



Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association

Summer 2005

NEWSLETTER

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FNHA Mission Endorsed by Highlands Chapter of Ozark Society



Terry Frederick, chairman of the Ozark Society-Highlands Chapter, presents a check to FNHA chairman Pete Heinzelmann during a ceremony Thursday afternoon, June 30, at the Williams/Skyline entrance to Mt. Sequoyah Woods.

On June 30 Terry Frederick, chairman of the Highlands Chapter of the Ozark Society, presented a check for \$1000 to Pete Heinzelmann, chairman of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, to go toward the purchase of Mount Sequoyah Woods. Support from one of the oldest conservation organizations in Arkansas to one of the youngest is a significant milestone especially at this critical time when the deadline is drawing near for FNHA to meet its financial pledge to the city of Fayetteville.

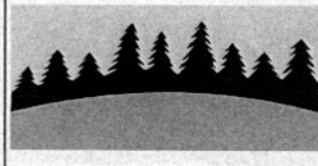
Heinzelmann thanked the Ozark Society for the generous gift and said the money will be applied to the \$300,000 pledge made by FNHA to the city of Fayetteville in 2003 toward the purchase of MSW. The City, in partnership with FNHA, paid \$1.3 million for the land, and will convey a conservation easement to FNHA when the pledge is met. This conservation easement will guarantee that the Woods will remain natural and open to the public in perpetuity. To date, FNHA members have given the City \$150,000 toward the pledge obligation.

The Ozark Society was founded in 1962 by Dr. Neil Compton of Bentonville and his associates on the U of A campus. The Society successfully defeated dams on the Buffalo River and lead the battle to establish the Buffalo National River, the nation's first National Wild and Scenic River, in 1972. The Highlands Chapter partnered with the City in 1994 to plan and build the popular scenic hiking trail at Lake Wilson. Today the Ozark Society's chapters have active conservation, education, and recreation programs throughout the area.

Frederick urged individuals and organizations to ensure preservation of Mt. Sequoyah Woods by sending tax-deductible donations to FNHA at PO Box 3635, Fayetteville, AR, 72701-3635.

FNHA Receives Arkansas Forestry Commission Grant

FNHA has received a grant for \$20,000 from the Arkansas Forestry Commission to conduct an assessment to determine the locations of the important environmental ecosystems in Fayetteville's planning area. We will be working with the Nature Conservancy to collect input and do GIS mapping of the area for this very important project. The work will take place over the course of the next year, so stay tuned for updates and further details!



FNHA Endorsement of Urban Wetlands Influences Outcome

By the early May deadline, the Town Branch Neighborhood Association raised the funds necessary to complete the purchase of the 2.5 acre wetland prairie land by the City of Fayetteville. We wish to thank the FNHA members and other supporters who contributed to FNHA's special appeal. FNHA's endorsement of this project encouraged the large financial contributions that made this significant purchase possible on such short notice.

This natural area is a remnant of Northwest Arkansas' once abundant wetland prairie ecosystem and after reclamation will be an important habitat as well as a centrally located educational resource. Now named the World Peace Wetland Prairie, the entrance is at 1121 South Duncan Avenue.



Chairman's Corner

In the Midst of Change

This topic, change, pertains to the City and the FNHA. Fayetteville as we know is in the midst of rapid growth and change. Large land areas are being purchased and moved through the development process with the City at an unprecedented rate. What will Fayetteville be like in the future if the special natural areas we have been blessed with are lost never to be enjoyed again? The question is do plans need to be made to preserve this heritage for the future? The FNHA also is in the process of change, developing into a more mature organization which can have greater influence on how our city grows.

We recently had an evaluation of our organization by Jamie Fugitt in a report entitled "Conservation Strategy at a Local Level". Jamie, a U of A student of communications professor and state legislator Lindsley Smith, has written a well-researched and insightful report on FNHA. He examined our organization through personal interviews with board members, city planners, council members, the mayor, developers, and local conservationists. He also researched national organizations such as "Smart Growth America" (www.smartgrowthamerica.org). Please see the article, U of A Internship, page 3.

Saving Mount Sequoyah Woods

Here are some specific realities. The FNHA has made a pledge to the City to raise \$300,000 to help purchase Mount Sequoyah Woods. We have raised and given to the City \$150,000 and we are now working to raise the remaining \$150,000. It is vital that we complete this commitment because it will obtain a CONSERVATION EASEMENT on Mount Sequoyah Woods protecting it as a natural park for all time. It will also establish the credibility of the FNHA so that it can have a strong influence in helping determine how Fayetteville grows toward a highly livable community which values and preserves its great natural heritage.

