

arkansas update & field trips



Buck the trend! Get outdoors!
Sign up for a Conservancy field trip (see page six)

A recent study found that people are spending less time outdoors than ever before, and previous research has shown the decline in natural experiences is correlated with a rise in playing video games, surfing the Internet and watching movies. (Learn more about the study online at nature.org/arkansas.) There is good news, though. The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas is offering eight field trips this spring with activities ranging from bird watching and wildflower walks to hiking and canoeing. Make sure you and your family stay connected to the great outdoors. Check out our field trips and sign up for one today!





Mature bottomland hardwood trees at the Ouachita River Nature Preserve

Calion Lumber Company Donation Creates Nature Preserve Along Ouachita River

Did you know...

A conservation easement is a voluntary restriction placed on a piece of property by the landowner to conserve its habitat or open space values. While it is a legally binding agreement that limits certain types of uses or prevents development from taking place now and in the future, the landowner retains all other rights of ownership.

Thanks to a donation of a 2,900-acre conservation easement from Calion Lumber Company to The Nature Conservancy, there is now a new nature preserve on the lower Ouachita River in Arkansas. The easement, located north of Camden in Ouachita County, includes six miles along both sides of the river and will be known as the Ouachita River Nature Preserve.

Roger Mangham, director of conservation programs for the Conservancy, said the area is best described as an old bottomland hardwood forest with embedded cypress-tupelo sloughs.

“This forest is absolutely beautiful,” Mangham said. “There are some enormous trees there, some over six feet in diameter. This is a place that provides habitat for deer, turkey, black bear and many other animals. And its location on the Ouachita River will help maintain water quality for endangered mussels and fish, like the Alabama shad (*Alosa alabamae*), and for people, too.”

Before the creation of the preserve, the only major conservation area on the lower Ouachita in Arkansas was the Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge near the Louisiana border.

“I bought this land for Calion in 1958,” said Charlie Thomas, vice president of Calion Lumber, a business his family owns. “When I purchased the land, I knew I was purchasing one of the Natural State’s finest treasures. I wanted to ensure the land remains natural and well managed, which is why we decided to donate an easement to The Nature Conservancy.”

“Charlie and Calion Lumber have been such good stewards of this land,” said Scott Simon, the director of the Conservancy in Arkansas. “We are honored they chose The Nature Conservancy to be a partner on their property.”

The Conservancy, working with Calion Lumber Company, will develop a conservation forestry management plan that will focus on the sustainable harvest of timber on 1,900 acres of the property. The remaining 1,000 acres—according to Thomas’ goals—will not be harvested.

The land, which remains the property of Calion Lumber, is still being used by the company and the family and will not be open for public use. ■

Land Donation from Cooper Communities Benefits Saline River

One hundred twenty-three forested acres along the Middle Fork of the Saline River will soon be dedicated as one of The Nature Conservancy's newest preserves. (Dedication date to be determined. If you're interested in attending, contact Lynn Watts by phone at (501) 614-5074 or lwatts@tnc.org.)

The preserve, located within Hot Springs Village, was donated by Cooper Communities of Rogers, Ark. "It occurs along two miles of the Middle Fork and will benefit aquatic and terrestrial wildlife as well as people who live in the area," said Joy DeClerk, the Conservancy's Ouachita Rivers project manager.

"There are several mussel beds along this stretch of river, including beds with endangered Arkansas fatmucket mussels," DeClerk said. "The Saline is a special river, one with an amazing diversity of aquatic life, including the Ouachita madtom (*Noturus lachneri*), a fish found only in Ouachita Mountain streams."

Over the past several years, Conservancy field studies funded by the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission have shown that a variety of land-use practices are increasing sediment in the Saline River. The forested riverbanks on the Cooper land, DeClerk said, are extremely important to maintaining the river's health.

The preserve is less than a mile from the Middle Fork Barrens Natural Area, which is owned and managed by the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission.

