



**Ed & Sue Hawkins Retirement / FoOT Leadership for 2019**

December 23, 2018

The Board of the Friends of the Ouachita Trail held its final meeting for 2018 on December 18th in Hot Springs.

**FoOT would like to recognize retiring District Captains Ed & Sue Hawkins** for their hard work and many contributions to the Ouachita Trail over many years. We are indebted to them for a legacy of leadership and volunteerism. The Ouachita Challenge a major source of funding for FoOT is a part of that legacy. The FoOT Board passed a motion for the record to say thank you both for what you mean to your friends in FoOT.

The following individuals will be FoOT's leadership team for the New Year.

Bo Lea	Director	President
Robert Cavanaugh	Director	VP – Resources
Ron Mayfield	Director	VP – Maintenance
Carolyn Shearman	Director	VP - Community Relations
Dennis Ward	Director	Coordinator Adoptions & Trail Reports
Sue Ehrgood	Director	District Captain Section 6
Ned Skoog	Director	District Captain Section 8 & 9
Terri Griffin	Director	
Matt Williams	Director	
E J Pangle		VP – Membership
Richard Lawrence		Secretary / Treasurer
Bill Sears		District Captain Section 1 & 2
James Wise		District Captain Section 3 & 4
Ben Liesman		District Captain Section 5
David Saugey		District Captain Section 7
Charles Mullins		District Captain Section 10



### **FoOT Awarded Recreational Trails Program Grant**

November 30, 2018

The Arkansas Highway Commission announced that Friends of the Ouachita Trail has been awarded a Recreational Trails Program grant for the remodeling and upgrading eight of the older OT shelters on the east end of the trail. One older shelter, Oak Mountain, was upgraded in the spring of this year.

The \$21,200 grant will pay for the addition of porches plus new picnic tables and fire rings. General repair work will be done on the existing shelter structure. This is a reimbursable grant requiring FoOT to pay for the upgrades and then apply for reimbursement. Normal time lines would have grant funds being released in late spring of 2019. It is anticipated that actual work would begin in the fall of 2019. Project completion will take 2 to 2 ½ years.

Upon completion, the Ouachita Trail Shelter System will have 12 new shelters and 9 remodeled ones. This will be a major enhancement to the OT. Special appreciation to all the volunteers that have made this possible.

### **Friends of the Ouachita Trail (FoOT) Annual Meeting 2018**

November 16, 2018

This year's FoOT annual meeting was held as part of the fall maintenance event which was held at the Queen Wilhelmina State Park on Saturday evening, October 27th. Special guests included a Louisiana Conservation Crew of 6 which had joined FoOT for the weekend.

Thirty four people were in attendance and enjoyed an excellent meal at the Queen Wilhelmina Lodge prior to the annual meeting. FoOT President, Bo Lea conducted the meeting and reviewed the major FoOT and trail events of 2018. An election for new Board members was held. Those elected to serve a 3 year term beginning in 2019 are: Bo Lea, Terri Griffin, & Ned Skoog.

Ben Liesman volunteered to become OT District Captain for section 5 of the trail. This section goes from Big Brushy (MM 94.5) to Highway 27 (MM121.7). A special thanks to Ben for stepping up and taking on this important role. Contact information for Ben is on the FoOT



web site.

Another excellent year for FoOT. The key achievement was the continued outstanding safety record, which remains a focus of our trail activities. Oak Mountain shelter was remodeled as FoOT begins to upgrade the 9 older shelters on the east end of the OT. A recreational trail program grant is pending that would fund the remaining shelters.

A major corporate sponsor, Mountain Valley Spring Water came on board this year. Currently they are selling t-shirts with a FoOT logo and map of the OT at no charge to FoOT, who receives all the profits.

FoOT received a national award for its use of RTP grant money for the 12 new OT Shelters. The award was given in Washington D.C. and former FoOT President, Jim Gifford accepted the award for FoOT.

Great year for trail maintenance, with the exception of Fouche Mountain which has a red area. In 2018 FoOT started a contracting program to address some of our more difficult areas such as Fouche Mountain.

FoOT appreciates all the volunteers who contributed so much in time, effort, and money to make 2018 a successful year.

### **FoOT Fall Maintenance Event 2018**

November 16, 2018

This year's fall maintenance event was held at the Queen Wilhelmina State Park from October 26th to the 28th (Friday thru Sunday). A Louisiana Conservation Crew of 6 also joined the effort and worked 6 days in the area.

