

Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers Member News



VOLUME 1 / ISSUE 1

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President's Message

As incoming president I will strive to fulfill Friend's mission statement – "Dedicated to clean, healthy water in the North Fork and White Rivers by working with individuals, groups, and government agencies to protect and enhance this watershed for future generations."

Because Friends is an all-volunteer organization I ask for your help in these efforts as you are able, with your volunteer time and financial support. Friends is a 501(c) (3) organization under the IRS so your financial support is tax deductible.

I look forward to working with you to expand the confluence of science and passion to protect our watershed.

Thank you.

Steve Blumreich, President

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"I ask for your help, if you are able."

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jerry & Gail Hester
George & Marianne Latus
Mark Schram
Betty Scott
Dina & Jeff Nash
Kaitlin Vosseller
Gail Lee
Glen Dimick
Cynthia Naff
Steve & Susie Parsons
Carol Brainard
Kent Coffey
Ron Garcia
Mac & Julia Caradine
Joe Dillard
Blueberry Farm/Gordon Watkins
Buffalo River Watershed Alliance

NEW LIFETIME MEMBERS

Wayne & Jane Buck
Dennis Wright

ABOUT STEVE BLUMREICH

Meet your new Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers president.

Steve Blumreich was elected president of Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers for a two year term at the group's annual meeting April 24th held in Batesville, AR.

Steve was born in Rhinelander, Wisconsin and graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh in 1973 with a degree in accounting. He worked for several years as a CPA in Wausau, WI and then moved to Little Rock in 1976. "Although I was born and raised in Northern Wisconsin, I knew there had to be a place warmer in the winter than Wisconsin". Steve's career focused on helping clients with mergers and acquisitions and in 1996 he moved to Springfield, MO and founded BKD Corporate Finance for BKD, LLP the eighth largest CPA firm in the US.

YOUR NEW PRESIDENT CONTINUED....

He retired in 2013 and he and his wife Susan moved to Rocky Ridge Road east of Mountain Home on Lake Norfolk. Steve and Susan have two sons, Paul and Michael, three granddaughters and a grandson.

“We love the natural beauty of this area, the lakes, rivers and streams and especially the people.”

My goal for Friends is to increase awareness of the significant impact our lakes and rivers have on our quality of life and the economy and the importance of water quality. Most of the population of the middle section of the White River watershed, including Bull Shoals Lake and Lake Norfolk area are affected directly or indirectly by these waters. “We are blessed with an abundance of water, however we must realize how our actions, individually and collectively impact water quality. If we degrade the quality of the water we are hurting ourselves, future generations and the economy. We can all make a difference.”

FRIENDS “ON” THE RIVERS

DUANE HADA ARTIST, MASTER ANGLER AND PASSIONATE ABOUT PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT



“As a working artist and passionate outdoorsman, I cannot think of any better place to live and work than my Ozark studio which is tucked away on a ridge close to the Buffalo River National Park. I never have to look far or ponder long for inspiration. As a native son of this rural landscape, I’ve become increasingly aware and protective of my corner of the planet and strive to keep the Ozark ecosystem the unique wild and beautiful place that defines who I am and what I paint.”

Duane owns [Rivertown Gallery](#) in Mountain Home. He is helping to organize and grow the [Cross Trails Outfitters](#), Buffalo River Arkansas Chapter. CTO is a group of Christian men who mentor boys through outdoor experiences of fishing and hunting.

Duane's adventures have taken him to Alaska and the Florida Keys. He has fished in the Gulf of Mexico and in the waters off Christmas Island. Despite fishing many exciting destinations, he still is at home and equally happy when he guides on the Arkansas tailwaters and wild smallmouth bass streams that were his boyhood haunts.

GABE LEVIN FLY FISHING GUIDE. NEW BOARD MEMBER



Gabe Levin is a local fly-fishing guide and recently elected to the board of Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers. He lives on the banks of [Crooked Creek](#), one of the major tributaries of the middle portion of the White River.

Growing up in the Ozarks and learning from his older brother, Ben Levin, how to fish the many small, clear rivers of these hills, Gabe’s appreciation for smallmouth bass and their habitat is deeply rooted in his personal identity.

Gabe considers himself extremely lucky to live in a yet unspoiled environment and to call the waters he has enjoyed since childhood his workplace. He hopes that through his work as a fishing guide, he might help people develop an appreciation for the clean watersheds that healthy fisheries depend on.

