



Current Events



The Newsletter of the Arkansas Stream Team

Volume 13, Number 3

July – September 2009

News from Region I (Ozark Highlands and Boston Mtns.) Stream Team Coordinator, Dave Evans...

The summer flew by...school has started again, and (at this writing) fall begins today. Man, where does the time go so quickly?

Stream Team activities are starting backup with a “bang” after the summer lull. New adult teams with multiple sub-groups have sprung-up in Benton and Marion counties; two new school groups are forming in Washington County, and North Arkansas Community College in Harrison is expanding their Stream Team activities. In addition, the ever-dependable Ambassadors for Christ Academy Stream Team in Benton County has started-up again.



*Ambassadors for Christ
Stream Team ~ September 2009*

Two groups of *Master Naturalists* have formed new Stream Teams. The Benton County group has already had one training session, received their mini-grant check, and is in the process of purchasing their macroinvertebrate and water sampling equipment. These folks will be monitoring three or four creeks in Benton County around Beaver Lake. A large portion of their membership is composed of retired folks who have a love of the beautiful hills and streams around Beaver Lake, and want to do what they can to help keep this area in a “Natural State.”

Many of you will probably remember Dwan Garrison and her activities with the Yellville-Summit High School Stream Team. Well, Dwan has retired from teaching and, not being one to flitter away her time, has helped with the formation of the Master Naturalists Stream Team in Marion County. This group will be monitoring several streams both east and west of Yellville.

The Ambassadors for Christ Academy sixth and ninth grade classes recently had their first stream field trips of the year. Ms. Hankins’ sixth graders collected a large number of fish to place in their aquarium. They will care for these minnows until the end of the school year, and then return them to Little Sugar Creek. Next trip they’ll start “kickin’ bugs and takin’ names.” Stefan Eubanks’ ninth graders are the “grownup” group of kids that helped start the Stream Team program at their school. They’re now conducting water chemistry testing.



*Ambassadors for Christ Academy
Stream Team ~ September 2009*

North Arkansas Community College in Harrison is expanding their Stream Team program. They’ve already held several litter pick-ups along Crooked Creek in Harrison and their next pick-up is planned for October 24th of this year. Sherri Townsend has received the team’s mini-grant check, and will soon be purchasing their HACH water chemistry test kit, waders and “D” frame nets, so they can conduct chemical and macroinvertebrate sampling on Crooked Creek.



*Dave Evans presenting mini-grant check
to Sherri Townsend – North Arkansas
Community College*

The Cooperative Extension Service in Washington County recently held their annual litter pick-up on Lee Creek, near Devil's Den State Park. This year, over 200 folks helped remove in excess of 3.2 tons of litter from the creek and the campgrounds along the creek. They picked-up litter for 20 miles downstream from the park.



*Lee Creek Litter Pick-up
September 2009*

Bass Pro Shop and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have partnered with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) to improve water quality in Table Rock Lake and two of its major tributaries in Arkansas, Long Creek, and Kings

Rivers. This is a multi-year program with the goal of improving water quality and fish habitat within the Table Rock watershed. The AGFC lakes work portion of the project has been completed, and the stream portion is currently in the works.

Last April, work on the first of several streambank stabilization projects was begun on Long Creek near Denver, in Carroll County. This project involved the installation of a *longitudinal-filled stone-toe protection (LFSTP)*, and three rock vanes, along an eroded stretch of bank that exceeded 1,200 feet in length. During the construction phase of this project the site was flooded several times, once to a depth of almost five feet over the project. Fortunately, no significant damage occurred to the structures. The major construction portion of this project has been completed, and the only thing remaining is to plant several hundred trees this winter. If anyone is interested in helping plant trees in January or February, please feel free to call me at 870-743-4374.



Long Creek

The next project in this program has been designed and permitted. It's also on Long Creek in Carroll County, near Carrollton. This site, just upstream of the bridge on Highway 412, is almost 500 feet long and has an approximate average height of six feet. This repair will also involve the installation of a LFSTP and several rock vanes. A flood bench will be constructed behind the LFSTP, and the bank behind the flood bench will be sloped. This area will be planted to annual grasses, and shrubs will be planted this winter. A variety of native trees will be planted above the sloped bank. Again, if you're interested in helping plant these trees, please call me.

Work on a bank restoration project on the Little Buffalo River, near Jasper in Newton County, began a couple of weeks ago, and then the rains started. About half of the rocks have been delivered to the project site, and a small amount of construction has been completed. Lately, it seems like every time we start one of these restoration projects we bring in the rain. When the rains stop, and the ground dries out, it should only take a couple of weeks to finish this project.



