



APRIL 2025 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 Directors 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 -

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

The deadline to submit your name as a candidate for OHTA's 2025 election has come and gone. This year, just three folks put themselves forward as candidates for the three OHTA Board positions coming open on July 1, and here they are in the order each submitted their bio and pic:



Peter Cooper

My name is Peter Cooper, and I am pleased to be a candidate running for the OHTA Board of Directors in 2025. Serving on the board the last 2 years has been a privilege. It is extremely motivating and rewarding to work with such a kind group of people who are so organized, passionate, and intentional about providing safe and inclusive trail space for the world to enjoy.

I hope to have the honor of serving this organization again as it works diligently to maintain hiking trails, cultivate relationships, and increase awareness of how beautiful Arkansas really is.

Adam Higinbothom

I was born in Fayetteville and grew up in the central valley of California, about an hour south of Yosemite National Park. After undergraduate studies at the University of Arkansas, I once again moved away. This time to Memphis and again to California for a brief stint. I again returned to Fayetteville after my now wife's doctoral program, I guess you can say I have been called to Northwest Arkansas. Although, finding time to get out on the trail has been hard lately. Raising a 3-year-old, Sophie Mae, and managing sales for the Outdoor Network at Bentonville based Outdoor Cap Company has left little time to do much else.



I became an official member of the OHTA 2022, but I have been involved with the organization and trail maintenance since joining the Pack Rat Outdoor Center in 2011. With Scott and Carolyn Crook being instrumental in the founding of the OHTA, the shop has always had a strong connection to the organization. Roy Senyard was the maintenance coordinator at the time and one of the few customers we would still accept checks from. He always had a great story about the most recent outing or trail maintaining trip. The Pack Rat ended up adopting the Hurricane Creek highwater bypass and I was tasked with making the schedule to keep the sales floor staffed while a team of staff members headed to the remote wilderness area to clear trail. While I am no longer officially on staff at the Pack Rat Outdoor Center, I still assist when I can and join the maintenance trips to their current adopted section near Woods Gap.

Once Steve Parker was heading up the maintenance coordination, we started talking about reaching new audiences and social media's capabilities while on a trip to the bypass. The next thing I knew I was maintaining the social media pages for the organization. A year later I attended my first board meeting and was elected to the open VP position. I hope to continue my membership and participation in the organization long after my board position expires next year. I would encourage anyone looking for a deeper connection to the outdoors in our area and camaraderie of like-minded individuals to join the OHTA. Like so many other resources, we have a special opportunity with the OHT and a duty to preserve and protect it along with all the other outdoor spaces that make Northwest Arkansas amazing.



Todd Wells

I have been an OHTA member for over 10 years.

I have served as OHTA secretary and treasurer and currently serve as the treasurer. I also have a section that I maintain. I love being out maintaining and enjoying the trail. I love giving back and doing my small part to keep the OHTA moving forward.

As is readily apparent, each of the candidates for this year's positions are currently the board members whose term expires as of July 1 of this year. Given there are just the three candidates and no other issues requiring membership approval, the outcome of the election this year is, by default, predetermined. With this in mind, the remaining six board members discussed the sensibility of holding the 2025 election from a financial perspective, and all six agreed that forgoing this year's election would save the organization the expense. So, with that said, members of the OHTA, here are your three new candidates for the fiscal year of 2025-2026!

WELCOME BACK ABOARD, PETER, ADAM, AND TODD!!

RENDEZVOUS 2025

The plans for this year's Rendezvous are pretty much in place. As of the first of April, somewhere around 35 folks have expressed their intent to attend this event, and we're hoping there will be more who plan on doing the same! Whether it's for one, two, or all three days, we hope you'll be there! And, yes, there's no such thing as too many members showing up for the Rendezvous.

Indeed, we're still getting inquiries regarding what this Rendezvous thing is all about. Well, simply put, it's an opportunity for the trail enthusiasts of this organization to come together to hike; relax and enjoy a great meal; connect with the beauty of nature; and camp, converse, and enjoy some good music around the campfire. As for the music, we're still working to make this happen, so if you'd like, don't be shy about bringing your own instrument. Singalongs will be encouraged!

OHTA members and their families and friends of all ages are welcome to join in on the food, fun and festivities! And, yes, our furry friends are welcome, as well, but remember, Buffalo National River (BNR) regulations are that they must be kept on a leash that is no longer than 6 feet (bummer)!

There is no charge to attend the Rendezvous, and pitching your tent in any one of the three group camping areas reserved by OHTA is free!

