



Taking Fayetteville's Natural Heritage into the Future - since 2003

Newsletter

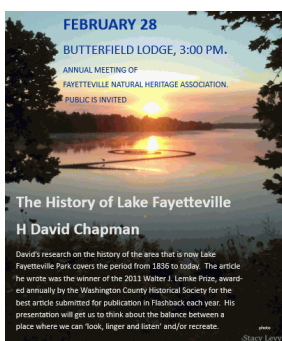
February, 2016

www.fayettevillenatural.org

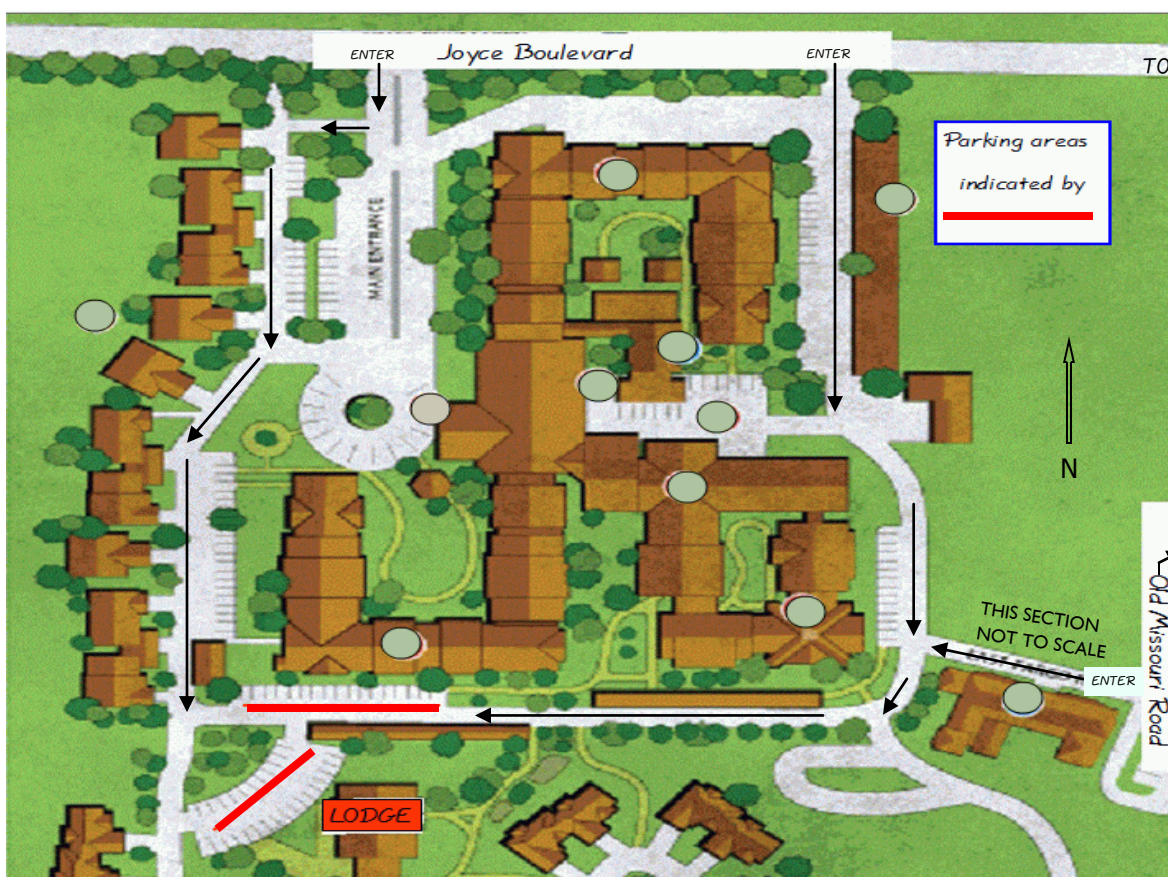
Volume 13, Issue 1

FNHA 2016 Annual Meeting to Feature Talk by David Chapman

Our featured speaker will be **Dr. H. David Chapman**, who will give a presentation about "The History of Lake Fayetteville." David's research on the history of the area that now is Lake Fayetteville Park covers the period from 1836 to today. His article on the site was the winner of the 2011 Walter J. Lemke Prize, awarded annually by the Washington County Historical Society for the best historical article submitted for publication in *Flashback*. Since its 1975 creation, the Park has been considered an important natural area. However, regional population growth has increased demand for other uses for the park land. David's presentation should get us to think about balancing uses in a place where we can "look, linger and listen" or actively recreate. We hope you will join us February 28th for conversation with FNHA members, refreshments and our annual business meeting!



