



Spring 2000  
Vol. 5.

### **Alliance Receives Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in Washington D.C. announced that it has awarded the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance a grant of \$25,000. This grant is being matched by contributions from American Forests (see our last newsletter) and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Stream Team program. The \$25,000 will help the Alliance plant nearly 100,000 bottomland hardwoods along the Bayou Bartholomew and its tributaries.

### **Teacher Training Workshop Announced**

The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance in cooperation with the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality's W.E.T. program, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Project WILD and STREAM TEAM program will host a one-day workshop on June 19, 2000. The class will run from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Teachers, especially from the schools located within the Bayou Bartholomew Watershed, are encouraged to attend. No matter what discipline, there will be something to be gained. Science teachers are especially encouraged to attend. The workshop is open to all teachers K-12.

The workshop will include outdoor activities so dress will be casual. Presentations will be made, and ideas for teaching will be covered including, hands on activities, curriculum guides, and activity plans. Teaching modules will be provided.

A number of ideas for select school groups will also be presented. Instructors will also learn how to form a W.E.T. club or a Stream Team, where they can obtain assistance for equipment, and how to get resource persons to visit their classrooms.

For further information, call Dr. Bill Layher at (870) 879-4808. To enroll contact the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative at (870) 534-6129. We hope to see a lot of teachers there.



Members of a W.E.T. Club from Watson Chapel High School sample fish in Bayou Bartholomew.

## **Jefferson County Update**

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-ups went very well. Within the Bayou Bartholomew watershed 7, CRP and 11 EQIP applications were submitted. Three Water Quality Plans were written, which included to a total of 1,787 acres. That also includes about three miles of Riparian Buffers along Bayou Bartholomew, just south of I-530, which will be planted to hardwoods. Benny Fratesi completed the planting of about 200,000 trees along Deep Bayou and Bayou Bartholomew., which amounts to 520 acres of reforestation along the Bayou and its tributaries.

Reminder: Continuous CRP sign-up for Riparian Buffers and Filter Strips for crop and pastureland is still ongoing.

Doug Butler

## **Lincoln County Update**

Our county has signed up 26 contracts for the Conservation Reserve Program totaling 1,155.3 acres in the Bayou Bartholomew Watershed Area. These contracts will include tree plantings, riparian buffers and filter strips. We have also coordinated the signing of 30 new contracts under the EQIP plan that total 2,490 acres. These contracts will provide cost-share assistance to farmers and landowners to help implementation of irrigation water management, irrigation land leveling, underground irrigation pipe, pipe drops, and other erosion reducing land management practices.

Keith Shepard  
Lincoln County Water Quality Technician

## **Bayou Bartholomew Alliance Board Meeting Set**

The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance will hold a board meeting in Monticello at the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission building on April 24, 2000. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. and adjourn by 8:00 p.m. The public is welcome and invited to attend the board meetings.

## **BBA Technical Support Group to Meet**

The Technical Support Group for the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance will meet May 4, 2000 at 9:00 a.m. in the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative in Pine Bluff. Representatives of many state and federal agencies will present information on activities, programs, and accomplishments in the watershed.

### **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

## **BBA Develops Teaching Modules for Local Schools**

The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance recently finished work on a series of teaching modules aimed at aiding area junior and senior high school science teachers in efforts to educate children about the Bayou Bartholomew. The series includes six topics, each focusing on a subject pertinent to the Bayou Bartholomew watershed. The subjects discussed include the following: The Bayou Bartholomew Watershed; Bottomland Hardwoods of the Bayou Bartholomew; Bayou Bartholomew Watershed Problems and Solutions; Invertebrates of Bayou Bartholomew; Fishes of Bayou Bartholomew; and Amphibians, Reptiles, Birds, and Mammals of Bayou Bartholomew. Included in each booklet is a list of activities students can perform as well as a list of additional resources. Any interested teachers can contact the BBA coordinator, Dr. Bill Layher, by phone at (870) 879-4808, or by e-mail at [lay-](mailto:layher@bba.org)

## **Coming Soon — Bayou Bartholomew Alliance Website**

The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance is hopeful that it will soon receive a grant from the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission. These monies would come from the Environmental Protection Agency's nonpoint source pollution funds.

A small portion of those funds would include monies to develop a web site. We currently envision the site containing information on the Bayou's hydrology, land use, etc. Also included will be teaching modules which include information on fish, wildlife, bottomland hardwood forests, problems and solutions, and other topics. We plan to include past newsletters, public meeting announcements, clean-up dates, agriculture related dates such as CRP sign-ups, and other information.