Gabe sees Friends of the Rivers as an opportunity to get more directly involved in the work of conserving our valuable aquatic resources.

BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER FACTS

- Head waters in Boston Mountains in Northwest Arkansas and flows about 150 river miles to confluence with the White River at Buffalo City
- Drops about 2,000' from beginning to end
- Drops about 600' from Ponca to Buffalo City
- Became first US National River in 1972
- About 800,000 visitors per year
- 36 sub-watersheds (tributaries)
- American National Rivers (AMR) preservation advocacy group now ranks the Buffalo as one of America's ten most endangered rivers due to the threat from hog farm pollution



OUR BEAUTIFUL BUFFALO RIVER

Beautiful Buffalo River Action Committee (BBRAC) & Buffalo River Watershed Management Plan (BRWMP):

The third of four scheduled BRWMP meetings was held in Marshall, Thursday, June 8. The BRWMP is part of the overall action plan established by Governor Hutchinson's Beautiful Buffalo River Action Committee (BBRAC) in 2016 after an outcry concerning a massive algal bloom in the middle Buffalo River during the late summer of 2016, reports of outbreaks of waterborne illness among recreational users of the Buffalo waters during that period and the public outcry over the C&H hog CAFO located near Mt. Judea in the Middle Big Creek watershed near the Buffalo River.

BBRAC is comprised of the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Arkansas National Resources Commission (ANRC), Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Agriculture Department, and Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. Additionally, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and Arkansas Geographic Information Office have joined as partners.

Directives from the Governor for the first year included establishing a forum of interested stakeholders and initiating the development of a Buffalo River Watershed Management Plan.

ANRC was authorized to oversee development of the BRWMP and hired FTN & Associates (FTN) to manage the process of involving the stakeholders and identifying causes for nutrient and other forms of pollution in the Buffalo sub-watersheds as well as the river itself.

The objective of the BRWMP is to identify and quantify non-point source (NPS) pollution in the Buffalo River sub-watersheds, suggest alternative land management methods and the associated funding sources and technical expertise to implement those actions.

The BRWMP has no regulatory impact and the WMP recommended solutions are strictly voluntary.

Examples of NPS pollution include nutrient runoff from fertilizer, poultry litter, other animal excrement such as cattle and hog waste and sediment from gravel roads, fields, pastures and stream bank erosion.

Regulated point source pollution such as that associated with waste water treatment facilities, certain factories and other "permitted and regulated" (i.e. by ADEQ) entities, including C&H hog CAFO is NOT considered in the BRWMP.

The process calls for identifying and prioritizing sub-watersheds and FTN chose comparative information from a dataset that did not allow data from the most recent Middle Big Creek studies to be compared to the parameters and timeframes of other streams. Middle Big Creek is where the C&H hog CAFO is located.

The most recent time frame used by FTN in the BRWMP was from 2004 to 2015.

Based on the parameters used for the BRWMP, FTN initially identified eight "priority sub-watersheds" out of thirty six in the Buffalo River watershed. The eight sub-watersheds initially identified by FTN as priority sub-watersheds included the following creeks: Whiteley, Mill, Davis, Tomahawk, Calf, Brush, Bear and Water.

A "HUGE" THANK YOU

to Bill Pettit who has served Friends Treasurer for over 9 year and to Tina Cole who rotates off the board. Sam Cooke will remain on the Board as Immediate Past President and we are indebted to his leadership.



Visit friendsoftherivers.org for more photos of the 2017 crawfish boil.



Bookmark our [event page](#) to keep up with water related events.



However after further analysis FTN selected five as "priority" sub-watersheds. They are Mill, Calf, Tomahawk, Brush, and Lower Big Creek (see map).

Middle Big Creek is not considered a "priority sub-watershed" based on the comparative data set information selected by FTN for the BRWMP.

Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers is concerned the omission of the Middle Big Creek in this management plan may imply there is no "problem" in this watershed.



In reality there are problems in Middle Big Creek and over time they will increase because of the continued spraying of liquid hog waste on the land and perhaps leakage from the C&H hog CAFO collection lagoons.

According to C&H's annual report to ADEQ, approximately 2.6 million gallons of liquid hog waste was sprayed on pastures in the Middle Big Creek watershed in 2016.

American Rivers, a national river preservation advocacy group, now ranks the Buffalo River as one of America's ten most endangered rivers due to the threat from the hog farm pollution.

