

# Bayou Bartholomew Alliance



Winter 2000  
Vol. 4.

## **American Forests Brings ReLeaf to Bayou Bartholomew Watershed**

AMERICAN FORESTS, the nation's oldest nonprofit citizen conservation organization, will help fund the planting of 202,000 trees on 431 acres of damaged forest land in several counties within the Bayou Bartholomew watershed. The trees, which will be planted in the winter of 2000, are an important part of AMERICAN FORESTS' Global ReLeaf 2000 campaign to plant 20 million trees for the new millennium. Money from AMERICAN FORESTS will also fund tree plantings in the year 2001.

The money donated by AMERICAN FORESTS helped pay for a large portion of the trees purchased by the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance this year. Additional tree purchase funds were provided by Potlatch Corporation, the Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Stream Team, and individual donations. Tree planting along the bayou helps create "buffer strips" which act as filters for the water entering the stream as runoff. This reduces the amount of sediment and chemicals entering the bayou, thus increasing the quality of the water. The trees also provide cover for a host of animals and can serve as travel corridors between larger patches of woods.

The Bayou Bartholomew restoration is one of nearly 50 Global ReLeaf projects and 3 million trees to be announced so far by AMERICAN FORESTS for 2000. Additional projects are expected to be announced later. Through AMERICAN FORESTS Global ReLeaf 2000 campaign, more than 10 million trees have been planted in more than 500 forest ecosystem restoration projects and urban and community forest projects. Global ReLeaf trees offer a multitude of environmental benefits, such as clean air and water, habitat for wildlife, recreational opportunities for people, and more livable communities.

"The outpouring of support from individuals and our business partners has been fantastic," said Deborah Gangloff, AMERICAN FORESTS' executive director. "As more people discover that they can participate in Global ReLeaf by planting trees online or calling our tree planting hotline, we are confident that we will be able to support many more projects like this."

AMERICAN FORESTS was founded in 1875 by citizens concerned about waste and abuse of the nation's forest. Global ReLeaf projects are made possible by individual and corporate donations. The public can participate by calling 1-800-545-TREE or visiting AMERICAN FORESTS' website at <http://www.americanforests.org>.



## Jefferson County Update

Doug Butler has been busy developing conservation plans for farmers in Jefferson County. So far he has put together plans for 10 farmers in the area. There are approximately 2200 acres of land involved. The BBA is funding the purchase of hardwood trees for the plans that included a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign up. The new CRP sign up period is January 18 – February 11. Interested Jefferson County landowners can contact Doug at (870) 534-3200. In addition to CRP, there are additional financial incentives available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Farmers in the Bayou Bartholomew watershed can receive the following payments for implementing conservation practices through this program:

<b>No Till</b>	<b>\$15 / acre</b>
<b>Seasonal Till</b>	<b>\$10 / acre</b>
<b>Mulch Till</b>	<b>\$5 / acre</b>
<b>Flooding for Ducks</b>	<b>\$3 / acre</b>

The sign up date for EQIP has not been released as of this newsletter printing. Contact Doug to discuss the details of sign up and payments. More information on this and other government incentive programs can be found during the 2000 Area Agri Conference taking place January 28 at Hestand Stadium in Pine Bluff.

## Lincoln County Update

We are continuing to work on EQIP plans for the Bayou Bartholomew area. This was our last year for the Water Quality program that started in 1997. We are encouraging landowners to sign up for the year 2000 EQIP program if they have Water Quality or Erosion control projects that they would like assistance with. Anyone interested in signing up for the Wetland Reserve Program for the upcoming year needs to do so as soon as possible. Ranking should begin in early February and the sign up is done in the District Conservation Office. The new sign up for the CRP program begins soon and the rental rates for Lincoln County have increased. If you are interested in any of the programs or the changes in rental rates, contact Keith Shepard at (870) 628-4542.



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

Dr. Curtis Merrell  
P.O. Box 665  
Monticello, AR 71657  
870/534-6129 office  
870/534-2847 fax  
870/367-5901 home  
merrellc@aresc.arsc.k12.ar.us

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

## **Alliance Featured on Television**

The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance was highlighted on the weekly show “Arkansas Outdoors”, which airs on AETN. Duck hunting and fishing segments were followed by a discussion of the BBA and its mission. Vice-president John S. McClendon and Coordinator Bill Layher were interviewed by Steve “Wildman” Wilson of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. The show has already generated several phone calls by people interested in assisting the BBA in its efforts.



