

Newsletter

www.fayettevillenatural.org

Volume 11, Issue 3

City of Fayetteville Accepts FNHA Proposal for Use of Funds Raised to Fulfill Mt. Kessler Reserve Commitment

On December 2, 2014, the Fayetteville City Council accepted the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association's proposal for designated uses of the funds we will raise in fulfillment of our commitment to the preservation of Kessler Mountain.

In a November 16 letter to Mayor **Lioneld Jordan**, board President **John Coleman** outlined FNHA's priorities, based on lessons learned from our earlier preservation efforts of Mt. Sequoyah Woods and the Brooks-Hummel Nature Preserve. The expenditures will improve Mt. Kessler's conservation value and help unlock the site's recreational and educational opportunities. Our priorities include:

- A conservation easement, which is a legal agreement with a land trust to protect future uses of the property, and a stewardship fund to allow active monitoring of the Mt. Kessler Reserve conservation easement in perpetuity;
- Biological and other natural asset inventories of the reserve;

- A habitat management plan to address the encroachment of invasive and noxious species and the plan's implementation;
- Educational signage to help visitors understand the reserve's geological, biological and other natural features and their ecological value; and
- A pavilion or other outdoor education structure for public school and university student study groups.

After the letter was sent, board members talked with City Council members about our proposed designated uses for the funds. There was general agreement from the Council and the proposal was placed on the consent agenda and accepted.

FNHA's pledge to raise \$300,000 over three years for the Mt. Kessler Reserve was a crucial component of the purchase of the property, accomplished with combined funds from the Walton Family Foundation and the City of Fayetteville.

2014 Kessler Trail Run

FNHA, Pack Rat Outdoor Center, and the City of Fayetteville hosted the 2nd annual Mt. Kessler Trail Run on November 1st. This year's run took place at the new Kessler Trailhead off of Judge Cummings Road in south Fayetteville. With 193 runners signed up, this year's run eclipsed last year's totals despite the cold temperatures at start time. Event winners include **Pauline Allen** (Women's 10k), **Chris Brosh** (Men's 10k), **Cara Cremeans** (Women's 20k), and **Brian Hurley** (Men's 20k). The list of runners also including many first-timers on Mt. Kessler Reserve.

Thanks to local partners like the **Ozark Offroad Cyclists, Fossil Cove Brewing Company, Ozark Beer Company, and Apple Blossom Brewing Company**, runners were able to stay warm at the after-party while enjoying good food, beverages, and connecting with fellow Mt. Kessler supporters.

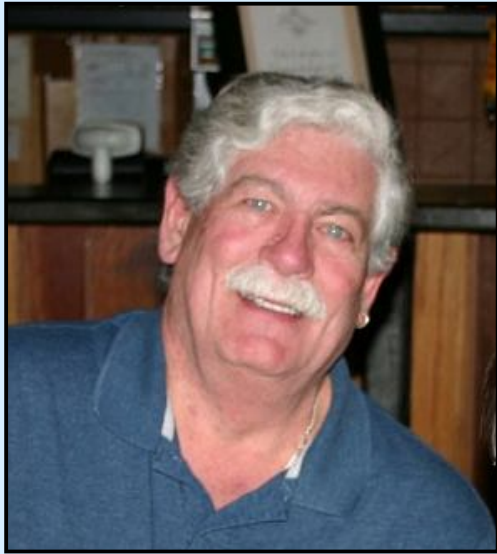
Specialized Real Estate Group has committed \$5,000 per year for the next three years to serve as the Kessler Trail Run's Presenting Sponsor. This, along with support from **Subaru, FayetteChill, Nabholz, Bordino's and Rush Running Company** helped push the Kessler Trail Run's fundraising total to over \$11,000. All proceeds go towards FNHA's commitment to raise \$300,000 for the Mt. Kessler Reserve.



