

Conserving
Arkansas
for Future
Generations

arkansas

2018 year-end report



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Cover photo by Michael Baxley Photography

Welcome New Legacy Club Members

Lembers of the Legacy Club have made a lasting commitment to conservation through a life-income gift or by naming The Nature Conservancy in their estate plans. Our deepest thanks to the 199 friends who belong to the Legacy Club in Arkansas, including these new members or members who have made additional gift intentions:

Anonymous Jennifer Barnhouse Ron Barron John D. Berger Susan and Robin Borné Leonard Crane Raeburn Hughes Glenn Jones Sherry Lewis Elvon C. Lloyd Martha McKay Kendra Roesner Ann Rosso

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Matured Bequests

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Leaving a Legacy Is Easy and Rewarding

bequest is one of the simplest ways to protect the lands and waters you care about. You can easily name the

Conservancy as



Susan Borné

a beneficiary of your will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy or financial accounts. Anyone can make a bequest and no amount is too small.

For more information, contact Susan Borné: (501) 614-5071 or **sborne@tnc.org** or visit nature.org/gift-planning.





Rattlesnake Ridge Natural Area

he Maumelle Pinnacles and surrounding rivers in Central Arkansas are a landscape of grand, exposed sandstone ridges towering above sweeping oak and pine woodlands and broad river valleys. In addition to spectacular views, they house a remarkable range of habitats and species as well as provide clean drinking water to 600,000 people via Lake Maumelle. Thanks to an anonymous private donor, committed partners, a generous landowner, and your sustaining support, a new public Natural Area safeguards these treasures. Welcome to Rattlesnake Ridge Natural Area.

Rattlesnake Ridge is a place for rugged adventure. Co-owned between the Conservancy and the Arkansas Natural Heritage

What's in a Name?

This spot has been known for generations as Rattlesnake Ridge. The name is appropriate for two reasons: rocky outcrops form a distinctive, snakelike ridgeline, and it is the farthest east that western diamondback rattlesnakes are found.

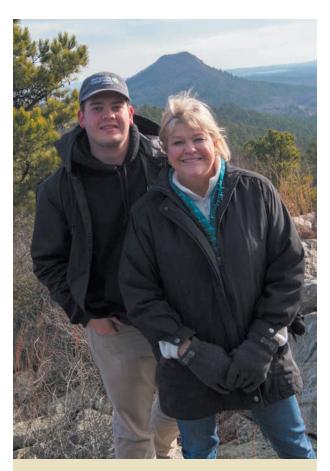


Rattlesnake Ridge Natural Area has something for everyone.

Commission, a division of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, the natural area consists of 373 beautiful acres of mature woodland, rock outcrops, and steep valleys. Hike to the top and you are rewarded with panoramic views of Pinnacle Mountain State Park, Lake Maumelle, Pinnacle Valley, and the Ouachita National Forest. There are opportunities for mountain bikers and rock climbers, and fishing. Nowlin Creek flows through the property to Pinnacle Mountain State Park.

Rattlesnake Ridge Natural Area is best described by longtime Conservancy member Lee Bodenhamer, whose family sold





Ann Rosso Leaves Her Legacy

Ann Rosso's family made the generous donation of land that established Rattlesnake Ridge Natural Area. Working through that project with her three brothers, her children, and her father, Lee Bodenhamer, made her think about the future of conservation in a new light. The thoughtfulness of the planning, culminating in the dedication of the property to the public in May, gave Ann insight into what a lasting gift could look like and how many people could benefit from it.

This inspired Ann to join the Legacy Club with a bequest gift. "I wanted to do my part to make sure the Natural State stays natural for future generations," she said. Many thanks to Ann and all Legacy Club members for planning for a better tomorrow.

the property to the Conservancy at a generous discount. "The Pinnacles are a rare treasure. I loved this place instantly when I started looking for land 27 years ago. It has given me a place of reprieve and a way to instill in my family a love and respect for the land. I would like to see these mountains and rivers remain natural for the benefit of all Arkansans." With all of us working together, Rattlesnake Ridge can remain healthy and wild for generations to come.

