



Current Events



The Newsletter of the Arkansas Stream Team

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January – March 2011

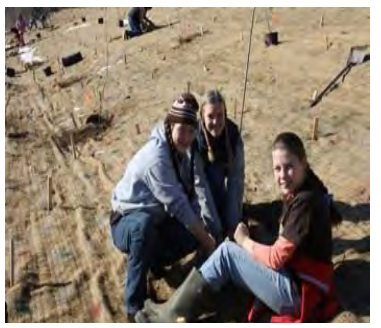
News from Region I (Ozark Highlands and Boston Mountains) Stream Team Coordinator, Dave Evans...

On a beautifully warm Saturday, in mid-January, 80 kids and adults met at the Fred Berry Conservation Education Center, on Crooked Creek, to plant trees and shrubs along 700 feet of recently restored streambank. This marked the progression of a restoration project that had begun almost five years earlier.



Kelly Slab Volunteer Group

Over 500 trees and shrubs had been delivered to the site on the previous Thursday. These were relatively large plants that ranged in size from two feet to over eight feet in height. Each plant was growing in a pot that was a little larger than a one-gallon milk jug. There were over 20 species of trees, and as many different species of shrubs.



Some of the volunteers planting trees and shrubs along Crooked Creek.

The vast majority of these plants were (what I call) “critter friendly,” which means they will provide some sort of food for the area wildlife. There were a number of different types of nut trees for deer and squirrels, berry trees for birds and small mammals, and flowering plants for butterflies and hummingbirds. Among the trees planted were river birch and cottonwood, trees that had once grown in this area, but are few and far between today.

The river birch and cottonwood were the only trees we planted on the flood bench. The remainder of the plants planted in this area were multi-stemmed shrubs. From a bank stabilization point-of-view, the purpose of the shrubs is to increase the “friction” along the bank during a flood. These plants will fold over during a flood and protect the ground immediately around them. They also assist to slowdown the flood waters which, in turn, aids in the deposit of a lot of the material that it’s carrying, thus building up the soil on the flood bench.

Larger, multi-stemmed shrubs were planted along the sloped portion of the bank. These perform a similar function during floods, as do the shrubs on the flood bench. A number of these plants will develop into “thickets” that will provide cover and habitat for a large number of birds and small mammals.



More pictures of volunteers planting trees and shrubs along Crooked Creek.

A large number of oaks, pecans, and black walnut trees were planted throughout the upper floodplain above the sloped bank. In addition, a number of various shrub types were planted among the trees. These plants extended from the upper edge of the sloped bank for about 70 feet across the upper flood bench. Once mature, these trees will provide shade for the waters flowing past this site. Shading of a stream's waters is important, in that desirable fishes (smallmouth bass for example) need cool water in order to thrive. These trees and shrubs will also help to reduce the damage caused by future flooding, such as the ones that hit here in 2008.



Enjoying a meal and fellowship with the volunteers.

I would, again, like to extend a heartfelt “thank you” to everyone who helped with this worthwhile project! Without your help, this would have taken much longer than it did. Volunteers are a God-send to a lot of the projects the Stream Team program installs. I know I am speaking for all four of us (Filipek, O’Neal, Irvin, and myself) when I say “thanks” to all of you...you know who you are.

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

2011 is in full swing, and all oars are in the water—tongue-in-cheek references concerning psychology are allowable! Region II has been pretty busy for the first quarter of 2011 with tree plantings, litter pickups, water quality testing, site visits, design work, and preparing for the upcoming summer months when stream stewardship and habitat projects will be initiated.

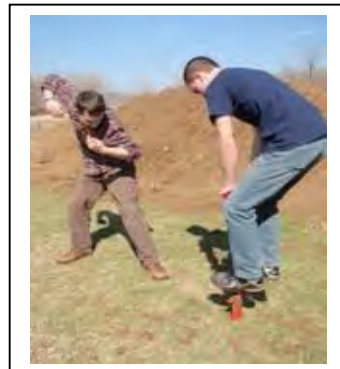
In January, David Long, Private Lands Coordinator (PLC) for AGFC and Stephen O’Neal, Region II Stream Team Biologist, co-hosted a ‘Landowner Participation’ meeting in Randolph County. We had more than 40 interested attendees. Several landowners voiced strong interest in the “Continuous CRP” practice that David presented; one landowner who farms 2,000 acres was very interested in putting field buffers on his farm. Stephen O’Neal presented information of streambank restoration, habitat improvement, and riparian area establishment. Stephen made four solid contacts for technical assistance from landowners owning land along the Eleven Point and Current Rivers with eroding streambanks, and site visits were scheduled as a result of the meeting.

