



Bayou Bartholomew Alliance NEWSLETTER



Spring 2004
Vol. 17.

Bayou Log Jam Work Near Cane Creek Lake



Volunteers remove log jams from Bayou near Cane Creek Lake (left). Mr. Herman Fleming ties a log to a cypress knee (right). (Photos by Dr. W.G. Layher)



We've been putting the new barge to good use. We have only been able to work 2 1/2 days during the month of April due to bad weather, but our time has been well spent. We were able to clear seven log jams in that time. We have been working around the AGFC boat access to Bayou Bartholomew at Cane Creek State Park in Lincoln County. Our efforts have made approximately four miles of the Bayou upstream of the boat ramp and another half mile downstream accessible to small to medium size boats and canoes. Unfortunately, there are too many stobs and cypress knees to be safe for large fiberglass boats.

To answer a common question, no, we do not remove the logs from the bayou. We usually pull them to a side channel where they are out of the immediate channel, but sometimes, we use them for bank stabilization efforts. Log jams provide fish habitat and are important to the Bayou's ecology, so we do not often move entire jams, just open a corridor to improve passage and prevent flows from eroding banks.

Our work is nowhere near through. With nearly 200 log jams left in the Bayou, we need all the help we can get. We will be dedicating as much time as possible to their removal throughout the summer. We plan to dedicate an average of two days per week to removing log jams. We anticipate working on Wednesdays and Thursdays as well as some Saturdays if help is available. **If you would like to volunteer to help us in these activities or if you would like to be added to our contact list, please give the BBA coordinator a call or send an e-mail (see page 3 for contact information).** The work is quite rewarding.

We would like to thank Mr. Herman Fleming, Dr. Jerry Webb, Dr. Curtis Merrell, Mr. Phil Penny, and Mr. Keith Shepherd for their help on our log jam work this year. We would also like to thank SEAARK Marine and the AGFC Stream Team Program for the donation of our new barge and equipment. Without these entities, this work would not be possible.

“What can I do with this junk?”

That’s a question I’ve asked myself many times. Like me, do you have some “junk” or trash lying around that you want to get rid of but don’t know what to do with it? Unfortunately, the answer for some people has become low lying areas like those found along the Bayou Bartholomew (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Bayou Bartholomew illegal dump, Ashley County

Allow me to propose a solution.

Instead of allowing this situation to continue and get worse, why don’t we try a more environmentally friendly, aesthetically pleasing, and potentially monetarily beneficial solution? Let’s begin by encouraging our local officials to be tougher on illegal dumping and littering and to institute more recycling programs within our counties.

Then, let’s participate in these programs. The majority of the trash and junk we throw away each day is recyclable. Plastic, glass, metals, paper, cardboard, batteries, motor oil, and tires are all commonly recycled. Recycling prevents tons of trash from reaching landfills each year and can even put money back in your pocket. There are already facilities that recycle some products in all of our counties. A partial list of recycling facilities can be found in Table 1. You will have to check with them to find out exactly what they accept. Some pay for materials (usually metals), others don’t, either way you’re helping the Bayou. If you find that no one in your county accepts a particular recyclable product, contact your county judge. They may be able to obtain grant money for recycling programs from The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality.

Recycling may require a little more effort on our part, but the reward is well worth the effort. I would like to be able to fish and swim in the Bayou without wondering what’s in the water. I think we would all like to see places like the one in Figure 1 disappear. If you would like to help with stream clean-ups along the Bayou, contact Dr. Bill Layher or Eric Brinkman at (870)-879-4808.