To meet our pledge, we need continued financial support. If you know of any prospective donors—individuals, businesses or corporations—please call Walt Eilers, our fundraising director at 582-0784.

Attaining a beautiful and livable community depends on us acting NOW. By working together we can reach these goals.

It is our Natural Heritage — Let's Pass It On

Pete Heinzelmann
521-8973

The best way to realize
the importance of our natural areas
is to imagine our world
without them...



A group of outdoor enthusiasts take to the Mud Creek Trail in April

Walking Fayetteville's Trails by Bob Caulk

In April the League of Women Voters and the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association began a series of trail walks to enjoy some of Fayetteville's beautiful trails, to better understand the variety and scope of the trails and to see how the trails are being used.

Dave Parker led the first walk on the Mud Creek Trail. This is a hard surface trail and very easy to walk. To the west you walk through the wetland restoration area south of Home Depot/Walmart, and to the east the trail follows along the wooded creek south of Butterfield Trail Village. In addition to our group, the trail was being used by many other walkers and bicyclists. A recent letter to the NWA Times editor accurately described the trail as "a country environment within the confines of a rapidly growing town."

In May, Bob Caulk led the second walk at Lake Fayetteville. After meeting in Veteran's Park on the south side of the lake, the group first took time to see the new bridge over the spillway that completes the circle loop trail around the entire lake. The trail over the dam, the bridge and up to the Veteran's Park parking lot are all hard-surface and very easy to walk. A fox, lying in the tall grass below the bridge trying its best to look like a lump of clay, was spotted from one of the observation areas. The group then walked the south shore trail (dirt surface) and identified trees using a trail guide published by the Botanical Garden Society of the Ozarks. The trail was being used by a few other walkers and many bicyclists.

Mt. Sequoyah Woods was chosen for the June walk. Pete Heinzelmann led a group of enthusiastic hikers from the starting point at the southeast entrance (Happy Hollow Road at Paddock Lane) all the way up to the scenic overlook. Everyone was happy and surprised to find benches (a recently completed Eagle Scout project) at the overlook since after hiking nearly half way to the top of the Woods, a rest was really in order. The last 200 feet of the trail to the overlook is quite steep, but Pete said everyone felt that the view was worth the effort. (*Editor's note: one hiker was well over 80!*)

We hope to start the trail walks again when it gets cooler (mid October?) and are open to suggestions (seaulk@alltel.net). The first three walks have shown that Fayetteville's trails are used by many residents for family recreation, exercise, nature study, and transportation.

Blooms
by Roseann Krueger

Through the years of walking the trails in the Mt. Sequoyah Woods, I've enjoyed the many wildflowers that grow there with varying degrees of abandon. In the very early spring, the Toothworts and Spring Beauties are followed by Yellow Corydalis and Violets, Spiderworts, Lyre-leaved Sage, May Apple, Violet Wood Sorrel, Wood and Rue Anemones, Phlox, Cinquefoil, Sweet Cicely, Wild Comfrey, False Dandelion, and the delicate Four-leaved Milkweed. The Green Dragon, an interesting relative of the Jack-in-the-Pulpit, is hard to spot in its all green camouflage until its red seed cluster appears.

June discoverers Venus's Looking Glass, Wild Petunia, Yellow Star Grass, Heal-All, Fleabane, and Sunflower-like Wingstem. Later still, one finds the Asiatic Dayflower, Starry and Bladder Campions, Lobelia, Pussy Toes, Asters, Black-eyed Susans, and if you're lucky, the lovely Butterfly Pea. There are many more for the woods walker's enjoyment and discovery.

SAVE THE WOODS by Lindsay Smith

Save the Mount Sequoyah Woods—what a meritorious campaign and one that is still underway. As a State Representative of Fayetteville, I am extremely thankful for citizens coming to the call to persuade the City of Fayetteville in January of 2003 to purchase 67 acres of the Woods. I am also thankful for the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association in initiating this campaign. The City's purchase of the land was stage one.

It was the wonderful outpouring of support in the initial stage of the campaign to save the Woods that persuaded the Fayetteville City Council to purchase the Woods. At the time of the purchase, there was also a persuasive effort to assure that the City would preserve the Woods in their natural state rather than sell the property for private development. The primary part of the persuasion to assure the natural state of the Woods for future generations was the FNHA's commitment to raise \$300,000 in private funds. The City agreed to provide the FNHA the opportunity to raise these donations to assure that the Woods will remain a natural heritage for our city, with a deadline of January 1, 2006, for meeting that goal.