Region II worked with the Sharp County Roads Department to design a solution for a bridge area erosion issue along Big Creek east of Ash Flat. The creek is rapidly migrating into the bridge abutments, and a solution to train the stream to flow along the centerline of the bridge span was developed, and will be installed during the low-flow period this summer. The county looks forward to a decreased maintenance budget associated with this well-traveled bridge area, and the local fishermen are looking forward to the increased in-stream fish habitat potential.



Sharp County Roads and the Stream Team will work to make this site productive for fishing while, at the same time, reducing the chance of bridge failure due to lateral erosion migration.

“Snow-mageddon” in February cancelled an outing that Pocahontas High School had planned to help plant thousands of trees on a riverine project near Pocahontas. However, a week later the *White County Homeschool Stream Teamer’s* took up the task and were able to plant 2,600 trees and shrubs, install seven rolls of coconut matting, move a load of Ozark hellbender habitat slabs to the river, while at the same time having a blast. The students and adults involved were treated to a hamburger feast, grilled right on the riverbank by the landowner, Wayne Gearhardt. The cows, which are now excluded from this riparian area, looked contemplatively at the lunchtime fellowship, and seemed to have a rancorous look about them. Nevertheless, the project on the Eleven Point River is now complete and we await the results of the upcoming fisheries, crayfish, mussel, and Ozark hellbender surveys to see how well this area will respond biologically to the habitat improvements after the winter and spring flood season.



Picture 1—Some parts of Arkansas received two feet of snow during February 2011.

Picture 2—The *White County Homeschool Stream Team* headed north a week after the snowstorm to plant 2600 shrubs and trees on the Eleven Point River.

Picture 3—This team really knows how to have fun and get the job done!

A successful litter pickup occurred along a drainage area leading to Christian Creek, in Jonesboro, with a group of enthusiastic students from the *Health, Wellness, and Environmental Studies Magnet School* in Jonesboro. Led by their fearless leader, Lisa Long, this group picked up over 250 pounds of litter (in less than an hour) along this drainage, including a serpentine slab of metal over 40 feet long—someone must have thought the drainage was a good place to dispose of that type of refuse—this Stream Team thought otherwise!



The students at Jonesboro picked up 250 lbs. of trash in less than an hour!

As an employee of the AGFC, and representing my part in the Stream Team program, I headed south to look at the Wrape Plantation Waterfowl Rest Area with AGFC Wildlife Biologist Mark Hooks. As you can see from the picture (see below), the problem on Bayou Meto is pretty dramatic where two drop pipe structures empty the flooded wetland areas into the bayou. The erosive nature of the soils requires a solution slightly more aggressive than what may be normally required, but a solution has been devised, and plans are to remediate the area as soon as water conditions allow.



The erosive power of water is quite evident here on Bayou Meto.

The *Ahlf Jr. High School Stream Team*, spearheaded by their teacher, Mary Cook, took part in a “shotgun approach” to Stream Team’s as they tasted a little of what the program is all about. We performed some water chemistry tests from Gin Creek, which runs through Searcy, including dissolved oxygen (D.O.) readings, phosphates, and nitrate levels, as well. They also spent some time sharpening their skills at macroinvertebrate identification, as they investigated the pans of aquatic biological samples provided for them ahead of time. Nearly 120 students also learned a bit about riparian areas, dibble bars, and hydrogeomorphology—all in about 40 minutes, as each class from the school made a whirlwind trip to the creek, which was only a few blocks away. Mrs. Cook’s class plans to perform several litter pickups this spring, as well as assessing the creek’s health via “bug kicks,” and they have also applied for a mini-grant to acquire the water quality testing equipment. This team will definitely be active for years to come.



The students at Ahlf Jr. High in Searcy dig into the macroinvertebrate identification.

Viola High School received a mini-grant, which will go towards their water quality testing equipment, to help students gain a better understanding of water chemistry and biology analysis. The school stepped up to the plate this winter and planted over 2000 trees on a cold/windy day, which was not fit for man nor beast. However, these die-hard students are in to getting their feet wet and putting into practice the knowledge they acquire in the classroom.

Viola High School takes receipt of a valuable HACH water quality test kit as part of their focus on training future water quality experts!

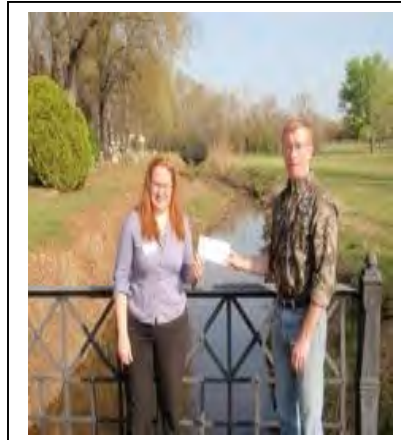


The Mammoth Spring EAST Lab students headed to their local creek, just down the hill from the high school. Town Branch has been the stomping ground for many children over the years. In fact, the principal, Brian Davis, said he used to catch crayfish in the creek when he was a child, visiting his grandmother who lived just a stone's throw from the aquatic playground. The EAST Lab has applied for a mini-grant to work with this creek and monitor the water quality there. They were excited to see the abundance of aquatic invertebrates, especially those rather sensitive to water quality contaminants—a good sign for the overall health of the creek, at a quick glance. A lot of good activity can be expected from this team over the next few years.