Table 1: Partial list of recycling centers in the Bayou Bartholomew watershed

County	Facility	Location	Phone
Jefferson	Jefferson County Recycling	3304 W. 7th, Pine Bluff	(870)-534-7020
	Mc Gehee Metals	4525 W. Barraque, Pine Bluff	(870)-534-7021
	Johnson Metal Recyclers	2000 Sturgis Rd., Pine Bluff	(870)-534-5966
	Light Wrecking Yard	4719 W. 6th, Pine Bluff	(870)-879-1171
	Jenkins Industries	2411 Leslie Leas, Pine Bluff	(870)-536-0475
Lincoln	City of Star City	Star City	(870)-628-4364
Drew	City of Monticello	Monticello	(870)-367-4407
	U of A Monticello	Monticello	(870)-460-1018
Ashley	Ashley Co. Recovery Facility	800 Ashley, Crossett	(870)-853-2000
	Martin Tire and Scrap Metals	1150 Hwy 133 N, Crossett	(870)-364-2010
Desha	Dumas Recycling Center	Hwy 54 W., Dumas	(870)-382-4159

STREAM TEAM MINI-GRANT

SEAARK Marine of Monticello donated a pontoon barge to the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance late last year (see Newsletter Vol. 15, Fall 2003). Funds were still needed to pay for the trailer, depth finder, two 9,000 lb. winches, and the motor. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Stream Team Mini-Grant Program came through for us. Recently, Mr. Phil Penny presented the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance with a check for \$5,000.00 which went a long way to help pay for the items on the barge. We sincerely thank the Stream Team Program for their assistance. This is not the first Stream Team Mini-Grant received by the BBA. Other awards from the program have helped pay for trees given to farmers and landowners who were re-foresting areas adjacent to the Bayou or to help clean-up dump areas and stabilize stream banks.

If you own land or live near the Bayou or any of its tributaries and would like to start a stream team to work on a portion of the stream near and dear to you, give either Bill Layher or Eric Brinkman a call or e-mail or **call Mr. Phil Penny, Southeast Arkansas Stream Team Coordinator at 1-877-478-1043**. Any of these individuals can help you get started. A Stream Team may be a group, a family, or even one individual. You may want to clean-up a dump, fix an eroding bank, plant trees, build a nature trail, or some other activity. We need your help to restore and take care of the world's longest bayou. In our own backyard, it is also a national treasure with over 117 species of fishes inhabiting its waters.



Dr. Curtis Merrell accepts a check from AGFC Stream Team Coordinator Phil Penny as Herman Fleming & Eric Brinkman look on.

Photo by:
Dr. Bill Layher

NEW BOARD MEMBER FROM DESHA COUNTY

Gibbs Ferguson is the newest member to join the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance Board. Gibbs and his wife, Anne, live and work in Mc Gehee. He is a Lawyer, a Mc Gehee Municipal Judge, and a District Judge for Desha county. The Board invited Mr. Ferguson to become a member in February 2004. He accepted the offer and was unanimously inducted at the March 4 meeting. With his acceptance, Gibbs becomes the sole Board member from Desha county. The Board was drawn to Mr. Ferguson due to the work he has done with the Wallace Trust/ Foundation, of which he is the Managing Trustee. The organization is dedicated to promoting local charities, educational scholarships, historical and environmental preservation. Through this organization he has helped to create a 2,000 acre wetland along Boggy Creek in Desha county.

Welcome to the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance Board Mr. Gibbs Ferguson!!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

Board Members

Dr. Curtis Merrell, President
P.O. Box 665
Monticello, AR 71657
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870/367-7427 fax
cmerrell@seark.net

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

Dr. Bill Layher, Coordinator
Layher BioLogics RTEC, Inc.
7233 Camden Cutoff Rd.
Pine Bluff, AR 71603
870/879-4808 office/fax
layher@earthlink.net

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who have made generous donations to the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance recently . Your contributions are greatly appreciated! Thank you.

