



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

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Newsletter

March, 2017

Volume 14, Issue 1

Check Presentation Brings FNHA to 75% of Kessler Mountain Reserve Commitment

When the Fayetteville City Council voted on February 18, 2014, to acquire the Kessler Mountain Reserve, community financial support was an essential selling point. Once again, FNHA stepped up and assumed the leadership role to fulfill a community pledge to raise \$300,000.

At the February 7, 2017, City Council meeting, FNHA President Jennifer Ogle presented a check to Mayor Lioneld Jordan for \$60,000, bringing our total contribution toward our pledge to just over \$225,000.

Included in this total is \$165,000 in cash and \$60,000 in conservation services which cover the costs to establish a Conservation Easement held by the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust and conduct a Rapid Ecological Assessment by the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission to guide development of the Trail Plan.



FNHA President Jennifer Ogle presents \$60,000 check to Mayor Jordan

While most of the support came from FNHA members, Kessler Gala attendees and Kessler Run participants, several contributors deserve special mention: Fayetteville Natural Areas Foundation (Pete and Margo Heinzelmann), Beaver Water District (Conservation Easement support), David and Pamela Parks, Duane and Judy Woltjen and Specialized Real Estate Group (Run Sponsor). Of course, Kessler Greenways (Frank Sharp) continues to cook pizza and collect donations. Thank you all!

-Article by Bob Caulk

Coming Soon on a Sunday in March
FNHA Annual Meeting
Date and Place To Be Announced by Email

Featuring a Presentation by Entomologist Sim Barrow
and Some Taste Treats from the Kitchen of Bob Caulk



Save the Date!
The 3rd Annual Kessler Gala
will be held on Sunday, May 21,
from 5:00-8:30 pm at the Pratt Place Barn

FNHA Board Develops Organization's First Strategic Plan

The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association Board has developed and adopted an organizational strategic plan. Every month for five months, starting in September, 2016, the Board met, under the guidance of David Williams, to create, refine and, in February, 2017, adopt the new plan. Williams, the retired director of Ozark Guidance and an experienced consultant to non-profit boards, generously contributed his time and expertise to what proved to be an intensive but rewarding effort.

The FNHA Board developed a vision statement, a mission statement and a set of values that inform the organization's work (see insets). It also identified strategic initiatives for 2017 and for the following five-year period, from 2018-2021, along with work groups to carry out the initiatives. As part of the planning process, the Board identified internal strengths and weaknesses; external opportunities and threats; and key supporters, allies and stakeholders.

FNHA Vision

The Greater Fayetteville area* will have conserved natural areas, including both private and public lands, that preserve our natural heritage, balance the needs of people, and allow wildlife to flourish for generations to come.

FNHA Values

The compelling values that inspire and foster integrity in FNHA's work include:

- Scientifically-based land conservation strategies and stewardship practices.
- Balanced use of natural areas for people and wildlife.
- Positive, collaborative approach to advocacy.
- Accountable and transparent operations.
- Flexibility and adaptability toward changing opportunities and needs.

FNHA Mission

To promote the conservation of natural areas in the Greater Fayetteville area* to balance the needs of people and wildlife for generations to come.

**The Greater Fayetteville area is defined as the city limits and planning areas of Fayetteville and the planning areas of Farmington, Greenland and Johnson.*

FNHA Strategic Initiatives for 2017 and Associated Work Groups

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Our advocacy efforts will be framed with a win-win positive approach emphasizing what we are for instead of what we are against (save the Buffalo instead of stop the dam). Our public engagement and information efforts shall convey good stewardship of our natural resources, will be soundly science-based, and will encourage ways to help people connect and fall in love with a natural location.

2017 Strategic Initiatives

- A. Stay strategically involved politically, including FNHA board members' presence and representation in partnership efforts, in interaction with city governments in strong support of land conservation initiatives and in the two-county open space plan (especially conservation tax support).
- B. Fund annual levels of support for habitat projects, Halberg Ecology Camp, Kessler Outdoor Classroom, Kessler Classroom Volunteer Committee, and related community projects.
- C. Support cities' backyard habitat certification initiatives. Include expanded media communications. Engage homeowners in eradicating non-native invasive species.
- D. Identify the most important areas for next stages of ecological conservation and restoration projects (including completing our Kessler commitments). Update status annually.
- E. Draft and broadcast a set of guiding principles for natural heritage protection efforts designed to keep us connected with a robust and healthy ecological environment for balanced physical, emotional, social and economic health.
- F. Support sustainable management of conserved natural areas.
- G. Plan strategic marketing, communication, and fund-raising efforts that grow our membership and enhance public understanding in support of key initiatives.
- H. Create a routine accountability protocol to evaluate performance of board and work groups and on work list initiatives to measure productivity, quality, impact, and cost-effectiveness.
- I. Develop the concept of protected areas to be designated as wildlife sanctuaries.

