

arkansas year-end report



Bayou DeView © Allan Mueller/TNC

| 2009

Constructing a Delta stream

After completing in 2007 a project that transformed part of an agricultural ditch back into a meandering stream, The Nature Conservancy is again focusing on Benson Slash Creek, a tributary to Bayou DeView (above). In September the staff began restoring an upstream section that remains channelized. When completed the 1,900-foot course will mimic native streams and follow natural flooding cycles that keep excess sediment and nutrients from polluting waters downstream. The work is made possible through U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Private Stewardship Grants, matching funds from the Wolf Creek Charitable Foundation, and support by Riggs Cat of Arkansas.



Banking on clear, clean water



At work to stabilize stream banks

This summer and fall, The Nature Conservancy completed two projects to stabilize stream banks that were losing tons of sediment to erosion every year. Excess sediment within a stream can fill in gravel beds, choking out insects, larvae and small fish at the bottom of the food chain, which, in turn, affects game fish near the top of the food chain.

At the Middle Fork of the Little Red River in Van Buren County, the Conservancy stabilized 375 feet of stream bank that had eroded as much as 16 feet in the past year, dumping some 850 tons of sediment into the river. The project is on private land enrolled in a multi-agency program designed to provide habitat protection for the endangered speckled pocketbook mussel, which is found only within the watershed of the Little Red River. Funding was provided by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Private Stewardship Grant, which was matched in part by the Conservancy. Other partners in the project include the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

(Above) Conservancy staff discuss the restoration design for the Middle Fork of the Little Red River. © Ethan Inlander/TNC

“This project will benefit people as well,” said Ethan Inlander, the Conservancy’s Ozark Rivers Program Director. “The landowner at the site benefited from improved roads that were needed for us to bring in the heavy equipment we used to complete the project. The loss of their land has also been stemmed. The Little Red River flows into Greers Ferry Lake, which provides drinking water for dozens of communities and attracts lake recreation and fishing that support the local economy.”

At the Middle Fork of the Saline River in Garland County, the Conservancy restored a 2,600-foot bank section that was collapsing and dumping about

(Continued on next page)



Construction on the Middle Fork of the Saline River. © Jay Harrod/TNC



Joy DeClerk at the Middle Fork of the Saline River. © Jay Harrod/TNC

Banking on clear, clean water (continued)

1,770 tons of sediment into the stream every year. To keep the sediment out of the river, the team changed the slope of the bank, constructed in-stream structures designed to focus the river's energy towards the center of the channel, and planted trees and other vegetation to hold the earth in place.

The project followed a two-year study, funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act, that concluded that sediment is among the Saline River's worst pollutants. After zeroing in on sediment, Conservancy researchers then identified the biggest contributors, which included eroding stream banks.

A second part of the project included erecting fencing and creating alternative watering sources for nearby landowners to keep cattle away from the stream's riparian area.

"The upper Saline watershed still sustains populations of important species, but it is experiencing a significant increase in sediment and nutrient pollution,"



Shown above is one of the structures used to direct the energy of the Middle Fork of the Little Red River away from an eroding bank. © Ethan Inlander/TNC

said Joy DeClerk, manager of the Conservancy's Ouachita Rivers program. "This makes the timing of the on-the-ground work critical. Maintaining and improving water quality here helps threatened species as well as game fish, and it ensures a clean source of water for communities like Hot Springs Village and Benton."

Restoration activities at the Middle Fork of the Saline River were made possible by grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership that were matched in part by the Conservancy. Riggs Cat of Arkansas supported both of these projects as well as a recent stream restoration project at Benson Slash Creek near Brinkley. Mountain Valley Spring Water donated boulders used in the restoration at the Middle Fork of the Saline River. ■

Working for wildlife

Restorations at the Saline and Little Red rivers were supported in part by State Wildlife Grants, or SWGs, which are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas revenues and through Congressional funding. The grants are used to develop and implement programs that benefit wildlife and habitats. Priority is placed on projects that benefit species of greatest conservation concern. In Arkansas, these grants are managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, which oversees 22 SWGs in which the Conservancy is a partner. To learn more about these grants, visit the "Places We Protect" section on nature.org.

