



THE HOBBS ADVENTURE

SPRING 2015

NEWSLETTER OF FRIENDS OF HOBBS STATE PARK CONSERVATION AREA

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Somethin's Cooking!

If your timing is right, you can enjoy some great Dutch oven cooking at Hobbs! This group of men were serving up mountain man breakfast, cobblers, biscuits and more during the Leopold Education Day March 7th. Follow your nose to them at other events — they're regulars!



Boy Scout enthusiasts Jim Swearingen, Ken Farmer, Mark Love and William Garrett prepare to serve a hungry crowd.



Hobbs visitor Gavin McCartney rings the dinner bell.



Mark Love prepares coals for another Dutch oven.

Hobnob set for June 20th

Mark your calendars for June 20, 2015, to attend the annual gathering of Friends of Hobbs. This is your chance to reconnect, enjoy the soulful music of Brick Fields, eat wonderful food, and support the organization your efforts have allowed. We will celebrate from 6:30 to 9:00PM which will include a silent auction, a catered dinner, and a lively, auctioneer-led program allowing you to bid on more items donated by our community of supporters. Please join us and look for more information to follow as we get closer to the date.

This is the largest fundraiser of the year for the Park. We hope to see you there. For ticket information please call Kathy Mayhue at 479-409-8494.

To purchase tickets, send a check (\$40 per ticket, made out to "Friends of Hobbs") to PO Box 709, Rogers, AR 72757. Check www.friendsofhobbs.com for information. There is limited seating; reserve your tickets today!

Meet a Bird Up Close!

Alyssa DeRubeis handles a Tufted Titmouse netted during the Hobbs Birds and Breakfast program on March 7th. The program fascinates young and old with a catch and release peek at songbirds. Alyssa is an instructor at Ozark Natural Science Center.



PHOTO BY JOE NEAL

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BACKGROUND PHOTO BY RON BIRD

Hobbs State Park - Conservation Area: The Combined Efforts that Navigated the Twisted Path to Today

by Jo Barnes

Hobbs State Park - Conservation Area,

appreciated and loved by so many of us, came about because of an amazing array of interconnections within our community and state, beginning, of course, with Roscoe Hobbs. Let's take a look at the how it came to be the fine park that it is today.

Roscoe Hobbs Buys the Van Winkle Property

Originally from Bentonville, Arkansas, Roscoe Hobbs bought the Peter Van Winkle lands in 1928 through his railroad tie company — Hobbs Western Tie — originally founded as the Ozark Tie Company of Rogers, Arkansas. In 1943/44, Hobbs purchased the Van Winkle estate of 11,644 acres from the tie company and sold Van Winkle's house materials to Harvey and Bernice Jones who used the handmade bricks from the three chimneys to create the first building at Har-Ber Village, a mid-19th Century history museum & pioneer village, in Grove, Oklahoma.

Coordinated Effort to Purchase Property for the State of Arkansas

By 1977, Carl Spivey of Rogers, acting as realtor for the Hobbs property and prompted by a request from Gene Ramsey of the Rogers Chamber of Commerce, wrote to the Hobbs estate managers suggesting that they sell the property to some private citizens who would buy the land but guarantee that it be held perpetually as a wilderness area to be used for hunting, fishing, and camping, and never developed or used for commercial purposes.

About this same time the Arkansas Fish and Game Commission (AFGC) entered the picture. Through newspaper and television promotions, AFGC publicized the need to acquire the Hobbs estate for the State of Arkansas. In 1978, then Governor David Pryor became aware of this issue through the efforts of Charles Bingham and John Brown. Local and state citizens, including State Senator Morris Henry, State Senator Larry

Douglas, State Representative Dick Barclay, the Rogers Chamber of Commerce, the Springdale Chamber of Commerce, Mrs. Doris Freyder (a writer), Mr. Charles Bingham, Mrs. Clarice Moore (great niece of Roscoe Hobbs), Governor David Pryor, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Senator Kaneaster Hodges, Jr., Governor Bill Clinton, the banks of Northwest Arkansas, and many other people and organizations, worked together to arrange the purchase the Hobbs land for the State.