FoOT Volunteers and the LCC worked primarily on the western end of the Ouachita Trail between mile marker 15.3 (west of Holson Valley) to mile marker 56.7 (Highway 270). The 21 FoOT volunteers contributed 483 hours to the OT while the LCC provided the better part of 6 days to the trail.



Specific areas worked included from the Stateline east to the Lodge then on further east to Hwy. 270 by FoOT. FoOT volunteers worked almost 2 miles of the Kiamichi bottoms from the Tail Head to the first river crossing. Approximately 3 miles remain to be worked in the bottoms. Stateline down to the Kiamichi was worked by the LCC. They also worked from Hwy. 259 past Pashubbe T.H. over Wilton Mountain to the western Kiamichi T.H. After the maintenance event the LCC worked from Horsethief Springs west to two miles past the Holson Valley Shelter and Foran Gap west for a couple of miles.

Almost 30 miles of the Ouachita Trail was worked. An outstanding job by FoOT volunteers and the Louisiana Conservation Crew. Special thanks to the FoOT volunteers that provided meals during the event. The kitchen crew also cleaned up 3 shelters in their spare time. Our LCC was excellent as well, and a special thanks to them for their effort. FoOT VP of maintenance, Ron Mayfield put in a lot of time and mileage to coordinate and guide the LCC team.

Although Thursday night and Friday morning's weather was terrible on Rich Mountain, volunteers were able to get out a little late on Friday morning and enjoyed great weather the remaining time. Lots of hard work but a lot of fun and fellowship. The Ouachita Trail benefited greatly from this effort. Look forward to an even bigger and better event next year.

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### **Final Maintenance Reports for FY2018**

October 5, 2018

The final reports for Fiscal Year 2018 have been published. [CLICK HERE](#) to view the Trail Maintenance Report (TMR). [CLICK HERE](#) to view the Trail Condition Report (TCR). The Trail Maintenance Report shows that 5,166.5 hours were volunteered this year towards the maintenance of the Ouachita and Womble Trails. Great job Folks! As you would expect, the Officers of our organization volunteered the most hours as follows:



Bo Lea	372.5 Hours
Ned Skoog	315.0 Hours
Ron Mayfield	302.0 Hours
Robert Cavanagh	296.0 Hours
Glenn Wortham	245.0 Hours
Matt Williams	122.5 Hours

Other Volunteers that provided a herculean effort are:

Jerry Vaccaro	191.0 Hours
Ouachita Mountain Hikers and Ralph Butler	176.0 Hours
Brenda Lea1	27.0 Hours

This list doesn't begin to show all the people that make FoOT what it is, as we have many volunteers whose efforts contribute to the overall success of FoOT. How could we ever do what we do without the efforts of all these Folks? The next time you see one of your fellow volunteers, pat them on the back and say "THANK YOU."

I'm looking forward to the FoOT Annual Meeting and work event planned for the last weekend this month. I'll see you there.

Dennis Ward  
Board Member and Trail Reports Co-ordinator

### **Confirmation of Fall Maintenance Event**

August 29, 2018

FoOT would like to confirm that this years fall maintenance event will take place Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Oct. 26 - 28. The event will be held at the RV park of Queen Wilhelmina State Park. Meals will be furnished each morning with dinner meals furnished on Friday and Saturday evenings. Volunteers should bring their own food for lunch on the trail. The State Park has given FoOT 12 RV sites for the event. If you have not asked for an RV space or tent space and plan to come, please do so. Again this year a Texas Conservation



Crew of 8 will be joining our effort. Our maintenance work will focus on the Rich Mountain portion of the Ouachita Trail.

As last year, FoOT's annual meeting will be held after the Saturday dinner meal, starting at 6 p.m. Including the annual meeting last year was well received. Please confirm if you will be attending any or all of the events, so planners can have the necessary maintenance equipment and food on hand for the volunteers. Just drop me a email at the address below. Last year's event was lots of fun with great food and fellowship plus yes, we did get a lot of the Ouachita Trail cleaned up. Look forward to another fun and productive event.

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### **HR. 5636, the Flatside Enhancement Act**

July 12, 2018

Arkansas Representative French Hill is sponsoring HR. 5636, the Flatside Enhancement Act. The 640 acres is in the area around Forked Mt. - Forked Mt. at this time just barely has its peak in the wilderness. There is an additional 2000 acres along the bluffs on the north side of Cedar Creek that we wanted included. Technically it would qualify as "wilderness" as I understand it but Rep Hill thought that its inclusion might jeopardize the entire bill. The Farm bill passed this week and this bill was not attached so it will have to be tagged onto something else to be successful. Public interest in this addition (after 35 years with no additional wilderness area) seems important. So e-mails and letters from FoOT members and your hiking/biking friends in the Hot springs area would be appreciated. We need French to keep up the fight and we need Boozman to step up to the plate in the senate.

