



DECEMBER 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)

Ancillary Services

Website Development and Maintenance
Social Media Coordinator
Online Store Coordinator
Brochure Business Coordinator
Adopt-A-Highway Program Coordinator
Trailhead Register Data Processor
Arkansas Trails Council Representative
Trail Angels

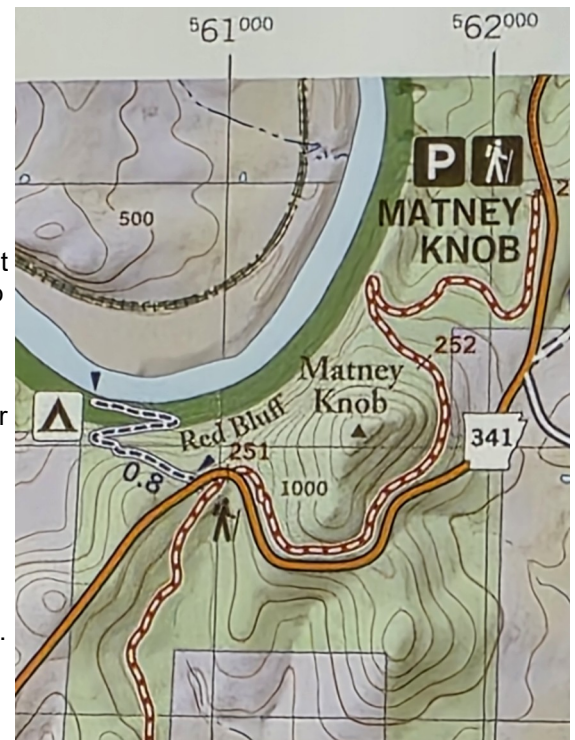
Brent Umphlett and Leslie Wright Productions
Tiffany Mallard
Mike Lemaster
Elizabeth Granderson
Randy Soeung
Yvonne Liske
Yvonne Liske
Billy and Donna Hignite • Mike Lemaster

- LOOKING AHEAD ON THE TRAIL -

MATNEY CAMP RESTORATION CELEBRATION

As was noted in the OHTA November Newsletter, Matney Camp was decommissioned several years ago by the United States Forest Service. A lack of upkeep and the processes of nature caused the once beautiful site to deteriorate into a barely recognizable remnant of its once glorious self. But the past is the past, for now we're proud to announce that the campground has been brought back to life by Gordon King and several dedicated teams of volunteers! Never seen it but want to now? Well, come and take part in the Matney Camp Restoration Celebration scheduled for this coming Saturday, December 6, 2025, starting at 9:30 a.m. And get this, the current long-range weather forecast is that there is little likelihood of rain with temps topping out in the 50s! That's super great weather for a hike and a celebration outdoors!! Here are the details:

- Those wanting to hike roughly three miles from Matney Knob Trailhead (MKTH) to the camp can meet at MKTH at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 6, 2025.



- If you don't want to do what is almost a three-mile hike from MKTH to Matney Camp, please check in at MKTH at 9:30 a.m., catch a shuttle to the intersection of Matney Camp Spur Trail and Highway 341, and hike in from there. **NOTE:** The parking area near the intersection of the two is limited to four vehicles at the most. Taking the shuttle will cut the total hiking distance to Matney Camp down to 0.8 miles—the camp can be accessed only by water or on foot (birds are known to dispute this fact).
- Food, water/soft drinks, and utensils for the celebration will be brought in from the river by Gordon King, but adult beverages are a byo item!
- If you want to kayak/canoe yourself and/or family/friends to the event, you are encouraged to do so—children and fur babies are certainly welcome.
- If you have an instrument and want to play some music, please bring it along!
- Want to bring a board game—please do!
- The festivities will likely end somewhere between 2 and 3 p.m.
- If you want to turn this into an overnight backpacking event, please bring along your camping gear as everyone is welcome to stay through the night.
- The camp has picnic tables and an outhouse that are in very nice shape.
- Provided there are enough board members present to constitute a quorum, there will be a brief board meeting during the celebration. Of course, everyone in attendance is welcome to attend the meeting!

