

Arkansas Trails Council
Spring Quarterly Meeting
Minutes taken by Mike Sprague
10:00 am, Thursday, April 9, 2015
Pinnacle Mountain State Park

After the Spring Quarterly Meeting opened, Trudy Kincade moved to approve the Winter Quarterly Meeting minutes. Jay Swafford seconded it. Then the minutes were approved.

Signs along roadways for parks were discussed, especially the recreational symbols on the signs. The formation of a subcommittee to discuss and recommend solutions for recreation signs was brought up. Jerry Shields moved to form that group. Steve seconded it. Jerry Shields, Steve Schneider, Debbie Doss and Mike Sprague agreed to be part of the committee.

Porter Briggs, from the Friends of the Historic White River Bridge, spoke next about his organization's effort to save the White River Bridge.

It was built in 1931, he said, and is one of two double cantilevered bridges in the state and is on the historic register. Currently, it is scheduled to be torn down, he said, however his group would like to preserve it.

The bridge would be a great link for a bicycle touring route between Little Rock and Memphis, he said. The bridge would help get people from Little Rock to Marianna. A levee-top trail is being constructed between Marianna and Marion (near West Memphis), and West Memphis and Memphis is being linked with the establishment of a pedestrian bridge across the Mississippi River.

At this point, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sides with tearing down the bridge, Porter said. However, the governor likes the idea of protecting the bridge.

The Governor's attention has turned the tide of affairs, he said.

The White River Bridge at Clarendon would possibly be the longest pedestrian bridge in the world, according to Porter. It would be spectacular, he said, and profoundly change the economy in Monroe County and others. The Website for the group working to protect the bridge is www.bigwhiteriverbridge.org.

Debbie Doss mentioned that she had spoken about the bridge effort with the Cache River Wildlife Refuge Project Leader Keith Weaver and that he was not necessarily opposed to the bridge remaining.

Guy Headland said that the refuge would be concerned about the wildlife as their first priority.

It was eight years ago, according to Porter, that the memorandum of understanding was signed concerning the mitigation for the construction of the new bridge, when it was agreed that the old bridge would be taken down.

Porter asked if the Trails Council would write a letter of support for protecting the Clarendon Bridge as a bicycle and pedestrian crossing.

Steve Schneider moved to write a letter in support of the Clarendon Bridge, and Trudy Kincade seconded it.

After discussion regarding the level of support the council could give. The motion was voted on and passed.

Next, oral nominations for the Arkansas Trails Council awards were accepted.

Guy Headland nominated Johnny Moore for Advocate of the Year for his effort to save the White River Bridge at Clarendon.

Steve Schneider nominated Basil Hicks, Jr. for Volunteer of the Year for his work with mountain bike trails in Central Arkansas.

Jerry Shields and Tom Ledbetter both nominated Robert Cavanaugh for Volunteer of the Year for his work on mountain bike trails in the Ouachitas.

Mike Sprague announced that award nominations will also be accepted via email and that voting will be done by email. To be eligible to vote, members must have attended two of the last four meetings.

Artwork for the awards was going to be created by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism Artist Marty Smith.

More information about the upcoming Arkansas Trails Symposium at Blanchard Springs was given. There will be free group camping.

Recreational Program Manager of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest Robert Duggan invited council members to the National Forest Supervisor's Office in Russellville on Monday, April 13 from 4 pm to 6 pm to discuss things regarding the Forest Service with local and regional leadership. This public event is part of a General Management Review of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest. Duggan also said he would send out an email about the event.

Toby Von Rembow next spoke about the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission Natural Areas and trails.

The Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission is focused on the natural communities and not particularly trails. All trails in Natural Areas are foot traffic only, he said. There are 71 Natural Areas, which are areas of biological concern and are managed to a pre-settlement state.

There are three prairie trails (Baker Prairie, Searles Prairie and Chesney Prairie trails); two water trails (totaling 35 miles) (Benson Creek and Cut-off Creek trail). There are 14 primitive trails and six non-primitive trails.

There are always plenty of volunteer opportunities. Von Rembow mentioned an event to help plant 500 trees at Devil's Eyebrow and another volunteer event at Dardanelle Rock.

Upcoming on November 3-5, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission will be hosting the Natural Areas Association Conference in Little Rock, which Von Rembow said was a prestigious national event with regards to those who manage Natural Areas.

For more information on the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Natural Areas and their trails you may visit their Website at www.naturalheritage.com.

Matt McNair, the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) writer with Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, spoke next. SCORP is a guide used for funding projects, and a new SCORP is currently being worked on. McNair is currently taking suggestions of what outdoor recreation should be included in the next plan. This time, one of the ways they are being taken is by email, he said. That email is recreation.suggestions@arkansas.gov. All suggestions are welcome, and he is requesting everyone email suggestions so the SCORP can better reflect the outdoor recreation Arkansans would like to see.

