



Current Events



The Newsletter of the Arkansas Stream Team

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Time for Spring Clean Ups People!!!

By: Steve Filipek, Arkansas Stream Team Coordinator



Conservationists (left to right) ~ Fred McGill, Katrina Heath, Stephanie Hymel, Mark Oliver, Ceci Oliver, Chris Racey and Matthew Irvin getting ready to do a cleanup on Bringle Creek.

As you can see from these hardworking folks here, it is time to not only do spring cleanups at home, but also at the beautiful places we love to visit, wade in, fish and swim in. What you see here is a cleanup done on Bringle Creek by a concerned Stream Team. Organized by Jackelyn Racey and Katrina Heath, we had eight quality conservationists there picking up literally tons of trash. Bringle Creek is a tributary to the Maumelle River which, of course, is the main feeder stream/river of Lake Maumelle, which is the main water source for Little Rock and much of central Arkansas. In these photos, you will see Fred McGill, Katrina Heath, birthday girl Stephanie Hymel, Mark Oliver, Ceci Oliver, Chris Racey and Matthew Irvin with photos by "SteveO." Unfortunately, or fortunately (in the long run you might say), this team picked up 1,400 pounds of trash that we couldn't recycle, and slightly more than that of plastic bottles, glass, metal and aluminum cans that we could recycle. Way to go, Team!!! Central Arkansas Water provided pizza for the hungry trash hunters, and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission provided water, gloves, litter bags and two trucks and trailers to haul the trash off (see photo below). So, now is the time for all of us to get outside, do some fishing, floating and swimming, or whatever on these beautiful streams and waters of Arkansas...BUT, be sure to take a litter bag with you, and take out what someone shouldn't have left behind. Thanks for all you do to keep Arkansas *The Natural State*!!!



One and a half tons of trash and recyclable material that this Stream Team removed from Bringle Creek and Little Rock's water supply.

OZARK SUMMIT 2012

Dear Stream Teams:

Registration is now open for Ozark Summit 2012 http://ozarks.cr.usgs.gov/ozark_summit_2012.htm, "Restoration in the 21st Century" to be held June 12-14 at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO.

Here is the registration link:

<http://tiny.cc/6owf2b>

Space is limited, so please register soon. Registration is being facilitated by Eleven Point River Conservancy. The registration fee of \$50 includes Tuesday evening social, coffee breaks, Wednesday afternoon restoration site visits, and Wednesday evening barbecue and speaker. Box lunches for Wednesday afternoon site visits can be purchased for \$10 during online registration only.

The draft program schedule is available at:

http://ozarks.cr.usgs.gov/Docs/ozark_summit_2012_draft_program.pdf

Lodging at the special conference rate of \$77 per night is open until May 15th. Here is the link:

http://ozarks.cr.usgs.gov/Docs/Ozark_Summit_2012_Lodging_information.pdf

Please share this information with your friends and colleagues.

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SALINE RIVER STREAM TEAM # 260
Ed Bacon, Coordinator

The *Saline River Stream Team* conducted its annual trash cleanup of the Saline River at Ozment Bluff on October 1, 2011. Sixteen members of the *Saline River Stream Team* (# 260) participated in the cleanup, and removed six bags of trash and debris from the river. Current projects of the *Saline River Stream Team* include a water quality study and the habitat value of woody debris in the stream ecosystem. Future projects will include a water quality study and an assessment of the mussel populations and potential impacts of land use patterns and activities of humans in the watershed. Citizens interested in information on the *Saline River Stream Team* and the lower Saline River should contact Ed Bacon, 345 Crestwood, Monticello, AR 71655, or telephone 870-723-4671.



Saline River Stream Team members (left to right): Hope Veorster, Heather Peek, Robert Rose, Jacob Roberts, Kristin Winters, Nathan Probst, Doug Cagle, Austin Beatty, Faye Stephens, Summer Huddleston, Adair Claycomb, Tessa Cucurullo, Nelly Towett, Douglas Holland, and Cody Rainey.

The Region III Stream Team Coordinator position remains vacant. The Region III news will continue once this position has been filled; however, in the absence of a coordinator for this region, Steve Filipek (Arkansas' Statewide Stream Team Coordinator), has been working to provide assistance, as needed. In addition, from time-to-time, area Stream Teams in Region III will be submitting articles. Thanks to All!