Runners weave their way through Rock City during the 2014 2nd Annual Mt. Kessler Trail Run on November 1st

The 2015 Mt. Kessler Trail Run will take place on Saturday, November 7th. For more information go to www.facebook.com/KesslerTrailRun

Reflections on the Life of Tommy Lonon, 1947-2014



Former FNHA Treasurer, Tom Lonon, joins members at the Garden Room on Dickson Street to celebrate FNHA's successes and 10 year milestone 2013

Tom Lonon passed away on October 23, 2014, at the age of 67. Most of us knew him in his role as treasurer and governing board member of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association - since its inception. He managed all the funds coming in and going out, making it possible for the Association to accomplish its mission of conserving natural areas in and around Fayetteville. In this position and as a CPA, he helped establish the credibility of the FNHA. Donors knew that their contributions were being handled properly and would be used to help save our natural areas. Tom also handled all the tax information needed for FNHA to be certified as a nonprofit organization.

When Tom developed cancer, I spent some time visiting with him and his wife **Miriam** and came to learn a whole new realm about this man who was amazing in so many ways.

Tom and Miriam grew up in the adjacent small towns of Flippin and Yellville in north central Arkansas. As Miriam relates, they first met at a school function as young teenagers. She said, "When I first saw him across the room, I thought he was the best man I'd ever seen in my life." She adds that Tom always worked hard and always had a job. At first, it was shining shoes at the local barbershop, then delivering papers and drug prescriptions on his motor scooter, and then all of his work and accomplishments later in life.

Tom and Miriam married in 1966 when they were not yet 20 years old; they had just celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary when he died. They had two children then two grandchildren whom they were very close to, often taking care of them when their parents were busy.

When Tom was 17, right out of high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a Seaman recruit. He initially served as a radioman on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Oriskany during the Vietnam conflict. Being ambitious and hard working by nature, he eventually became an officer and rose to the rank of Captain (the next rank would be Admiral). Toward the end of his military career, he was in command of the USN Cruiser Jack Ellison, "The Happy Jack," that sailed in the Mediterranean and beyond.

He retired after thirty years of service and he and Miriam returned home to Arkansas. Not being one to sit around, Tom enrolled at the University of Arkansas to start another career. He got a degree in accounting, became a CPA and established a successful accounting business.

But his life extended beyond the office. He used his talents to help others and was an active member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He was also very active in the local Lions Club, which works to serve the needs of the visually impaired. In addition to serving as President, he was chosen Lion of the Year, received the Edward Dahlstrom award, was a Mevin Jones Fellow, and was Past District Governor for Lions Club International. Tom served as Treasurer on the original Executive Board of FNHA and received a Golden Acorn in 2013.

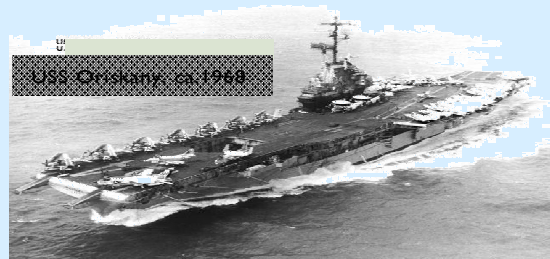
All of us who worked with Tom on the Board enjoyed him as a person and appreciated his vital contributions as an accountant and treasurer of FNHA. One of our board members, Karen Crocker, made this insightful comment about Tom:

"I have to say that Tom Lonon was unbelievably helpful in documenting the financial end of all our work on the grants we received. There were always forms to fill out about funds and volunteer hours spent, and I would take it all to him. He was able to write up all the needed information and send it in. I trusted that he'd do it well, since he had the CPA experience. I never could have done any of that! Tom always did it in a calm and direct way, with a smile, as though he was glad to do it."

In the end, when Miriam was trying to put everything together, she probably summed up Tom's life in the best way possible when she had this epitaph carved on his gravestone:

HE SERVED

- Pete Heinzelmann



Paige Mulhollan Waterfowl Blind Gains Momentum from Make a Difference Day Volunteers



Make a Difference Day volunteers carry posts to waterfowl blind site

The blind's purpose is to allow us to view waterfowl - ducks, geese, grebes, coots, an occasional Trumpeter Swan, even Bald Eagles - without unduly disturbing them. That is, purposes educational and benevolent, a created educational zone of contact between wild nature and our urban culture, guided by the concept that we have no inherent right to degrade lives of wild creatures. The hard work and generosity of these students, and others who helped make a difference, remind me we have a surprising and refreshing capacity to do the right thing by the earth when we have positive goals and set our minds to it. Paige's wife, **Mary Bess**, made homemade cookies for all and carried logs. Paige's son **Kelly** and daughter-in-law **Donna** took a break from being the bluegrass duo *Still On The Hill* to work deep in the thick of it. Thanks to the blind's architect **Michael Cockram** (with plans in hand in the picture at right) and to project chair **David Chapman** (in coveralls).