Students from the Mammoth Spring High School EAST Lab prepare to get their feet wet in Town Branch.

The Booker Arts Magnet School in Little Rock received a mini-grant from the Arkansas Stream Team to help them get started working on “Battle Creek” across the road from the school. The fourth and fifth grade students, spearheaded by Deborah Hipps, will be involved in a large project consisting of performing regular litter pickups, monitoring water chemistry parameters, performing biological assessments in the creek, and assisting with habitat work that will be occurring on property owned by the Oakland-Fraternal Cemeteries on the same waterway. The cemetery, represented by Lakresha Diaz, recently applied for a mini-grant to get the project off the ground, in order to help restore the creek to its full function as an ecological resource in urban Arkansas. There is a stretch of the creek, at a bridge, where one can look upstream and see how a healthy, functioning riparian area should appear, with excellent cover and sinuosity to the waterway. Then, if you turn 180 degrees and look downstream at the creek, as it flows through the cemetery where the sinuosity has been removed, you’ll observe the vegetation has been eliminated and the creek is eroding, shallow, and essentially devoid of aquatic life in that section—a textbook side-by-side comparison, really. The cemetery is looking forward to initiating the project, and hopes the restoration effort will cut down on their maintenance expenses, and help to restore the creek to its former aesthetic. It is quite rare that a stewardship project and an educational opportunity are as conveniently located as these two, but the Booker Arts Magnet School and Oakland-Fraternal Cemeteries will ultimately benefit from each other as the projects move forward—a true TEAM approach to watershed conservation!



Picture on Left (above) — Deborah Hipps and her students at Booker Arts Magnet School in Little Rock will purchase water quality testing equipment with the mini-grant they received recently.
Picture on Right (above) — Lakresha Diaz of Oakland-Fraternal Cemeteries accepts a check to serve as seed money to initiate an urban creek restoration project in downtown Little Rock.

News from Region IV (Ouachita Mountains and Arkansas River Valley) Stream Team Coordinator, Matthew Irvin...

Wow, four months already! Where has the time gone?

I started off in January helping Region I Stream Team Coordinator (STC), Dave Evans, cut willows for planting projects at Fred Berry Conservation Education Center in Marion County, and a Long Creek project in Carroll County. Dave is a wealth of knowledge, as well as a good teacher. He has shown me many techniques for using willow cuttings on streambank stabilization projects.

I spent one Friday, in January, helping Region II STC, Stephen O'Neal, plant approximately 2400 bare root seedlings on the Harley Harbor project near Salem. Forty high school students from Viola Public School made short-order of the seedlings.



Viola Public School students planting seedlings.

Just after the snow had melted on a cold, frosty Saturday morning, in January, I was back in Marion County with Dave Evans at the Fred Berry Conservation Education Center to plant 520 containers of native trees and shrubs on the banks of Crooked Creek. We had 60 volunteers of all ages help us plant the trees and shrubs.



The above picture is during progress (600 ft. of bank).



This picture was taken after a hard day's work.

In-between tree planting projects, I am getting to know some old, and some new, Stream Teams. I received one request from Leisa Watkins, at West Side Greers Ferry, to become a new Stream Team. Annually, and faithfully, I receive Stream Inventory Reports from Brian Abbott and the *Cossatot River Watch Stream Team*. Next month, I get the pleasure of working with Sister Carol Anne Corley and the *St. John's Stream Team*.



Timber Harvesting along the Cossatot River.

It has been nearly 14 years since I had a surveying course in college. Since it has been a while since I have done any surveying, I spent a day with Dave in Carroll County to survey a new project he was working on with the city of Green Forest, to repair a streambank that was about to take over a jogging trail in a city park.

Closer to home, I have been assisting District IX biologists, Bob Limbird and Frank Leone, with electrofishing on Lake Dardanelle for sauger, and doing interviews with National Geographic at Ozark Dam concerning the freshwater drum kill.