Over the next year, with your support, we will work with partners and neighbors to replace existing roads with trails and to create rock climbing

Special Species

Species of Conservation concern at Rattlesnake Ridge Natural Area:

- ▲ Arkansas twistflower
- ▲ Southeastern bat
- Western diamondback rattlesnake
- ▲ Wright's cliffbrake fern

areas that provide visitors with an uncrowded nature experience. The area will also showcase important land management activities like prescribed fire. Thank you for helping conserve this special place!

Bucket Brigade to the Rescue



Volunteers worked together to successfully transfer yellowcheek darters to their new home.

restoring stretches of the Little Red River's upper forks that are the only known home of the endangered yellowcheek darter. Last summer, we were set to start on a section of the South Fork that suffers from severe erosion, when a pre-construction survey found the species where we intended to dig. It was confirmation that we were working in the right place, but we had to keep the fish safe while repairing their home. Our



friends at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners helped us catch and relocate about 75 darters to calmer waters nearby. The restoration is almost complete, thanks to supportive partners, caring landowners, and generous friends like you.



A Long-Awaited Rockhouse Revival

n Rockhouse Creek, a tributary of the Kings River in northwest Arkansas, decades of human changes to the landscape have taken their toll. One 1.5-mile stretch with eroding creekbanks is dumping 10,000 tons of sediment into the Kings each year. Meanwhile, people living on Rockhouse Road have endured life-threatening delays in emergency response because the low-water crossing over the creek is often flooded and impassable.

Nadara and Wayne
Williams lived on 550 acres
along this section of Rockhouse
Creek. With a desire to help the
creek and see their serenely
beautiful property conserved,
the Williamses sold it to the
Conservancy at a deep discount.
A grant from Acres for
America, a program of Walmart
and the National Fish and
Wildlife Foundation, helped
with the purchase of what will
be the first Arkansas Heritage
Stream Partnership project.

Now thanks to you and some generous neighbors, we are on our way to installing a better, safer bridge, healing the creekbanks, and stopping the erosion. Fish migration will also be vastly improved by removing the old crossing.



Work to heal the creekbanks along Rockhouse Creek will begin this winter.

The property connects more than 20,000 acres of protected lands in the Madison County Wildlife Management Area, Bear Hollow Natural Area, the Ozark Natural Science Center, and the Conservancy's Kings River Preserve, creating the potential for new recreational opportunities in northwest Arkansas and a healthier Kings River.

"There is so much potential here for promoting best practices in river care and for involving people in hands-on conservation," said Watershed Restoration Program Director John Chapman. "We are just getting started."

If you would like to learn more about how you can help, contact Jennifer Barnhouse, Director of Philanthropy, at (501) 614-5091 or j.a.barnhouse@tnc.org. ■

Restoring Habitat Here and Around the World



Fire professionals from Colombia and Zambia visiting Arkansas.

More Benefits from Prescribed Fire

Since 2012, the Conservancy's Arkansas fire team has cultivated an annual exchange program with land managers in Zambia to promote best practices in prescribed fire. Word spread about the success of the exchange, sparking a similar relationship with Colombia. Thanks to your support this year Arkansas fire professionals visited the new 180,000-acre Manacacias National Park and helped park managers develop a comprehensive fire strategy for

this landscape that, along with surrounding private lands, burns every year. The managers then came to Arkansas to work alongside our burn crew, tour the state's national forests, and meet with conservation leaders to learn more about successful fire management in protected areas. Now a new exchange program with Nigeria is taking shape. Thank you for supporting international cooperation that leads to better conservation practices at home and around the world.

Quail Habitat on the Rise

With your help, the Conservancy and our partners are restoring quail habitat in the central sandhills of southwest Arkansas. (And statewide, our partners burned more than 340,000 acres this year.) Your support helped increase prescribed burning on Conservancy preserves, Poison Springs State Forest, state natural areas, and state parks in the sandhills from 300 acres a few years ago to 3,000 acres this year. That's great news for quail and other animals that depend on healthy, diverse plant life for food and shelter.





