



SIERRA
CLUB

Ozark Headwaters Group

Sierra Club - Arkansas Chapter

Promoting acknowledgement of the rare and unique nature of the remaining unpolluted lands, waterways and water resources in Northwest Arkansas, and fostering general community and government support for the rehabilitation of degraded areas.

Serving the Citizens of Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Madison, Marion, Montgomery, Newton, Polk, Pope, Scott, Searcy, Sebastian, Stone, Washington, and Yell Counties

OHG Sierra Club Newsletter

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YEAR-END & NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

Cindy Sagers, OHG Chair

3 November 2004

Today has been surprisingly miserable. How I convince myself again and again that a 5:30 a.m. flight is doable is akin to Sue Madison explaining that a political campaign is like pregnancy: near the end you just want it to be over, but two years later you have forgotten how bad it was. So, Kim Smith arrived at my house at 4:30 a.m. to pick me up for a business flight to San Jose, Costa Rica. I was showered, flossed, packed, had double checked my meeting documents: board books from 2003 AND 2004, list of, and contact addresses for attendees, tentative schedule, minutes from the last board meeting, a stack of fresh business cards, Nine West pumps freshly polished and not a hair out of place. Ten minutes from the airport, and laughing about Carol Augsberger's passport (expired, and hence her missed meeting in May), I realized mine was sitting next to a spare bottle of Head and Shoulders in my bathroom vanity 28 miles behind us. Rain, sleet, and cold. And Bush held the balance in yesterday's election (Ohio has never mattered to me before). All was decidedly grim as it became clear I was going to miss the flight. Kim got checked in; I shoved him off and pleaded my case to Mo Burriss (soon to be Man of the Hour) at Delta Airlines. One flight a day to San Jose and I just missed it. American Airlines had an evening flight to CR (arrive midnight) but with a same day fee of nearly \$1000. Ugh. Back to Delta to hold my reserved seat on the return flight from CR. And there, in the blink of an eye, my luck changed. Mo Burriss advised me to collect up my passport and get back quickly (31 minutes to Fayetteville in Kim's Volvo wagon, a Volvo that drives like an Audi, but only under duress.). I didn't expect any favors when I got back to XNA. I had missed a flight on a non-refundable ticket with little hope of transferring to tomorrow's flight, and then not without penalties. But by the time I returned, Mo Burriss had transformed my Delta ticket to an American ticket with no fees, no penalties, no shaking of fists and no stomping of feet. An oversold flight out of Atlanta to CR allowed him to move me to another airline. He didn't have to do it. But he could and he did.

I flew out of Fayetteville at 10:20 a.m., now through Dallas, only mildly disheveled (and by my own personal accounting scheme now have \$1000 at my disposal, the money not spent on a new plane ticket!). What worries? Only that: 1) I woke up at 3:30 for an early flight, only to have earned a 6.5 hour layover in Dallas, and 2) I was in Texas and Bush was still president.

So, what does one do? While my departure from Fayetteville was miraculous, my day in Dallas was dreadful. I flew into the middle of Texas as Kerry and Edwards announced the scheduled concession speech, and stayed until after Bush gushed through his victory speech. Dreary. I drank a tall Bloody Mary, bought a soldier lunch, and took a nap.

During my nap something changed. As my bile rose and fell and my tongue dried to a crisp as I rode the delta waves of deep sleep with my mouth wide open and all available spittle slipped out the corner of my mouth and down the neck of my new Anne Taylor sweater, it occurred to me where we may have perhaps blundered. I had focused a bucket-load of resources and energy on making a difference in this election. I was determined to convince voters to promote environmental issues and green-leaning candidates at a time when our foreign policy was (is) in shambles and our economy was (is) a wreck. But was our focus the blunder? No, no, I don't think so. We are a pro-environment organization, and environmental issues bring us together. Our focus on environmental issues was not the problem. Where we fell short, I am convinced, was in focusing on THIS election.

We must begin now to plan for 2016. Citizens who will vote for the first time then are now six years old. We must recall those experiences that made us activists and be certain the same opportunities and experiences are available to our children. For me, it was walking the woods with my grandmother, Nettie, picking up hickory nuts to learn which tasted good and which were bitter. Riding my trusty Schwinn to Granny's house on backcountry Iowa gravel. Finding the time in the sun to make sugary fruit juices from blackberries growing in the hollow (smoothie-prototypes). This is how I came to know nature and how I know that nature makes me feel stronger. We must find the ways and the time to teach our children, our colleagues and our neighbors that nature provides and that nature heals.