Eventually, with the backing of several banks in the community, the land was sold to The Nature Conservancy where it was held until the State of Arkansas could find the funds to buy it. In February of 1979, the further diligence of local citizens, area politicians, along with assistance from The Nature Conservancy, resulted in the passage of an administration appropriations bill signed by Governor Clinton for the amount \$3.25 million (\$279 per acre!) for the deed to the entire 11,644 acre Hobbs Estate.

Determining End Use and Juggling State Agencies

The management of the Hobbs Estate, as it was known at that time, was under the direction of three agencies:

- 1) Arkansas State Parks (the entire tract title holder)
- 2) Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
- 3) the Natural Heritage Commission

Understanding the value of this land, The Natural Heritage Commission, in 1979, contracted with Ellen T. Neaville of Rogers, to survey the Hobbs area for potential natural areas. Six were identified: Shaddox Hollow, VanWinkle Hollow, War Eagle Creek Bluff, Kirk Hollow, section 16 in Carroll County, and Pigeon Roost Cave. The State agreed that every effort would be made to maintain these areas in their current conditions, including allowing only foot trails to be built on them. As a result of this research, zones were assigned to each agency for management purposes, including one, made up of approximately 2,500 acres, as Beaver Lake State Park.

The State was resolved to accommodate the needs of the surrounding community, so two public meetings were held — one in Rogers and one in Little Rock — in January of 1980. Public input ranged from ideas of limited primitive activities to developing an amusement park. The overwhelming consensus of the community seemed to be to leave the park as pristine as possible, in its most natural state.

In August of 1980, the State again held public meetings again to present four different development options proposed within the Beaver Lake State Park Zone. The final option chosen, number 3, included trails (foot and horse), rustic cabins, campsites, canoe trails, interpretive programs, environmental programs, and guided tours, with 80% of the park set aside for hunting. This indicated a style of development which allowed a close association with the natural resources of the park.

To embrace the zone concept and be more inclusive of all agencies, in 1984, the name of the park was established as Beaver Lake State Park - Hobbs State Management Area. Around that same period, an agency management/operational deal had been struck to include the Arkansas Forestry Commission as an additional state management agency with a stake in Hobbs, now bringing the total number of agencies to four. At that time, the concept of State co-agency management was unique in the State of Arkansas, a first. Previously only State and Federal agencies had managed natural areas across Arkansas. The responsibility for each agency was broken down this way:

- **Natural Heritage Commission** - to development and inventory of natural resources
- **Arkansas Game and Fish** - to identify areas suitable for nursery ponds and wildlife habitat management
- **Arkansas State Parks** - to identify areas for park facilities
- **Arkansas Forestry Commission** - to identify areas for demonstration forests

In the fall of 1986, Park Ranger/Superintendent Mark Clippinger transferred to Hobbs from Lake Ouachita State Park and was the first and only full-time staff member. He inquired and was informed that his area of oversight would include the entire property and not just the Beaver Lake State Park zone, which increased

operational responsibility.

The Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC) presented their plans for management in 1988, and by that fall, the citizens in NW Arkansas were not pleased with their demonstration forest proposal. As a result, the AFC removed themselves as a management partner in 1989.

Following years of field research and management evaluation, the zone concept was abandoned, and in 2003, the park was given its current name of Hobbs State Park - Conservation Area.

From Concept to Reality

Multiple master plans were developed over the years, and just prior to the passage in 1996 of Amendment 75 — the Conservation Amendment — a 10-year legacy plan was at last completed. The visitor center design and program plan developed in the mid 1990s included office space for employees; a gift shop; a visitor contact and registration area; exhibit space; classroom space; and storage, support, and utility areas. Our current Visitor Center includes all of these amenities and is the focal point and gathering space for the visitors who come to Hobbs State Park - Conservation Area. Citizenry input and a portion of the option for development presented to the public in 1980 has become a reality, giving us one of the finest parks in the State of Arkansas.

Completing the Vision

The vision for developing Hobbs does not end here, however. In an interview with Mark Clippinger, he shared some possibilities for future resource management and facility additions to the park. Look for an article in the fall 2015 Friends of Hobbs "Hobbs Adventure" newsletter which will include some of the plans for what may come next.

Sharing the joy of Hobbs in a way that continues to protect the park and keep it viable for future generations is the mission through which educational and recreational opportunities are presented. Many thanks to those who put so much time and effort into the making of the marvelous place that is Hobbs State Park - Conservation Area.

Find us on Facebook at
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School Children Visit Hobbs: A Teacher's Paradise!

by Jo Barnes

The mission statement for Hobbs State Park Conservation Area is “to provide enriching educational and recreational experiences in harmony with resource stewardship.” With this in mind, Hobbs welcomes local school children and teachers as a place to apply in real life what has been taught in the classroom and to see and touch the history and natural resources where they live. A teacher's handbook is available so that educators can plan a productive and interesting visit for their students, including a list of programs teachers refer to when organizing such a field trip:

Curriculum Description (includes the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks K-8 for Life Sciences, Earth Sciences, and Arkansas History):

- Hidden Diversity Program
- Trail Programs
- Lewis and Clark Program
- Forest Ecosystems Program
- Slavery Program
- Survival
- The Lorax
- Hobbs State Park & Ozark Natural Science Center Programs

Park interpreters are able to customize programs to meet specific needs for both in-school and park experience. They will come to the classroom prior to a visit to introduce students to what they will see and do when once in the park.

Contact Information:
 Steve Chyrchel, Park Interpreter
 Email: steve.chyrchel@arkansas.gov
 Hobbs Phone – 479-789-2380
 Hobbs Fax – 479-789-5969

Workshops and Special Events - Spread the Word!

Saturday, March 21

Messier Marathon (sundown to sunrise)

Astronomy Nights: Sugar Creek Astronomy Association hosts astronomy night viewing at Hobbs - free of charge. No registration required. You may use our telescope “Big Boy” or bring your own. Binoculars work too. Bring a red lens cover, such as a cloth or balloon. You may also bring chairs and drinks for outdoor comfort.

Wednesday through Friday, March 25 – 27

Spring Break Day Camp 9AM – 3PM

Kids out of school for the week? Send them back to school after having the break of a lifetime! Give your child the opportunity to immerse themselves in nature at Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area's Spring Break Day Camp. Registration and pre-payment required. Call (479) 789-5000 for more information and to register. Camp recommended for nature lovers ages 9-12 years old. Cost: \$50.00 plus tax.

Sunday, March 29

Keeping Your Septic System Healthy

Are you septic smart? Caroline Eastman will speak on “What you need to know about your septic system” in the guest speaker series presentation. Free event, 2PM at the Visitor Center.

Saturday, April 18

Earth Day — The Forest Comes to Life in Spring

Join the staff and volunteers at Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area as we celebrate our Earth! During this free event there will be programs, hikes, crafts, and a chance to meet animal “characters” throughout the day. Get out and enjoy nature as we recognize Mother Nature's beauty and purpose! Contact the park at (479)789-5000 for a detailed schedule.

Saturday, April 4

Early Saw Mills of NWA

Guest speaker series presentation by June Westphal. Free event, 2PM, Visitor's Center.

Saturday, April 25

Astronomy Night — Sugar Creek Astronomy Assoc.

Free class at 7:30 p.m. followed by observation.

Sunday, April 26

Best Management Practices for Your Landscape

Guest speaker series presentation by Angela Danovi. Free event, 2PM, Visitor's Center.

Saturday, May 2

Old Time Digital

Susan Young explores how people used their hands in the old days. Free event, 2PM, Visitor's Center.

Sunday, May 17

What Kind of Tree is This?

Al Einert offers a primer in tree identification in this guest speaker presentation. Free event, 2PM, Visitor's Center.

Saturday, May 23

Go Geo-cache Challenge

Want to see new places at Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area while challenging yourself against local geocachers or just looking for something new to try this Memorial Day Weekend? Try geo-caching! This unique treasure hunt event will get you out exploring. So bring the family and have some fun as you explore Hobbs State Park. Admission is \$10 per group.

Saturday, June 20

Annual “Hobnob” — Friends of Hobbs Fundraiser

Join the “Friends” for a catered dinner, entertainment and silent auction. 6-9pm. More details on page 1.

Saturday, June 20

Genealogy and Civil War Soldiers

Russell Baker offers tips on researching the genealogy of Civil War Soldiers in this guest speaker series presentation. Free event, 2PM, Visitor's Center.

Saturday, July 11

Walk on the Wild Side with Native Edibles

In this guest speaker series presentation, Tamara Walkingstick offers a look at our native edibles. Free event, 2PM, Visitor's Center.

Saturday, July 18

Astronomy Night — Sugar Creek Astronomy Assoc.

Free class at 7:30 p.m. followed by observation.

Saturday, July 25

Bugs are Cool!

Austin Jones shares a look into the amazing world of bugs in this guest speaker series presentation. Free event, 2PM, Visitor's Center.

Sunday, August 2

Painting Nature/Wildlife Workshop

Lysell Hiatt will instruct participants and offer tips on capturing the spirit of nature on canvas. More information on time, price, and registration to follow.

The Hobbs State Park Conservation Area Trails: A Story of Commitment, Muscle, Dedication and Volunteering

by Jo Barnes

Commitment

Meet Al Knox, Trail Maintenance Supervisor for Hobbs. Since 2002, he has been the master of trail building for the park, first as a volunteer, then as an official park employee beginning in December of 2003. In a recent interview with Al, I was able to learn about just what it takes to create and maintain the beautiful trails on which we hike, run, bike, and ride. To paraphrase the actress Bette Davis, trail building and maintenance are not for sissies!

The history of trails at Hobbs begins with Shaddox Hollow Trail, a 1 ½ mile path created in 1989 and dedicated in 1990. This trail, approved by the State Park Little Rock office, was field marked, designed, and constructed by Park Superintendent Mark Clippinger under the tutelage of Tim Ernst, the leading trail designer, field constructor, and wildlife photographer at the time. The most significant fact . . . Shaddox was the first trail constructed entirely through volunteer efforts. This was followed quickly in 1990 by Pigeon Roost Trail, 8 ¼ miles. Because of the relationship built with Tim Ernst on the Shaddox project, he was the first to be contracted in State Park's history to "hand tool construct" a lengthy foot traffic only trail with primitive, backpacking camping sites. Again, Mark and State Parks Planner Ken Eastin determined the planning and layout of the trail.

But, the largest and most challenging trail development began in 2004 with the Hidden Diversity Multi-Use Trail consisting of three loops: Bashore Ridge Loop (3 miles - Blackburn area), Dutton Hollow Loop (3 miles - Blackburn area), Little Clifty Creek Loop (9 miles - Van Winkle Hollow), and War Eagle Valley Loop (6 miles with an added three miles if hikers travel to the Visitor Center and two other spur sections). All six trails, including the Sinking Stream, Historic Van Winkle, and Ozark Plateau, equal 35 miles! This year, 350-40,000 people will enjoy these family friendly trails.

In 2003, Arkansas State Parks Planning and Development created the Trail Advisory Panel (comprised of local user group representatives) and held public meetings in order to determine just how these trails would be used. Although State Parks had committed in 1980 to constructing equestrian trails, since that time mountain biking had gained popularity, and a multi-use trail (equestrian, off-road cyclists, and hikers)

would be considered as part of the development plan for this 21 mile trail system so that all could enjoy "the diversity of life [at Hobbs that] inspires wonder and discovery", one of the interpretive themes of the park. Bluffs, rocky outcrops, limestone bedrock, disappearing streams, sink holes, and even a large fault line add to the diversity of this trail which was dedicated in May of 2006.