**Residents of the SE Arkansas Community Punishment Center load trash into a trailer along Gibb Anderson Road in Jefferson County.**

## **Department of Community Punishment Assists in Clean Up Effort**

Residents from the Southeast Arkansas Community Punishment Center recently cleaned up several roads near Bayou Bartholomew. Fourteen residents from the Center worked 207 hours cleaning up about eight miles of road ditches. The areas cleaned included portions of Ohio St., Grider Field Rd, Gibb Anderson Rd., and Pinebergen Road. A total of 534 bags of litter were removed from the area, as well as many larger items including stoves, refrigerators,

and washing machines. Anyone interested in initiating the clean up of additional areas can contact the Alliance at (870) 879-4808. We can help coordinate the activities and solicit the help of volunteers and inmate labor.

### **Bayou Bartholomew Alliance Board**

Dr. Curtis Merrell  
President

John Scott McClendon  
Vice-President

Sonia Byrd  
Jack Edwards  
Cynthia Kimbrell  
Howard Kimbrell  
Robert Mitchell  
George Pugh

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Dr. Bill Layher  
Coordinator

### **Keeping Focused on Our Goals**

With the numerous and varied activities that are taking place everyday, on behalf of the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance, we need to pause occasionally to make sure we are still focusing on our goals. Our goals, in abbreviated form, are to improve the water quality of Bayou Bartholomew; restore and preserve its natural beauty; educate the people about the esthetic and ecological value of the Bayou, and its historical significance to the region; to enhance the benefits of the Bayou as they relate to fish, wildlife and public recreation; and to improve the overall benefits of the Bayou to the landowners adjacent thereto.

I am pleased that I can honestly say that our efforts are still focused on our original goals as stated in our Charter and By-laws. We are progressing in all areas, with the help of numerous partners, including organizations and individuals. I encourage you to become more directly and actively involved.

Curtis Merrell  
President

## List of BBA Donors Since the October Newsletter

October- Bob Kizer, Dermott

November- William P. Allison, Little Rock

December- Billy Harrison, Star City

We truly appreciate the donations that we received since the last newsletter. They helped to pay for the over 200,000 trees that the alliance purchased this winter. Each year many hours are spent trying to solicit money from corporations, government agencies, and private foundations. So far we have been successful in raising enough money to plant hundreds of thousands of trees along Bayou Bartholomew. The best feeling, however, is when private individuals sacrifice some of their hard-earned money to promote the restoration of Bayou Bartholomew. Remember, one dollar can pay for the purchase of 4 – 6 hardwood seedlings! Thanks again for the donations.



Send to: Bayou Bartholomew Alliance, 7233 Camden Cutoff Rd, Pine Bluff, AR, 71603

### To Restore Bayou Bartholomew I Would Like

- to donate** \_\_\_\_\_ **(a tax deductible donation) to be used for**  
**(circle one)**  
tree planting  
educational programs  
general funds to be used wherever needed most  
a memorial gift in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

- to donate time as a volunteer**  
**(circle one)**  
to plant trees  
to clean up Bayou Bartholomew  
wherever I am needed

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

## Creature Close-up

This is the first in a series of articles intended to highlight some of the animals, both aquatic and terrestrial, that inhabit the Bayou Bartholomew watershed. Each volume of upcoming newsletters will focus on one creature. We will discuss their history and biology, as well as some of the myths and stories surrounding them.

This issue's creature close-up will focus on the bowfin. In Arkansas, they are more commonly referred to as "grinnel". In other parts of the country they are also called grindle, dogfish, mud fish, and cypress trout. The scientific name of the bowfin is *Amia calva*. *Amia* is the Greek word for a fish that resembles the bowfin. The word *calva* is Latin for "smooth", and refers to the fact that the bowfin is covered in tiny scales, giving it a smooth feel.