John Cooper III, president of Cooper Communities, said the donation is of special value to his family. His late grandfather, John A. Cooper, founded the company as well as Hot Springs Village. The Conservancy plans to name the site the John A. and Mildred B. Cooper Nature Preserve in honor of John Cooper III's grandparents.

"We felt this property was exceptional and would help maintain water quality in the Saline River," said Cooper, who is a trustee for the Conservancy in Arkansas. "Because this land will never be developed, it will provide valuable green space for the citizens of Hot Springs Village. The Nature Conservancy has an excellent track record of conservation, and when we decided to donate the land, the organization, which has been working in Arkansas for 25 years, immediately came to mind."

The property is the latest of several land donations the Cooper family has made to the Conservancy, which include two caves in Bella Vista.

"The Conservancy appreciates the Cooper family's stewardship of these important natural areas, and we are excited about this latest donation," said Scott Simon, director of the Conservancy in Arkansas. ■



(Above) The Conservancy's work on the Middle Fork of the Saline River includes studies to assess rates of streambank erosion, which will be used to prioritize restoration efforts.

(Below) The Middle Fork of the Saline River



Wanna save some green?

Sign up for our new e-newsletters!

We want to keep you informed about the conservation work you support and make sure you know about upcoming events. But we don't like the idea of using more paper than needed. So help us save some green—trees and dollars, that is! We're creating electronic newsletters for three important audiences: our general membership, Legacy Club members and the new Green Growth group for young professionals. If you're interested in receiving one or more of these e-newsletters, please e-mail us at ARenews@tnc.org and let us know which one[s] you'd like to receive. We plan to send these out no more than once a month. (Current members will continue to receive Arkansas chapter newsletters quarterly by mail.)



The Simpson Preserve at Trap Mountain

Conservancy Expands Two Conservation Sites

The Nature Conservancy recently purchased 138 acres to add to the Nacatoch Ravines Conservation Area in southwest Arkansas near Hope. In the late 1980s the Conservancy and the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission defined the boundaries of the 4,300-acre area based on its ecological significance. Since then, as willing sellers and donors have come forward, the two organizations have steadily conserved nearly 1,800 acres within the area.

The Conservancy also purchased 121 acres on the border of Hot Spring and Garland counties to add to its Simpson Preserve at Trap Mountain. The preserve, which now comprises 670 acres, protects a variety of plant communities unique to the Ouachita Mountains, including novaculite glades and associated woodlands. Three plants found only in the Ouachitas are at the preserve, including the rare Arkansas cabbage or twistflower (*Streptanthus obtusifolius*).

The Simpson Preserve was established in 2001 with the donation of 349 acres by Dr. John B. Simpson, a charter member of the Conservancy's Arkansas board of trustees, and his wife, Donna. In 2003, the Hot Springs couple donated an additional 200 acres at Trap Mountain. ■



The Simpson Preserve at Trap Mountain

Profile of Giving: Cliff and Frieda Schroder

“Sometimes people look around and say, ‘Somebody ought to do something.’ And sometimes you realize you’re the person who ought to do it,” says Frieda Schroder, who lives outside Mountain Home with her husband, Cliff.



Cliff and Frieda Schroder

Looking at the Schrodgers’ involvement over the past few decades, it’s clear they often see something that needs doing, and

often they are the ones to do it. Both Cliff and Frieda have served on advisory boards and volunteered for several non-profit organizations. Recently the Schrodgers, who have been Conservancy members since 1988, started a recycling program for the gym to which they belong, and they helped Mountain Home’s mayor secure funding to plant 2,000 trees in the fast-growing city.

While their interests are wide, a common thread throughout their years of philanthropic involvement has been conservation. When the couple lived near Memphis during Cliff’s 25-year career with FedEx and Frieda’s 34-year career with the Bell System, they were founding members of the Wolfe River Conservancy.

Frieda, who grew up near Bryant and spent time at her grandparents’ central Arkansas farm, says her family was outdoors a lot. When she and Cliff, a Bauxite native, were newlyweds, they spent their vacations hiking and camping at Lake Ouachita.