- Article by **Joe Neal**

"Make a Difference Day" on the first day of November started out at 27 bone-chilling degrees. Several of us older folks enjoyed working with a bunch of student volunteers at Lake Fayetteville Park. Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society leads in the construction of the **Paige Mulhollan Waterfowl Blind**. **David Chapman**, University of Arkansas professor and blind committee head, arranged for 25 to 30 students from the **Order of Omega**, a Greek honor society, and **St. Thomas Catholic campus parish** to help with heavy lifting. That is: carrying treated posts, very long boards, 2 x 4s, plywood, and 80-pound bags of concrete from the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks to our construction site. They also helped build a walkway from the Lake Fayetteville Nature Trail to the blind. They were not daunted by the temperature, chores, poison ivy, or chain saws.



Project Chair, volunteers and architect trying to keep warm November 1, 2014



Mary Bess Mulhollan, far left, joins volunteers carrying fallen logs

FNHA Annual
Meeting
&
Kessler Fundraiser
Coming Soon

Watch your mail and email
for an invitation
with specific details



One of many magical frost flowers at Lake Fayetteville on November 15th got the camera shutters snapping

Gulley Park Expansion Nearly Completed

The City of Fayetteville purchased the approximately eleven-acre Dunn's property just north of Gulley Park on October 10, 2014. The appraised value of the property, including two houses on Old Wire Road, was \$970,000. The Dunns said they would accept \$1,100,000 if the land were kept as park land. This was significantly less than another offer they received. The City looked to the private sector for the difference between the appraised value and the asking price. The **Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association**, working with the **Friends of Gulley Park**, committed to provide the \$130,000,

Gulley Park is a 27-acre community park that was created in 1988 when the Fred Gulley family sold the land to the City of Fayetteville. Its walking trail, playgrounds, pavilion and open space are very highly used by area families. Fayetteville is lucky to have many parks; however, many of them are heavily programmed, and those that are not are extremely popular and heavily utilized. Gulley is one of the few Fayetteville parks to still retain a somewhat pastoral atmosphere due to the nature of the land: open, non-programmed, usable green space. As many are aware, people do not have to be actively engaged in any particular outdoor sport or recreation activity to reap the benefits of being in nature. Often it just takes "being" in nature to reset. The proposed addition of the land to the north is a natural expansion of what currently exists and will preserve that pastoral setting to which people appear to flock.

Niokaska Creek, which runs through the park, is an important feature of the City's Enduring Green Network ([see the City Plan 2030](#)) that provides a green corridor from this area west to Scull Creek. The Water Conservation Resource Center has done a significant

streambank restoration in the park and the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association has sponsored a number of invasive plant removals along the Creek.

The City of Fayetteville Master Trail Plan calls for a multi-use trail to be built along Niokaska Creek. The current target for building this trail is 2016. The Niokaska Creek Trail would go through Sweetbriar Park, also the site of a WCRC streambank restoration, and close to Butterfield School before joining Mud Creek Trail. Butterfield School has the highest percentage of students who walk or bike to school today.

The Niokaska Creek Trail is expected to increase the use of Gulley Park in two ways. The park will become an eastern access point to the Fayetteville Trail system, with good parking and bathrooms, and the Trail will bring visitors, like Butterfield Trail Village residents, to the park from the west.

FNHA is working on another pledge to provide community support toward the purchase of the Kessler Mountain Reserve, but we felt it important to accept this additional challenge because opportunities to add to important Enduring Green Network features in urban areas are rare, and City Staff is excited about expanding this very highly-used park. The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association has been successful in obtaining a \$65,000 Matching Grant from the **Walton Family Foundation** and **FNHA** and the **Friends of Gulley Park** have donations and pledges for the other \$65,000, so the full amount pledged has been raised!