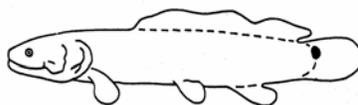
The bowfin is one of the more common fish living in Bayou Bartholomew. It is sometimes captured from large rivers, but tends to be more common in slow moving bayous and oxbow lakes. It is usually caught by fisherman seeking more popular game fish such as bass and catfish. Bowfin will readily take both live and artificial baits. Their normal prey include shad, minnows, small sunfish, and crayfish. Anyone who has caught a bowfin on rod and reel will vouch for their superb fighting ability. Although most people don't eat them, bowfins are edible if cooked correctly. Recipes are available from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

The bowfin can easily be distinguished from other fish by its long, cylindrical body, rounded tail, and long dorsal fin. The fin runs along the back and is more than half as long as the body. Juveniles and adult males also have a large black spot ringed in yellow or orange which is located near their tail. Females also possess this spot, but it is more subdued in color. Bowfin have powerful jaws that contain sharp teeth. On their snout they have two nostrils that are covered by barbel-like flaps.

The bowfin possesses several attributes that allow it to survive in places that other fish cannot. Most fish require a certain amount of dissolved oxygen in the water to survive. The bowfin, like other fish, uses gills to exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide. Like most fish, it also has a swim bladder that is filled with air and used to maintain buoyancy in the water. In differs from other fish in that it also has another use for its swim bladder. The bladder is lined with tiny capillary veins and arteries. During times of low dissolved oxygen, the bowfin can gulp air from the surface and fill the bladder with fresh air. It works as a primitive lung by exchanging oxygen and carbon dioxide via the veins and arteries. The bowfin also has another unique habit that allows it to survive in extreme conditions. During times of low water, the bowfin can estivate. Estivation is similar to hibernation. The bowfin will bury itself in the silt at the bottom and shut down all but the most essential body functions. It can survive for months in this condition as long as the silt stays moist. When the water rises, the bowfin will free itself and continue its normal routine.

Bowfins are dedicated parents. In the world of the bowfin, the male has the sole responsibility of caring for the young. Males build a nest on the bottom by fanning out a depression with their tail. After spawning, the male guards the nest until the young are old enough to leave the nest. After the young can swim, he herds them into a school and guards them for a few weeks until they are about four inches long. After this, they are on their on.

The next time you're out fishing and accidentally hook a bowfin, don't back away in disgust or toss it on the bank. Bowfins are unique fish that are part of the character of bayous and swamplands. One myth says that bowfins are so tough, "if you cook them and leave them overnight, they'll uncook themselves". They deserve our respect and admiration.



## **Illegal Dumping Continues to Plague Bayou Bartholomew**

It is an unfortunate fact that the mention of Bayou Bartholomew often conjures up images of trash. The BBA has been doing its part to reverse this image in the last few years. We have sponsored many clean ups and removed untold tons of trash from the Bayou Bartholomew watershed. Despite these efforts, it sometimes seems that the harder we work, the deeper the trash piles in around us. A case in point is the September 18 cleanup of the Pinebergen Rd. bridge. We removed over two trailer loads of trash from the site. Less than two weeks passed before a pickup truck load of debris from housing demolition appeared. Shortly after that an old recliner was thrown from the bridge into the bayou. Soon thereafter dozens of bags of household trash were added to the pile. This is especially disturbing in light of the fact that Jefferson County provides trash pick up on a weekly basis. There is simply no excuse for dumping. The Pinebergen site now bears little resemblance to the area we left behind after the clean up.

Now the question arises as to what can be done to stop this illegal dumping. We could continue having clean ups at the same sites year after year. This would certainly keep us busy. We could call and write our representatives demanding stiffer penalties for illegal dumping. Stiffer penalties would most likely reduce much of the dumping. The problem with new laws is that many times the existing laws are not enforced. In a time when murder, rape, and robbery are common themes in newspaper stories, police have little time to chase litterbugs. The solution lies with the individual citizen. It is very possible that some of the people reading this newsletter know an individual responsible for dumping trash in Bayou Bartholomew. Pick up the phone and turn them in. Perhaps one of the perpetrators is a relative or friend. Sit them down and tell them how you feel about their actions. If you turn a blind eye towards them, you might as well be guilty yourself. The majority of the people in Arkansas are disgusted by illegal dumping. It gives the whole state a bad image. It is time that the majority stands up and is heard.



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