

arkansas update & field trips



Smith Creek Preserve by Ethan Inlander/TNC

You Go, Green!

To the Subscribers of *AY* Magazine—We hope you enjoy learning about The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas and are inspired to join our members who have had a hand in conserving more than 250,000 acres of natural lands and waters right here in the Natural State. Nature Conservancy members receive a quarterly magazine filled with fascinating articles and beautiful photographs about conservation issues and achievements worldwide, as well as quarterly updates from the Arkansas field office about local initiatives and outings. To learn more about the Conservancy, which was founded in 1951 and opened its Arkansas office in 1982, or to join its more than one million members, visit nature.org/arkansas or phone (501) 663-6699. Our Web site also contains several videos that highlight our conservation work in Arkansas.

To Our Members—For the past few months Jay Harrod, The Nature Conservancy's spokesperson, has written columns for *AY* monthly magazine titled "You Go, Green," which focus on conservation and environmental issues in Arkansas. He'll continue to do so through the end of 2009. In its April issue, in honor of Earth Day on April 22, *AY* will dedicate a section within its magazine to issues that affect the natural world that sustains us all. The Conservancy will mail each of its members in Arkansas a complimentary copy of this special *AY* section, and *AY* will mail its subscribers a copy of the member update you're reading now. If you'd like to read Jay's remaining columns, you can subscribe to the magazine by logging onto aymag.com or phoning (501) 224-9700. ■

Bringing underground knowledge



The 26 workshop attendees participated in field trips to several Dominican Republic caves, some of which face threats similar to those in Arkansas. Photo by Ethan Inlander/TNC

Living within the karst (or cave) terrain that covers about 12 percent of the Earth are many of the world's rarest and most endangered animals. In the United States, karst animals represent more than half of imperiled species, but, similar to other countries, fewer than 4 percent are federally protected. Karst terrain provides much more than habitat for rare animals—globally, 25 percent of humankind relies on groundwater for drinking.

Despite so much at stake, karst conservation is a relatively new field of study with few networks to facilitate the exchange of information. The Nature Conservancy is working to change that. Thanks to a donated endowment that funds innovative science projects annually, Conservancy colleagues and partners in Arkansas and the Dominican Republic are bridging critical gaps in karst conservation science.

The situation in the Dominican Republic is common among countries with karst terrain: while experts within the country have in-depth knowledge of specific karst information, there are wide gaps in the data needed to plan coordinated conservation actions. Those with knowledge have not worked collectively until recently, as was once the case in Arkansas.

Ten years ago The Nature Conservancy launched its Ozark Highlands Karst Program in Arkansas to tackle the issues Dominican and other karst researchers now face. The first order of business was to form a network of karst experts from state and federal agencies, universities and caving organizations. Drawing on this

to light

collective expertise, the Conservancy and its partners developed a suite of tools that aid karst researchers in collecting data and creating conservation plans. Now recognized as a global leader in karst conservation, the Ozark Highlands program hosted in May 2008 the Conservancy's first international karst conference in Eureka Springs. The event drew researchers and conservation specialists from three countries as well as four U.S. states.

In December many of these same participants met at a second workshop in the Dominican Republic to get expert feedback on the conservation plans they had begun in Eureka Springs. Mike Slay, the karst program director in Arkansas, said the resulting plans ranged from conservation actions designed to protect a single cave to addressing groundwater impacts for the aquifer that underlies most of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, a region with thousands of water-filled caverns and sinkholes.

Following the five-day workshop, Slay and Ethan Inlander, the Conservancy's Ozark Rivers program director, as well as Brian Wagner, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's karst specialist, joined experts from the Dominican Republic's Autonomous University of Santo Domingo and its National Museum of Natural History in providing four days of training to help Conservancy staff in the Dominican Republic develop a karst program and a conservation plan.

"We offered a long menu of topics ranging from cave safety and cave mapping to species collection and identification," Inlander said. "Our colleagues in the Dominican Republic said they wanted to start at the beginning, to get the basics of all the topics we offered."

Dominican experts provided overviews of their country's karst region and conservation issues, while a member of a local caving organization covered cave mapping. Then the group visited caves, where they practiced the techniques covered in the classroom. Slay and his colleagues provided training on species collection.

"On the last day, we were back in the classroom helping them learn taxonomy and species classification," Slay said. "One of the most important successes from the training was bringing together the karst experts from within the country. They are now working as a team, using techniques we and many partners have honed over the past 10 years." ■



Mike Slay points out the taxonomic features of a cave animal. Photo by Ethan Inlander/TNC

To learn more about
the Ozark karst
program, visit
nature.org/arkansas.



Josie (left) with her longtime friend, Gay White, during a Conservancy field trip to the Strawberry River Preserve. Photo by Susan Borné/TNC

Profile of Giving

The legacy of Josephine Smith

Josephine Smith, 60, of Little Rock passed away on Dec. 9, 2007. In November 2008, The Nature Conservancy received a bequest of \$100,000 from Josephine's estate to support conservation work in Arkansas.

Josephine “Josie” Smith enjoyed sharing her love of traveling and the outdoors with her friends and colleagues. Her legacy will be long remembered and will have a great impact on the lives of Arkansans for generations to come.

Josie grew up in Arkansas but spent summers at her family's second home at Cape Porpoise, Maine. From 1971 through 1983, she lived year-round at Cape Porpoise while she worked at the Breakwater Inn. When in Maine, Josie spent time walking on Goose Rocks Beach, hiking at Acadia National Park, ocean kayaking and enjoying lobster bakes with close friends.