Please Join Us for
The FNHA Annual Meeting
Sunday, February 28, 2016, 3:00-5:00 pm
Butterfield Trail Lodge



There are two entrances to BTV on Joyce Blvd. and either will work.

There is also an entrance to the grounds on Old Missouri Road just north of the Mud Creek Trail parking area.

Please park near the Lodge in the areas marked with the red lines on this map.

Popular Ornamental Shrub Poses Threat to Native Habitats

In the last FNHA newsletter we reported on the City of Fayetteville resolution requesting a study of the need for an ordinance to regulate or prohibit the use of certain invasive plants in town. In response, city staff organized a group of community stakeholders to study the problem of invasive plants in Fayetteville and to determine whether an ordinance to regulate their use was warranted.



Flowers and leaves of burning-bush

Photo: Eric Hunt

The stakeholder group concluded that 18 species of invasive plants were causing, or had the potential to cause, significant economic and environmental problems within Fayetteville, and recommended that the city council adopt an ordinance prohibiting the use of these plants in new developments that require a landscape plan review and approval. We are happy to report that on November 5, 2015, the city council passed the ordinance seven to one. This decision represents an important first step toward making an important contribution to urban forest health as well as improving the accessibility and aesthetic value of public spaces throughout Fayetteville.

Chinese privet and bush honeysuckle are the most common invasive shrubs in Fayetteville and, of course, they are on the prohibited list. But it might come as a surprise that burning-bush (*Euonymus alatus*) also made it onto the list. A native of China, burning-bush is a popular ornamental shrub that was brought to the U.S. in the 1860s and is still widely available in local nurseries and garden centers. However, it has escaped from cultivation and is now becoming a common sight in mesic forests and along wooded trails throughout Northwest Arkansas. While it is not yet as common in Fayetteville as some of our more established invasives, the city felt it was important to raise awareness about its invasive potential, as it tends to form dense thickets that can shade out native herbs and tree seedlings, which can reduce biodiversity and negatively impact forest health.

With its prominently winged, often green stems, burning-bush is easy to identify at any time of year, but especially in the fall when leaves turn brilliant red to purple. It is a multi-stemmed, flat-topped shrub that grows up to 10 feet tall and wide, with upright to spreading branches. The deciduous, simple leaves have pointed tips, and are opposite along the stems. Small, greenish-yellow, four-petaled flowers appear in May to June and are solitary or grouped in clusters of two to three, with male and female flowers appearing on separate plants. Female flowers produce green, lobed fruits in the fall that turn



A large infestation of burning-bush along Hwy 12 in Rogers displaying its red Fall foliage

Photo: Susan Jasan

brown at maturity and open to expose four seeds, each of which is enclosed in a bright red aril – an enticing treat for birds, which then disperse undigested seeds to new locations.

So just how invasive is burning-bush in Northwest Arkansas? Several areas in Fayetteville, including Mt. Sequoyah, Kessler Mountain, Markham Hill, and Lake Fayetteville, host somewhat small populations of the plant. But much larger infestations have been documented in Bella Vista at Tanyard Creek and in Rogers near Lake Atalanta, where it is the dominant understory shrub. This tells us that burning-bush probably isn't going away on its own, but instead will likely only become more common in the region if we don't take steps to control it.

What can you do to help curb the spread of burning-bush? The single most important thing you can do is **DON'T PLANT IT**. If you already have these plants growing in your yard, consider replacing them with an Arkansas native, such as strawberry-bush (*Euonymus americanus*), silky dogwood (*Cornus obliqua*), red chokeberry (*Photinia pyrifolia*), fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*), or arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*). All of these shrubs have colorful fall foliage and also provide food for birds.

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Kessler Gala Skit Sequel for 2016: Snake Oil and Song

Stubborn horses are out. Snake oil and songs are in ...

for the 2016 Celebration of Kessler Mountain. Prop preparation and script polishing have commenced for the sequel to the 2015 FNHA Kessler Gala skit, "**PHILLIP KESSLER REVISITS HIS MOUNTAIN.**" A small able-bodied band of folks, "willing to trade talent for food," joined **Frank** and **Sara Sharp** for supper at Gabriella's Mexican Grill in Farmington, then migrated to the Old Smokehouse for a work session on January 11th.

Once all had settled in, Director Frank provided both vision and motivation.



Donna Mulhollan, right, performs a tune written for the 2016 Ole-Tyme Medicine Show Gala during a work session. Enjoying the music are, from left, Alex Mironoff, Frank Sharp, and Kelly Mulhollan.



