



## JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER

### 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 2024-2025

Phil Brown, *President* (term on Board ends June 30, 2026)  
Adam Higinbothom, *Vice-President* (term on Board ends June 30, 2025)  
Todd Wells, *Treasurer* (term on Board ends June 30, 2025)  
Brent Umphlett, *Secretary* (term on Board ends June 30, 2027)  
Chris Adams, *Maintenance Coordinator* (term on Board ends June 30, 2026)  
Tiffany Mallard (term on Board ends June 30, 2026)  
Wade Colwell (term on Board ends June 30, 2027)  
Peter Cooper (Interim—when approved as board member, term on Board will end on June 30, 2025)  
Randy Soeung (term on Board ends June 30, 2027)

#### OHTA Board of Directors Meeting

The June 30, 2024, meeting of the OHTA Board of Directors is in the books, and we are honored to have the opportunity to welcome to the Board our newest member, Randy Soeung—welcome aboard (no pun intended) Randy!!

In addition, each of the previous Board's officers volunteered to serve yet another term in the position they last held. Given their willingness to serve as an officer, the Board voted to make each of the previous year's officer's dream come true. With that reality in mind, we want to offer up a HUGE show of appreciation to each of our officers and to every other member of the OHTA Board of Directors for providing your services to this organization and, thus, enabling it to function so productively and smoothly! YOU ALL ARE GREAT!!

Of course, there were a few other highlights, and here they are:

- Board voted to purchase one—two if there is availability—1,460-foot coil of 2-inch white aluminum from which blazes can be made for marking the OHT. We used to be able to buy the 6" x 2" blazes already made, but the company from which we purchased those sold their blaze manufacturing machine. All is not lost, though, because our Maintenance Coordinator, Chris Adams, is already planning to see if there is someone who wants to hang out in camp during one or more of the upcoming maintenance basecamps (dates are yet to be determined) for the purpose of cutting the aluminum into 6-inch sections to be used as blazes. If you believe you just might be the person best suited for this special job, please contact Chris at: [ohmaintenance@gmail.com](mailto:ohmaintenance@gmail.com)
- Board voted to purchase 12 additional trailhead register boxes as soon as they are manufactured. Wade Colwell is taking the lead on placing OHTA's order for these boxes, and if all goes well, we plan to install them during one of 2024's upcoming maintenance basecamps. Thank you, Wade, for overseeing this project!
- Osprey Packs contacted OHTA's Vice-President, Adam Higinbothom, about the possibility of donating \$1500 to Pack Rat in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Not all of the details have, as yet, been discussed, but it is almost certain that the money will be used for putting on an event tied to the OHTA. There will share all of the information on this event as the details fully come to light. Thank you, Adam, for taking on the planning of this event!
- Board voted to designate approximately 10.1 miles of roadway as the newest section of the OHT. Here's the breakdown:

- Matney Trailhead to Norfolk, Arkansas, via Highway 341/Push Mountain Road—3 miles
- Norfolk, Arkansas, to The Grill at Whispering Woods via Norfolk River Road—5 miles
- The Grill at Whispering Woods to Norfolk Trail Trailhead via Highway 177—2.1 miles

If all goes as we hope it will, this new section of trail will be shown on the OHT North map due out in late 2024 or early 2025. Closing those gaps is what it's all about! Thank you, Duane Woltjen for bringing this long-neglected and overlooked issue to the Board's attention!

And let's not forget to thank Fossil Cove for making space for our meeting and for being so accommodating! What a great group you have, and your brews are incomparable!

### – Looking Ahead on the Trail –

#### Steps to be Taken by the OHTA for 2024-2025

OHTA's Board is determined to assure our organization stays on a growth-oriented trajectory, and to do this, here are just some of the steps we'll take in the year ahead to enhance the progress we've established:

- Continue working to close the gaps/ bring OHT as near to completion by the end of 2025 as is possible
- Establish stronger collaborative relationships with the United States Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Improve the tracking system that makes it possible to inform each member, in a timely manner, about the status of their membership
- Staff an OHTA booth for Frost Fest in February
- Elect board members in April to fill the positions of the three directors whose terms expire
- Rendezvous in April—date, day, and time to be determined
- Continue to enhance the improvements that have been made in OHTA's social media presence
- Continue working toward making our website the face that best represents what this organization is about
- Establish once-yearly sawyer courses for volunteers seeking sawyer certification and recertification
- Broaden OHTA's base of qualified and dedicated trail maintainers
- Develop an annual First Aid Training Course for volunteers wanting to become sawyers that is free to all
- Expand participation in OHTA's Maintenance Base Camps
- Assure those volunteering to be maintainers, sawyers, and swamper are properly equipped and outfitted
- Organize more group hikes and backpacking events
- Get the word out to everyone that the Hare Mountain Hike-In is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, November 2 and 3, 2024
- Most importantly: Work to let each member of this organization know how much you are valued and appreciated. Each of you is vital to the heart and soul of the OHTA!! THANK YOU!!!!