*Little Buffalo River
September 2009*

Another stabilization project, this one on Cave Creek, in Newton County, will begin once the rains stop. This will be the second rock vane project on this farmer's land. Again, the rocks are on-site, the permits are in-hand, and the only thing stopping construction is high-water levels and muddy fields.

**News from Region II (Delta) Stream
Team Coordinator, Stephen O'Neal...**

The third quarter of 2009 is highlighted with many stream surveys in preparation for riparian area renovations, presentations, and some new teams getting their feet wet—literally.

During the past three months, Region II has surveyed and designed nine streambank stabilization projects that are slated to be installed, or considered for installation, during 2010.



This site on the Strawberry River is experiencing severe bank erosion along 850 feet of the river. The primary issue is that the landowner has been clearing the vegetation along the bank and spraying the remaining vegetation with brush killer. Each root holds onto soil at the microscopic level—the resulting erosion was bound to happen, eventually.

The Augusta Stream Team performed double-duty recently. On one of their outings, a litter pickup was conducted on Mud Ditch in Woodruff County where tractor tires, appliances, trash bags, televisions, and even a gumball machine had been discarded in the creek. This creek has been treated as a dumping area for years but, with the help of this Stream Team, renewed awareness in the community, the placement of signs that read “Keep our streams clean,” the hope is that slowly, but surely, this area can be restored to its original beauty.

Augusta Stream Team picks up debris from the surrounding forest that was deposited during the high-water events from previous months. Everyone lives downstream, but sometimes “we can’t see the forest for the trees...”



Don't let anyone tell you differently. These litter pickups are difficult, dirty, and tiring---but, the long-term benefits are worth it—sometimes even fun and educational!



During the cleanup some interesting animals were discovered, such as this Western Worm Snake.

The Team also performed water quality testing from a “chemical” perspective, and found the creek has notably high-level nitrates and orthophosphates. Testing will continue, and “biological” parameters will be recorded later.



The Team performs a chemical assessment of Mud Ditch.

Towards the end of September, the Stream Team Ambassadors (taking the form of some of Arkansas' most interesting creatures—reptiles and amphibians) was part of the *Family Fun Fair* held at the Forrest L. Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center in Jonesboro. The event, although threatened with rain and cloudy skies, was a smashing success with over 3,000 attendees! Many of AGFC's specialty programs were on-hand to display their wealth of knowledge and expertise to the public. A great time was had by all!



The room was “packed to the gills” to hear about the Stream Team Program and learn about the animals that live in and around our rivers and streams.

News from Region III (Gulf Coastal Plain) Stream Team Coordinator, Andy Turner...

Summer was a busy time for the Arkansas Stream Team. Southern Arkansas has seen frequent rains and, as a result, several new streambank stabilization projects have begun. The Ouachita Clean Sweep (litter pick-up) was held on September 12, and was met with a good turnout. Luck was on our side as there was a 70% chance of rain but, fortunately, we all stayed dry as the thunderstorms passed around us. Progress has also continued on the Lake Saracen Bank Stabilization Project in Pine Bluff. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission continues to work with the city of Pine Bluff to re-establish stable banks and increase fishing access around the lake.



*Andy Turner
Region III Stream Team
Coordinator*

The amount of precipitation we received this summer was one of the greatest on record, and all that rainfall has lead to erosion problems for many Arkansans. As a result, new streambank stabilization projects have arisen on Ozan Creek and the Ouachita, Caddo, and Little Missouri Rivers. Erosion problems on these rivers stem from a combination of higher than normal rainfall and removal of vegetation from streambanks. Houses, businesses, and farmland are all threatened by this erosion and, without proper stabilization, the rivers will continue to erode and migrate as the river attempts to stabilize itself. Erosion is an inevitable and natural process, however, in most cases natural erosion is a slow process that is not detrimental to the river's biota or the people who live near the river. Streambank vegetation is the key factor that slows erosion and keeps streambanks stable by holding soil in place with their roots. Trees and some large shrubs have roots that spread wide and deep, holding deeper soils in place, while grasses and smaller shrubs have shallow roots that prevent valuable topsoil from being eroded into the river. More often than not, the problems begin with people's desire to either build or plant crops up to the edge of the river's banks. As a result, the native vegetation that once provided stability is removed, and the probability of erosion problems is greatly increased. Bare, vertical banks are an indication that accelerated erosion is taking place and, without stabilization, the river will continue to erode the banks until it stabilizes itself. Allowing a buffer zone of native vegetation (~100ft) between the river's banks and proposed development will prevent future erosion problems and benefit both human and biotic interests.



