



Mark Your Calendars for the Annual Kessler Trail Run OCTOBER 14!



Join us on Saturday, October 14th for the annual Kessler Trail Run! The Kessler Trail Run is a community event organized by FNHA and partners at Mt. Kessler Greenways, Specialized Real Estate Group, Pack Rat Outdoor Center, Northwest Arkansas Land Trust, and Beaver Watershed Alliance to support conservation efforts in and around Fayetteville. The 10k and 20k run will begin at 9 am at Kessler Mountain Regional Park, located at 2600 Judge Cummings Road in Fayetteville. The after-party will take place starting at 10 am at the Ozark Mountain Smokehouse. Upon finishing, runners will receive a limited-edition 2017 Kessler Trail Run pint glass and a meal ticket to enjoy food and drink from local vendors. An after-party only option is also available for those that are interested in supporting FNHA's conservation efforts without running the course. **For more information and to register**, visit <https://www.facebook.com/pg/kesslertrailrun/events>.

Kessler Mountain Outdoor Classroom and Nature Center – Summer, 2017

Even after classes ended for the summer, field trips at the Kessler Mountain Outdoor Classroom and Nature Center continued, offering environmental education to students from local home-school groups, the Yvonne Richardson Community Center, and the Bentonville School District's Adventure Club. With help from Elizabeth Smith, the Classroom Intern, over 200 local students visited the Outdoor Classroom over the course of seven different field trips. Students who went on the field trips ranged from kindergarten through middle school and high school. For some of the students, the summer field trip was the first time they had been on a hike or spent time in a forested area.

The Outdoor Classroom also expanded its reach to the community. The Nature Center and Outdoor Classroom were open to guests at the Fayettechill Lawn Party in July; many of the 400+ guests explored the Outdoor Classroom facilities that evening. Many of those visitors were teachers from the surrounding area who were interested in bringing their students on field trips in the future.



With help from volunteers, Open House Saturdays were launched to offer families opportunities to connect with Kessler Mountain through self-guided hikes, free exploration of the Nature Center and nature-themed activities. Each Saturday in June and July had a different theme; Art in Nature (June) and Defense Mechanisms in Nature (July). Each Open House Saturday had relatively low attendance, but every person thoroughly enjoyed the activities and were supportive of goal of the Outdoor Classroom. Open House Saturdays will continue in September, and are expected to have increased turnout through the fall months.

In addition to the field trips and programs that took place this summer, progress was also made on enhancing the exhibits in the Nature Center. A new hands-on mapping activity was created, based on 4th grade geography curriculum. In addition, signage was created and updated for existing exhibits. Some exhibits were moved and rearranged to make them more effective, and the space was cleaned to make the classroom more user-friendly to visitors. The Outdoor Classroom is ready to make an impact on more students this fall, starting with 3rd grade field trips in mid-September. Elizabeth will continue as the Classroom Intern, using the experience and knowledge she gained from the Summer to coordinate field trips with students from surrounding schools.

Third Annual Kessler Gala Raises Funds to Meet FNHA's Commitment

The 2017 Kessler Gala, "Enduring Green: Our Natural Heritage," took place on Sunday, May 21, 2017, in the Pratt Place Barn. Highlights were a silent auction, a buffet dinner provided by Farmers Table Café and music by Bill Dollar and Loose Change, an address by Mayor Lioneld Jordan, and Pete Heinzelmann's presentation of a plaque to Charles and Tamara Brickey, the first FNHA contributors. FNHA Chair Jennifer Ogle welcomed the lively crowd and Vice-Chair Terri Lane spoke about the theme of the Gala, bringing personal memories into her celebration of green spaces such as Kessler Mountain. Treasurer Bob Caulk asked those gathered to help close out our fund-raising commitment to the City of Fayetteville for the Kessler Mountain Reserve. Thanks to the enthusiastic response we have now reached our goal.