Terry Vaughan, Tim Gilster, and Bob Caulk listen as Kelly (red scarf) and Donna Mulhollan in framed reflection behind them) perform an original tune for an enthusiastic audience

Actress **Terry Vaughan** brought her "Earth Day Girl" character to life with playful professional flair. **Donna** and **Kelly Mulhollan** served up samples of delightful ditties they've crafted for their roles as **OLD-TYME MEDICINE SHOW** minstrels. **Alex Mironoff** reanimated Professor P. Dan Tic, purveyor of profuse prose, who fixates on phosphorous this time around. **Tim Gilster**, **Bob Caulk**, and **Dot Neely** supported the evening's effort with constructive comments, as well as offers to assist with set construction, projection equipment and other event staging tasks

-Article and photos by Dot Neely

Students Experience Hands-on Environmental Education at Kessler Mountain Outdoor Classroom and Nature Center

Kessler Mountain Outdoor Classroom and Nature Center, a collaborative effort among several local organizations including Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, hosted its first groups of students from the Fayetteville School District last November. Fourth-graders from Butterfield Trail Elementary School spent a half-day at the classroom learning about ecosystems, citizen science, plant/animal adaptations, and erosion through interactive activities. As **Dana Smith**, environmental education coordinator at Fayetteville School District, told the kids, “The goal today is to learn something and have fun!” Based on the feedback from both teachers and students, the field trips succeeded in their goal.

The first half of the trip consisted of a suite of activities at the nature center inside the Ozark Smokehouse. Students dressed up as a flower or a bee while learning the different adaptations that make pollination possible. The components of their costume represented structures that have important functions in pollination. A favorite among the groups were the nectar guides on the flower petals. These invisible lines glowed under UV light, which represented the markings on flowers that help bees and other insects find nectar. After learning about animal and plant adaptations, the students shifted their focus to erosion. After a demonstration of how root systems affect runoff, the students used natural materials to build their own mountains and experimented with wind and water to erode their creations. As they ran their experiments, they put the scientific method into practice as they made predictions and took observations about their mountains.



Next, students took a nature hike on the 0.6-mile interpretive loop trail. They used a field guide to take observations by filling out a checklist. Among the things they looked for were “a place where water flows,” “something a plant uses to protect itself,” and “I used my magnifying glass to see...” Students found ample opportunities to practice being citizen scientists! At one point on the trail, they spent time doing nature sketches and composed poetry about their surroundings. Many were proud of their artwork and were eager to share it with the rest of the class.

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The students' Kessler Mountain Outdoor Classroom experience continued back at school. Their artwork was used in art class, where they colored their drawings and displayed them in the hallways. Also, as part of a weekly writing prompt, the students wrote positive and enthusiastic thank-you letters. Many of them recalled their favorite moments on Kessler Mountain and expressed their opinion that all 4th grade classes should visit the outdoor classroom. The teachers shared the same sentiment.

In addition to the fourth-graders, some high school students visited the classroom. The AP Environmental Science class spent a full day there learning about how humans impact the environment and how land use planning works. They ate pizzas from **Frank Sharp's** famous pizza oven before hiking to Rock City, one of the most scenic spots on Kessler Mountain. The last activity of the day was a mock steering committee in which students worked together to compile a Master Plan for public use of a fictional property. Students were tasked with providing reasonable and environmentally sustainable public access to a large public preserve – much like the current process for Kessler Mountain.

The Kessler Mountain Outdoor Classroom and Nature Center is a work in progress, but these first field trips show that the classroom has great potential for environmental education that is local and accessible for school and public groups! **If you would like to get involved at the Kessler Mountain Outdoor Classroom and Nature Center, contact sbarrow@nwalandtrust.org.**

Thanks to Fayetteville Public Schools, Northwest Arkansas Land Trust, Boston Mountain Solid Waste District, Mt. Kessler Greenways, Arkansas Native Plant Society, and the National Park Service for working to make these field trips a success!



Article by Sim Barrow
Photos by Karen Crocker

November Kessler Trail Run: Fun for Participants and Funds for Kessler Mountain

With over **200 runners** representing **eight states**, the Kessler Trail Run continues to grow each year! **Specialized Real Estate Group** was the lead sponsor for the second year in a row along with annual sponsors, **Pack Rat Outdoor Center** and **Adventure Subaru**, as well as a new members to the team, **Beaver Watershed Alliance**, **Prewitt Wealth Management Group** and the **Bank of Fayetteville**. The 10k and 20k runs began at the City trailhead located off of Judge Cummings Road, where runners made their way across Kessler on a beautiful fall day. This year, runners finished at the historic Ozark Mountain Smokehouse, allowing each participant to soak in the fall colors of Kessler and finish with a pint from local breweries **Fossil Cove**, **Ozark Beer Company** and **Apple Blossom**. **FayetteChill** and **Pack Rat** rounded out the event with some great giveaways for runners. FNHA is incredibly thankful for the many volunteers who helped organize the event as well as all of the sponsors. over **\$12,000** from the run will go towards the conservation of Kessler Mountain.

