



February 2019

Dear Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers

Crooked Creek, as many of you know, is one of North Central Arkansas's prime smallmouth bass waters as well as one of the top floating creeks in Arkansas. Crooked Creek is especially important to Friends of the Rivers and each year on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend (weather and water permitting) we sponsor our Crooked Creek Cleanup and Crawfish Boil and Burger Cookout.

Crooked Creek, like many of Arkansas's creeks and rivers, is impacted by human activities including runoff/sediment from unpaved roads and creek bank erosion, underperforming municipal wastewater treatment facilities, failing private septic systems and agricultural runoff. According to the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) 303d (impaired/polluted) list, sections of Crooked Creek between Harrison and Yellville are classified as polluted. The official causes of the impairments include excess Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) from the City of Harrison's waste water treatment facility and water temperature being higher than normal in areas impacted by years of instream gravel mining. The City of Harrison is making improvements to its waste water treatment facility to address the problem of excess TDS. Although instream gravel mining was banned a number of years ago it has left sections of Crooked Creek wider and shallower resulting in warmer water temperatures, especially in summer months which results in loss of habitat and aquatic life.

Protect the Fishing

Friends of the Rivers has many members that live, fish and recreate in the Crooked Creek watershed and we are fortunate to have Gabe Levin as a board member. Gabe and his brother Ben Levin have lived and guided on Crooked Creek for many years and have enjoyed its beauty and bounty but have also witnessed what is happening to the Creek.



According to Gabe Levin, “Crooked Creek continues to surprise and delight anglers with some of the best smallmouth bass fishing in the state. This is a waterway that not so long ago was ravaged by destructive gravel mining and whose future as a recreational resource was questionable. Now the resource is no secret - visiting anglers increase in number every year.



Simultaneously, new threats to water quality in the form of increasing poultry agriculture in the watershed and inadequate municipal water treatment facilities are negatively impacting water chemistry. The Crooked Creek fishery has shown amazing resilience considering its past and present environmental threats. The challenge moving forward is to translate increasing recreational interest into a constituency for the health of the resource. It is wonderful that more and more folks are enjoying this waterway and its spunky native fishes. Perhaps it is time now for Crooked Creek’s fan club to push for concrete legislative protection of water quality.”

Reduce Stream Bank Erosion



Crooked Creek bank erosion has been monitored over the years by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and in the fall of 2010 the Trout Habitat Program (THP), Commission Construction Crew (CCC), and Stream Team Coordinator Dave Evans stabilized approximately 1,000 feet of severely eroded streambank (between the new bridge and old slab) at the Fred Berry Conservation Education Center near Yellville. The project involved the installation of Longitudinal Peak Flat Stone Toe Protection (LPFSTP) and rock vanes. Partial funding for this project was received from the American Recovery and Re-Investment Act (ARRA). The project functioned as designed and has withstood several flood events in the past 9 years, however, some rock from the tips of the vanes were washed downstream in these floods. The THP conducted repairs to these structures during the summer of 2017 to alleviate these concerns and protect against future erosion.

Reduce Sediment Runoff from Unpaved Roads

Sediment runoff from unpaved roads is a significant contributor to stream and river pollution. The State of Arkansas along with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Arkansas are promoting Arkansas's Unpaved Road Program to help reduce the amount of sediment entering our streams and rivers. To address this problem a plan was developed to improve how unpaved roads are built and maintained:



- Step one, establish dedicated funding sources and a way to distribute the funds to local projects.
- Step two, fund projects to fix dirt and gravel roads that are eroding heavily into nearby streams or causing a lot of dusty air pollution.
- Step three, train road crews on new techniques and best practices.
- Step four, create on-the-ground demonstrations that reinforce the training and share the best practices more broadly.

Members of Friends of the Rivers, TNC in Arkansas and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission met with Marion County's Judge and County Road Department head in 2018 to discuss how these steps are being implemented in Marion County. We plan to meet with the new Marion County Judge and County Road Department head to encourage continuance of these processes.

Butterball Turkey Feedmill



Many of you have seen and most of you know about the new Butterball Turkey feedmill under construction just west of Yellville near Georges Creek. We believe the feedmill itself does not pose a direct threat to Georges Creek or Crooked Creek because the feedmill is not a large discharger of water, and there is a railroad line between the feedmill site and Crooked Creek which is a barrier to runoff from the site. However, we are concerned that the operation of this feedmill may foster increased turkey production and truck traffic on unpaved roads in the Crooked Creek watershed. Increased turkey production also may result in increased nutrients (especially phosphorous) entering Crooked Creek, and more truck traffic on unpaved roads will add to the already problematic sediment runoff.

What Friends of the Rivers is doing to Help

Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers is bringing attention to these issues and working together with various citizen volunteer groups, governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations to address them. In addition to our annual Crooked Creek clean up, we will be adding Crooked Creek water testing this year.

We will be comparing our water test results for

nutrients and bacteria to the results of ADEQ to determine variances which may indicate increasing pollutants. As stated above, we will also work with Marion County officials and TNC in Arkansas to encourage unpaved road building and maintenance programs that reduce sediment runoff.



Please support Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers' efforts to protect our streams, lakes and rivers by:

- **Attending [Friends Annual Membership](#) meeting Monday, April, 29 at the Veda Shied Center**
- **Participate in the [Crooked Creek Cleanup and Crawfish Boil](#) Sunday, May 26th.**
- **Attending Friends Educational Meetings (See our [Website Calendar](#) for details)**
- **Joining or renewing your 2019 [membership](#)**
- **Making a financial contribution**
- **Volunteering for Stream Team and stream clean up events**
- **Contacting your elected officials and agencies when necessary**
- **Volunteering to serve on a Friends of the Rivers committee**



Thank you again for your support.

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