[Link to Google Maps for Mt. Judea](#)

ANRC's presentations from the first three stakeholders meetings are posted on our website. [December 2016](#) [March 2017](#) [June 2017](#)

If you value the beautiful Buffalo River you are invited and urged to review the information and attend the fourth and final meeting, scheduled for September in Jasper.

The final BRWMP report will be delivered to the ANRC June 2018 and BBRAC will then determine next steps.

In next months we will share more about the various threats to the Buffalo River in addition to C&H hog CAFO.

If you, friends, family or acquaintances plan to float or swim in the Buffalo River we strongly recommend you look at the BRWMP maps and analysis showing the various pollutants entering the river from the eight tributaries. Even though the water may look clear and clean, it unfortunately has some pollutants that can cause harm.

Please let us know if you have questions or comments regarding the BRWMP or BBRAC.

Email us at riverfriend@friendsoftherivers.org

CROOKED CREEK CLEAN-UP AND CRAWFISH BOIL

Thank you to all who participated in Friends' Crooked Creek Float/Clean-up/ Crawfish Boil and Fund Raiser on Sunday, May, 28. About 20 people floated from Kelly Access to Yellville City Park in canoes and kayaks. We were concerned about water flow and weather conditions but both were ok for the float. The water flow was about 300 cfs at Kelly Access compared to 200 cfs at normal flow which made the float time shorter. The good news was it required less paddling. A trailer load of trash was pulled from the river including tires, metal frames, bottles, cans and other trash.

Thank you to Ben and Gabe Levin for planning and coordinating the float and Tim Burnley with Arkansas Game and Fish for disposing of the trash.

The crawfish boil, cold beverages and entertainment at the Fred Berry pavilion were enjoyed by about 80 people. Thank you to David Lemoine for the fantastic authentic crawfish boil and Wendy and Gary Luna for the wonderful smoked burgers... And to Duane Hada who annually creates an image of Crooked Creek that one lucky person is awarded for their donation to Friends, present or not. Entertainment was provided by Rio.

This annual fundraiser is the result of a lot of volunteer effort – and in particular Kate Vosseller, AJ Cantrell, and Pam Alexander. But it is all about each of you who floated, who came and ate, enjoyed one another, or donated in support of the work of Friends.

A big thank you to [Ozark Mountain Trading Company](#) and [Start2Start Recycling](#)—Matt Beavers, our business sponsors. The money raised from this event will be used for scholarships and other educational activities related to water quality in our watersheds.

Our hosts, Ben and Gabe Levin are passionate about the importance of Crooked Creek, a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon small mouth fishery in addition to being a beautiful stream to float and enjoy.



There are many treasured creeks and tributaries to the White in our watershed. Hope you will take time to visit our "[Rivers and Streams](#)" page .



2017 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING REVIEW

CONFLUENCE

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines confluence as: the place where two rivers or streams join to become one and also a situation in which two things come together or happen at the same time.

“A Confluence of Science and Passion” was the title of the presentation by Dr. Joe Nix, water chemist, environmentalist, naturalist and Educator.

Considered by many to be the “watchdog of Arkansas rivers and lakes” with respect to water quality – his mission is to have society use good scientific data in making decisions about environmental matters.

In Dr. Nix' closing slide - he shared this inspiration:

“Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by waters.”

– Norman Maclean, A River Runs Through It and Other Stories



AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Mayor Rick Elumbaugh, on behalf of the citizens of Batesville, accepted a “Friend of the Rivers Award” – for their efforts to preserve and improve the White River’s Water Quality through the funding (\$50M) and completion of their new wastewater treatment plant and collection system upgrade.



Ellen McNulty was the winner of the trip with **Lowell Myers** on the Little Red River, and **Karl Lindstrom** will be fishing with Gabe Levin later this year. **We'll report their adventures!**

Special *Friends on the Rivers* donated guide trips to encourage participation at our annual meeting. Members of Friends whose dues were current received **one FREE** opportunity to win and those in attendance at the meeting were invited to purchase more chances.

***Thank you Gabe Levin and Lowell Myers
for your generous donations.***

ACT NOW AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Invitation!! – Please contribute stories, experiences, and photos. If you hike, kayak, collect “shrooms” or wildflowers and native plants – your passion and your time on the streambank or on the water is a reflection of your care and we would like to share it in upcoming news to members and subscribers. Send your articles to sblum1326@gmail.com