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

I started off the new year with a joint state Fisheries meeting in Fort Smith at the Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Valley Nature Center with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. We had a room full of administrators, professional biologists and technicians from throughout Arkansas and Oklahoma sharing the most up-to-date technology and information regarding just about everything related to managing aquatic life.

Late January through early March is ideal for planting dormant native trees and shrubs on streambanks just before green-up begins. This year, I ordered 1,900 seedlings to be planted on streambanks in Arkansas. Two hundred fifty seedlings were planted on the banks of the Caddo River, in Clark County near Caddo Valley, 170 were planted on Short Mountain Creek, in Logan County near Paris, 95 seedlings were planted on West Fork Mill Creek, near Houston in Perry County, 250 were planted on Horsehead Creek, north of Clarksville in Johnson County, 425 seedlings were planted on Cadron Creek, near Springfield in Faulkner County, 110 were planted on the banks of Brodie Bend Lake (a backwater area of the Arkansas River), near Wright in Jefferson County, 400 were planted on Lockett Creek in Garland County, near Hot Springs Village, and 200 seedlings were planted on Mazarn Creek, in Garland County near Percy.

While the water was low in January, I was able to complete a streambank renovation project on Lockett Creek in Garland County. Due to flooding and log jams, Lockett Creek was migrating laterally via erosion towards a private road and a landscaping business. To slow this process down, I used stone-toe-protection, up to the ordinary high-water mark, and used grasses, shrubs, and trees to re-vegetate the riparian corridor. The project was 160 feet in length and five feet in height. It took 317 tons of boulder-size rock and 400 seedlings to complete this project. The landowner now has a new appreciation for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the *Arkansas Stream Team Program*.

Before ▼



After ▼



During ▼



Complete with trees and shrubs in the ground. ▼



We have a new Stream Team in Pulaski County on Fourche Creek. Tenacious, Norm Berner, is heading up the *Meadowcliff/Brookwood Neighborhood Association Stream Team*. His neighborhood association officially adopted Hindman Community Park through the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department. Hindman Community Park, which has become the largest active park in Little Rock, has 1½ miles of Fourche Creek shoreline, and over 800 acres of land for the public to enjoy. Hindman Community Park for many years has been neglected and has fallen by the wayside. Norm and his crew have definitely given this park an extreme makeover, and they have the best interest of Fourche Creek water quality in mind.



In February I, again, met with the *Friends of the Mulberry Watershed Stream Team*. Much to our disappointment, the nitrates in Little Mulberry Creek were still high. They plan to start monitoring other areas up and down the creek to determine where the greatest concentration of nitrates is located. All other tests were within the parameters of a healthy Ozark mountain stream.

In addition, in February, I attended the Arkansas Chapter American Fisheries Society meeting in Conway, to keep myself abreast of the latest science and research from our universities and professional fisheries biologists.

After our little snow event of the year on February 13, water temperatures began to rise, and so did the fish activity. I assisted District 9 fisheries biologists, Bob Limbird and Frank Leone, with collecting crappie brood stock for Lake Dardanelle and Lake Hinkle nursery ponds. These nursery ponds allow the crappie to reproduce and raise their young in a “predator free” environment. Once the crappie fingerlings have a “fighting chance” to survive, the fisheries biologists open the water control structure gates and turn the fish loose into the lakes.

Over 120 volunteers took part in this year’s annual cleanup effort in the Mulberry River Valley area held Saturday, March 3. The participants, many of whom belong to the Arkansas Canoe Club, spread out all up-and-down the National Wild and Scenic Mulberry River and adjacent roads to pick up trash wherever they could find it. The U.S. Forest Service brought out two large trailers that we filled nearly full with everything from beer cans to plastic kid’s toys that had washed into the river. A pile of old tires were brought in one at time. The volunteers gathered at the store in Turner Bend afterwards for a feast put on by Rivertowne BBQ, and for the much anticipated door prize drawing. After this fine effort, the beloved Mulberry River and the nearby roads were clean and ready for spring.

Brad Wimberley, owner of Turner Bend Mulberry River Outfitters, hosts this fantastic cleanup event each year. The store at Turner Bend celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011. It is located at the junction of the Pig Trail Scenic Byway (Highway 23 North) and the National Wild and Scenic Mulberry River.

We could not do what we do without VOLUNTEERS.



Two trailers full of trash. Ouch!!▼



▼ Brad Wimberley handing out door prizes.