On February 18, 2014, the Fayetteville City Council voted unanimously to acquire 435 acres of woods and nature trails on Kessler Mountain for outdoor recreation, an outdoor classroom and laboratory for students from kindergarten to Ph.D., protection for the Illinois and White River watersheds and preservation of wildlife habitat within the Fayetteville city limits. The Walton Family Foundation and the City of Fayetteville each gave \$1,500,000 and the Chambers Family Foundation donated 48 acres. The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association pledged to demonstrate community support by raising \$300,000 over a three-year period that would go toward the City's cost to purchase the land and to develop an ecological assessment of the property, a conservation easement held by the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust that will protect the property forever, and educational signage for trail users.



Photos from the Gala by Dot Neely

Clockwise, from upper left: Board member Dana Smith and husband Scott enjoy craft beer; Event sponsors Seth and Tanya Mims, Ivone and Jeremy Hudson from Specialized Real Estate Group; Treasurer Bob Caulk and Vice-Chair Terri Lane greet guests; Elizabeth Adam and husband Board member Doug James; Celebrants listening to the Mayor's speech; Board member Pete Heinzelmann recognizes FNHA's first donors, Charles and Tamara Brickey

FNHA Endowment Fund Provides Scholarships to Halberg Ecology Camp

The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association contributed more than \$2,000 from its Founders' Scholarship Endowment Fund to provide tuition assistance to at least six area 11- and 12-year-olds who attended the Arkansas Audubon Society Halberg Ecology Camp this summer.

The Halberg Ecology Camp has been held every year since 1980. It provides 11 and 12-year-old girls and boys a sample of seven scientific disciplines: ornithology, mammalogy, herpetology, geology, botany, aquatic biology and entomology. The staff is made up primarily of college instructors, high school science teachers, graduate students and other naturalists, and is a remarkable learning opportunity and introduction to the wonders and complexities of nature.

Fayetteville's Kelly and Donna Mulhollan, well-known to most of us as the singing duo Still on the Hill, wrote the following thank-you note to FNHA:

"We want to thank Fayetteville Natural Heritage for their long support of the Halberg Audubon Ecology Camp. "Bird Camp," as my wife and I call it, has been nurturing 11 and 12 year old kids with a good dose of nature for over 30 years and is still going strong. It is certainly not just about birds: five days of immersion in botany, geology, herpetology, entomology, aquatics, mammalogy. Donna and I have been the Ornithology instructors at camp for 16 years and look forward to it every year.

The camp is transformative for many of the kids who would otherwise be gazing at their smart phones. I love seeing the eyes of a child light up when they get a Scarlet Tanager in their binoculars for the first time. Yellow Billed Cuckoos, Parula Warblers, Louisiana Water Thrush – all common birds at camp. They can hardly believe that all this cool stuff is out there in the woods.



Kelly is the taller kid in the ever-present knit chapeau!

Camp Clear Fork is a rich habitat and there are critters everywhere. When kids get to camp and encounter a bug, most inevitably want to squash it or else cower in fear. By the end of camp they are more likely to want to pick it up and admire its complexity, but never again would they intentionally harm it.

We spend quite some time with these kids over the five days of camp and often our conversations with them drift into profound pontifications on our relationship with the natural world. I have no doubt that some of these kids will go on to be leaders in the natural sciences and all of them are bound to be better stewards of our natural world.

Thank you again for investing in these kids' future." Kelly and Donna Mulhollan

Patti Erwin Acknowledged with Golden Acorn Award at FNHA Annual Meeting



Bob Caulk presents Golden Acorn Award to Patti Erwin at the FNHA Annual Meeting.

The 2017 Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association Golden Acorn Award was presented during the annual meeting to Patti Erwin "For the vision and leadership she provided for regional green space planning and for inviting FNHA to be part of the journey."

Back in 2001 Patti, as the Arkansas Forestry Commission Urban Forest Coordinator, began looking for ways to promote, conserve and plan for urban forest in Arkansas, particularly in rapidly-growing areas like Northwest Arkansas. Her first effort measured tree canopy in Bentonville and Fayetteville. In 2004, she obtained funding and began working with FNHA on land-use planning that led to the 2006 Urban Forest Conservation Prioritization and the 2010 Green Infrastructure Plan. Both efforts were nationally recognized and used by the City of Fayetteville in their land use plan. They also provided the idea for the two-country Open Space Plan that was adopted by the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission in 2016. Over the years, she asked FNHA to present its work to cities and groups around the state. In response, Hot Springs has also developed an Open Space Plan.

