



OCTOBER 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 2025-2026

Phil Brown, **President** (Board term ends: June 30, 2026)
Adam Higinbothom, **Vice-President** (Board term ends: June 30, 2028)
Todd Wells, **Treasurer** (Board term ends: June 30, 2028)
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 (Board term ends: June 30, 2028)
Randy Soeung (Board term ends: June 30, 2027)

- ON THE TRAIL -

FALL MAINTENANCE IS IN FULL SWING

Without a doubt, the OHT is alive with the sounds of string trimmers, rambos, hedge trimmers, and chainsaws. Yes, maintainers are back on their sections to assure the trail is ready for the hiking and trail running seasons that are upon us. As well, sawyers and swampers (sawyer helpers) alike are addressing any and all deadfall issues, and as volunteers venture out, they're finding what was suspected—there are many trees blocking the trail, as usual. But, with each passing day, more and more miles of the trail will be cleared and ready for use. So get your hiking and running gear ready because it is time to hit the trail! Please, go out and STEP ON IT!!

- LOOKING BACK ON THE TRAIL -

2025 MULBERRY MAINTENANCE BASE CAMP

The first of OHTA's four Maintenance Base Camps is behind us. Altogether, over 70 volunteers showed up and participated in this fantastic three-day event, and what they accomplished both on and off the trail is beyond phenomenal! Here's a look at the totals for the three days:

- Number of volunteers: 110
- Miles covered: 64.9
- Volunteer hours logged: 833

Without a doubt, the numbers are no less than amazing!! To each of you who showed up and endured what nature dished out, the OHTA wants you to know just how awesome and appreciated you are! You all are phenomenal!!! **THANK YOU! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!!**

That said, there are some to whom a special thanks is due. First, we thank the Patton family for allowing us the space to do our thing. Their generosity and hospitality have always been remarkable, and we do not have the words to fully express how much they all are appreciated. **THANK YOU!**

Next, thank you Donna and Billy Hignite for your tireless efforts to keep everyone satiated! You are each remarkable not just for what you do but for who you are! What you do and the patience with which you do it go above and beyond—you are appreciated more than you can imagine! THANK YOU BOTH!



Trail Life Troop 0524—First Baptist Church, Altus, Arkansas

And then there is our Maintenance Coordinator, Chris Adams. How you do it, no one knows, but you do and do it all so very well! THANK YOU, Chris!!

In addition to the OHTA volunteers at Mulberry, we had some special guests this year. Among those was the Trail Life Troop 0524 sponsored by the First Baptist Church of Altus, Arkansas. They were a great group of young folks all led by Versal Batesell, and though they were unable to accomplish all they had planned to, they informed us they will be back and ready for the task at hand next year. Thank you Versal and Troop 0524!

Another special group led by Wade Kelly showed up from the Cass Job Corps to work on their adopted section of trail running from Ragtown Road to Fane Creek. What a contribution they made to the day's progress, and to them we give a big thanks!

Yes, Mulberry 2025 had it's challenges with storm after storm, but the weather did not dampen the spirits of those who showed up to volunteer. At this point, we're pretty sure the long-range forecast is for clear skies and mild temps during the month of September 2026—hey, we can hope—so mark the month for the next Mulberry experience. Hope to see you all there!

- LOOKING AHEAD ON THE TRAIL -

2025 FALL MAINTENANCE BASE CAMP DETAILS AND SIGN-UP LINKS

NOTE: OHTA will be providing BREAKFAST, LUNCH, and DINNER for all participants. Water, soda, and tea will be available, but bring your own adult beverages. So, if you plan to attend any or all of the three remaining base camps but have not, as yet, signed up, please let us know via email at [OHTA Base Camp \(East\) at Richland Creek](#), [OHTA Base Camp \(North\) at Fifty Six, AR](#), and/or [OHTA Base Camp \(Keystone\) at Norfork](#). The folks preparing all the meals for the four events are about to head to the grocery store once again to shop for food, and having an accurate count of the number they'll be feeding is a valuable piece of information for them to have.



Cass Job Corps team led by Wade Kelly

So, if you plan to attend any or all of the three remaining base camps but have not, as yet, signed up, please let us know via email at [OHTA Base Camp \(East\) at Richland Creek](#), [OHTA Base Camp \(North\) at Fifty Six, AR](#), and/or [OHTA Base Camp \(Keystone\) at Norfork](#). The folks preparing all the meals for the four events are about to head to the grocery store once again to shop for food, and having an accurate count of the number they'll be feeding is a valuable piece of information for them to have.

Hard hats, safety gear, and maintenance implements will be provided. Members and nonmembers are welcome. Please remember to bring your lawn chairs because after the workday, base camp becomes a social event filled with conversation, giveaways, and plenty of laughter while sitting around the fire with people who enjoy similar things.

Volunteers are needed to help in many ways both in camp and on the trail. On the trail, folks will have an opportunity to serve as loppers, sawyers, trimmers, and swampers. Or, if you'd prefer to stay at camp and help out there, you can assist with the cooking, cleaning, picking up around camp, and/or with shuttling volunteers to various locations on the OHT. Whatever you choose to do, it will be very greatly appreciated!