My first step is to develop a calendar of outings for the club, outings that will engage young people, training skills like orienteering or camp cooking, cleaning up (stream teams? sure!), planting trees and developing expertise in natural history – plants, fish, birds and bugs. We have tremendous expertise in our members as exemplars and role models, and they will help us make this happen. Further, we must continue to build coalition with other environmental groups, TNC, Audubon, and Fayetteville Natural Heritage Commission, for example, and with our members, especially those training children, like Dinah Williams' summer program for grade schoolers. We must be trusted to do all that we can to solve local and regional environmental issues, and to this end we must develop a functional conservation committee with an effective and accessible chair. We must continue to publicize our victories. We must continue to make a change and commit our energies to making a difference in the long term.

As my layover at DFW was coming to an end, the intercom at scheduled intervals assured us that we live in a scary, scary world. As evidence of this, I watched at the security entrance where two beefy security guards hoisted an old woman from her wheelchair by her armpits and a third ran his magnetic wand up and down her body. Does this old woman constitute a threat? An old woman who cannot even stand? We seem to have lost our senses, but this is our future if we choose to be frightened. And we must not be frightened into believing we are helpless.

But I am not afraid. I am resolute. We have the courage and the strength and the leadership to move forward. We are not radical environmentalists as we were painted in the last election. We are normal people concerned about the quality of our drinking water and the air we breathe. Let us give our children a foundation rather than a Play Station, give our members confidence in our abilities, and give our community a clear and reliable ally in protecting our lands from exploitation by anti-environmental interests. Let's do like Mo. We don't have to do it. But we can and we will.

OHG's Better BTR 2004

Dot Neely

The OHG engineered the best organized and most excellent Fall Foliage BTR (Big Train Ride) to date. The theme for the ride was, "Ride-'em-out-on-a-rail" calling for citizen action to oppose the environmental policies of the national administration and the polluting industries in Arkansas.

The great success of the BTR and many thanks are due to a cast of tens who contributed to the time, effort, eats, treats, and silent auction items. Generous sponsors of the BTR include Newmarket Sales, Pack Rat Outdoor Center, Lewis & Clark Outfitters, Rom Orchard, Bank of Fayetteville, Premium Brands, Petra Cafe, the Wild Bird Center, and Liquor World.

The weather even cooperated, providing all with a brilliantly sunny day and blue skies under which to party on the Powerhouse patio prior to boarding the A & M (Arkansas/Missouri) Excursion Train for a "three-hour tour" down to Chester, AR and back.

Cindy Sagers, Chair of the OHG Executive Committee reported that everyone "had a great time and that the BTR cleared about \$2600. The OHG donated \$300 of the proceeds to the Young Democrats in support of their event called DEMOCRACY ON WHEELS. The YDs rented a Razorback Transit bus during five days of motor voting that carried new, student voters from the UA dorms to the Washington County Courthouse. The effort was organized by YD President, Dwayne Bensing.

The remainder of the money, about \$2300, was divided among the candidates endorsed by the OHG and the AR Chapter of the club. This was an exceptional effort by exceptional OHG people, notably Dot Neely, Joyce Hale, Fran Free, and Adrienne Pilmanis."

ELECTION 2004: HOW DID WE DO IN ARKANSAS?

Rob Leflar, Political Chair

Unfortunate as the national elections proved to be, in Arkansas Sierra-endorsed candidates made a fine showing: 8 of 12 were elected. Heading the list was Congressman Vic Snyder, who won overwhelmingly in Central Arkansas' 2nd District. State Rep. Jan Judy lost her bid in the heavily Republican 3rd District.

In the Arkansas General Assembly, Sen. Sue Madison of Fayetteville increased her margin of victory, beating an experienced property-rights advocate. We backed three newly elected state representatives: Robbie Wills of Conway, Lindsley Smith of Fayetteville, and Jonesboro's Ray Kidd – whose margin of victory was just 16 votes! The campaigns of Jo Carson (Ft. Smith) and Jim House (Washington County) were unsuccessful.

On the Fayetteville City Council, our endorsed candidates Brenda Thiel, Don Marr, and Lioneld Jordan were all re-elected. Only newcomer Sandy Prince was defeated.

The Arkansas Sierra Club PAC distributed \$3300 to our endorsed candidates, in addition to the \$1000 to Rep. Vic Snyder from the national Sierra PAC. More than half of our Arkansas Sierra PAC kitty came from the Big Train Ride put on by the OHG in October, organized by Cindy Sagers, Dot Neely, Fran Free and others. This is the most we've ever been able to contribute to state and local candidates. Thanks so much to all the Political Committee members for their work, especially John Hill, Blake Rutherford, Steve Smith, Barry Weaver, and Mary Weeks at the Chapter level.

The OHG Political Committee members were Forest Boles, Bob Brewer, Harold Haller, Jonna Hussey, Robert James, Tom McKinney, Cindy Sagers, John Shadwick, Steve Smith, Melissa Terry, and George Zeiler. Thanks to all for a great job.

FLASH: ARKANSAS CONSERVATION COALITION REBORN!