#### Hare Mountain Hike-In

In a mere four months, November 2 and 3 will be upon us. What's so special about those two days? Well, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of November are when the celebration extraordinaire of OHTA's 43<sup>rd</sup> birthday will take place atop Hare Mountain! Remember, this is not a catered event, so be sure to bring whatever gourmet dish you choose to create for the potluck feast. Also, this is not an RSVP thing because there is room galore up there for your luxury tent suite. And if you do not want to haul water up the trail to the top, there is an old water well near where we'll be camping. Of course, if you choose that source for your drinking pleasure, don't forget to bring some means of purification with you—you'll be glad you did!



*Bear Crossing—beware!*

So what's the pic on the previous page have to do with the HMH-In? It's simple—there are black furry creatures in the vicinity of where we'll be camping, and they leave tracks just like the one photographed by Elizabeth and Josh Granderson during their recent hike to Hare Mountain. Now if you're equally as fortunate, you'll see a similar track on your journey to the summit! HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

### - On the Trail -

#### The Storms' Wrath on the OKT/OHT

In June's Newsletter, the damage created on certain of the westernmost sections of the OHT was reported. Since then, news of the damage done to the OKT/OHT along the banks of Norfolk Lake has surfaced. Here's what we've learned thanks to Roy Stovall:

- Norfolk Trail—13 miles—Norfolk Dam north to County Road 1028
  - impassible and will not be cleared before winter
- Panther Creek Ozarks Keystone Trail (OKT)—8 miles—County Road 396/Panther Creek Bridge north to overlook high above Lake Norfolk which is located about 1 ½ miles south of Robinson Point Trailhead on Robinson Point Road
  - hikeable with scattered blowdowns—no plans to clear blowdowns this summer
- David's Trail South—9 miles—Robinson Point Trailhead to Panther Bay Park
  - recently cleared of blowdowns by Arkansas Master Naturalists and OKT Endowment officers (some volunteers doing this work are also OHTA members)
- David's Trail North—9 miles—Bidwell Point (north end of Highway 101 bridge across lake) to Red Bank Trailhead
  - no storm damage reported
- Ozarks Keystone Trail—9 miles (80% constructed)—Red Bank Trailhead north to Missouri border
  - no storm damage reported

#### Searching for Volunteers

Summer is here, and due to the heat and the potential for encounters with snakes, ticks, ground hornets, and other creatures that can produce discomfort, the OHTA is, for all intents and purposes, hibernating. Honestly, all that means is that we're repairing gear, taking inventory of our supplies, and stocking up for the fall which is only a few months away.

What happens in the fall is that all sorts of trail maintenance and hiking events and such will be scheduled, and having the ability to successfully pull off all of these events requires having folks like yourself who are willing to volunteer a little of their time here and there. The commitment is not extensive, and there are many ways to contribute. So if you're ready to throw your volunteer hat into the ring and donate a little of your time to the OHT and/or the organization, please contact us at [OHTA@ozarkhighlandstrail.com](mailto:OHTA@ozarkhighlandstrail.com). We'll be glad to talk it over with you and find the way of contributing a little extra that works best for you!

### - Interesting Trailside Reads -

*The Last Season* – Eric Blehm

*Hiking with Nietzsche: On Becoming Who You Are* – John Kaag

#### Quotes for the Month

*"It feels good to be lost in the right direction. Explore. Learn. Experience. But don't ever turn back."* Steve Maraboli

*"Jobs fill your pockets, but adventures fill your soul."* Jaime Lyn

*If there is one thing on which we can count, it is how unlikely any of us will have the opportunity to count as many steps as we'd like on our journey through life.  
Hike on for as long as you possibly can . . .*



*Another tornado, another sawyer on the OKT/OHT*

*photo courtesy of Roy Stovall*

Till 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!!**