We are grateful to Patti for the difference she has made to our region, the state and the nation, and believe that she has planted the seeds of change that make her a worthy recipient of the Golden Acorn Award.

Beaver Watershed Alliance Grant to Improve Natural Areas Including Mt. Sequoyah

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has approved \$37,710.56 for the grant proposal from the Beaver Watershed Alliance, "Initiating Community Stewardship through Watershed Discovery," pending successful completion of the NFWF fiscal review process. The NFWF received over 250 proposals nationwide for their Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program, which seeks to develop nation-wide-community stewardship of local natural resources, preserve these resources for future generations and enhance habitat for local wildlife. Funding is awarded to projects which seek to address water quality issues in priority watersheds, such as erosion due to unstable streambanks, pollution from stormwater runoff, and degraded shorelines caused by development.

BWA's project, Initiating Community Stewardship through Watershed Discovery, will target the Town Branch watershed, a sub-watershed of the West Fork-White River watershed. The West Fork of the White River (WFWR) flows into Beaver Lake, the regional drinking water source for 1 in 6 Arkansans. The WFWR is an impaired river impacted by sediment and nutrients, and has lost one-third of aquatic species on record since 1894 (Brown et al., 2003). Through community partnerships and stakeholder engagement, Beaver Watershed Alliance (BWA) will conduct on-the-ground restoration activities that will include development of an ecological restoration plan for 97 acres of upland urban forest, removal of invasive species from 108 acres, enhancement of 20 acres of riparian habitat, removal of 6,000 pounds of bulky waste and trash from 15 miles of waterway, and implementation of five green infrastructure elements within the project area.

The ecological restoration plan for the 97 acres of upland forest will be for Mt. Sequoyah in Fayetteville, which will include 97 of the 108 acres slated for invasive plant removal. In 2003, Theo Witsell with Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, surveyed the property and noted invasive plant species such as Amur Honeysuckle, Japanese Honeysuckle, Oriental Bittersweet, Tree-of-Heaven, Winter-creeper, Fragrant Honeysuckle, Perilla Mint, and Multiflora Rose. Since then, Garlic Mustard has been located on the property as well, which FNHA has worked to eradicate in the past. The Arkansas Forestry Commission also completed a Conservation Management Plan in 2003 for Mt. Sequoyah. BWA will continue to work with FNHA and area stakeholders to build on previous assessments and plans and address the invasive species concerns, as well as work towards restoring the native habitat of the upland forest and develop a comprehensive conservation management plan. A project steering committee will be formed to help guide the project, and a representative from FNHA will be requested to serve on the committee.

Riparian restoration will include planting 10,150 native tree and shrub seedlings and grasses and forbs for pollinators that will include milkweed species for monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) habitat. Five green infrastructure demonstration projects will be installed to promote best management practices such as rain gardens, bioswales and pervious pathways, and encourage communities to develop voluntary, sustainable practices that benefit water quality and habitat.

Article by Becky Roark

FNHA Thanks Its Contributors Who Provided Support Over the Past Year

We are grateful to all those who contributed to FNHA during the past 12 months with their donations and in-kind support:

\$2,500+

Robert & Sara Caulk
Exxon Mobil Foundation
Kessler Run Participants
David & Pamela Parks
Specialized Real Estate Group

\$1,000 to \$2,499

Adventure Subaru
Beaver Water District
Beaver Watershed Alliance
Kessler Greenway Events
Pack Rat Pint Night
DC Lin III Foundation
Wade Colwell
Annie & Steve Edmondson
Andy & Shari Heinzelmann
Douglas James & Elizabeth Adam
Jennifer & Isaac Ogle
Martha Sutherland
Barbara Taylor
Duane & Judith Woltjen

to \$999

Alison Alison
Rachel & Greg Billingsley
Susan Bolding
Charles & Tamara Brickey
Christopher Clayton
Heidi & Bart Cohen
Bob Cross
Carol Daggett
Craig & Connie Edmonston
Patti Erwin
Bob Ford & Amy Herzberg
Fossil Cove Brewing Co.
Goddard Geographics
James Gorlock
Graham Hawks
Lorraine Heartfield
Pete & Margo Heizelmann
Ironsides Photography
Susan Jenkins
Jon Johnson
Steve & Kandy Johnson
Douglas & Linda Jones
Lionel & Diana Jordan
Hugh & Brenda Kincaid

to \$999 (cont'd)