“We don’t have any children, and when we started planning our estate, we talked about how we could do the most good for the most people,” Cliff says. “We just felt like nature has been such an important part of our lives. These special places need to be here for everyone, and we had concerns about the outdoor resources that will be available for future generations.”

The Schrodgers decided to leave most of their estate to The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas. “We were attracted to the Conservancy’s non-confrontational approach when working with a lot of different people, agencies and organizations,” Cliff says. “We’re not rich people. We wanted to get the most bang for the bucks we will be leaving.”

Another factor in their decision was the Conservancy’s involvement with water conservation issues. “We are both very interested in the Extraordinary Resource Waterbody laws that protect Arkansas’ most pristine streams,” Frieda says.

“Water rights and access issues will become heated debates if we don’t take action now,” Cliff says. “It’s already happening in Arizona along the Colorado River. The laws for water rights and usage need to be established now, when there’s a controlled, calm environment. I’m pleased to see the Conservancy working with many partners to take these steps in Arkansas now.”

Frieda adds there was an emotional factor in her decision. “Nature is such a restorative source in my life. It restores my sanity and my spirit, and it nurtures my body. I feel as though I should give back to nature. I really think we’re here to be good stewards of our world.” ■

The Legacy Club

The Schrodgers belong to the Legacy Club, a group of Conservancy supporters who have made a lasting commitment to conservation by making a life income gift or by including the Conservancy in their estate plans.

Cliff and Frieda hope their testimonial will encourage others to make similar gifts. Learn about the Legacy Club and the variety of giving options at

giftplanning.nature.org. Or contact Susan Borné at (501) 614-5071 or sborne@tnc.org.



Please Let Us Know

If you have already named the Conservancy in your will or trust, please let us know so we can take the proper steps to thank you and welcome you into **The Legacy Club**. All wishes for anonymity will be honored.



Define Your Dreams through your estate plan

To make a gift of any kind to The Nature Conservancy is an act of generosity. To make a long-term gift—one derived from the work of a lifetime—is to make a commitment beyond measure.

Spring 2008 Field Trips

April 12: 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. (May end earlier)

Birding Tour at Camp Robinson Special Management Area

Join bird-savvy staff for a walking tour of central Arkansas' Camp Robinson Wildlife Demonstration Area during the peak of spring bird migration. We'll likely spot warblers, vireos and other interesting birds and wildlife. Bring lunch, drinks and your binoculars! \$10/person.

April 12: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Hiking at Smith Creek Preserve

Smith Creek Preserve, located near Ponca and the Buffalo River, is at its best in the springtime! The stream cascades over a series of waterfalls, and vibrant wildflowers are abundant. We'll offer two hikes—one strenuous and one easy. Bring a lunch; we'll provide drinks. Four-wheel drive recommended to enter the preserve. \$10/person.

May 3: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Kings River Float Trip

Join us for a 7.7-mile canoe trip on the scenic Kings River near Eureka Springs. Spring should be a good time to spot migratory birds, and we'll discuss the Conservancy's work on Ozark rivers. While the Kings is typically ideal for intermediate-level paddlers, the degree of difficulty varies depending on water levels. Float length is subject to change. Canoes, paddles, life vests and shuttle will be provided. We'll send confirmed participants a list of items to bring. \$40/person (Contact us for special registration instructions.)

May 9: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Explore Bayou DeView with Gene Sparling and David Luneau

This trip is an extra-special treat! Paddle with naturalist Gene Sparling through the very place where he spotted the ivory-billed woodpecker in 2004. Birding pro David Luneau, who captured the ivory-bill on video, will be there to help identify the birds you see and hear. Limited to 11 participants. Bring your lunch, camera and binoculars; we'll provide drinks, canoes, life vests and paddles. \$100/person.

May 10: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ozark Oak Woodlands Restoration Tour

Tour by van the Ozark National Forest Big Piney Ranger District, where we and our partners are restoring the oak woodland ecosystem using fire and ecological thinning. We'll show you areas before and after a prescribed burn and discuss the role of fire in a healthy woodland ecology. With blooming wildflowers, the forest is beautiful in spring. Bring a lunch; we'll provide drinks. \$10/person.