Eloise R. Means	Bastrop, LA	Nell Phillips	Beaumont, TX
Curtis and Virginia Merrell	Monticello, AR	Jim and Jane Townsend	Pine Bluff, AR
Elizabeth Brockman	Pine Bluff, AR	Mark Jenkins	Pine Bluff, AR
Three Rivers Audubon Society	Pine Bluff, AR		

It's always hard to ask folks for anything. Many people have willingly donated both time and money to help restore Bayou Bartholomew. While most of our day-to-day expenses are covered by grants from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, many expenses are not. Examples range from insurance to operate the logjam barge, to gas and oil for the boat motors and chain saws to do the work. This past week we unexpectedly found a log with the barge motor which resulted in over \$400 in repairs. Additionally, we publish the newsletter, each issue costing about \$1,000 to print and mail out. We hope to put up more signs on the new nature trail for plant identification and build more trails in the future. If you would like to contribute to these efforts, please fill out the form below and mail it to either Dr. Bill Layher or Dr. Curtis Merrell at the addresses given on page 3. Your donations are tax deductible as the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance is a 501 © 3 organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit organization. If you own or operate a business which would like to fund the newsletter or provide assistance on a large project, please call the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance Coordinator at 870-879-4808. As always, we appreciate your efforts to help preserve this southern treasure!

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 such as a boy scout troop, 4-H Club, Rotary Club, etc.

Mail to
Bayou Bartholomew Alliance, 7233 Camden Cutoff Rd., Pine Bluff, AR 71603

WE APPRECIATE ALL THAT YOU DO!!!

Creature Close-Up: American Alligator



Figure 1: Alligator

Photo by: Bill Kinkaid

Few North American creatures scare people more than the American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*). Is it because we know someone who has been attacked by one? Most likely not. There are only about 4 attacks recorded per year, nation wide, most of which are in Florida. Perhaps we've been watching too much Discovery Channel and have seen what they or one of their close cousins, the American Crocodile, did to some warm, fuzzy creature. Maybe, its just their overall appearance. They're not cute, not even their babies.

They're rough, scaly, and cold blooded. They are big (10-15 feet long) and they have between 74 and 80 big teeth. All things considered, they appear somewhat scary.

So, why don't we just kill all of them? Americans have killed many of the other top predators (red wolves, grizzly bears, and mountain lions) to the point that they are nearly extinct or at least extirpated (locally extinct) from their historical ranges. "So what", some people say "that's just one less thing that can eat me or my livestock". Well, like all creatures on earth they have a purpose and reason for being here. Like other top predators, the alligator helps control populations of other more abundant creatures. Alligators have to swallow their food whole, so their food has to be relatively small. The main diet of adults consists of fish, birds, turtles, and small mammals, like beavers that dam creeks and nutria and muskrats which dig holes in pond levies. Maybe if we had a few more alligators around we would have fewer "nuisance" animals. Nothing in their primary diet resembles the size of humans or livestock. That is not to say they will not try if given the opportunity. Like most other animals, alligators try to eat whatever is easiest to catch.

If you happen to encounter an alligator, be cautious and keep children and pets away. Do not swim in areas where alligators have been reported or are likely. If one happens to come on to your property and you feel threatened by it, contact the local Game and Fish office or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A Wildlife Biologist or Wildlife Officer should be able to remove the animal without harm to you or it.

When it comes down to it, alligators are not very common in Arkansas. They were placed on Arkansas' Threatened and Endangered species list in the 1960s due to over harvest by market hunters. Like most other threatened or endangered creatures the main threat to current alligator populations is loss of habitat. Arkansans have drained 72% of the wetlands (their main habitat) that were historically here, mostly for crop production. Although they are no where near as numerous as they once were, alligators are considered to have recovered from endangered status. However, they remain on the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service list of threatened species due to their close resemblance to the American Crocodile, an endangered species. Some states, like Louisiana, allow a limited hunting season on alligators, because they are so numerous there.

BBA Website

The BBA has a website!

Visit the website at www.accessarkansas.org/bba/

Maps, pictures, teaching modules for science classes, past newsletters, and upcoming events are all posted. We hope to expand the materials at the site. Please let us know your thoughts and ideas. Drop in! We'd love to hear from you.

If you have old photos or stories about the bayou, send them to us and we will try to put them in our newsletter. We can return photos.



Bayou Beaver

Photo by: Phil Penny

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