, so if you have food items you want to keep cold, we can put them in it till serving time. If you want there to be coffee and have a big coffee maker, please bring it. There will be a can of coffee we can use, but there is no reliable coffee maker in the facility.

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 Back on the Trail -

Hare Mountain 100

For those of you who may be wondering why nothing was reported on the outcome of the Hare Mountain 100, the reason is simply that the reporter overlooked it. In hopes of remedying this oversight, here's what we've learned about it.



OHTA runners' aid station at Hare Mountain 100

With just one runner left in the race at that time and the weather being less than pleasant, they packed up the station and left soon after the one participant passed through.

OHTA owes Randy, Shane, and Mandy a big round of applause! THANK YOU, Randy, for overseeing the entire project, and our hats are off to Shane and Mandy for all of the assistance they provided for Randy! Each of you did a fantastic job and represented our organization very well! We all appreciate you and what you did!

Hare Mountain Hike-In

The Hare Mountain Hike-In of 2023 is in the bag, but there are rumors circulating that plans are already being made for next year's Hike-In to be held on Saturday and Sunday, November 2nd and 3rd. We have nothing firm on this at this time, so stay tuned. There will be announcements as the event draws nearer!

If you missed this year's event, you simply do not know what you missed. It was announced that it would include a potluck meal, and did it ever. It was amazing how much food folks hauled to the summit, and it was all so very good. There was everything from snack foods to a big pot of stew. In fact, there was so much food, some had to be hauled out! Oh, and there was even a surprise snack waiting for one of the nighttime grazers—a hornet snacking on a pumpkin cookie found its way into the mouth of one of the campers, and it delivered a nice little sting to the inner lip of the surprised diner. Fortunately, a couple Benadryl were quickly administered, and the swelling was minimal. We're still awaiting the feedback on whether hornets taste like chicken.

It was announced in the OHTA November Newsletter that there is no water at the top of Hare Mountain. Well, apologies are due for this misstatement. Indeed, there is a water well left from an old homestead, and

OHTA had an aid station set up for the runners on each of the two days the race was held. The first of those two stations was placed at the road crossing on Moonhull Mountain. Randy Soeung took the lead in running that aid station, and he recruited two folks from the running community to assist him, Shane Capps and Mandy Ferguson. Numerous runners made it through the aid station on day one, but there were also several runners who decided to end their race right there. Randy and Shane moved the aid station to Black Mountain for the second day of the

it provided an abundance of water for all who had a way of filtering, boiling, or treating it before make use of it.

The Hare Mountain Hike-In crew minus a handful (photo courtesy of Jim Warnock)

Though just about 30 folks and three dogs camped overnight, there was no shortage of room for tents to be pitched on nearly flat ground. And making the experience all the more pleasurable was the beautiful weather that graced us. Mother Nature behaved her best for this year's event, and to her we are eternally grateful!



As had been anticipated, two awards were given at this year's Hike-In: the Trail Ranger Award and the Dawna Robinson Volunteer of the Year Award. The photos below reveal this year's recipients.

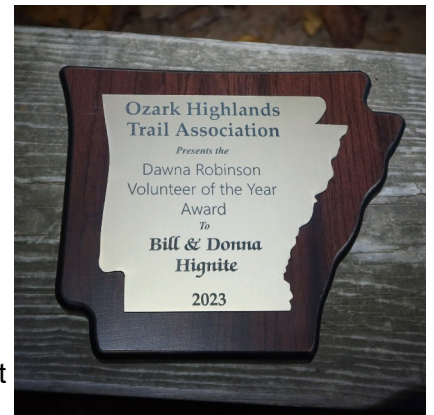
(photo courtesy of Jim Warnock)



The Trail Ranger Award is given to a tenured, "can-do and does" member whose efforts as a volunteer and attitude toward others contribute significantly to the overall health of the organization and the OHT. As can be seen, Wade Colwell was recognized as fully deserving of this year's award, and to you, Wade, we say THANK YOU!!!

The Dawna Robinson Volunteer of the Year Award is one given to any member who exhibits spirited enthusiasm, dedication to the betterment of the OHTA, positively impacts other members,

(photo courtesy of Jim Warnock)



and works tirelessly on the OHT and/or OHTA activities as a whole. This year's winner was actually a couple, Billy and Donna Hignite! Their contributions to the OHTA and the trail extend back more years than most of us have been members of this fine organization, and to them we extend a very heartfelt THANK YOU!!!

Awards time! (photo courtesy of Jim Warnock)

Finally, as was stated in last month's newsletter, this was a celebration of OHTA's 39th birthday. But was it truly the 39th or the 42nd? As was pointed out, the OHTA was actually started in 1981, but its Articles of Incorporation were signed on July 10, 1984. So the debate lives on, but any way you cut it, we have a heck of an organization!!