STRATEGIC WORK GROUPS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Work groups will be authorized to be the champions for each strategic initiative. Each group will be composed of at least one board member, and may include community members. Their job is to define the work to be done on each initiative, define the deliverables, communicate the timelines for initiative work/completion and provide timely reports to the board on initiative status. In general, they will use a format that identifies what they are going to do, what the quality indicators of their work or outcomes will be, what difference the initiative completion will make and what the cost-effectiveness of the completed initiative will be.

Land and Policy Work Group (A, D, E, I)
Education Work Group (B, C)
Communications and Fundraising Work Group (G)
Habitat and Stewardship Work Group (C, F, I)
Executive Work Group (H)

Again, please let us know if you would like to be part of one of the work groups.

FNHA Founders' Scholarships for 2017 Halberg Ecology Camp

Once again, FNHA will provide scholarships to area students who attend the Halberg Ecology Camp. The camp, sponsored by the Arkansas Audubon Society, is a fantastic introduction to the natural world for 11- and 12-year olds. If you want to see how fantastic, view any of the YouTube videos at http://www.arbirds.org/halberg_ecology_camp.html. The camp sessions this year will be June 11-16 and 18-23. The link above has all the details about the camp and how to apply. More information and a few photos are included below.

The Arkansas Audubon Society Halberg Ecology Camp is held each June at Camp Clearfork, a U.S. Forest Service camp between Hot Springs and Mt. Ida. Starting in 2001 the camp expanded to two sessions (from one in past years) with each session having sixty-two 11- and 12-year old youth, about equally boys and girls.

The camp students arrive on Sunday afternoon and leave Friday morning. So what happens in between? The staff includes two co-directors and a



teaching staff of 14 instructors (including several with Ph.D.s) who are college and high school natural science teachers. Also on staff are a full-time nurse plus an activities director to coordinate recreational activities. And the kitchen staff prepares nutritious food that also tastes good! We get a lot of positive comments from camp students about the food before they leave.

A typical day for campers would include early morning walks (to identify birds and other critters out early in the day), breakfast in the dining hall, both indoor and outdoor hands-on classes, recreation including a lake with canoes and swimming in late afternoon and then a common evening meal in the dining hall followed by a guest speaker. Guest

speakers include naturalists like Lynne Slater of Russellville, a rehabilitator with HAWK (Helping Arkansas Wild "Kritters"), who does an evening presentation on rehabilitating birds, and Don Simons, interpreter at Mt. Magazine State Park.

Camp Clearfork has cabins which accommodate 10-12 students (boys in some cabins, girls in others) plus staff members who sleep in the cabins with the campers. Upon arrival on Sunday there is a welcoming session for students and their families hosted by our director, Robin Buff, a recently retired Advanced Placement Environmental Science teacher at Fayetteville High School.

At the conclusion of camp Friday morning, there is another group session which gives the campers and staff one last time to interact before they say goodbye and head home. That final session can get a little teary-eyed.

The AAS Halberg Ecology Camp sessions in 2017 marked our 37th year. The setting, Camp Clearfork, gets rave reviews from camp staff and others for its biological diversity that allows the staff to show campers a variety of habitats and natural disciplines- aquatic biology, botany, entomology, geology, ornithology, mammalogy and herpetology. Many of the staff members return year after year and those positions are prized by educators.



Kessler Fieldtrips for the Next Generation of Conservationists

During the fall semester, 18 classes and a total of approximately 450 students visited the Kessler Nature Center and Outdoor Classroom. Classes included third graders from Fayetteville public schools as well as Fayetteville High School environmental science and outdoor education students. Field trips take place in all kinds of weather.

The center recently hosted a volunteer training and now has a wonderful group of volunteers to assist with the third grade classes in the spring. In recent months, the nature center has also been used increasingly for trainings and other meetings by environmental groups in the community.



High school students
at lower left; all others
are third graders.