Future Streambank Stabilization Projects in Region III

The 2009 Ouachita River Clean Sweep was held on September 12, and was a success as more than 100 volunteers showed up to help keep the Ouachita clean. This event was an effort to clean and beautify the Ouachita River, one of the great natural and economic resources of southern Arkansas. This event provided an opportunity to bring together the communities surrounding Malvern, Arkadelphia, Camden, Moro Bay, Crossett, El Dorado, the Ouachita River Valley Association, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission personnel, and volunteers from the sponsoring partners to help clean and beautify the Ouachita River Watershed. This event was put on by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and was funded largely by the Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA). A big personal “thanks” to ORVA and its members for supporting the Stream Team, we couldn’t have done it without you!

Also, a big “thank you” to all the contributors of the Ouachita Clean Sweep: the Ouachita River Commission, Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services’ Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge, Friends of Felsenthal, Ouachita Conservation District, Save the Ouachita, and the cities of Malvern, Arkadelphia, Camden, Moro Bay, and Crossett. I would also like to personally thank Chris Claybaker, Kent Steegal, Lora Hicks, Cathy Casteel, all Game and Fish Commission volunteers, Stream Team volunteers, staff at Moro Bay State Park, and everyone else who showed up to participate. It was a great experience to be a part of the cooperation and willingness of so many people who sacrificed their time to help keep our river a little cleaner.



Moro Bay Volunteers



Camden Volunteers

In Pine Bluff, work to stabilize the banks of Lake Saracen continues. Work on the first stabilization site is complete, and we are moving on to the second site. This work is part of a larger effort between the city of Pine Bluff and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to improve the fishing, recreational opportunities, and safety of Lake Saracen. There are still some obstacles we must overcome before construction can start, but this project will ultimately help to reduce sedimentation and improve fishing access to the lake.

News from Region IV (Ouachita Mountains and Arkansas River Valley) Stream Team Coordinator

Region IV Stream Team Coordinator, Jim Ahlert, has retired. The news from Region IV will continue once this position has been filled.

HAS ANYTHING CHANGED?

Please let us know if your address, phone numbers or e-mail information has changed.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, and Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Mail to: Stream Team Coordinator
2 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205

(OR)

E-Mail to: sfilipek@agfc.state.ar.us

For those reading a Stream Team newsletter for the first time, Stream Teams are groups of citizens from 6 years old to 96+ who care enough about Arkansas' water resources to form or join a team and adopt a stream or other water body in the state for the purpose of keeping it clean and healthy. Started in 1996, there are now over 500 Stream Teams statewide that carry out a variety of activities in the quest of keeping our state's water more natural. These teams conduct litter pickups, repair eroding streambanks on willing owners' land, plant trees to restore degraded riparian areas, work with local leaders to better manage their watersheds, and a variety of other activities aimed at conserving one of the most valuable of Arkansas' natural resources, its water. Anyone out there who hasn't already joined this winning team and is interested in joining the Stream Team, or learning more about this grassroots way to conserve our state's water resources, can contact Steve Filipek at the AGFC (501) 223-6371, or e-mail him at sfilipek@agfc.state.ar.us. There is no cost to join. Classes on how streams work, what animals live in and around them, and how a healthy stream functions, are offered each year at a reasonable rate.



NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL.

In an effort to conserve resources, Stream Team members with current e-mail addresses were notified of the option to receive the newsletter via

e-mail. If you have not received an e-mail notification and would like to receive the newsletter via e-mail, please notify Steve Filipek at sfilipek@agfc.state.ar.us, or at (501) 223-6371.

► **NEWSLETTER UPDATE:** *Easier access (a direct link) to the Stream Team Newsletter has been made available on the Internet: <http://www.agfc.com/streamteam>*

Stream Team #: _____

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The Process of becoming a STREAM TEAM...

1. Express an interest and request more information: **Send your name, address, and phone number to:**
STREAM TEAM PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

2 Natural Resources Drive

Little Rock, AR 72205

2. Sign up. You will get the newsletter and be counted among Arkansas' STREAM TEAM members. This will also get you in the network of those wanting to help out Arkansas' waterways.

3. Adopt a stream. To become more involved in the program you can adopt a stream. Select a stream that you or your group are particularly concerned about. For example...the creek on your land, your favorite fishing hole, or the stream you drive over every day to work or school.

A. Inventory your stream with help from STREAM TEAM coordinators.

B. Decide what you want to do---trash pickup, habitat improvement, water quality monitoring, and/or whatever is of interest to you!



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2 Natural Resources Drive
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TO: