



Bayou Bartholomew Alliance NEWSLETTER



Spring 2006
Vol. 20.

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Bayou Alliance Loses Dedicated Board Member

The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance is saddened to report the passing of Marshall N. Rush. Marshall has served as a member of the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance Board of Directors for some time. His dedication to the natural resources of this area and to the restoration of the Bayou Bartholomew were unsurpassed. His efforts and labors will be sorely missed.

Marshall served as chairman of the Pine Bluff National Bank Board of Directors and retired from farming just a few years ago. Marshall was an avid hunter and had over 100 trophies from Africa, China, Siberia and other exotic places. I recall being in his house when someone asked him what his most memorable hunt had been. He paused just a moment and replied that some of his best hunts resulted in no game being bagged. He went on to explain that the real enjoyment he had from traveling to foreign places was meeting new people and seeing different cultures first hand. No doubt, as is taught in Hunter Education classes, Marshall had evolved into a true sportsman, one who was not worried about the kill but rather the enjoyment of nature and the great outdoors. Marshall accomplished many things in his life. He also was a charter member of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, a member of the Safari Club International, Dallas Safari Club, Texas Big Horn Society and the Grand Slam/Ovis Club. He is survived by his wife, Carolyn Sue Morgan Rush and two daughters and a son. We wish his family well and we will not forget the contributions that Marshall has made to the restoration of the Bayou Bartholomew.



Cub Scout Pack 143 Picks Up the Bayou



We thank the Cub Scout Pack 143 sponsored by the Pine Bluff Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for their efforts in keeping the Bayou Bartholomew a clean place. Tyler Green, Zachary Birdsong, Daniel Jacobson, Andrew Jacobson, Brian Jacobson, Jon Jacobson, Koyle Kendrick, Ryan Wade and Ian Phillips all loaded a truck with tires, cans, paper, and other trash dumped by those not so thoughtful one Saturday morning. Thanks to their leaders, Gretchen Wade and Bobbi Phillips for taking the time to let these young men participate in a civic duty helping to make our environment better for all!!

Bayou Volunteers: Ray Long

The work of the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance would not be possible without dedicated volunteers who get the job done. Two years ago, we completed the building of a nature trail at the I-530/Hazel Street intersection. The maintenance of this beautiful trail has been largely accomplished by Ray Long who has spent many hours mowing, weeding, and cleaning the trail up. He has blown the leaves and pine needles off of the trail on many occasions. We cannot emphasize how much effort Ray has made at the expense of his own time and money. We salute Ray's unselfish dedication to maintaining this trail.

Ray is originally from Ada, Oklahoma and resides with his wife Verna who completed a cd program with pictures Ray took of the nature trail. Ray is retired from International Paper here in Pine Bluff.



Mr. Ray Long

New Trail to be Built-Volunteers Needed

We will clear a new trail on property recently donated by Dr. George and Sarah Roberson. This trail will be located near Hazel Street. We plan to clear a primitive trail and hopefully someday acquire the funding to upgrade it like the one near the bypass. We will be clearing this trail on **April 8, 2006**. We are hoping that many volunteers will come out to lend a hand. The work is being guided by two Boy Scouts working on their eagle scout requirements.

We will meet in a grassy area just off of Hazel Street on the morning of April 8. We plan to work from **8:00 a.m. until about 2:00 p.m.** The location is just south of existing medical buildings on the west side of Hazel and before the wooded area along the Bayou Bartholomew. If you get off the I-530 exit and go toward town, cross the Bayou bridge and the meeting location will be on your left before the first buildings you encounter on Hazel Street. **Please call 870-879-4808 or e-mail layher@earthlink.net if you plan to attend.** We plan on having sandwiches for lunch so let us know. Bring clippers, rakes, chain saws, etc. if possible.

YES, I WANT TO HELP!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

Enclosed is a donation to help fund: (donations are tax deductible)

_____ the nature trail

_____ tree seedlings

_____ general operations

_____ newsletter mailing and printing

I would like to volunteer to:

_____ help with cleanups

_____ help remove logjams

_____ Adopt a trail segment (be sure to include the name of your group)

Properties/Easements Donated

Dr. George and Sarah Roberson of Pine Bluff recently donated a 25 acre wooded parcel of land just off of Hazel Street to the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance. This unique area contains many old hardwoods with majestic oaks among them. They indicated that they hoped this area would remain in forest and they wanted to do their part in preserving the Bayou Bartholomew and its wonderful natural resources. We hope to build a nature trail on this property and in fact have scheduled a day to begin this process (see page 2)

Another piece of property of some 23 acres was donated to the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance by **Becky Kilmer, Tom Foti, and Pratt Rimmel, Jr.** all of Little Rock. This parcel actually has the Bayou running through the property. It is along Oakwood Road. While most of the trees are not as old as some on the Roberson donation, it offers a great diversity of plant and animal life as well as some unique ephemeral wetlands and pools with some very hilly topography. This area will also have a trail built through the area so that the public can enjoy the great diversity of the Bayou Bartholomew. This property was owned in part by the late Stern, who hoped the area would be preserved in a natural condition.