Seventh Semi-Annual Bushwhack Conducted at Brooks Hummel Nature Preserve

On February 18, an invasive species management project at Brooks Hummel Nature Preserve took place, coordinated by FNHA President Jennifer Ogle and Board member Tom Dureka. The Fayetteville Parks & Recreation Department loaned loppers, pruning saws, a Puller Bear brush-wrench, gloves and goggles.

A total of 30 volunteer hours (not including travel time) were donated by members of the public. The 12 volunteers, aged from 8 to 61, each spent two hours on site. Ogle and Dureka spent additional time organizing, preparing and cleaning up.

Volunteers included: Shari Withey, Dot Neely, Sean Slape, Cantolino Sandoval, Abby Burr, Jacob Burr, Susan Bolding, Tom Dureka, Ann Mesrobian, Jennifer Ogle, Isaac Ogle, and Andy Heinzelmann.

Most of the volunteers had never visited the wildlife preserve, so the unseasonably warm and clear weather provided them a pleasant introduction. Our efforts concentrated on bush honeysuckle and Chinese privet on the banks and immediate surrounds of Sublett Creek, within about 150' to the south of the pond.

The area on the SW corner of the pond held clusters of large *Lonicera*. About half of the crew employed saws and loppers to dispatch these invasives, and half focused on brush hauling and piling. This opened up a nice view of the pond while greatly slowing recolonization in this low, moist area.

The rest of the crew used the Puller Bear and loppers to take out smaller *Lonicera* and *Ligustrum* in heavily-grassed areas away from the creek bottom. The dense ground cover is expected to slow recolonization.

The work done on February 18th began to clear a trail along Sublett Creek.

No injuries occurred. Two volunteers did find ticks on themselves after returning home.

-Article and photos by Tom Dureka



The FNHA Board voted to donate a Puller Bear to the Fayetteville Public Library's tool library for people interested in removing honeysuckle to borrow.

Fayetteville to Offer Monarch Conservation, Habitat and Citizen Education Program

Monarch butterflies need our help. An iconic pollinator species that numbered in the hundreds of millions in the 1990s has declined by 90% during the past 20 years. Many factors have contributed to this decline, but perhaps the most notable has been a loss of habitat, both at their overwintering sites in Mexico and throughout their spring and summer range in the United States. Milkweeds and nectar plants that once were abundant along the monarchs' migration route have been replaced by agricultural crops and development. The situation has become so dire that the species is currently being considered for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

In November 2015 Mayor Lionel Jordan signed the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge, and by doing so committed to creating monarch habitat and educating citizens about how they can help this iconic species locally. The Fayetteville Monarch Project, a collaboration among the city, conservation groups, local nurseries, university researchers, and public schools, was formed in January, 2016, to develop a Monarch Conservation Plan for the City of Fayetteville. The mission of the Fayetteville Monarch Project is "to conserve and create monarch habitat in Northwest Arkansas."

One important way you can help is to create habitat for monarchs in your yard. Such habitat provides resources they need to survive during their migration and produce future generations of monarchs.

Are you interested in helping the monarch but are not sure where to start? Well, help is on the way! The Fayetteville Monarch Project will be hosting an educational program about monarchs and how to create habitat for them at a free work-

shop on **March 25th, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks**. The program will begin with an introduction about the project and its goals, and will cover topics such as monarch life cycle and conservation, how to design a monarch garden, and the native milkweed and nectar plants that should be used in the garden. The program will also include a tour of the BGO butterfly gardens. Space is limited so be sure to **reserve your seat soon by registering** at: <http://bgozarks.org/learn/adult-classes-and-workshop/monarch-workshop-32517-9am-12pm/>.

By working together as a community, we can restore vital habitat for migrating monarchs and their offspring and help save this declining species.



-Photo and article by Jennifer Ogle

FNHA Explores Collaboration with Master Naturalists

FNHA President Jennifer Ogle met recently with **Ken Leonard** of the Washington County Master Naturalists to explore potential collaboration in restoration activities at Brooks Hummel Nature Preserve. The Master Naturalists may help us remove invasive non-natives and do other work to preserve the 15-acre plot of woods and stream valley; a test event will take place **Sunday, March 26, from 2:00-5:00 pm** at Brooks Hummel.

Smokehouse Concerts Benefit FNHA

You may have heard that **Frank Sharp** has opened the Chill'n Room at the Ozark Mountain Smokehouse to concerts. We were delighted to learn that he is generously sharing the proceeds from admission to the concerts and associated food sales with FNHA. We'll help him serve food and we hope you will come to many concerts at this wonderful new venue.