“Josie had an innate love of and appreciation for God's creation,” said Gay White, the former first lady of Arkansas and a member of the Conservancy's board of trustees. “We enjoyed many hours marveling at the diversity of that creation right here in our beloved state of Arkansas. I never saw Josie more at peace than when we were canoeing on the beautiful Buffalo River or tromping through the woods in the Ozark National Forest. It was Josie's desire to protect and preserve this beauty and diversity for the generations to follow.”

In 1984, Josie moved back to Arkansas, where she worked at Little Rock's James F. Goodwin Travel until her retirement in 2000. Josie had been a member of the Conservancy since 1998, and she participated in several field trips.

In recalling a February 2005 field trip with Josie and Gay White to the Strawberry River Preserve, Susan Borné, the Conservancy's associate director of philanthropy and lifelong friend of the Smiths, said, “despite the cold, it was a fabulous day. Josie had a keen interest in the natural world, and her enthusiasm, energy and sense of humor were evident as we learned about the Conservancy's work to address water quality and protect aquatic species at the Strawberry River. Her gift to the Conservancy is a legacy of love for the natural world.”

Josie was the only child of the late Stephen Harrow Smith and his wife Kathryn “K.C.” Smith of Little Rock. Her parents also belong to the Legacy Club, a group of supporters who have made a life income gift or have included the Conservancy in their estate plans. During their more than 20 years as Conservancy members, Harrow and K.C.'s steadfast support has included a gift that helped purchase Lorange Creek Preserve and Natural Area near Little Rock.

“Josie, like her parents, had a deep love for natural places,” said Scott Simon, the director of the Conservancy in Arkansas. “We are honored to use her gift to help conserve the places she so cherished in Arkansas.” ■



The Legacy Club

Membership in The Legacy Club is open to those who make a lasting gift. These include gifts through your will, retirement plan and insurance policy, as well as life-income and other deferred gifts. Membership is voluntary and without obligation. It is our way of recognizing a remarkable commitment to the Conservancy. For more information, phone (501) 614-5071, e-mail sborne@tnc.org or visit nature.org/legacy.club.

Benefits:

- A free subscription to *Nature Conservancy* magazine
- A personalized membership certificate
- Our semiannual newsletter, *Legacy*
- The Conservancy's annual report
- Trip invitations offering participants an up-close look at our projects
- Exclusive discounts & offers

Memorial Gifts (July 1-December 31, 2008)

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given by Mr. & Mrs. William Terry

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Honorary Gifts (July 1-December 31, 2008)

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given by Mr. & Mrs. Orville Hall

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given by Sally Lewis; Sherry Lewis; Tom & Susan Schallhorn

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Sally Lewis

given by Chris & Lisa Lewis; Sherry Lewis

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Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Wilson

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Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Woods

given by Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Cranford

Photo this page by Mike Slay/TNC

Purposeful fun

Spring 2009 member field trips



Put on your work gloves and lace up your boots. This spring The Nature Conservancy has some work for you! Don't worry; the trips we're offering won't be all work and no play. Both of them will give you a chance to get out with fellow Conservancy members and see firsthand the beautiful places you are helping conserve.

April 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Clean the Saline

The Conservancy has been working to improve water quality within the Saline River watershed since 2005. Join us as we float and clean one of the most scenic sections of the Saline—a five-mile stretch from Paul Wright Ford to Peeler Bend Access. Bring work gloves, river shoes and your lunch. You might also want to stash a change of clothes in the car, just in case. The Conservancy will provide water, and Saline River Canoe (salinerivercanoe.com) will provide canoes, paddles, life vests, shuttle services and trash bags free of charge. During normal flows, this section of the Saline is considered ideal for intermediate-level canoeists. Cost is free, but space is limited! Reservations required by April 17.

May 1, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Clearing the Way at Smith Creek Preserve

The Conservancy's 1,226-acre Smith Creek Preserve is an incredibly scenic and special place. Smith Creek flows into the Buffalo National River, around enormous boulders and over a cave where the state's largest colony of endangered Indiana bats hibernates each year. To enable more people to experience Smith Creek's beauty, we're calling for volunteers to cut small trees and other plants that have overgrown an old trail. Bring work gloves and sturdy footwear. The Conservancy will provide drinks and snacks as well as saws, loppers and other equipment necessary for the job. Cost is free. ■

To learn more about the Conservancy's work within the Saline River watershed or to watch a video highlighting conservation efforts at Smith Creek Preserve, visit nature.org/arkansas.

Photo by Jay Harrod/TNC

Field Trip Registration

Details will be sent to registrants prior to each field trip. You may either cut out and fill in this form and then mail it to the appropriate Conservancy office, or send the same info via e-mail to Cynthia or Brenda, depending on which field trip(s) you'd like to participate in. *(Please include "field trip registration" in the subject line of your e-mail.)*

Contact for Saline River trip: Cynthia Sizemore, (501) 614-5093, csizemore@tnc.org. The Nature Conservancy, 601 North University Ave., Little Rock, AR, 72205.

Contact for Smith Creek trip: Brenda Luper, (479) 973-9110, bluper@tnc.org. The Nature Conservancy, 675 Lollar Lane, Fayetteville, AR, 72701.

Saturday, April 25 Saline River Float & Clean-up: # in party _____
Are you interested in carpooling from Little Rock? _____

Friday, May 1 Smith Creek Trail Maintenance: # in party _____
Are you interested in carpooling from Fayetteville? _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Kindly let us know if you cancel so someone else may have your spot(s).

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The Saline River by Jay Harrod/TNC



The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas
601 North University Avenue
Little Rock, Arkansas 72205
TEL (501) 663-6699

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