



Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association

Winter 2005

NEWSLETTER

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Urban & Community Forestry Assistance Grant Update

by Bob Caulk



FNHA Vice-Chair Karen Rollet-Crocker, left, listens as Arthur Fry, foreground, makes a point during the first public meeting at which the FNHA Community/GIS Urban Forest Conservation Assessment criteria were discussed.

The FNHA Community/GIS Urban Forest Conservation Assessment is progressing. Public input has begun to reach a consensus on the most important natural features that local residents support preserving. GIS data on natural and man-made landscape features has been collected and analysis has begun. Combining the GIS data with the results of the public input will begin in January.

In the last FNHA newsletter it was announced that FNHA had received a \$20,000 joint grant from the Arkansas Forestry Commission's Urban Forestry Program and the U.S. Forest Service to be used to identify the highest priority areas in and around Fayetteville for conservation before they disappear due to rapid population growth.

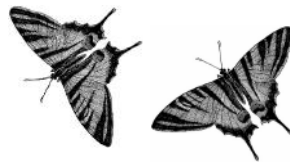
FNHA's partners in the grant project are The Nature Conservancy Ozark Highlands Office and the Landscape Architecture Department at the University of Arkansas. The study will be done with GIS analysis developed by The Nature Conservancy under the direction of a broad-based Science Advisory Council. Key milestones for the project are going to be the SAC's identification of important forest and landscape characteristics that would be desirable for conservation and input to be provided by interested citizens attending a series of public meetings. Students from the Landscape Architecture Department will then assess areas for beauty and 'passive recreational' public uses such as trails.

A beginning point for this project was a preliminary study completed by Jamie Fugitt, a student at the University of Arkansas, entitled "Conservation Strategy at a Local Level: A guide to Increasing the Effectiveness of FNHA". His interviews with local officials, planners, conservationists and scientists documented their opinions about the need for protection of natural areas in Fayetteville.

On Tuesday, November 1, FNHA held the first public meeting at the Fayetteville Public Library to describe the process being used to collect and analyze the public input. FNHA Board member Karen Rollet-Crocker and Ethan Inlander, conservation geographic information system specialist with The Nature Conservancy lead the discussion. The geographic area being considered includes the Illinois and White River watersheds and goes beyond Fayetteville's current planning area. The conservation ranking criteria include human use, ecology, and development likelihood components. Ethan described the questionnaire that is being used for ranking criteria input and gave some examples of information available in GIS data bases.

The questionnaire is available from the City website (www.accessfayetteville.org), and to date many have downloaded the document and mailed it to us. It was also sent to FNHA members who have provided an email address. If you don't have email, please call any board member for a hard copy. Results of the questionnaire will determine which criteria are given the most weight in ranking conservation opportunities.

In his letter notifying FNHA of the grant award, Governor Mike Huckabee noted that 80% of Arkansans live in urban areas where planning and management of community forests add to the quality of the state's natural resources. Mayor Dan Coody said that this project will provide input for the new Fayetteville 2025 Plan. FNHA will use the information to help landowners identify and preserve valuable natural areas for the future. The FNHA also expects that this project will show other communities across Arkansas how such an analytical tool can identify areas for conservation.



Think Spring with Paige Mulhollan

will hold its first quarterly general membership meeting of the new year at 6 PM Tuesday, January 10, 2006 at the Mt. Sequoyah Assembly Center's Bailey Hall. We are delighted that Paige Mulhollan will speak to the group.

No escape from the short, dark, and cold days of mid-winter is better than to reflect of butterflies, the "dancing wildflowers" that will soon predict spring and summer. Butterfly watching is one of the fastest-growing wildlife enthusiasms. Mulhollan's program will introduce you to the life history of these interesting insects, as well as to identification of local species and their relationship to local wildflowers.

After Dr. Mulhollan's program, we will have a short business meeting to elect board members and review the 2005 FNHA finances.



Chairman's Corner

by Pete Heinzl-

I would like to thank all of you who have supported the efforts of the FNHA to save some of our priceless natural heritage for the future. Especially, thanks to the many who have contributed funds to preserve Mount Sequoyah Woods. We are getting close to meeting our commitment to the City to raise \$300,000 toward the purchase of this special place, but we are not there yet. We are going to make another significant contribution to the City early this coming year. With your continued financial support, we can complete our commitment and protect Mount Sequoyah Woods through the conservation easement the City will provide us. For all that the FNHA has accomplished, many people, especially the following, have worked hard and contributed a great deal:

Tom Lonon- A CPA and the FNHA's treasurer makes sure that the critical job of managing our donations and funds is done properly. It is a big and very important task.