On March 5, the **20th Annual Mulberry River Clean-Up** was a great success, even though the weather was cold and windy. One hundred and twenty people donated their labor to do their part to keep the Mulberry River valley beautiful. Most participants came from within a 50 mile radius, but some came from as far away as Tulsa and Shreveport to take part. Many of the workers were members of the Arkansas Canoe Club. There was also a crew from Cass Job Corps. Brad Wimberley, from Turner Bend, once again hosted and organized the effort. Volunteers were treated to a Rivertowne BBQ meal, along with barbeque provided by Steve Outlaw, and hamburgers provided by the Arkansas Canoe Club. The U.S. Forest Service provided two large trailers for gathering the trash, and, afterwards, hauled off the trash. The cold weather forced most of the workers to stick to the roads, rather than get on the river. Approximately 30 miles of road from Highway 103 to Shores Lake, along with all of the river access points, were cleaned. Those brave enough to work on the river cleaned approximately 20 miles of the Mulberry. After a hearty meal around the campfire, everyone gathered for the much anticipated door prize drawing. Door prizes were provided by the Arkansas Stream Team, Rivertowne BBQ, Burford Distributing, Belle Pointt Beverage, Post Winery, Wiederkehr Winery, Mt. Bethel Winery, Mulberry Mountain Lodging, and the Pack Rat Outdoor Center. All agreed that it seemed a shame to be filling up two large trailers each year, but litter seems to be a renewable resource that can be harvested whenever you wish. Many thanks to all who took part! (To give credit where credit is due – Brad Wimberley submitted this paragraph, with just a few edits by me.) Sorry, no cool pictures.

Also, during the month of March, I attended a Streamside Landowner Workshop at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Arena & Watershed Research and Education Center in Fayetteville. There were 30 local residents/landowners in attendance and six presenters (three from the University of Arkansas, one from the Cooperative Extension Service, one from Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and the Executive Director of Arkansas Watershed Advisory Group). Topics of discussion ranged from 'Riparian Buffers 101' to 'Erosion Prevention, Recognition, and Restoration.'

Probably one of the most exciting things I have done in the past three months is visit Mr. Lowell Myers in Pangburn, Arkansas and look at the final product of his streambank stabilization project. His property is on the Little Red River in Cleburne County. The area of concern was on the left descending bank, approximately two miles upstream of the Highway 110 bridge, near Pangburn, directly above Rainbow Island. Mr. Myers started with an unstable six foot vertical bank, 280 feet long. Mr. Myers contacted AGFC in 2008 seeking help from the Stream Team. Jim Ahlert (former STC) answered the call of help and provided Mr. Myers with a plan in 2008.

With direction from Mr. Ahlert and Mr. Myers, Terry Farris (with Farris & Sons Construction) used 657 tons of BFR's (big fat rocks) to stabilize the toe of this bank on the Little Red River. Eighteen hundred cubic yards of shale (fill material) were used to fill large holes and to bring the bank back to a suitable slope to support vegetation. Native shrubs and grasses were also incorporated to improve the riparian zone. The Myers' spent nearly \$124,500 on this project. To off-set some of their cost, \$5,000 came from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Stream Team Mini-Grant Program.



From left to right: Jim Ahlert, Terry Farris, Lowell Myers, and Matthew Irvin.



Looking downstream on the Myers' property.



Looking upstream on the Myers' property.

Throughout the past three months, since our last newsletter, I have visited 19 sites of various degrees of progress. Dealing with everything from new project sites, with serious erosion issues, to projects that have been completed for several years and holding well.

Among other things, after searching high and low, I found all of my inventory, got my computer up-and-running, and I have been doing a lot of spring maintenance on generators, boats, and other related equipment, to get ready for the “busyness” of spring and summer.

**News from Region III (Gulf Coastal Plain)
Stream Team Coordinator, [currently
vacant]...**

The Region III Stream Team Coordinator position is currently vacant. The Region III news will continue once this position has been filled.

HAS ANYTHING CHANGED?

Please let us know if your address, phone number(s) or e-mail information has changed.

Name: _____

Address: _____

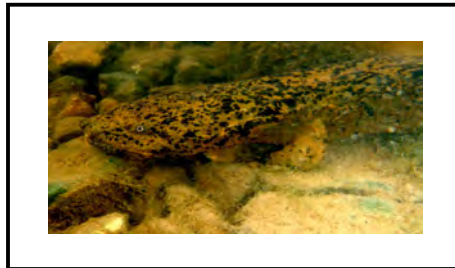
City, State, and Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Mail to: Arkansas Stream Team Coordinator (OR) E-Mail to: sfilipek@agfc.state.ar.us
2 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205

For those reading an Arkansas Stream Team newsletter for the first time, Stream Teams are groups of citizens from the age of six years 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 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>

NOTE: [Under: Arkansas Stream Team Program---Click: Arkansas Stream Team Quarterly Newsletter---then, click on your choice of newsletter(s).]

Stream Team Name: _____

Activity Sheet

Stream Team #: _____

[illegible]

The Process of becoming a STREAM TEAM...

1. Express an interest and request more information.

Send your name, address, and phone number to:

2. Sign up. You will receive 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 everyday going to work or school.

A. Inventory your stream with help from the *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 or your group!



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