Fire on the mountain

In February, The Nature Conservancy's fire restoration crew teamed with Arkansas State Parks to conduct a 640-acre controlled burn at Pinnacle Mountain State Park (right) near Little Rock. From September 2008 through May 2009, Conservancy crews in Arkansas conducted more than 80 prescribed burns, covering over 13,000 acres. Fire restoration improves the health of the state's prairies and forests and increases native plant diversity and wildlife populations. Fire can also help keep non-native species at bay, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, and help prevent trees from growing in overcrowded conditions, which can make them susceptible to disease, drought and pests.

In September, the Conservancy conducted prescribed fires at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock and at Warren Prairie Natural Area in Bradley County to kick off the 2009/2010 burn season. ■



© Roger Mangham/TNC

Conservation forestry program adds public land in south Arkansas

In 2009, The Nature Conservancy's conservation forestry program helped bring nearly 3,300 acres in south Arkansas into public ownership for wildlife watching, hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities.

Recently the Conservancy signed a purchase agreement with Plum Creek Timber Company for 2,425 acres near Warren Prairie Natural Area in Bradley and Drew counties. The Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission plans to acquire the majority of the property from the Conservancy for addition to the natural area, which currently encompasses nearly 2,130 acres. On the remaining acreage, the Commission plans to acquire from the Conservancy a conservation easement. Here, the Conservancy will restore dense pine plantations to open, natural stands using conservation forestry techniques such as ecological timber thinning and prescribed fire. Funding for the



Warren Prairie © Joe Fox/TNC



Joe Fox uses a prism, a tool that helps foresters determine the density of trees, at Kingsland Prairie Preserve. © Jay Harrod/TNC

purchase came from a U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy Grant worth more than \$2 million that was matched by the Commission, primarily through the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council, which is funded by the state's real estate transfer tax.

In Ouachita and Nevada counties, the Conservancy sold to the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission a working forest conservation easement on 647 acres, which the Conservancy will manage similarly to the easement at Warren Prairie. Most of the land is near the Poison Springs State Forest and Natural Area in Ouachita County, while 50 acres is near the state forest and Arkansas Oak Natural Area in Nevada County. The land is the last of the 4,758 acres in the Poison Springs area the Conservancy purchased from International Paper in 2006.

In Cleveland County, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission purchased 200 acres from the Conservancy to create the new Kingsland Prairie Natural Area, which is adjacent to the Conservancy's Kingsland Prairie Preserve.

While regulations will vary from site to site, the lands and conservation easements owned by the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission will be open to the public and will include hunting to be managed under a cooperative agreement with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

"Our conservation forestry program illustrates the importance of collaboration," said Joe Fox, who manages the program. "Like a lot of our work, we wouldn't be able to accomplish what we do without partners that range from state and federal agencies to corporate and private landowners. And we are also thankful to Senators Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor and Congressman Mike Ross for their support of the Forest Legacy grant." ■

Sites at a Glance

Warren Prairie—Stands of dwarf palmetto are interspersed throughout grassy prairies, created by sodium-rich soils that account for the sparse and irregular distribution of trees. Consisting of a mosaic of salt slick barrens, saline prairie, Delta post oak flatwoods, prairie mound woodlands, pine woodlands and bottomland hardwood forest communities, the natural area provides critical habitat for the state's largest population of the tiny *Geocarpon minimum*, a plant listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Poison Springs—More than 400 plant species have been identified in this site's rare sandhill grasslands, woodlands and seeps, accounting for a significant percentage of the entire flora of Arkansas in a very small space.

Kingsland Prairie—Kingsland Prairie is a mosaic of prairie-like openings interspersed with savannas and woodlands on a very unusual type of saline soil. It contains the second largest system of saline barrens and pine-hardwood flatwoods in the Upper West Gulf Coastal Plain. *Geocarpon minimum* is also found here.