Thomas & Jill King
Legacy National Bank
Merck Gives Back
Elizabeth McKee
Dot Neely
Northwest Arkansas Land Trust
Anne O'Leary Kelly
Alan Ostner
Ozark Beer Co.
Ozark Natural Foods
Ozark Orthopaedics
Terry & Sheri Payton
Anne Johnson Prichard
Rush Running
Aubrey Shepard & Lauren Hawkins
Dana & Scott Smith
Kim & Peggy Smith
Joyce Stafford
TBG, LLC
Aaron Thomason
Uptown Fayetteville
Shawn & Jennifer Watts
Shea & Gary Weidner
Amy Wilson

Witsell Presents Program on Kessler's Natural Resources at Annual Meeting

The FNHA Annual Meeting was held Sunday, June 11, 2017, in the Chillin' Room of the Ozark Mountain Smokehouse. Theo Witsell, the senior botanist and ecologist for the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission gave an engaging photo-illustrated talk on The Plants, Habitats and Natural History of Kessler Mountain. Witsell is currently working on a number of research projects, including an inventory of the plants of remnant grasslands across Arkansas. He has authored or co-authored more than 30 scientific publications and book chapters and serves as a regional reviewer for the Flora of North America Project.

In 2014, he conducted an ecological assessment of Kessler mountain that documented 544 plant species and 11 natural communities, five of which were identified as being ecologically significant to the site. The resulting document, *A Rapid Terrestrial Ecological Assessment of Kessler Mountain Reserve*, is guiding management decisions at Kessler Mountain as the City of Fayetteville and its partners work to protect this ecological treasure for our benefit and for that of future generations.



Theo Witsell, ANHC

Invasive Non-Native Plants Cleared from Mud Creek Trail

FNHA organized a cleanout of bush honeysuckle and other invasive plants along the first 200 yards of Mud Creek Trail from the trailhead on Old Missouri Road on Saturday, June 17th. About fifteen volunteers showed up with saws and loppers, and Doug James and Liz Adam were there to identify plants. The invasive plants were cut close to the ground and hauled to the other side of the trail, creating an impressive pile of brush to later be picked up by the Parks Department. The plant stumps were painted with glyphosate to limit any re-growth. After the cleanout one could see Mud Creek, which had previously been blocked from view by the green barrier of Bush Honey-suckle. The removal of these invasive plants will open up the area for native plants to return to create a natural habitat for birds, bugs and other critters.



Article by Pete Heinzelmann; Photos by Tom Dureka

Don't forget...

5th ANNUAL KESSLER TRAIL RUN
Oct. 14th at 9am

Registration:
[Registration Wiz Link](#)

For information:
[Kessler Trail Run - Home | Facebook](#)

You Can Help FNHA Future Projects
by **Becoming a Member or by**

[Donating online](#)

or
Downloading a [Membership form](#)
from our [Website](#) to fill out & mail in to us

THANKS, AND AS ALWAYS WE
APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

FNHA Board Welcomes Edmonston

At the Annual Meeting, Craig Edmonston was elected to the Board. Last fall he expressed an interest in being involved with FNHA, and since that time his knowledge and expertise have had a positive impact on our community and FNHA as an organization. His enthusiasm is contagious!



Craig Edmonston

Craig is Instructor of Recreation and Sport Management in the Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation and Assistant Dean for Administration of the College of Education and Health Professions of the University of Arkansas. He was responsible for the administration and management of the University Recreation Program and now oversees the college's Business and Operational Support Center. He serves on more than 15 university, community and national boards or committees and teaches graduate courses in sport management and recreation.