Also, in March, I began a survey on Kates Creek in the Ouachita National Forest with U.S. Forest Service personnel. Much to my dismay, after completing my first transect, my laser level died and the rotating head quit spinning. This high-dollar device is hemispherically sealed and purged with nitrogen, and has to be sent to the manufacturer for repairs, which could take weeks. ☹

On a happier note, my wife delivered our third son, Nathaniel Malachi, on March 9. He weighed eight pounds and one-half ounce, and was 22¾ inches long! ☺ We consider him a blessing from the Lord.

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

Well, what's that old saying about, "Spring has sprung, fall has fell, summer's here and it's hot as (expletive deleted)!" This morning, down here on Lake Ouachita, it's not nearly that hot...in fact, it's somewhat cool as the thunderstorms rumble through. So far, this year is continuing along the same vein as the past winter...warmer than usual. In fact, we've already had a couple of days in the low 90's up in the Arkansas hill country.

Most of my activities this past quarter have involved conducting site visits to numerous creeks around the region. I've met with folks as far west as Washington County, and as far east as Stone County. In addition, I've developed or modified plans for projects in several counties including Madison, Newton, Washington, Stone and Carroll, and done prep-work for a project in Searcy County.

About 1,000 trees and shrubs were planted on two different project sites on Crooked Creek this winter. Considering the weather we've had over the last few months, it's hard to believe that spring has only been around for a couple of weeks.



← *Volunteers planting at Crooked Creek* ↑

On a lovely Saturday morning, in mid-March, 10 volunteers met on a streambank site near Harmon, in east central Boone County. This energetic group of retirees and high school kids made quick work of planting the 360 trees and shrubs that had arrived on-site earlier that week. These were not all of the trees and shrubs that needed to be planted at this project. The remainder will be arriving this fall, so if you're interested in digging holes in some amazingly soft soil (at least soft for this part of the world), then keep this project in mind. I will be calling for help, again, later this year.

In early January, another group of "volunteers" helped plant 600-plus trees and shrubs at the park in Yellville in Marion County. This time, it was the convicts from the minimum security prison at Calico Rock that stepped up to the plate...thanks, guys. The Stream Team Program has used these guys several times in the past, and I can only say positive things about their work. Every time they've done work for us, they've done a fantastic job. If you have a project that is being installed on public land, and meets certain other requirements, I would strongly recommend you consider using this free labor source.

As always, the plants we plant are a "critter friendly" mixture. I always attempt to purchase vegetation that will not only help create a viable riparian zone, but also help feed the critters that live in the area. These animal species include everything from butterflies to bull elk.

The folks that run the Botanical Garden in the Fayetteville/Springdale area had a creek cleanup in early March. This cleanup was a little different from what I usually participate in. Instead of focusing on removing trash, that seems to "grow" in urban streams, we concentrated on removing flood debris and invasive plants. Between the ice storm, a few years ago, and the rapid development in that part of the state, a huge amount of woody debris had collected around the bridge piers and along the banks of the small stream that runs through the Botanical Garden. In addition, invasive plants such as privet were starting to take over the riparian zone. Around 30-to-40 volunteers from the surrounding area donned waders and took-up saws, clippers and shovels to attack this project. In no time at all the banks were looking better, and the debris dams and problem logs had been removed.

Those wily kids at the *Ambassadors for Christ Academy* up near south Bella Vista in Washington County are still at it. For about five years now, a constantly changing group of sixth and tenth graders have been sacrificing a part of their school day to go down to the creek and collect bug and water samples. I know it's hard on them, so let's hear it for these folks....YEAH! When I was in school, I never had to put up with such "torture" as spending a part of three or four school days a year down at the creek. ☺

Master Naturalists ►



Finally, and by no means least, a new group of *Master Naturalists* received the Stream Team portion of their training on the last day of this quarter. Dwan Garrison, some of you will remember her from the *Flippin High School Stream Team*, led them through this portion of their training. It was another beautiful day at the Fred Berry Conservation Education Center on Crooked Creek up in the Ozarks. These folks set in their hard chairs and learned about the Stream Team Program and its goals, the streambank restoration project at the center and about riparian zones. We then ate lunch and prepared for the more difficult part of the training---chemical water analysis and macroinvertebrate sampling. Being the true troopers they are, this new class of *Naturalists* headed for the creek. Although the water level was up slightly, we were able to collect a good number of bugs, and conduct a chemical analysis of the creek. The results of these tests showed that this particular site on Crooked Creek ranked as being at the upper-end of "good." In fact, based on the inverts, we were only a few points below excellent---which is typical for Crooked Creek.