Article by Bob Caulk

Another Round in the Removal of Invasive Non-Natives at Brooks-Hummel Reserve

On November 9, 2014, **Tom Dureka** led 13 volunteers, representing five non-profit organizations, in the fourth semi-annual bushwhack at the Brooks-Hummel Reserve. Tom reports that the synergy was phenomenal, and he was able to report 80.75 hours and 65 miles volunteered to the City for the event. He added, "Although only one of the four chainsaws that came to the event was ready to emerge from its summer snooze, two weed wrenches (Bob Caulk's and Nancy Varvil's) and one Puller Bear (Sue Madison's) participated, and gave the opportunity to compare their efficacy. Sue mentioned that her efforts to get the City to purchase two Puller Bears and make them available for user to check out from the Library were moving ahead."

Tom used a trim roller to paint stumps with herbicide and said there were "Virtually no drips or splatters, no squatting or kneeling necessary, no worry about knocking over cans of herbicide, much safer and more time-efficient for the user." Tom's and our thanks to Joe Woolbright and OERI for the donation of the herbicide.

Volunteer **Amanda Bancroft**, a Master Naturalist and columnist for the [Free Weekly](#), pictured, wrote a column about the bushwhack for her newspaper in which she praised the beauty and peacefulness of Brooks-Hummel.



Mt. Kessler Reserve with Dr. Walt Manger and the First Snow

Everybody enjoys a good story about armadillos. **Dr. Walt Manger**, University of Arkansas Professor Emeritus of Geology, led a field trip to Kessler Mountain Preserve on November 16, 2014. In characteristic Dr. Manger style, humor was well-mixed with technical description of “Late Paleozoic cyclicity” and the “Cratonic Submergence” at the boundary between Mississippian and Pennsylvania in the Carboniferous Period (all included in his hand-out).

At one point, Dr. Manger was describing how watersheds divide to the south and north on I-49 at Winslow. Here’s how armadillos probably breached this geological barrier:

Back in the day when **James Quinn** was Geology Chair, he was tracking the northward march of armadillos. Geology folks were charged with the mission of finding the first one to cross the big divide at Winslow, where all waters flow north (White River) or south (Lee Creek). It was, therefore, a red-letter sort of a day when one was found north of the divide. The assumption all around was that it must have bumped its way through the railroad tunnel.

The weather prediction for the 1:00 pm start on the 16th was low 30s and light snow, which had already started at 12:45. There were four of us there: **Terri Lane**, Executive Director for Northwest Arkansas Land Trust, who organized the hike; Dr. Manger; **Frank Sharp**; and me. It looked like cancellation, then others arrived - eventually around 35 - ready to go, ignoring cold and snow. Dr. Walt Manger has star power and so does Mt. Kessler Reserve.

By acclamation, we shortened the hike, added an indoor Manger lecture on Kessler, and Frank invited everyone to finish the afternoon at his pub for famous pizza so we could digest the information generously provided in hand-out, lecture, and explanation along the trail.

It was also decided the full-scale version of yesterday will have its rerun in late February or early March, before leaf-out, so Dr. Manger can show us some more about how the dramatic landscape within the Mt Kessler Reserve was formed.

Finally, while we were walking through downtown Rock City, someone turned over a rock and amazingly, found a small salamander with tiny white spots. Photographs were sent to **Dr. J.D. Willson** in the Department of Biological Sciences, who identified it as a juvenile Slimy Salamander. He also noted that this creature is among the most cold-hardy of its kind, a good thing considering the rest of us were in down jackets and funny hats.

– Article and photos by Joe Neal



Dr. Walt Manger (left) and talking with hikers on Mt. Kessler Reserve, (below)



Juvenile Slimy Salamander



Possible Shale Barren Identified North of Kessler Mountain Reserve

We reported in the August Special Issue of the FNHA Newsletter on **Dr. Theo Witsell's** Rapid Ecological Assessment of the Mt. Kessler Reserve. Witsell, a botanist and ecologist with the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Curator of the ANHC Herbarium, and a Research Associate with the Botanical Institute of Texas was commissioned to conduct the REA by the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association. In our summary of his interim progress report the Kessler Mountain shale barrens community was noted as perhaps the most unusual ecological feature on the tract, and other articles in that issue of the newsletter mentioned the shale barrens, as well.