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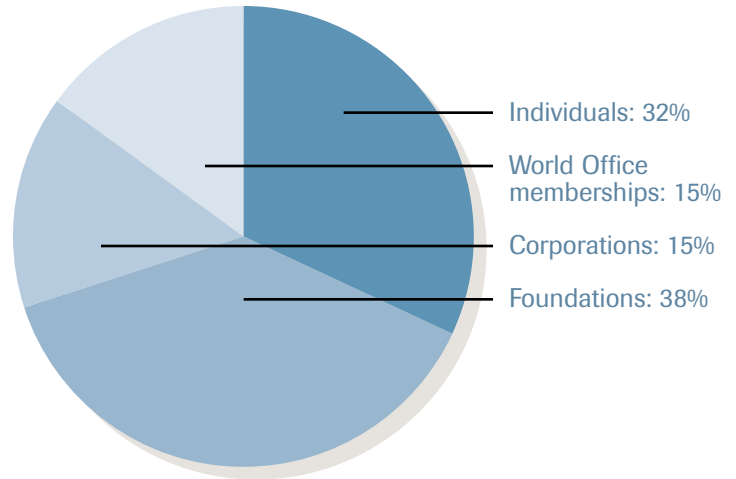
If it's been a while since you've visited the Web site of The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas, log onto nature.org/arkansas and check out all kinds of new features. You'll find links to more than a dozen videos and eight photo galleries, and we've also posted new stories focusing on the work that you've helped support!

Financial Statement

For the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2009

Support & revenue

Dues and contributions	\$1,524,267
Private contracts	\$32,800
Government grants	\$1,768,570
Investment income	\$(226,182)
Other income	\$397,842
Gifts of land	-
Sales of land to government and other conservation agencies	\$9,120,374
Support from/(to) other TNC management units	\$(694,989)
Total support & revenue	\$11,922,682



Expenses & purchases of conservation land & easements

Conservation activities and actions	\$2,161,476
Conservation land acquired/capital expenditures	\$2,823,204

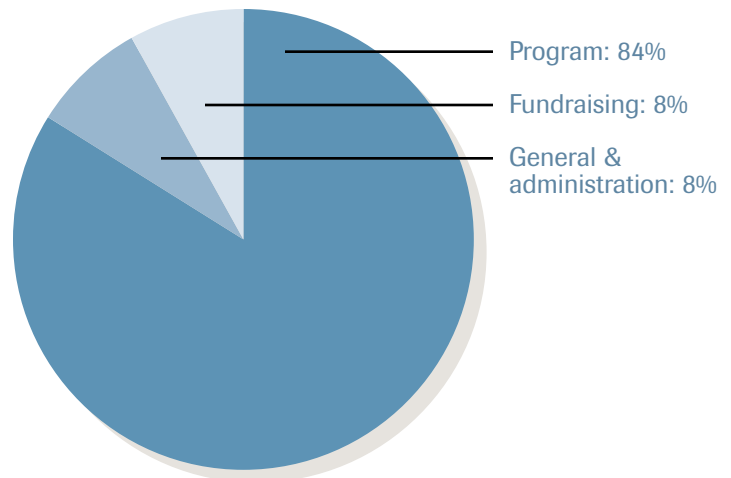
Total conservation program expenses & purchases of conservation land & easements	\$4,984,680
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General and administrative	\$485,885
Fundraising	\$468,683

Total administration & fundraising	\$954,568
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Total expenses & purchases of conservation land & easements	\$5,939,248
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Net result—support & revenue over expenses & purchases of conservation lands & easements	\$5,983,434
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Fundraising summary

Fundraising expenses as a percentage of total expenses & purchases of conservation land & easements	7.9%
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Asset, liability & net asset summary

Conservation land & easements	\$27,920,146
Investments held for conservation projects	\$3,003,253
Endowment investments	\$1,344,747
Property & equipment (net of depreciation)	\$639,002
Current assets	\$(96,805)
Other assets	-

Total assets	\$32,810,343
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Total liabilities	\$4,025,968
Total net assets	\$28,784,375

Total liabilities & net assets	\$32,810,343
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Contact The Nature Conservancy today.

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The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas was honored to receive bequests from the estates of Jejo Mobley, Col. Earl T. Newton, Jr., and Josephine "Josie" Smith this past year to support conservation in the Natural State. To make a gift of any kind to the 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.