Organizational updates were next.

Debbie Doss Spoke for the Arkansas Canoe Club. The Felsenthal Water Trail was going to be opened soon and the Wattensaw Bayou Water Trail campground was near completion.

Amy Beck from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission reported that a new trail behind the Arkansas Game and Fish Headquarters building was being worked on.

Jacque Alexander of the Arkansas Backcountry Horsemen said they were dragging logs to install on trails and doing other trail maintenance in the Lower Buffalo Wilderness.

Jerry Shields spoke about the Ouachita Challenge mountain bike race that took place in March. It brings in a lot of tourism to the area, he said, including over 400 cyclists in two days.

Tom Ledbetter, the Ouachita National Forest Trails Coordinator, spoke about the popularity of the Lake Ouachita Vista Trail with ultra runners. He also spoke of new efforts to fix up the Wildcat Mountain bike trails near Lake Sylvia. Work was being done on a 7/10 mile reroute on the Womble trail. The Black Mountain Trail Shelter along the Ouachita Trail is set to be built on April 28, he said. The Ouachita National Forest is looking to improve signage throughout the forest, he said, and registry boxes at trailhead are to be taken down.

Guy Headland with the National Parks Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program said his program was taking applicants for assistance. As of the meeting, he said, his program was looking at Mountain View with regards to the Syllamo Trail and possibly Cherokee Village.

Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism Outdoor Recreation Grants Program Director John Beneke said he had spoken with Daniel Siskowski, the head of the Arkansas Highway and Transportation

Department (AHTD) program that is in charge of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants, and said he mentioned that AHTD was still taking RTP applications, however they haven't received as many as they would like.

Robert Duggan said the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest had installed about seven new Wild and Scenic River signs. The forest was fixing the Twin Peaks Trail by rerouting it off of a sensitive area. The long-term goal is to connect that trail with the Fayetteville trails system. Off-Highway Vehicle and day-use horse parking at Moccasin Gap was to be re-opened, and it is in the works to improve Mulberry River access.

Ozark-St. Francis National Forest Natural Resources Specialist J. Swafford spoke about two upcoming mountain bike races on the Syllamo Trail: Syllamo's Revenge on May 2 and the Mountain View Epic starting from the town square in Mountain View on May 16. He also said the Louisiana Purchase Baseline Trail is to be finished in October.

Frank Wimberley of the Greers Ferry Lake Trails Council spoke about his group's events that will be posted on their Website www.gfltc.com.

The meeting was then adjourned.

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Sign-in List
10:00 am, Thursday, April 9, 2015
Pinnacle Mountain State Park

Name	Affiliation or Activity of Interest	Email
Mike Sprague	Arkansas Dept. of Parks and Tourism	michael.sprague@arkansas.gov
Porter Briggs	Clarendon Bridge	porter@porterbriggs.com
J. Swafford	USFS Sylamore Ranger District	jswafford@fs.fed.us
Robert Duggan	USFS Ozark-St. Francis Supervisor's Office	rduggan@fs.fed.us
Guy Headland	National Park Service – Arkansas Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program	guy_headland@nps.gov
Zoie Clift	Arkansas Dept. of Parks and Tourism	travelarkansas@gmail.com
Jacque Alexander	Arkansas Backcountry Horsemen	jacque.alexander@arkansas.gov
Trudy Kincade	Arkansas Trail Riders Association	gcktrudy@aol.com
Charlie Kincade	Arkansas Trail Riders Association	gcktrudy@aol.com
Amy Beck	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission	amy.beck@agfc.ar.gov
Matt McNair	Arkansas Dept. of Parks and Tourism	matt.mcnair@arkansas.gov
Frank Wimberley	Greers Ferry Lake Trails Council	frankwim@sbcglobal.net
Jerry Shields	Traildogs	traildog@windstream.net

Toby Von Rembow	Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission	toby@arkansasheritage.org
Tom Ledbetter	USFS – Ouachita National Forest	tledbetter@fs.fed.us
Kim Sanders	Arkansas Highway and Transportation Dept.	kim.sanders@ahtd.ar.gov
Daniel Siskowski	Arkansas Highway and Transportation Dept.	daniel.siskowski@ahtd.gov
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Matt Goddard	Central Arkansas Trails Alliance	mgoddard1@gmail.com
Bruce Alt	Central Arkansas Trails Alliance	brucealt58@yahoo.com
Steve Schneider	International Mountain Bicycling Association	steve.schneider@imba.com
Nathan Hudgins	Pinnacle Mountain State Park	