A trail is not an arbitrary path. In fact, the State of Arkansas parks system has standards for how trails must be constructed. For example, the path width must be 18" in flat areas and 24" on slopes, and a corridor 6 feet wide and 10 feet high must be cleared. Paths built on hillsides must have a slant of at least 5 degrees to allow water from rainfall to flow over the path and down the hill, not down the trail tread.

Muscle

All trails are built by hand! No tractors, no ditch digging machines, only hand tools such as rakes, shovels, axes, hoes, and chain saws were employed with brawn and sweat.

And, so it began. Before building could start, Park Superintendent, Mark Clippinger, marked where he wanted the trails to lead as he used his skills to select the trail corridor along flowing, gentle contours to minimize weather impacting the sustainability of the trail tread itself; then, Jim Langford, State Trails Coordinator, brought in two AmeriCorps teams, and the first of the clearing commenced. In the process of building these trails, so many thanks must be given to so many people who volunteered their time: Al's grandsons and brothers, the Rogers Senior High School Outdoor Club, Jamie Tabor for his Eagle Scout project, Boy Scout troops who built bridges, AmeriCorps volunteers, students on spring break from Washington University in St. Louis, Peace Lutheran Church, hikers, horse riders, bikers, and community folks.

The next step was raking/marking the exact path, which Al did, following Mark's flag line, then to remove the leaves, huckleberry bushes, and other foliage from the trails. The next required digging down to the soil and leveling the tread. Understanding the amount of sweat equity that this work entailed can be shown by the number of recorded hours of labor. In January of 2005, Supervisor Al Knox recorded 16 miles of trail completed for a total of 206 workers amounting to 3,386 hours of "tool in hand" production. This does not included the travel time to work sites that may

have been as much as a mile walk in and out, supervision and training of new volunteers, break times, lunch times, and so forth.

Dedication

The completion of a trail, however, is only the first step as they must be maintained. Once again, volunteer efforts are essential. "Every rain drop, every footprint, every season affects the trail tread. Wind, ice, sun, gravity, freezing and thawing, vegetation growth and death, seen or unseen, all are natural forces that change constantly and make hiking trails like living creatures needing to be pampered." (Al Knox, "Trails")

Volunteering

Opportunities exist for volunteers to help with this effort. AmeriCorps groups return every year to work on various projects around the park, including trail maintenance. From 2005 to the present, Larry Suchy, biology professor at Northwest Arkansas Community College, has run a program allowing students to receive extra credit by conducting a study twice a year (October and April) that includes surveys of trail participants. Two students at 5 different trail heads have a two part study: 1) observation (do people sign in and out; is there litter left behind; do they park in designated locations) 2) personal, face-to-face questionnaire (their home town; the number of times they use a trail; do they think the paths are well maintained; do they feel safe on the trails). Al trains and coordinates these student volunteers, with assistance from Roland Goicoechea, and uses the survey information to improve the trail experience. In 2014, 41,760 visitors used the trails!

As Al has seasoned, so have the trails as nature takes over. Consequently, they need our help. An "Adopt a Trail" program is available for groups to sign up (similar to "Adopt a Highway" for the littering program). Also, the second Saturday of every month, volunteers can meet at 8:00AM at the maintenance building on War Eagle Road to work on various trails throughout the park. Be sure to call ahead to let Al know you are coming (cell: 530-2458). For all volunteer information, call the Hobbs State Park Conservation Area Visitor Center at 479-589-5009, Roland Goicoechea's direct line, and he will get you going in something that is challenging and rewarding!

We Appreciate our Friends of Hobbs Board of Directors!

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Friends Volunteer Rick Jones shares his interests with young and old with "Birds: Form Follows Function" at the Hobbs Wonders of Winter Wildlife.

Continue Your Membership Then Invite Your Friends To Become a Friend of Hobbs

Visit the web site www.friendsofhobbs.com for a membership form (or use the one below). Contributions to The Friends of Hobbs provide major financial support to HSP-CA! Don't forget to give us your email and we'll send you green notifications on upcoming events!

Thank you for your contribution towards furthering our mission of resource stewardship!

Be a Member!

Membership Level

- Student \$10
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Mail to:
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