May 15: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wonderful Wildflower Walking Tour in the Blacklands

The blacklands are famous for their vibrant wildflower displays. Join us for an easy walking tour through the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission's Rick Evans Grandview Prairie in Hempstead County near Columbus. Conservancy State Director and botanist Scott Simon will identify wildflowers and fill you in on this incredible ecosystem. Bring a lunch; we'll provide drinks. Minimum of 10 participants; maximum of 30. \$10/person.

May 17: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Caddo River Float Trip

Join us for a 7.5-mile canoe trip on the upper Caddo River and take in the spring scenery. While the Caddo is typically ideal for intermediate-level paddlers, the degree of difficulty varies depending on water levels. Canoes, paddles, life vests and shuttle will be provided. We'll send confirmed participants a list of items to bring. \$35/canoe. (Registration and payment is through the outfitter; please contact us for instructions.)

May 24: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Motorboating on the Lower White and Cache Rivers

Learn how big rivers have transformed the Delta, how man has attempted to "tame" them, how they're changing, and what the Conservancy is doing to conserve these rivers, the lifeblood of the Mississippi River Valley. Leaving from Clarendon, we will travel up and down the White and Cache rivers in large, flatbottom boats. Life vests will be provided. Minimum of eight participants; maximum of 16. Bring a lunch; we'll provide drinks. \$20/person.

Upcoming Events

April 19: The Nature Conservancy and its partners will host a **Landowner Incentive Program workshop** at the Batesville Experiment Station for private landowners interested in the safe and effective use of prescribed fire to improve wildlife habitat. The workshop is limited to 25 participants. For more information, contact Jason Milks at (501) 614-5080 or jmilks@tnc.org.

April 24: The Conservancy will host its **15th Annual Corporate Council for Conservation luncheon** at the Country Club of Little Rock. More than 100 member businesses that provide a base of support for conservation will be honored during the event sponsored by Alltel. This year's guest speaker is Steve Rogel, chairman, president and CEO of Weyerhaeuser Company. For more information, contact Harryette Shue at (501) 614-5072 or hshue@tnc.org. ■

Field Trip Registration

(Please note: Field trips are non-refundable.)

Details will be sent to registrants prior to each field trip. Kindly let us know if you must cancel so someone on the waiting list may have your spot.

Name _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date	Trip	No. in party	Per person	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> April 12	Birding at Camp Robinson	_____	x \$10 =	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> April 12	Hiking at Smith Creek	_____	x \$10 =	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> May 3	Kings River Float Trip	_____	x \$40 =	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> May 9	Bayou DeView Float Trip	_____	x \$100 =	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> May 10	Oak Woodlands Restoration Tour	_____	x \$10 =	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> May 15	Wonderful Wildflower Walking Tour	_____	x \$10 =	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> May 17	Caddo River Float Trip	Call (501) 614-5093 for registration instructions		
<input type="checkbox"/> May 24	Motorboating the White and Cache rivers	_____	x \$20 =	\$ _____
Total payment enclosed				\$ _____

Make check payable to:

The Nature Conservancy
601 North University Avenue
Little Rock, AR 72205

Credit card payment (check one): VISA MasterCard American Express Discover

Name (as it appears on credit card) _____ Amount _____

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

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Arkansas Hosts Meeting for Fire Managers

In January The Nature Conservancy played host to more than 65 fire managers and prescribed fire crew leaders from 30 states who came to Arkansas to discuss the latest science and best practices in fire restoration. The workshop included a field trip to a fire restoration demonstration area within the Piney Ranger District of the Ozark National Forest as well as classroom instruction.

“Arkansas is a nationwide leader in restoring fire-dependent ecosystems,” said John André, an ecologist for the Ozark National Forest who led the field trip. “It was great to have so many fire managers together to see and learn about the work of our partnership in Arkansas.” ■

