



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

– Looking Ahead on the Trail –

2024 Fall Maintenance Basecamp Schedule

- **Basecamp #1**
 - Location: Mulberry Mountain Campground/Mulberry Mountain Lodging & Events
 - Days and Dates: Friday, September 13 through Sunday, September 15
- **Basecamp #2**
 - Location: Richland Creek Campground in Richland Creek Recreation Area
 - Days and Dates: Friday, October 4 through Sunday, October 6
- **Basecamp #3**
 - Location: Fifty-Six, Arkansas (exact location to be determined)
 - Days and Dates: Friday, October 11 through Sunday, October 13
- **Basecamp #4**
 - Location: Norfolk Lake (exact location to be determined)
 - Days and Dates: Saturday, October 19 through Sunday, October 20

**Details and sign-up sheets will be sent out to everyone during the first week of August 2024!
It's getting exciting!!**

Hare Mountain Hike-In

Just three months left to get your gear and grub ready for 2024's Hare Mountain Hike-In. Yes, November 2 and 3 are inching ever closer, and once that weekend is upon us, the celebration of OHTA's 43rd birthday will commence atop Hare Mountain! What's this about grub, you ask? Well, as in years past, there will be no catered cuisine at this event, so be sure to bring whatever gourmet dish you wish to create for the potluck feast. Also, RSVPing a spot at the top is totally unnecessary because there is room galore up there for each and every luxury tent suite. And if your sherpa takes off on vacation leaving you to haul your water up the trail, there is an old water well near where we'll be camping. Remember, if you choose the well as the source for your drinking

pleasure, don't forget to bring some means of purification with you—you'll be glad you did! Hope to see you there!

Searching for Volunteers

As was noted in July's Newsletter, summer is here! However, 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.

Now, when fall arrives, all sorts of trail maintenance and hiking events and such will be scheduled. OHTA's goal of successfully rising to the challenges presented by these events can be realized only if folks like yourself are willing to volunteer a little of their time here and there. With that said, we are very pleased to note that several folks have stepped up and asked for their names be added to our volunteer list! To each of you, we say, THANK YOU!!!

Naturally, though, the search continues for more folks who are willing to pitch in when a little extra help is necessary. As a reminder, 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 with others and donate a little of your time to the OHT and/or the organization, please contact us at 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!

- Looking Back on the Trail -

Snippet on the Sylamore Section

For those who may wonder where this beautiful and wild section of the trail lies, just pick up the OHT North map (don't have it but want it: <https://ozarkhighlandstrail.com/shop/>) and find Leatherwood Wilderness. Just to the south of Rand Road, which shoulders the southern border of Leatherwood, you'll find the OHT. Traditionally, the 31-mile Sylamore section started at Spring Creek Trailhead (TH) located along Spring Creek Road just under a mile south of the Rand Road/Spring Creek Road intersection. The trailhead can also be reached by traveling roughly six miles north of Big Flat on Spring Creek Road. A word of caution, though: Spring Creek Road is best navigated in a high-clearance vehicle, and following heavy rains, taking Rand Road to the trailhead is highly recommended.

Once you find Spring Creek TH (plenty of parking area), just look across the road, and you'll find the entrance to the section that heads east to Moccasin Springs Trailhead. If you look at the sign first, though, let your gaze drift a little to the left or west of it, and you'll spot the blaze marking the start of the section that heads west for just over one and one-half miles to the southeastern corner of Lower Buffalo Wilderness (LBW). If you decide to venture down that section of trail with the goal hiking to Dillard's Ferry at Highway 14, be sure to brush up on your GPS and/or compass navigational skills, and don't forget your map. There will be a bushwhack on your journey, and however challenging that may be, it is one very beautiful hike. NOTE: GPS coordinates are printed on the OHT North map in a box labeled 'Lower Buffalo Bushwhack (LBB) Waypoints.'



As was previously noted, between Spring Creek Trailhead and Matney Trailhead is a remarkable expanse of the OHT referred to as the Sylamore section. Traveling from west to east, the first trailhead you'll encounter is Moccasin Springs. From that point the trail ventures to the east for about one and one-half miles before turning north to the next trailhead at Cripple Turkey (there is now a sign on Highway 341/Push Mountain Road marking the road down to the trailhead). It is at Cripple Turkey that the OHT intersects the North Sylamore Creek Trail, and if you want enhance your hike, including this trail in your plans will not disappoint (map: https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsm8_042799.pdf).

Continuing to the north from Cripple Turkey, the next stop is Brush Creek Trailhead, and it, too, is located on Highway 341/Push Mountain Road. It is important to stock up on water before embarking on this stretch of trail because it is not uncommon for all of the water crossings between Cripple Turkey and Brush Creek to be dry if there have been no recent rains. A little aside: this section has been designated for the addition of a spur trail designed to take hikers to water and on past waterfalls and a number of other interesting features.

From Brush Creek, the expedition continues to the north another 13+ miles to Matney Trailhead. Along the way the OHT crosses Highway 341 twice, and just prior to the second road crossing, you'll encounter a spur trail (marked by blue blazes) on your left that ventures across the highway and down to Matney Camp on the White River, a distance of about 0.8 miles. If you have the time, the features along the way make this extra distance well worth your time. And if you're thru-hiking the trail, it's a nice place to camp for the night.

Through the years, confusion has been voiced about the origins and construction of the Sylamore section. To help clear up some of that confusion, long-time life member, Duane Woltjen, was recently asked what he knows about how the Sylamore section came into being. As it turns out, he was the right person to ask because back somewhere around 2000 or 2001, he and his wife, Judy, led the effort to get approvals from the Forest Service for the entire project. Those two oversaw the design of the proposed trail and then organized a team of about four people trained in trail construction to lead nearly 200 volunteers from both the Ozark Highlands Trail Association (OHTA) and the Ozark Society in making the trail a reality. In 2003, the efforts of all involved culminated in what we know as the Sylamore section of the Ozark Highlands Trail. If you've never had the opportunity to hike the Sylamore as it is now commonly called, now's the time to do yourself a favor and designate it as a must-do.

- Interesting Trailside Reads -

Walking Distance: Extraordinary Hikes for Ordinary People – Robert E. Manning and Martha S. Manning

In Walking Distance – Jamie Cannon

Quotes for the Month

"Nature is not a place to visit. It is home." Gary Snyder

"Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity." John Muir

Through the heat and cold we move ahead, one foot in front of the other. Pause comes for rest and taking in the beauty of the surroundings . . . and then we repeat. Does it get any better than this?



Awaiting your presence at Mulberry Mountain Maintenance Basecamp

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!!**