The Ozark Society has supported this Bill and there is some chance it going through but it needs support in the senate. Senator Boozman seems the best hope. So I urge FoOT to contact French and John to ask for continued perseverance. As stated It has been 35 years since the last addition and this property has been designated for wilderness by the Forest Service.

This information was received from David Peterson, Ozark Society. Please assist the effort to make HR 5636 , the Flatside Enhancement Act a reality.



Thanks!!!!

Bo Lea, FoOT President

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### **Oak Mountain Shelter Project**

June 16, 2018

Today we wrapped up the upgrade to the Oak Mountain Shelter, which was an Eagle Scout Project. A new picnic table and fire ring were included in the upgrade. Thanks to Nolan McKee, who headed up this shelter remodel for his Eagle Scout Project. He did an outstanding job with the logistics including work force co-ordination, safety, food, camping, tools & equipment along with co-coordinating with FoOT on materials and scheduling. He also took the FoOT plans and per-fabricated the picnic table which looks great! We appreciated the support of Nolan's parents, Joe & Gretchen.

Special thanks to Ned Skoog and Jerry Vacarro for their efforts. Ned coordinated materials and Jerry was FoOT's construction lead. This was a pilot project and we feel the design and implementation went well. Mike Sims, who has this area adopted, came out to assist us last Saturday. Mike deserves to get the first updated shelter, since he has maintained this part of the OT for many years.

We will do a lessons learned review on the Oak Mountain Project with FoOT and the Forest Service as we look to upgrades on the remaining eight older shelters.

Bo Lea, FoOT President

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## Updates on Current Activities

June 7, 2018

Friday, (8th) materials will be delivered to the **Oak Mountain Shelter site for a remodeling project** on Saturday & Sunday. Nolan McKee, a Little Rock Boys Scout will be heading up the project for his Eagle Scout badge. Ned Skoog, Jerry Vacarro, and I will be present to give oversight and lend our help. This pilot project will give us the information needed as FoOT proceeds to remodel the remaining 8 older existing shelters on the east end of the OT. An RTP grant request has been prepared by Robert Cavanaugh.

Contact has been made with Queen Wilhelmina State Park to comp FoOT for camping sites for our **2nd annual fall OT maintenance event**. I have ask for 10 RV sites and 4 tent spaces. They should confirm next week. The dates once again are Oct. 26 - 28, 2018. We have already had several people request camping facilities. A Texas Conservation Team (TCC) will be joining us again this year for the event.

Past FoOT President, Jim Gifford represented FoOT this past Tuesday at the **Coalition of Recreational Trails Awards ceremony** in Washington D.C. on Capitol Hill. FoOT's Ouachita National Recreation Trail Shelter Project won first place in the construction category for our use of RTP funds. Appreciate Jim attending and accepting the award. The award just reaffirms all the hard work by FoOT volunteers & our Forest Service partners. This was a big event and a high profile award for our organization.

**Mountain Valley Spring Water** has revised it donation to FoOT from its t-shirt sales from which FoOT is given the profit. They tallied May sales and a check for \$1,022.58 is being sent. A special thanks to MVSW for its help and our newly formed partnership.

The **OT Maintenance Investment Adoption program** has begun. For a donation of \$300 an individual, team, or corporate entity can adopted a mile of the OT. The adopted mile will be contracted for maintenance with the sponsor being shown on the FoOT trail maintenance report. We are hoping to get enough investment adopters to address the non-adopted part of the trail from Eagle Gap to Turner Gap. This 21.5 mile section has historically one of the hardest parts of the OT to keep in reasonable shape. Dennis Ward, author of our trail reports, is the first person to sign up.



FoOT is proud to welcome **Charles Mullins as our new District Captain for the east end of the OT.** Charles is taking over for the twice retired DC, Bill Mooney. Special thanks to Bill for all of his past contributions to the OT & FoOT. Also, Charles is a trail adopter and we appreciate him stepping up to assume this new responsibility.

As most of you know, one of our key FoOT members, **Glenn Wortham had a recent fall that resulted in a broken hip.** Spoke with Glenn yesterday, he sounded great and as you would expect had a very positive attitude. He had a good doctor's report this week and is resting at home. Glenn said he has to keep weight off the hip for another 6 weeks. We all wish Glenn a speedy recovery.