Recently, **Mr. Travis Holly** of Bastrop, Louisiana donated a conservation easement to the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance. This easement included three and 1/2 miles of frontage along the Bayou Bartholomew and includes some 136.4 acres. It is located directly across from Chem-A-Haute State Park. This ensures that the natural area of the state park will also enjoy a natural view for generations to come. Mr. Holley and family provided us with the following:

“About 25 years ago we bought the first 46 acres of land on Bayou Bartholomew that has turned into over 1600 acres of farm, forest, and recreational property. Over 1000 acres of land has been reforested in association with the State and Federal Governments, Ducks Unlimited, and from our own efforts. On average 500 trees per acre has been planted and therefore a half million trees now prevent soil erosion into the Bayou, improving water quality, wildlife habitat, and supporting the ecosystem surrounding the Bayou. Our long term goal is to return this part of the Bayou to its natural state. The donation to the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance presented a unique opportunity to accomplish that goal. We can now rest assured that this portion of the Bayou will never be developed for residential purposes and will be cared for after our stewardship of the land along the Bayou has long since ended. My wife Sara, our son Barlow and I feel that we have truly made a contribution to everyone by our donation to the Alliance. The feeling of accomplishment and knowledge that you have done something that will make a difference for a very long time, is priceless. Sincerely, Travis, Sara and Barlow, “On the Bayou” ”

We applaud Mr. Holley’s foresight and vision to keeping the Bayou Bartholomew in a natural condition and for preserving in perpetuity over two miles of riparian area along the Bayou. His conservation ethic and unselfish desire “to do what is right” are appreciated by us and many others for generations to come that will observe the Bayou’s beauty and enjoy the natural resources it has to offer.

These individuals have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help preserve the natural areas of the Bayou Bartholomew. We hope that you too will do what you can to help insure that the longest bayou in the world will continue to support its vast diversity of fishes and mussels and be bordered by its natural forests and wetlands. If you have a desire to learn more about conservation easements or property donations please give us a call. **(See page 5 for pictures related to the story.)**

Creature Close-up: Alligator Gar



Seven alligator gar (*Lepisosteus spatula*) from the White River. (ca. late 1930s)

Alligator gar like these pictured on the left from the White River were once found in the Bayou Bartholomew. Their large size make these gar commercially valuable as well as sought after trophies. Alligator gar are typically caught by bow-fishermen, but some are caught using large, deep-sea type rods with steel or titanium leaders. The current Arkansas state record is 215 lbs. Fish over 300 lbs have been

reported from the early 20th century.

Unfortunately, these gargantuan fish are becoming more rare as time passes. It appears that most recent accounts are of large, older fish. Juveniles are rarely captured. Little is known about their life history, but it is suspected that the drastic changes in large river systems over the past 100 years have been primarily responsible for alligator gar declines. Most of the large rivers have been leveed, channelized, and dammed. These actions disconnect rivers from their oxbow lakes and surrounding wetlands, inhibit up stream fish migration, and reduce flooding frequency; all contributing to reduce alligator gar spawning success. Yet, there is still hope. Biologists at the Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery in Oklahoma have successfully spawned alligator gar in captivity. Other efforts around the country are aimed at re-establishing populations of these fish into their former range. If you catch one, you might consider letting it go. That way we know it's still out there!!



Other gars found in Arkansas include
Above: shortnose gar
Right above: spotted gar
Right: longnose gar.

DONATIONS



Above left: Eric Brinkman, **Pratt Rimmell**, Carolyn Theis and **Becky Kilmer** view a turtle shell on the donated property. **Right above:** **Becky Kilmer**, **Pratt Rimmell**, and Carolyn Theis admire some trees. **Above Center:** The Bayou flowing through the Kilmer, Rimmell, Foti donation.

Bottom Left: **Travis Holly** holds an aerial photo with the easement marked in Red. To Mr. Holly's right is Dr. Curtis Merrell, BBA President. Bill Layher, BBA Coordinator is on Mr. Holly's left. (Photo from the Bastrop Sentinel)

Bottom Right: Dr. Curtis Merrell looks on as **Dr. George and Mrs. George Roberson** have documents notarized transferring title to their land donation to the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

You can contact the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance by writing, calling, or e-mailing:

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Board Members

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| John Scott McClendon, VP | Dr. Robert Butler |
| Jack Edwards | Elton Kennedy |
| Robert Mitchell | Gibbs Ferguson |
| George Pugh | |

Dr. Bill Layher, Coordinator
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Check out our web site at: www.arkansas.gov/bba/



Alligator Snapping Turtle or "Loggerhead"

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