Healing the Waterways of the Delta

Your Support Feeds a Nation

he Mississippi River quenches our thirst, nourishes our crops, powers our homes, and transports the goods we need. It provides critical wildlife habitat and sustains robust fisheries, which bring food, jobs, and economic security to millions of people. The Conservancy and partners share a bold vision to sustain the entire Mississippi River Basin from its headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico. It is one of our most ambitious undertakings. The annual reforestation of thousands of acres and the stream restorations you are helping make possible here in Arkansas feed directly into it.

Innovative Conservation

Farmers in the upper Cache River watershed were having problems with eroding ditches, and they were looking for solutions.

The Arkansas Farm Bureau connected the Conservancy with the landowners, and after some evaluation, we decided to build two-stage ditches. These are ditches with an extra shelf that forms a mini-floodplain within the water channel. The modified ditches function as wetlands during the winter—great for waterfowl—and they catch sediment and nutrient runoff from farm fields, keeping them out of the water.

With your support, grants from the National Fish and



Benson Creek restored to its natural meandering channel and floodplain.

Wildlife Foundation and the Cache River Drainage District, and innovative irrigation technologies from Delta Plastics, Inc., the project has begun, adding a new tool to help achieve floodplain restoration and clean water.

Back at Benson Creek

Benson Creek was the Conservancy's first ditch-to-stream restoration in the Arkansas Delta, made possible by generous members years ago. With your help, more of Benson Creek has been restored as part of a five-year collaboration with the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.

Benson Creek is part of an extensive system of waterways connecting to Bayou DeView and the Cache River. Our first project under the new partnership involved plugging the ditched creek, reconstructing its

natural, meandering channel and floodplain, and redirecting the water into the new channel. As all restorations do, this one faced its share of challenges, from heavy spring rains to very active beavers. But in the end, thanks to you, the area was restored. The waters are clearing as the floodplain traps sediment. Bluegill and largemouth bass are using the creek again. Ducks circle above.

Thank you for making it possible.



Two-stage ditches, like this one, create mini-floodplains within the channel.

Give yourself
and the planet
some peace of
mind on your
next getaway.
We invite you
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support
conservation
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Spend the Day or Night with Us

People are at the heart of conservation! The Conservancy is committed to providing more opportunities for you and others to explore the places you make possible and connect with nature. Give yourself and the planet some peace of mind on your next getaway. We invite you to visit one of these spots and support conservation while you escape!



Kings River

The modern rustic Deck House near Eureka Springs sleeps up to 20 people and is perfect for a family reunion, business retreat, or long weekend with friends. With panoramic views of the Kings River, a trail behind the house, and the river only minutes away, adventure awaits. Reservations at

KingsRiverDeckHouse.org.



Nestled along Rockhouse Creek near the Kings River is a charming log home, Whispering Wings, that sleeps 17 of your closest friends. Comfortable and off the beaten path, it is the perfect Ozark escape. Reservations at RockhouseCreekPreserve.org. If large cabins aren't your thing, check in with Ernie Killman at Kings River Outfitters. He has a variety of cabins to rent, plus he can set you up to fish or paddle the best spots on the Kings River.



Bluffton Preserve

If a tent is more your speed, primitive camping along the banks of the Archey Fork of the Little Red River near Clinton is a great way to spend a night or two. Enjoy floating and hiking among beautiful bluffs! Spots are first come, first served. As always, we ask that you have fun but leave no trace. For directions, visit Places We Protect at nature.org/arkansas.



Camping Platforms

If you want to take camping to the next level, the platform at the William Kirsch Preserve within Ranch North Woods (Little Rock) and the Cohen Family platform at Bayou DeView (near Cotton Plant) might be your new favorite spots. Only accessible by canoe or kayak, the floating platforms are just big enough for a couple of people to sleep beneath the stars. To reserve your spot visit **ArkansasWaterTrails.com**.