Karen Rollet-Crocker – The FNHA's vice chair and U of A professor of landscape architecture. She has developed and led the GIS project which the FNHA started with a State grant. This project will identify valuable natural areas in and around Fayetteville which have potential for recreation and to maintain the beauty and livability of our community. She has involved the U of A landscape department and City staff in the project.

Sara Caulk – Editor of our newsletter and invaluable executive secretary who keeps this organization organized.

Bob Caulk – Important and hard working member of our board with exceptional insight about our activities, especially from his involvement on the Council of Neighborhoods.

Nancy Varvil – The FNHA secretary and a journalist. She maintains the record of our activities and meetings and is working to establish our web site.

Dennis Petersen- A member of our board and active in the Mount Sequoyah Neighborhood Association, especially regarding the development of the DePalma land in an environmentally friendly way.

Doug James- Distinguished ornithologist and biology professor at the U of A and, fortunately, a member of our board. Dr. James has helped organize educational programs for the FNHA and presented a talk on "The Hawks of Arkansas" at our first of our quarterly educational meeting in October.

Walt Eilers – A board member and chair of our fund raising committee. Walt keeps us in touch with the business community.

Dan Ferritor- Dan has volunteered his time and has been a great help in applying for grants to help the FNHA complete its commitment for MSW and to develop educational programs about the character and value of our natural areas.

Robin Buff- A long time Fayetteville High School biology teacher. She is working on educational programs for school age children and adults using Fayetteville's rich natural environment.

Duane and Judy Woltjen- They have done so much to help save Fayetteville's natural heritage. They have been major fund raisers and givers for the FNHA. Duane conceived of and organized our quarterly General Membership Program.

Margo Heinzlmann- Always there to help (especially me). She keeps our correspondence up to date.

Kevin Renfro- Kevin built a group of benches at the "Twin Oak Overlook" in Mount Sequoyah Woods for an Eagle Scout project - a perfect place to rest and enjoy the woods.

Mayor Dan Coody- The mayor has been a vital part in the effort to save MSW and also, through gentle persuasion, encouraged and obtained the gift of 30 acres next to MSW from the DePalma heirs and the Barber development group. He also encouraged developers to donate 40 acres along Clabber Creek to the City. Additionally, Dan sees the need and value of the Skull Creek trailway for Fayetteville and is working toward its development.

And thanks to all of you for your involvement in preserving Fayetteville's special natural gifts for the future.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays,

Pete

FNHA's Inaugural Quarterly Meeting Takes Flight with James Presentation



Doug James, featured speaker at FNHA's fourth-quarter General Membership Program held October 6, 2005, in the Board Room at the Fayetteville Public Library, demonstrates hawk behavior. Doug's wry sense of humor both informed and entertained the packed house as he presented slides featuring Arkansas Birds of Prey. Many of the raptors are common and nest in northwest Arkansas, e.g. red-shoulder hawks or great horned owls, while others such as the immature Mississippi kites, that spent several weeks here this fall, are uncommon.

Audubon Arkansas presented the Robert Shults Award to Doug recently recognizing his contributions and achievements in the study of our native Arkansas birds. National Audubon Society president John Flicker traveled from New York to attend the award presentation banquet.

From the Editor

How many times have you thought about adding your two-cents worth to a community cause, but you "didn't have the time" to do so? How many times have you been disappointed in the results? Never has it been easier to provide your input.

Those of you providing FNHA with email addresses have received a copy of the FNHA Community/GIS Urban Forest Conservation Assessment questionnaire to fill out and return electronically. This questionnaire may also be downloaded from the City website (www.accessfayetteville.org) and mailed to FNHA, PO Box 3635, Fayetteville 72702. You may also call any FNHA Board member to receive a hard copy to fill in and return.

Now is a good time to let our community leaders know what is important to you and your family regarding natural preservation in and around Fayetteville. The number of responses can be very important.

And.....Thanks to all of you who helped spruce up Lake Wilson Nov. 12th.

Have a happy, healthy 2006 and take time to savor our natural heritage

Sara Caulk

IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER An Unparalleled Arkansas Event