- Article by John Coleman

Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association has been selected as a beneficiary of the **Inaugural Fayetteville Gumbo Cookoff** to be held on **Saturday, March 5th** **12 noon to 5:00 pm**, at the Historic **Ozark Mountain Smokehouse** on U.S. 62 West.

Enjoy beer and cast your vote for the region's best gumbo, as you support FNHA's efforts to preserve our natural heritage for current and future generations!

— THE INAUGURAL —

FAYETTEVILLE
GUMBO
COOKOFF
2016

MARCH 5 + NOON-5PM
The Historic Ozark Mountain Smokehouse
(Fayettechill Smokehouse Outlet) toward Farmington on U.S. 62
1725 S Smokehouse Trail, Fayetteville

TICKETS ARE \$25 AT BeerFests.com /EVENT/FAYETTEVILLE-GUMBO-COOKOFF

FEATURING BEER FROM

BLACK APPLE
CORE
OZARK BEER CO.

fayetteville natural
heritage association
Benefiting the Fayetteville Natural Heritage
Association for the Kessler Mountain Reserve.

LIVE MUSIC BY
Clifford Todd and The Sharp Elevens + Rachel B Table for Three

FIND US ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM & TWITTER

How Are Your Backyard Wildlife Habitats Doing?



As you may recall FNHA supported the EAC's crusade to get the city of Fayetteville designated as the first NWF Certified Wildlife Habitat in the state, and Jerry Davis's article, below, that was published on the Arkansas Birds Listserv, serves as a reminder to our members that their continued efforts in providing the right backyard habitat is not only helpful and rewarding but necessary for a healthy environment for the critters with whom they enjoy sharing their space.

Joe Neal, local bird expert and retired USFS biologist adds:

"Jerry Davis is a retired USDA Forest Service Wildlife Biologist with a long career promoting the concept that **what is good for wildlife is also good for people**. I worked with Jerry when we were both on the Ouachita National Forest. He was always looking for opportunities to improve conditions for wildlife on our National Forests. In retirement, he is doing the same for our yards."

Time for Your Bird Nest Inventory

As the trees go dormant and lose their leaves they reveal stories of events that happened in your yard during the spring and summer. If you did not track birds nesting in your yard during the breeding season, winter is the time to make an inventory of bird nests. This is not for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology or National Audubon, but for you and the birds. Often birds are able to nest without your knowledge and the locations of these nests become more obvious in winter. Some nests may be easy to identify and you may know the birds that made them and others you may need a nest field guide. The fact that

the nests are there is important. This will not tell you if young fledged successfully, but that there was a nesting attempt.

The value of this is to determine how important your yard is to breeding birds and not just the value to the birds that frequent your feeders. If birds are not nesting in your yard, what is missing in your habitat? If your yard is of little value to nesting birds, what improvements are needed?

Does your yard have the habitat basics, food, water, cover and space? Are there multiple layers of native trees, shrubs, and grasses? Do you have snags and properly placed and maintained species specific nest boxes? Is it free of feral and free roaming cats and other disturbances? Is your chimney open for Chimney Swifts or do you have a Chimney Swift tower? Are there brush piles and native evergreen trees that serve as hiding and thermal cover all year? Do you have a dominance of native plants that produce native insects and fruits for birds? The number and diversity of nesting birds are indicators of your bird habitat.

Some birders keep a list of birds seen in their yard including those that flyover. Shouldn't you start keeping a list of bird species that successfully nest and fledge young? If birds are not nesting in your yard, why not? Make the effort to eliminate the limiting habitat factors. With time and habitat improvements, nesting birds may increase. Your bird and bird nest monitoring will tell the story of your success or failure in contributing to bird recovery and survival.

Jerry Davis,
Certified Wildlife Biologist
Hot Springs, AR

Your Support is Vital to Our Ongoing Campaign to Preserve Natural Areas in Fayetteville and NWA

Annual dues are:

(☒ Please check one)

Membership is for the calendar year,
and dues are payable January 1, 2016

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <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** account or **Anedot** on the website at www.fayettevillenatural.org or

Make your check payable to **Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association (FNHA)**
and mail to **PO Box 3635, Fayetteville, AR 72702-3635**

Please Print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Thank you for supporting FNHA over the years and special thanks to our Lifetime members who have contributed at the \$1000 level and above.

We'd like to remind you that membership renewals were due in January. Please mail in your dues using a repro of the form to the left, or renew on our website (www.fayettevillenatural.org) by using either your PayPal account or your credit card on our Anedot link.

Thank you to the following for renewing your memberships for 2016:

David and Ann Oakley
Susan Jenkins
Bob Cross