At a December 27 meeting, the Sierra Club and several other Arkansas conservation groups resolved to re-form the Arkansas Conservation Coalition. The ACC was successful in the 1980s and early 1990s in promoting the Arkansas Wilderness Bill and pushing for environmental protection in the state legislature and agencies. Groups attending the meeting included the Ozark Society, the Audubon Society, and the Arkansas Canoe Club in addition to the Sierra Club. The revived Arkansas Conservation Coalition will try to

counterbalance environmentally destructive initiatives that can be expected in the future, and offer positive alternatives. Each participating group will have the latitude to engage or not on particular issues, in keeping with that group's concerns and philosophy.

CHECK OUT THE UPDATED OHG SIERRA CLUB WEBSITE!!

http://arkansas.sierraclub.org/ozark_headwaters/

FOR ELECTRONIC DELIVERY OF FUTURE OHG NEWSLETTERS AND ACTION ALERTS, PLEASE SEND A NOTE TO THE EDITOR: Libertas94@MSN.COM

Hey, Sierrans!

This year we are focused on rekindling our outings program. Just this afternoon we wrapped up the first ever "Mistletoe March" in Newton County. Nearly 20 hardy souls braved temperatures in the teens over the weekend to hike Alum Cove and environs. Winter hiking is great. There were no bugs and one can see forever! Barry Weaver and Kent Bonar carried the day. My finest natural history moments were glimpsing mayfly larvae swimming in the icy cold but sunlit streams of Alum Cove, watching newly hatched midges flying in the sunlight just beyond reach from a bluff overlooking Dismal Experimental Forest, ovate-leaved catchflies still thriving and green, awash in warmer air rising from the mouth of a cave, and the vast stretch of forest that is yet unmanaged. Thanks to the folks of Newton County for serving as such great hosts!

We have sketched out a '05 calendar of outings, and it may look something like this:
January – Join Melissa Terry and Fran Free to tour their riparian restoration project on the West Fork
Feb – Overnight at White Rock, hikes and Dutch oven cooking (fees for overnight stay)
Mar – Tour ONF with Kent Bonar and Barry Weaver, visit proposed Wilderness Area
April – Trail maintenance on the Buffalo River
May – Stream clean-up
June – Float trip on the Mulberry River
July – visit Blanchard Springs
Aug - fly casting workshop on Beaver tailwater
Sept – ?
Oct – Mushroom walk with John Shadwick
Nov - ?
Dec - Second Annual Mistletoe March

And there is more! Karen Faupel would like to arrange day hikes with parents of small children. Also, let us know if you are heading to the woods and would like some company. Check our website for details of the event including dates, leaders and contact information, or send your ideas for outings to me at (csagers@uark.edu).

David Pryor to Discuss Environmental Issues

The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association is honored to have Senator David Pryor as the keynote speaker for the FNHA Annual Meeting, which will be held in the Willard and Pat Walker Meeting Room at the Blair Public Library in Fayetteville at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, January 9th, 2005. Senator Pryor's address will focus on the environment and acquiring and protecting unique natural areas. We are extending a special invitation to members of the Sierra Club OHG.

Legislature Kick-Off Party!

Saturday, January 8th 4:00p.m. to 6:00p.m.
Moot Courtroom, UAF School of Law

Come find out what issues are likely to come up at the legislature this session and learn about strategies for creating state policy change. The legislature and legislative process is not a secret, legislators are accessible and that state legislation does matter, and that folks can and should get involved in the process. We'll hear from a panel of individuals who are experienced in the state legislature and welcome your participation in the conversation.

4:00 - 4:05 Welcome/Introductions by Moderator Rob Leflar
4:05 - 4:15 Stephen Smith
4:15 - 4:25 Jan Judy
4:25 - 4:35 Bill Kopsky
4:35 - 4:40 Transition into next segment - sponsoring organizations (CFC, League of Women Voters, OMNI, OHG)
4:40 - 4:50 CFC
4:50 - 5:10 League of Women Voters, OMNI, OHG
5:10 - 5:15 Transition to next segment - Audience participation
5:15-5:55 Audience participation
5:55-6:00 Wrap up discussion and thanks

You won't want to miss it!

Co-sponsored by the Arkansas Citizens First Congress, Ozark Headwaters Group Sierra Club, League of Women Voters of Washington County, and OMNI Center for Peace, Justice & Ecology.

Monthly General Membership Meetings

The Ozark Headwaters Group of the Sierra Club invites you to join us on the 4th Wednesday of every month for an evening of environmental updates and discussion. Meetings begin at 7:00 pm at the Boar's Head Pub (in the back of Powerhouse Seafood), located one block south of Dickson Street in Downtown Fayetteville.

Everyone is welcome. You do not have to be a Sierra Club member to attend! A full menu of food and drinks is available. Please feel free to forward this message to others who you feel may be interested. For more information about the meeting, please call the Ozark Headwaters Group Office in Fayetteville, AR at (479) 571-3005.