Hike Electric Island

Thanks to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, there is a new two-mile trail to explore on Lake Hamilton. A gift to the Conservancy from Entergy in the early 1980s, Electric Island is a quick paddle from the Andrew Hulsey Fish Hatchery and a great place to experience nature all year long.

Rattlesnake Ridge Natural Area

This newly conserved slice of nature near Little Rock's Pinnacle Mountain came with a house that we're sprucing up for vacation rentals. We hope to be hosting guests by summer 2019, so watch **nature.org/arkansas** for updates. In the meantime, the natural area is open for day use. Directions at

NaturalHeritage.com.



Paul and Melanie Norris working hard to build more trails.

Volunteers Extraordinaire

olunteers Paul and Melanie Norris with Central Arkansas Trails Alliance work tirelessly to provide new outdoor experiences for Arkansans. The Conservancy has been the beneficiary of their trail building talents at half a dozen preserves, including Bluffton Preserve and the Kings River Deck House. If you see them out working, or if you enjoy one of the trails they've helped build, be sure to thank them! We are grateful for all the dedicated volunteers who give so generously of their time and services to the Conservancy's mission.



Donor Profile



Hank Browne with his grandsons Rory and True.

Generations of Conservation

With the Brownes, conservation is a family affair. As members of the Conservancy's Last Great Places Society, Hank, a former trustee, and his wife, Cathy, have championed conservation in many ways over the years. Generous financial support, land donations, and gifts of their time and talents have advanced the Conservancy's work across the state, including the Delta, where they call home. Perhaps their greatest contribution is passing their love of the outdoors down to the next generations.

Hank's daughter, Mary Browne Allen, has been a leader in engaging young professionals in the Conservancy's mission. And with two boys of her own, she continues her family's legacy by connecting them with nature. Soon her dedication will extend to other youngsters, too. Mary's ideas, coupled with start-up funding from the Browne family and other visionary donors, are behind a new youth engagement effort that will take shape at the Conservancy in the coming year. Stay tuned!

We applaud everyone out there who is taking time to share your love of nature with those around you. You are making a difference!

Members of the Last Great Places Society make gifts of \$10,000 or more annually to advance our mission and protect the natural world that inspires us all. To learn more, please contact Jennifer Barnhouse, Director of Philanthropy, at (501) 614-5091 or j.a.barnhouse@tnc.org. ■

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Every gift you

make is a

You Are Our Conservation Hero!

Thank You for helping Arkansas' land, waters and wildlife thrive!

victory for the

lands and

waters on

which all life

depends. While

we can't list

everyone, we

celebrate each

and every

generous

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the driving

force behind

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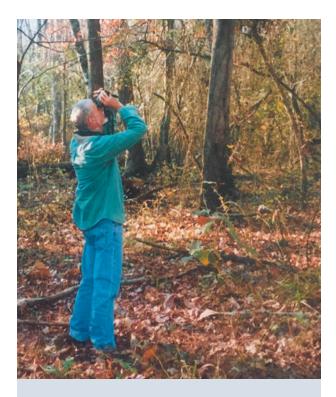
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Farewell to a Lifelong Conservationist

riends and former colleagues mourned the passing of Lance Peacock in September. Lance joined the Conservancy's Arkansas staff (all four of them) in 1983 as the sole scientist. A master birder, he was a leader in early acquisitions that conserved critical bird habitat along the Mississippi Flyway migration corridor. He retired in 2006 as Director of Science and Stewardship, having built a robust statewide conservation program and added volumes to our knowledge of Arkansas' unique plant and animal communities.

Lance's legacy lives on in the places he helped protect and the conservationists he inspired. Many thanks to everyone who has made gifts in his memory.

Lorance Creek Natural Area was one of his favorite places; we encourage you take a stroll along the boardwalk, listen for birds, and think of Lance.



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