FNHA board member **Dr. Doug James** gave a presentation this fall to landscape architecture students who are studying Mt. Kessler, and one of the students, **Cameron Bayles**, sent him photos of another possible shale barrens site. Doug James forwarded the photos to Joe Neal, who then sent them to Bob Caulk and Theo Witsell. Witsell replied:

"We (ANHC) are working with **Paul Nelson** (ecologist from Missouri, retired from US Forest Service and now with American Bird Conservancy's Central Hardwoods Joint Venture) who is mapping all glades in the Ozarks from aerial imagery. I sent him coordinates for the barrens site on Kessler and this one earlier so he would have a reference image and asked him to look for similar sites as he mapped the area around Fayetteville. He emailed me the other day saying that he has mapped "around 30" of these shale barrens communities on the Fayetteville quadrangle. He will provide these data to us at some point but I can see some of them in Google Earth. They aren't "glades" in the strict sense but very open thin-soiled woodlands or, as I like to call them, barrens. I'll include more info in my report.

On a related note, on Monday I found a population of a rare plant (Mexican white sage – *Artemisia ludoviciana* var. *mexicana*) in a fence row on the south side of W Persimmon St., just west of Owl Creek (due north of Woosley Prairie). Mexican white sage is a species of dry prairies, glades, and barrens. It was last documented

from Washington County in 1954 when it was collected from "Vicinity of Fayetteville, west slope of West Mountain".

There is no "West Mountain" on the topo map but **Jennifer Ogle** at the U of A Herbarium found a reference that said that Markham Hill was called West Mountain at one point. She showed me where this is on the east side of I-49 about 1.75 miles east of where I found the plant. From what I can gather, the west slope of this "West Mountain" would be immediately east of the mountain/hill where Cameron's shale barrens are (also named on the topo map but called "Millsap Mountain" in Jennifer's reference). It looks like there are more dry shaley woodlands on the west side of Millsap Mountain, southwest of where Cameron took his pics. This would be good habitat for the sage. I wonder if that is Jennifer's reference). It looks like there are more dry shaley woodlands on the west side of Millsap Mountain, southwest of where Cameron took his pics. This would be good habitat for the sage. I wonder if that is where the collector of the 1954 specimen was?"



Photo of possible shale barrens taken by landscape architecture student Cameron Bayles

Renew Your Membership in FNHA Now

The FNHA membership year is the calendar year, so it's time to renew your membership for 2015.

Take a minute to renew and also make your pledge to the FNHA fund-raiser for the Kessler Reserve! (Details below)

Now that you know why Kessler Mountain Reserve is so important and why FNHA's commitment to raise \$300,000 was a crucial part of the purchase agreement, what can you do to help?

It's easy! Make a contribution now. And, if you can, make a pledge to contribute during each of the three years of our fundraising effort. Your contribution will make a difference - now and to future generations in our community who live, play and learn on Kessler Mountain. Thank you.

FNHA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Amount contributed now \$ _____ Annual Pledge \$ _____ /per year

Name(s) as you would like them listed in acknowledgments (kindly let us know if you do not want your name listed)

Please send checks, made out to FNHA to: Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association
PO Box 3635
Fayetteville, AR 72702-3635

Have a question? Need more info? Want to comment?
Fill out the contact form at www.fayettevillenatural.org
OR Contact us directly

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I love to watch hikers on Kessler Mountain. Can you find me?

Help us to continue making exemplary natural areas accessible to everyone by supporting our conservation, stewardship, policy, and education efforts.

Please join FNHA or renew your membership

Membership is for the calendar year,
and dues are payable January 1,

Annual dues are:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landmark \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Steward \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Single \$20 |

Use your [PayPal](https://www.paypal.com) account on the web at www.fayettevillenatural.org "Join Us"

or

Make your check payable to **Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association (FNHA)**

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FNHA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation comprised of a group of citizens dedicated to conserving the natural areas of Fayetteville and its environs for the benefit of present and future generations