– Looking Ahead on the Trail –

Frost Fest 2024

Frost Fest 2024 is fast approaching, and we have received word that it is scheduled to take place on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Fayetteville, Arkansas. This year's event will host over 2000 attendees, well over 50 breweries from across the region, food trucks, bands and vendors for what will be a true celebration of craft beer, art, and community. It is important to note that Frost Fest will take place regardless of the weather. In other words, it will not be canceled due to rain, snow, ice, cold, or shine. And remember, it is a BYOP* happening! Tickets are already on sale, so get yours while the gettin' is good by clicking here: <https://stubs.net/event/5664/frost-fest-2024-outdoor-beer-festival>

So, you may be wondering why Frost Fest is such a big deal to the OHTA? Well, the answer is that it is an event that, since 2016, has been presented by Fossil Cove Brewing Company of Fayetteville. Fossil Cove views Frost Fest not just as a one-day outdoor beer festival but as a way of supporting organizations they believe make our region a better place to live. Well, we're very pleased that for the second year straight, OHTA has been chosen as one of those organizations! Yes, that means all of you who have made this organization a part of your lives have been instrumental in it becoming an organization deserving recognition! So a big THANKS goes out to all of our members! Of course, we would be remiss to do anything less than shout out: THANK YOU FOSSIL COVE!!!

We hope to see you all there!

* bring your own pretzels

– Looking At the Trail –

This just in from Jackson Rhoades and the Ozarks Keystone Trail group! Work is continuing, and plans for another maintenance weekend for completed sections of this section of the OHT are underway. If you want to be a part of this endeavor, then please read what follows. If you have any other questions, please contact Jackson at: ozarkskeystonetrail@gmail.com

Here's the important info:

Thanks so much for your help and enthusiasm!

We are working through the various options and ideas to eventually learn how to arrange and organize our Saturday Trail Maintenance Days to balance the joy of being active, outside, and on the trail with doing the work that matters most. I understand some of you have extensive experience, so please share your suggestions and concerns.

We usually begin our once-per-year machine-based leaf blowing in mid-December to catch as much of the leaf drop as possible. Our Cyclone blower fits on one of the small trail tractors, and we ordinarily clear with machines from near the Three Oaks Resort trolley with the loco ropes, close to CR 812 in Gamaliel, back to CR806, Bidwell, Panther Trailhead, Panther Campground, Rocking Chair, and finish up on the Robinson Point Loop trail that's within the campground.

The Mule and walking tractor can also reduce the hiking load of leaf blowers. We certainly don't enjoy de-leaving the trail; however, the 50k David's Trail Endurance Run (1/20/2024) inspires us to be helpful as we promote outdoor recreation's community health and economic benefits. We prefer to mulch leaves in place, although that's proven challenging.

It helps the machines work faster and cover more miles if we can do the **light maintenance (LM)** of walking the sections and clearing encroaching plants & limbs, blowdowns, plus moving larger sticks and stones.

We'll need help with **weeds, leaves & light maintenance (W+L+LM)** on various sections:

- Red Bank to the Yellow Gate at Seward WMA on Driftwood Lane off Highway 101 near Gamaliel: **Leaves & Light Maintenance (L+LM)** - Mostly leaves using the Mule, Walking Tractor, or Hiking with a blower or weed whip.
- Seward's Yellow Gate to the "T" intersection in Seward - **Weeds, Leaves & Light Maintenance (W+L+LM)** using the Mule and towable mower.
- Seward's "T" intersection to CR815: **W+L+LM** using the walking tractor and/or hiking with a blower/brush mower
- CR 815 - CR 812 (CR812 access needs permission from the Take It Easy Resort owner): **W+L+LM**
- CR 812 to CR806 to CR807 to Bidwell/Highway 101 Bridge - **LM**
- Bidwell - Panther Campground to Highway 62 Bridge - **LM**
- Pather Campground/Hwy 62 Bridge to Rocking Chair - **LM**
- Rocking Chair to Robinson Point Parking Lot to Robinson Point Loop (within the park) - **LM**
- Robinson Point Parking Lot to the Yellow Gate at Lagoon Road (just off old Robinson Point Road) - **W+L+LM**
- Lagoon Road's Yellow Gate to CR386/Panther Creek Bridge - **W+L+LM**

We'll meet briefly at the FSISG-Raymond James office parking lot across from Pizza Hut in Mountain Home, Arkansas, between 8 and 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 2, 2023, primarily to check in and get volunteers for sections as some are longer and harder than others.

We'll have 15 healthy sack lunches (thanks to Nicole at Cotter Bridge Market) for those who plan to work longer and get hungry.

Thanks again for your help, encouragement, and enthusiasm!

Jackson

PS. On Sunday, December 3, 2023, we might try to clear Bean Bluff with hedge clippers and brush-mowers. We attempted, unsuccessfully, this with machines, so our second attempt will be a hike-and-carry for this short section. With some good weather luck, we hope to have the new north trail corridor cleared and bench-cut to the ArkMo state line by year-end, although rain, ice, mud, and steep stony terrain can slow construction down for a few months. The Red Bank Boat Launch Trailhead to the ArkMo state line will likely be 8-9 miles one way with only a few public access trailheads unless private landowners offer us free easements.

To all who choose to participate in this event, the OHTA says **THANK YOU!!**

- 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 a good fit 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 and will 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 to 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 –

The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell: A Novel – Robert Dugoni

The Trail: A Novel – Ethan Gallogly (Author), Jeremy Ashcroft (Illustrator)

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.

Takin' a break from OHT maintenance



(photo courtesy of Dale White)

May the memories of the day's trek warm you just enough through the long winter night that your sleeping bag and shelter provide all you need to sleep profoundly soundly and have remarkably wonderful dreams.

Quotes for the month

“Returning home is the most difficult part of long-distance hiking; You have grown outside the puzzle and your piece no longer fits.”

Cindy Ross

“The best thing one can do when it’s raining is to let it rain.”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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!!