In the past years, the FNHA—a non-profit organization made up of 100% volunteers—has done a wonderful job at educating and informing about the need to preserve the Woods, and in the process has reached the half-way mark of the necessary \$300,000 to assure that the 67 acres would be preserved in their natural state rather than be commercially developed.

I thank the FNHA for its efforts, and I thank the donors who have contributed to meet the half-way point. The campaign to save the woods as a natural area is certainly still on *and oh so very necessary* to the assured preservation of this Fayetteville natural area. The reality of this continuing campaign is that the additional \$150,000 must be raised before January 1, 2006.

I pray and am hopeful that private donations will continue to come in to reach this assurance that the Mount Sequoyah Woods will continue to be here for many generations to come. Much has been done to reach the half-way point, but the Woods and the many wonderful joys living within it continue to call to us for their saving. The deadline is quickly approaching, and I encourage you to join with me to make a personal contribution to save the Woods.

U of A Internship

During the past five months, Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association has worked alongside University of Arkansas student, Jamie Fugitt, in order to explore future FNHA projects. Three things to consider are: (1) what are the criteria for selecting projects? (2) where are areas meeting the criteria? and (3) how can FNHA best achieve its mission?

To gather information, Jamie interviewed FNHA board members, city government officials, city planners, developers, environmental groups and citizen activists. His report "Conservation Strategy at a Local Level: A Guide for Increasing the Effectiveness of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association" suggests three main strategies. First, FNHA should focus its efforts on all parties who are involved in Fayetteville land issues through more effective communication. The interviews revealed that all involved parties are generally willing and eager for cooperation. Better dialogue between those involved will only increase the will for cooperation. Second, FNHA needs to continue its positive and knowledgeable approach in its future projects. The success of the Mt. Sequoyah Woods project is evidence that a well-prepared and courteous proposal benefits all participants. And most importantly, FNHA must continue to recruit a diverse and active support-base. Nearly all of those interviewed agreed that the effectiveness of a proposal is directly related to its supporters. A collective, yet diverse voice makes a community group immediately more effective in all its goals.

Jamie was also involved in preparing the proposal for an Arkansas Forestry Commission grant. For more information or a copy of his report please feel free to contact Jamie Fugitt at jfugitt@uark.edu.



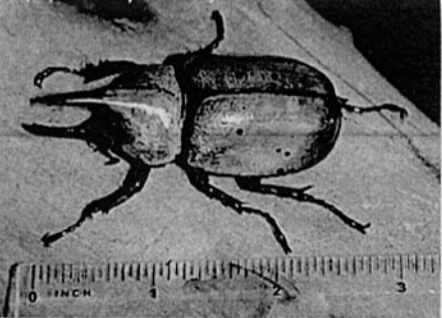
FNHA'S New Website to Link Web Surfers to Fayetteville's Natural Areas by Nancy Varvil

Soon, computer users will have a one-stop resource for finding what's available in Fayetteville in the way of places to get out and enjoy nature. The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association plans to provide a comprehensive list and links to more information about such places as a feature of its new website. Among items listed should be walking trails and their natural features, parks and other locations where particular types of plants or birds might be seen, and locations of other natural features of the area. For example, website visitors would learn they can expect to see yellow trout lilies if they walk the trail around Lake Wilson in the spring.

Website development committee members Dennis Petersen and Nancy Varvil came up with the idea of including this sort of information when they were searching for a way to make the new FNHA website site a meaningful resource for the community. The idea is that the more people know about and enjoy the natural resources that are already available to the public, the more people will want to support preservation of additional natural spaces. Of course the new website will also have information about the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, its current projects and how to participate in them.

The website won't be up and running for a couple of months. While U of A science major Jerret Ableitner is creating the website itself, FNHA members are gathering the information to put on it. Anyone who knows of a natural feature or place in Fayetteville that should be listed on the site or anyone who would like to gather information and write descriptions of particular natural spots in Fayetteville is encouraged to contact Nancy Varvil at 871-7023 or at nvarvil@yahoo.com.

This is a Hercules beetle found in the woods on Mount Sequoyah recently. Isn't he just too cool?



Ornithologist/Educator Douglas James Becomes FNHA Director

Douglas James, a longtime FNHA supporter joined the FNHA Board of Directors in April. Doug is a University Professor of Zoology at the University of Arkansas and is widely published in the fields of ornithology, ecology and vertebrate biology. He was named the 2002 winner of the Charles and Nadine Baum Faculty Teaching Award, the highest honor given to a U of A faculty member.

Doug will be working on developing educational opportunities using natural areas such as Mt. Sequoyah Woods, and we welcome his leadership and experience.