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Profile of Giving:

Gay White

Former First Lady of Arkansas Gay White loves Arkansas' "natural state." She hikes, kayaks, snorkels, camps and canoes. A conviction to leave the Earth a better place for future generations combined with her love of the outdoors led her to become a member of the Conservancy's board in Arkansas in 2004. By including the Conservancy in her estate plans, Gay joins Legacy Club members who've made a lasting commitment to conservation.

"I love Arkansas' rivers, and I love what The Nature Conservancy is doing to keep them clean and healthy," Gay says. "I've learned the important role fire plays in restoring natural habitats and have seen colorful wildflowers bloom for the first time in decades after the Conservancy conducted controlled burns."

When asked what prompted her to become a member of the Legacy Club, Gay says, "I feel a personal responsibility to help ensure the Earth is left a better place for future generations. In thinking about what impact I wanted to have in the future, I decided to include The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas in my will. I've always admired what The Nature Conservancy does. I've watched how the staff spends the money that's brought in. There's no waste. I know the organization is on a lean budget but does so much with so little. They do their work with heart and soul." ■



A lasting legacy

To learn more about estate planning and the Legacy Club, contact Susan Borné at (501) 614-5071 or visit nature.org/legacy.

Gay White, Legacy Club member and former First Lady of Arkansas © Sara Blancett



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Holiday Gift Ideas

Gift Memberships—Treat your friends to a year of The Nature Conservancy’s quarterly magazine, Arkansas news and field trip opportunities, and the gift of knowing they are part of an organization committed to conserving Earth’s last great places. Make your gift online at nature.org/joinanddonate or call Julie at (501) 614-5073.

Honorary Gifts—Make a donation in someone’s honor. We’ll mail a notification card to the honoree, or to you if you’d prefer to deliver it yourself. Call Julie at (501) 614-5073 or use the enclosed envelope.

Adopt an Acre, Adopt A Coral Reef, Plant A Billion Trees—These programs allow you to choose specific places around the world to conserve with your gift. For information about each site and to adopt a site or plant trees for yourself or a friend, visit nature.org/joinanddonate or call 1-800-84-ADOPT.

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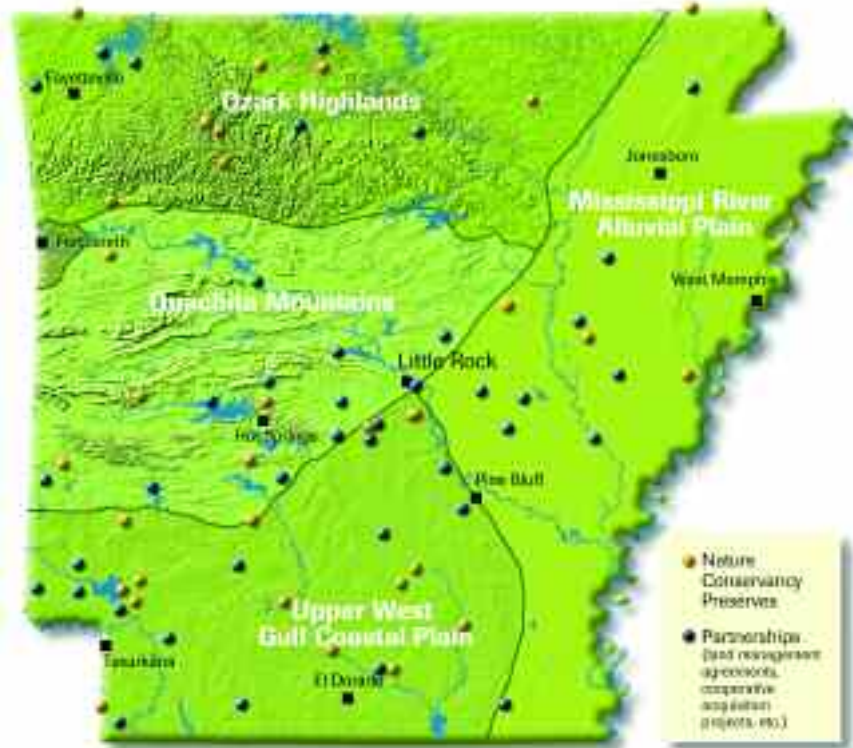
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