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

The first quarter of 2012 seemed to skip first and second gear as we revved up for the new year ahead. Let me first say that I appreciate all of the efforts of the teams in Region II and, as you know, you are the folks that are making this program so successful—you **are** making a difference in each of your respective areas, and it is certainly impressive the amount of work that goes on via your efforts and diligence. Even when your Regional Stream Team Coordinator is scheduled with surveys or stream-site visits, looking at erosion problems and other riverine issues, you all just keep up the pace with litter pickups, biological sampling, chemical analysis, tree planting efforts, and stream restorations (among a laundry list of activities). 2012 promises to be another very productive year.

During the first three months of the year, Region II surveyed and designed eight streambank stabilization projects that are slated to be installed during 2012 and 2013.

This site on the Oakland Fraternal Cemetery Creek is experiencing bank erosion along 420 feet of the creek—the "island" in the middle used to be on top of the bank. It is slated to have rock vanes installed, reshaped and planted in native riparian area vegetation with habitat pools installed. ►



The *Booker Arts Magnet School Stream Team* has been “picking up” the pace on a Little Rock creek that joins the Fourche Creek, in more ways than one. On one of their outings, a thorough litter pickup was conducted on the creek where shopping carts, construction debris, trash bags, bottles and cans have been accumulating along an otherwise picturesque area. The team has been steadily cleaning on this area over the course of the past two years. They are, indeed, making a difference—the media attention they have received through their efforts will, hopefully, start to change the way some folks dispose of their refuse.



▲ The students and their fearless leader, Mrs. Hipps, and Lakresha Diaz (of the Oakland Fraternal Cemetery), launch into the task at hand.



▲ Sometimes you just have to get your feet wet!



▲ The student wrestles a piece of plastic off of an ensnared longear sunfish.



◀ In March, a tree planting effort by the *White County Homeschool Stream Team* topped-off a project in Fulton County on the Spring River. An area of the bank approximately 150 feet long was planted with shrubs in order to restore a sparsely vegetated riparian area, to compliment a stacked rock, rock vane, bendway weir and boulder cluster design that was used to abate the erosion. The students planted over 700 trees in just under two hours—now, that is really getting after it! The area will also have a post-work fisheries survey to determine the benefit on the localized fishery of the area.



◀ The students from *White County Homeschool Stream Team* hit the ground running and planted over 700 trees in just under two hours on the Spring River!

After laboring so hard to get the trees in the ground, the group takes a break and eats a nutritious lunch on the river ---hard work has its rewards! ►





◀ Occasionally, we delve a bit deeper into biology as we study the aquatic organisms that are found in our rivers and streams. In a spring-time classroom setting, these students in Searcy dissect a fish and discover its stomach contents, swim bladder, brain components, and many other “slightly more disgusting,” but equally fascinating, details about some of our native game fish species—and, yes, the students also learned how to filet a fish...so, the next time we go out, we can actually perform some water chemistry analysis, rate the biological health of the stream, AND put food on the table!

The *Batesville West Magnet Elementary Stream Team* came out in full-force recently, and did a major cleanup on Polk Bayou in Independence County—75 (count them!) fourth grade students, and a half-dozen teachers, converged on the bayou to pickup all the trash they could find. Lots of plastic bags, cans, bottles and other interesting artifacts were collected and disposed of properly. Mesh bags were used to collect the debris so the water could drain through, and those same bags can be emptied many times and reused on subsequent outings. The area looked really nice once the students were finished, and they deserve a big, "Thank you!" ▶



◀ This team has made a long-term commitment to provide water chemical sampling data and perform biological assessments in the form of macroinvertebrate samplings (or, 'bug kicks') and **YOU TOO** can get in on the action. If your team is interested in performing water quality testing, give your Regional Stream Team Coordinator a call—they'll be glad to help you get your feet wet!



Behold...the "Army of Litter Soldiers" attack on the Bayou in Independence County!

The Process of Becoming a STREAM TEAM...

1. Express an interest and request more information.

Send your name, address, and phone number to:

ARKANSAS STREAM TEAM PROGRAM COORDINATOR
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
2 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205

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 and/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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