Here are some more of the particulars:

- **Location:** TYLER BEND CAMPGROUND alongside the beautiful Buffalo River in Buffalo National River Park
 - **Latitude** 35° 59' 12.0001" N – **Longitude** 92° 45' 50.0000" W
- **Days and Dates:** Friday through Sunday, April 25th thru the 27th, 2025
- **No fee for tent only camping** in the following group sites:
 - G3, G4, G5 (no electricity)
 - Check in time on Friday, April 25: 1 p.m.
 - Check out time on Sunday, April 27: 12 p.m.
- **Pavilion reserved for Saturday, April 26 from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.** (**NOTE:** The group shelter/pavilion has electricity but will not have water due to construction, so please bring a large water container. However, there will be one or more water faucets in the area of the group campsites.)
 - Saturday evening meal and the OHTA annual meeting will be held in the Pavilion
 - Evening meal served at or around 5:30 p.m.
 - Annual meeting starts at or around 7 p.m.
- **Chili cook-off** is planned for the Saturday evening meal. At this point, four folks have enthusiastically signed up to impress us all with a pot of their version of mouth-watering chili!
 - Pavilion where food will be served has electrical outlets, so slow cooker chili preparation is doable
 - If you want to bring a dish of any food item along to share, please do, and if you'd like to be reimbursed for the cost of the ingredients, please give a copy of your receipt to Phil Brown

- **Tyler Bend Campground amenities**
 - Hiking trails galore
 - Buffalo River Trail/Ozark Highlands Trail (BRT/OHT)
 - Tyler Bend Trail System
 - Old River Trail (ORT)
 - RV sites (non-electric) – some sites are currently available for reservation – others available on a first-come basis
 - Shower and toilet facilities onsite
 - Group camping site has its own toilet facility
- **Lodging options nearby**
 - Sky Hawk Ridge, St. Joe, AR
 - Anna's Guest House, Gilbert, AR
 - Buffalo River Outfitters, St. Joe, AR
 - Triple D Cabin Rental, St. Joe, AR (it's right on Hwy 65 at the intersection of Hwy 65 and Hwy 333-- the road that takes you down to Sky Hawk Ridge and Anna's Guest House)
 - Gilbertstore.com
- **Dining options nearby**
 - Ferguson's Store and Restaurant
 - Big Springs Trading Co.
- **Hike On Saturday Morning and Possibly Sunday Morning and Canoe on Saturday Morning**
 - Saturday morning a group of common adventurers plans to shuttle over to Gilbert and hike back to Tyler Bend—everyone's welcome to join the hike
 - Sunday morning hike is yet to be determined, but it is quite certain there will be another group of common adventurers getting together for a hike
- **Group canoe/kayak trip**—Baker Ford to Grinder's Ferry—Saturday. For details call/text Dave Richard: 591-339-6182

IMPORTANT NOTICE: If you plan to attend, please let us know as soon as possible so plans for how much food to prepare can be made. You can email us at: brown.philip9@gmail.com

Hope you and yours can make it!!

HARE MOUNTAIN HIKE-IN

What's this?! Did someone say the OHTA has an event coming up on Saturday and Sunday, November 1st and 2nd of this year? Well, the answer is, YES WE DO! And why are we talking about something happening seven months from now? The answer is simple: The Ozark Highlands Trail Association turns 44 this year, and the Hike-In is our way of celebrating the birthday!!! There's no doubt that this organization is middle-aged but becoming more of a powerhouse every day!

So, mark you calendars because it will be a great time filled with camping, fine conversation with some stretching of the truth, a beautiful hike up the trail from the south or the west to the camping area atop Hare Mountain, and yet, again, a potluck you won't want to miss! Stay tuned, for there will be more info coming as we get closer to the big celebration!

– On the Trail –

On Sunday, March 31, 2025, OHTA's Board of Directors met and voted unanimously to reimburse, in part, the fee for the Wilderness First Aid/CPR course(s) offered by Tom Burroughs. Here's how it works:

- Submit proof that you completed the course(s) to OHTA@ozarkhighlandstrail.com, and you will be sent a \$100 reimbursement check
- To be reimbursed, you must be a sawyer and/or section adopter who has either attended and participated in one of OHTA's Maintenance Basecamps and/or reported sawyer hours anywhere on the trail and/or maintenance hours on your section during the preceding 12 months.

The OHTA is committed to doing all it can to assure the safety of our sawyers and trail maintainers, so if you're one or the other or both, please take advantage of this offer!

– TRAILSIDE READS –

A Walk in the Park: The True Story of a Spectacular Misadventure in the Grand Canyon – Kevin Fedarko

Woodswoman: Living Alone in the Adirondack Wilderness – Anne LaBastille

QUOTES FOR THE MONTH

“Only where you have walked on foot have you really been.” – Reinhold Messner

“It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.” – Henry David Thoreau

Why the trail? Simply put, despite our differences, it's one place we can all find some common ground.



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!!

It's out there, and it's yours to find . . .