Just in case some of you missed this, Retired Jessieville District Ranger, **John Archer was made an honorary lifetime member of FoOT** at our last Board Meeting for his outstanding contributions to the Ouachita Trail. A most deserving recognition. Visit the FoOT web site for details.

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### **Fall 2018 OT Maintenance Event - More Information**

May 27, 2018

The second annual 2018 FoOT maintenance event will take place the last week-end in Oct. (26th, 27th, 28th Fri.-Sun). The event will be held at the Queen Wilhelmina State Park west of Mena, Arkansas. Notice has already been posted on the FoOT website and our Facebook page.

These communications are to give everyone a chance to put it on their calendars plus if anyone thinks they will need a RV or tent site they can let us know. This is not a firm commitment. We are working with the State Park to comp us some sites. These reservations will be made soon to ensure we have spaces. This is the only time sensitive action needed at this time.



Look forward to another fun event with lots of trail work done. A Texas Conservation Crew will be joining us again this year. Hope to see you this fall. Additional information will be sent as we get closer to the event.

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### **John Archer Named Honorary Lifetime FoOT Member**

May 23, 2018

At the May 23, 2018 FoOT Board Meeting the Board voted to make retired Forest Service District Ranger, John Archer, an honorary lifetime member of Friends of the Ouachita Trail.

FoOT wanted to recognize the many contributions John has made to the Ouachita National Forest and the Ouachita Trail. He retired in 1997 after 42 years with the U.S. Forest Service. The last 27 years was as District Ranger in the Jessieville District.

In the early 1970s John was instrumental in implementing the idea proposed by Forest Recreation Staff Specialists to build a foot trail across the Ouachita National Forest. In the late 1980s, he proposed adding hiking shelters to the OT to encourage usage. John acquired funding for the beautiful trailhead for the OT on Highway 7, when the highway was designated as Scenic 7.

These are just examples of his many contributions to the forest and to those of us who enjoy the fruits of his labor. He is truly a person of excellent character who, with his modest and unassuming manner, did so much for our outdoor resources. On behalf of the FoOT Board, John we are proud to make you an honorary lifetime member of FoOT.

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### **Trail Award**

May 18, 2018

The Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT) has chosen Friends of the Ouachita Trail and its Ouachita Trail Shelter Project as the winner of the CRT's Annual Achievement Award for outstanding use of Recreational Trails Program funds in the Construction and Design category.

The award will be presented on June 5th in Washington D.C. Jim Gifford and Glenn Wortham will represent FoOT at the awards ceremony. This is a major honor for FoOT and all the volunteers that have made this possible through lots of effort and hard work. FoOT appreciates all those who supported this major improvement to the Ouachita Trail. This award is accepted for all of you.

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### **District Captain Retirement**

May 18, 2018

East End District Captain, Bill Mooney is retiring again. Bill has stepped in for the past year due to a vacancy in the District Captain position. We appreciate his helping out. He has a long history of service to FoOT & the OT. Bill has served as a FoOT Board member, District Captain, and trail worker. He has always been there to assist a backpacker getting on or off the trail. Knowing Bill, he will continue to assist, when he can.

On behalf of FoOT, we say thanks to a special FoOT member, who has contributed so much of his time and effort.

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## **Fall 2018 OT Maintenance Event**

May 18, 2018

The second annual FoOT Fall OT Maintenance Event will be held on October 26th, - 28th (Friday - Sunday). This year's event will take place at Queen Wilhelmina State Park. Joining us again will be a Texas Conservation Crew. This group of young people adds a lot to our effort. The FoOT volunteer group last year had a great time and over 20 miles of the OT was worked on.

This early notice is to give everyone a chance to mark their calendars. Also we are working with the State Park to see if we can get our camping fees waived or reduced. Anyone who thinks they would be coming and would need a camping spot let me know so we can make plans now. We realize things can change this far out but just want to have an idea of what we need.

The FoOT annual meeting will be held Saturday evening, while the group is together. We are looking forward to another great event.

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## **Bettye Wallace Inducted into AR Sports Hall of Fame**

April 12, 2018

Long-time FoOT member Bettye Wallace was recently and deservedly honored with induction into the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame. Bettye, is a long time, great adopter and worker for FoOT. FoOT president Bo Lea says that "she is an example to us all. I am sure she is the oldest active trail adopter that FoOT has." Congratulations and thanks very much Bettye for your efforts for the betterment of Henderson, those you positively affected, and the OT!

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details.