So plans can be made for the amount of food and beverages we will need to purchase, please send an email to OHTA@ozarkhighlandstrail.com. Be sure to include your name and the number of folks who are coming with you. Of course, names are optional, but including them would be appreciated!

Hope to hear from you and to see you at the Restoration Celebration!!

HARE MOUNTAIN HIKE-IN

What do 45 and 2026 have in common? Well, 2026 just happens to be the year the Ozark Highlands Trail Association enters its 45th year of existence. To celebrate this milestone, there will be another celebration atop Hare Mountain on Saturday, November 7, 2026.

Keeping with tradition, the event will include a fantastic potluck meal in the late afternoon, a big bonfire to help warm your bones and your spirit, and plenty of wild stories. So, get your hiking legs on, your camping gear ready to pack, and prepare to summit Hare. There will be more details coming as the event draws nearer, so stay tuned!



Photo from Hare Mountain courtesy of Mark Larmoyeux

Looking forward to seeing each and every one of you there!

– ON THE TRAIL –

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

For the past 44 years, the Ozark Highlands Trail Association has been about bringing people together to build, maintain, and enjoy the OHT. The trail offers those who step on it a place to hike, backpack, run, and simply enjoy the enormity and bountiful beauty of nature.



Photo courtesy of Betty Krumweide

The Bylaws of the organization call for our board to be comprised of nine members, and if you would like to get more involved in this organization, serving on the board is a great way to do it. So, please give some thought to running for a position on our board. Doing so could result in you making a big difference in this organization's future. That said, if you have any questions about serving on OHTA's board of directors, please feel free to inquire by sending an email to: OHTA@ozarkhighlandstrail.com. The more candidates, the better! Let's keep the OHTA alive and thriving!!

- LOOKING BACK ON THE TRAIL -

It's been one very memorable year. Among those memories are the conversations many of us were fortunate enough to enjoy while hiking or maintaining the OHT with others. And, "with others" is what it's all about. This organization is filled with a plethora of very interesting, talented, spirited, caring, and giving folks. In other words, we have a very dynamic group of souls in our midst, and the OHTA is what it is because each member, in their own special way, has given something of themselves to make it special in its own way.

Since its inception, the Ozark Highlands Trail Association has been supported through memberships as well as through contributions, and your board members are always searching for new funding sources. Despite the contributions and other streams of funding that may be found, the OHTA does not exist without members who are willing to give of themselves in the form of membership dues.

For all but the 'Life' memberships, renewal is necessary each year. For some, a renewal reminder gets sent out annually, but, unfortunately, such is not true for everyone. Therefore, we encourage each of our members to check the status of their membership, and if it is time to renew, please do so. If you are unsure about the standing of your membership, please feel free to contact us at OHTA@ozarkhighlandstrail.com. You are this organization's lifeblood, and we will gladly update you about whether it is time to renew your membership. This organization needs and appreciates each of you, and we hope you want to continue being an OHTA member!

DOING EVEN MORE FOR OHTA

If you had a chance to read any of the past three OHTA Newsletters, you're likely aware we will be electing candidates in April 2026 to fill three OHTA vacancies that will be created on June 30, 2026, as board member terms expire. April may seem a long ways off, but it will be here before you know it.



Photo courtesy of Mike Lemaster



As 2025 draws near its end, the board of directors wants to take this opportunity to say thanks to every person who has found importance in being one of our members, a contributor, and/or a partner! You know who you are, and, yes, you are appreciated!

We trust the holidays have been and will continue being nothing less than wonderful for you and yours. If we are unable to come together before 2026, may there be many memorable gatherings in the year just ahead. Take care of you and those you love most, and ENJOY THE OHT!!

- TRAILSIDE READS -

Old Folks Talking: A Place of Special Value in the Ozarks of Arkansas – Jim Liles

Trail of the Lost: The Relentless Search to Bring Home the Missing Hikers of the Pacific Crest Trail – Andrea Lankford

QUOTES FOR THE MONTH

“Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

May fond memories of times spent with the OHTA in 2025 dance through your mind and bring to your face a warm, spectacular smile!





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!!