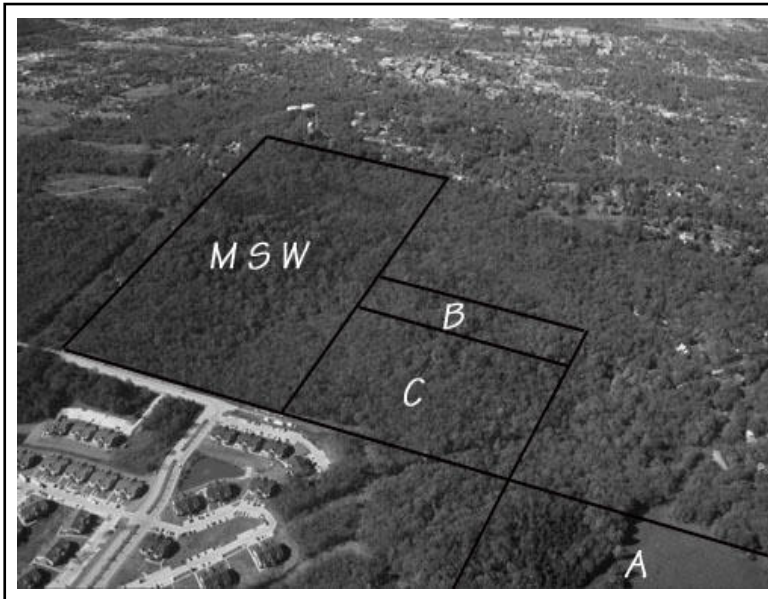
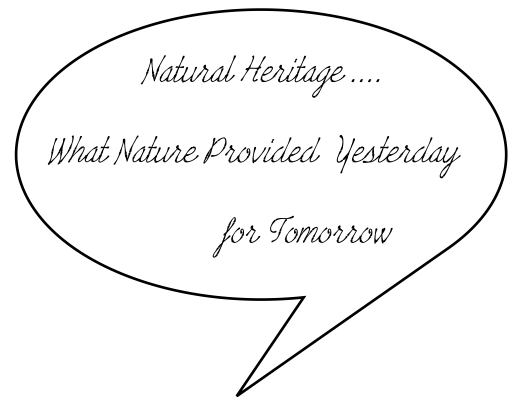
by Douglas James

Of course everyone has heard the fantastic news that the spectacular but enigmatic Ivory-billed Woodpecker, a bird thought possibly to be extinct, was discovered in Arkansas in February of 2004 and subsequently was confirmed. This is the first confirmed sighting since the species disappeared in northeastern Louisiana in 1944. The place of discovery was Bayou DeView in the eastern Delta country of Arkansas near Brinkley. Bayou DeView is part of the Cache River-White River complex of rivers in that flat-land area, a region dominated by mature bottomland cypress, tupelo, and wetland oak species, collectively called the Big Woods. Some of the cypress trees there are more than 1000 years old. These swampy forests stretch for about 75 miles north and south encompassing 500,000 acres, of which fortunately nearly 400,000 acres are already protected in public and private conservation ownership, combining the Cache River and White River National Wildlife Refuges, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission Dagmar and Rex Hancock/Black Swamp Wildlife Management Areas plus other protected lands including lands of The Nature Conservancy. The remaining 100,000 acres are being purchased rapidly.

But, back to the bird and its present status. So far there have been over a dozen sightings of the species in the Bayou DeView area. Tape recorders have been mounted everywhere and over 60 recordings of the main Ivory-billed Woodpecker sound have been obtained. In one case one bird is answering another. Most of these recorded sounds have been in the southern part of the White River Refuge where the forest is the biggest, far to the south of Bayou DeView where the sightings have been made. (The common contact sound between Ivory-billed Woodpeckers is a loud, rapid staccato double-tap with the beak followed by a lengthy pause before another double-tap.)

Here's more evidence. Even though the Ivory-bill is a little larger than our other large woodpecker, the common Pileated Woodpecker, the Ivory-bill's beak is much larger than that of the Pileated. Beak marks of Ivory-bill size have been found in trees where most of the contact sounds have been recorded.

As I write, a new season of thorough searches for the bird is underway. The original intensive search was conducted only in the Bayou DeView area in 2004 and early 2005. The current search which began in November and involves a huge cadre of volunteers will continue until the trees leaf out again in April. It is very difficult to find Ivory-bills when foliage is present, but in fact the search period does include the bird's nesting season. One problem is that an Ivory-billed Woodpecker requires a large territory, seemingly ten square miles per pair of birds. So, finding one is worse than a needle in a haystack. It's chasing a moving needle in a haystack!



Significant Urban Forest May Be Preserved

Several FNHA members, including Mayor Coody, contacted the heirs of Dr. Anthony DePalma regarding the disposition of the 120 acres of land, most of which is undeveloped, on which Tony lived while working, then retiring in Fayetteville. Discussions among the mayor, the heirs, and developer Brandon Barber, have thus far lead to two developments and a large addition to Mount Sequoyah Woods being proposed. The eastern-most 80 acres (A) is the proposed development known as Biella Estates; the southwestern 40 acres will have a 10 acre development (B) on its west side consisting of 5 building lots. The remaining 30 acres (C) will be given to the