Each day of trail work will begin with a meeting at 8:30 a.m. so volunteers can be informed of their assigned locations on the trail and what their tasks will entail.

Free camping will be available on Thursday evening for base camps #2 and #3 and on Friday evening for base camp #4.

Following is all the necessary information:

Richland Creek Base Camp/OHTA East Base Camp

- Days and Dates:
 - Friday, Saturday, Sunday – October 3, 4, 5, 2025
- Location: Richland Campground in Richland Creek Recreation Area
Located in Richland Creek Wilderness on the east side—accessed by Richland Creek Road
- OHTA's area is reserved, and **camping is open and free to all OHTA Maintenance Base Camp participants by the afternoon of Thursday, October 2**
- The campground has vault toilets and no water hookups
- One backcountry shower with hot water will be set up for all participants by East Maintenance Director, Sean Prewitt
- All food will be free
- Participants will be responsible for providing their own adult beverages
- **Sign-up link:** [OHTA Base Camp \(East\) at Richland Creek](#)

Fifty Six Base Camp/OHTA North Base Camp

- Days and Dates:
 - Friday, Saturday, Sunday – October 10, 11, 12, 2025
- Location: White Oak Cabins & RV
1655 Highway 14; Fifty Six, Arkansas 72533
- 5 cabins and 4 RV sites (w/electricity and water) are free and **open to all OHTA Maintenance Base Camp participants by the afternoon of Thursday, October 9**
 - Plenty of space on the grounds for tent camping
 - **NOTE:** If you would like to put dibs on one of the cabins or plan to use one of the sites for your RV or travel trailer, please let us know in advance at: brown.philip9@gmail.com
- Separate hot shower facilities for women and men available, and the bathrooms are nice and clean
- All food will be free
- Participants will be responsible for providing their own adult beverages
- **Sign-up link:** [OHTA Base Camp \(North\) at Fifty Six, AR](#)

Norfolk Lake Base Camp

- Days and Dates:
 - Saturday, Sunday – October 18, 19, 2025
- Location: Three Oaks Resort
117 Three Oaks Lane, Gamaliel, Arkansas 72537

- Cabins 7, 8, and 9 have been reserved
- Plenty of space on the grounds for tent camping
- There will be toilet and shower accessibility for everyone
- Camping is free and **open to all OHTA Maintenance Base Camp participants by the afternoon of Friday, October 17**
- All food will be free
- Participants will be responsible for providing their own adult beverages
- **Sign-up link:** [OHTA Base Camp \(Keystone\) at Norfolk](#)

Hope to see you all there!

HARE MOUNTAIN HIKE-IN

Here's another reminder that coming soon—November 1st and 2nd—to the top of a mountain known as Hare is the 2025 Hare Mountain Hike-In. Whatever you do, be sure to mark your calendar for this celebration of OHTA's 44th birthday. As you may know if you've participated in past years, access to the area where the campout will take place is possible by journeying east along the OHT from East Fly Gap trailhead or by heading north from Morgan Fields trailhead. It's a hike and a celebration you do not want to miss!

As has always been the case, all are welcome to join the fun, but please remember to bring all of your own camping supplies, stories and tall tales to share, and a dish for the top-of-the-mountain potluck that will be memorable and delicious! Be sure to check future editions of the OHTA Newsletter and OHTA's social media sites because there will be more info coming as we get closer to the big event!



Prepping for the day at Mulberry 2025

Another relaxing Mulberry evening



DOING EVEN MORE FOR OHTA

It's time to start talking about OHTA's upcoming election for board positions! Yes, we know ballots are not cast till some point in April, but now is the time to start thinking about tossing your name into the hat for a spot on OHTA's Board of Directors. Three members' terms come to an end on June 30, 2026, and though one or more of them may choose to run again, one or more of them may not. Since we need nine board members, please give some thought to running for a position. It is not

necessary to take action at this point in time . . . it's just something you might want to consider. If any of you has a question about serving on the board, please feel free to inquire by sending an email to: brown.philip9@gmail.com. The more candidates, the better!!

- A QUICK LOOK AT OHTA MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS -



JOSH AND ELIZABETH GRANDERSON

They did it!! Yes, they completed the Appalachian Trail, all 2,198.5 miles of it! Here's a pic from the starting point of their journey at Amicalola Falls State Park and another from their final destination at Pemi Loop in New Jersey! How long did this dream excursion take? Well, they were on the trail from February 28 till September 3, 2025. Congrats to them for a job well done, and thank you both for sharing the miles-of-smiles pics!



- TRAILSIDE READS -

On the Hippie Trail: Istanbul to Kathmandu and the Making of a Travel Writer
– Rick Steves

They Said It Would Be Fun: A Hilarious Journey Learning to Hike the NH 48
– Kenneth Bosse

QUOTES FOR THE MONTH

“Beyond the very extreme of fatigue and distress, we may find amounts of ease and power we never dreamed ourselves to own; sources of strength never taxed at all because we never pushed through the obstruction.” – William James

“The best thing one can do when it's raining is to let it rain.” – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

You can dance, walk, run, or just be. Whichever you choose, be sure to make it happen on the OHT!!



Photo courtesy of Sofia Merriman

Till the trails we travel alone become the trail that brings us together . . .

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

HIKE ONWARD!!