This website will be up and going sometime this summer if we stay on schedule.

### **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

---

Dr. Bill Layher  
Coordinator

## **Bottomland Hardwood Restoration**

In past newsletters we reported on upcoming tree purchases, grants, and plans for restoring some bottomland hardwood forests. This year, with the financial help from American Forests, Winrock International Foundation, Potlatch Corporation, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Stream Team program, and many private donors, we planted 187,027 trees.

Trees were planted primarily in Jefferson and Ashley Counties. Locations for trees were coordinated with the help of Brian Hollis, Ashley County District Conservationist, and Doug Butler, Water Quality Technician with the Jefferson County Conservation District office.

Tree species planted included nuttall oak, willow oak, water oak, overcup oak, white oak, and pecan. If you would like to help our reforestation effort, donations are tax deductible. For every dollar raised we can plant 4 to 5 trees!!! Your help is greatly appreciated and will be for generations to come.



## List of BBA Donors since the January Newsletter

William D. and Patsy Winningham, Star City, AR - in memory Ocie "Dude" Bradshaw 1912 – 1999

Chip Stewart, Wheatley, AR

Hahns S. Johnson, Pine Bluff, AR

James and Joan Thompson, Issaquah, WA

Lyle Lovelace, Pine Bluff, AR

### Can You Help?

Perhaps this isn't the right choice of words. A better question might be, "Will you help?" Over the past three years the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance has accomplished many tasks which have helped to focus state and federal dollars into the watershed to help farmers and landowners receive top payments to put lands in various conservation programs. The Bayou will benefit from these actions over time.

Despite all of the assistance, we are still trying to raise funds to support our bottomland hardwood restoration program. We have approval on some funds for next winter's efforts. However, to receive those funds we need to raise matching funds. For every dollar donated we can purchase, on the average, 4 to 5 seedling trees. So, for the cost of going to a movie, say \$20, we could plant one hundred trees. For every hundred dollars raised, another acre of land will become a diverse hardwood forest. Your help to raise funds will be greatly appreciated.

Any donations are tax deductible, as the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, dedicated to the wise use and stewardship of the watershed's natural resources.

Three years ago we planted roughly 30,000 trees; two years ago about 100,000 trees; the past winter we planted nearly 200,000 hardwoods. How about ½ million for this coming fall-winter season. Will you help? Your donation will be greatly appreciated and you will help insure that hardwood forests exist well into the future.

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 issue's "Creature Close-up" focuses on an animal that many Arkansans, especially those living in the Delta region, are familiar with. It is a common sight as one drives the highways that stretch through the rice, soybean, and wheat fields that dominate this area. It's not an armadillo, an opossum, or a deer, although they are common sights as well. The creature in question tends to socialize with others of its species. Actually, socializing is probably putting it mildly considering that they often gather in groups numbering in the tens of thousands. For those of you that haven't figured out this creature's identity yet, it is the snow goose.

More specifically the snow geese found in Arkansas are from the mid-continental population. There are several other populations that occur on the east and west coast of North America. The mid-continental population is unique in that it is the largest, numbering at least 3 million individuals. The "blue goose", which is a dark color phase of the snow goose, occurs frequently in this population.

Snow geese nest in the far northern areas of the Arctic. They are monogamous and have an uncanny ability to return to the same nesting areas each year. Female geese lay a clutch of 4-6 eggs immediately after the snow melts on the tundra. They nest near areas of water that are surrounded by the fields of grasses and sedges which comprise their summer diet. The young stay with their parents for one year and can raise young of their own at age two. Snow geese have an average life expectancy of eight years, but ages of over 20 are not uncommon.

In recent years much of the talk about snow geese has focused on their overpopulation and the subsequent destruction of their Arctic breeding grounds. In a century when conservationists have worked tirelessly to restore and maintain migratory waterfowl populations, it seems ironic that too many birds would pose a problem. Unfortunately, a combination of factors have resulted in a population of snow geese so high that it poses a risk not only to its own health, but to other species as well. The grasses and sedges in the tundra are supported by a very thin layer of topsoil. When all of the vegetation is removed from an area, it becomes very susceptible to erosion. It can take decades or longer for the denuded areas to recover. Without proper management action, the end results are inevitable. The snow goose population will control itself through starvation and/or disease. Snow geese are known to carry avian cholera, a disease that is transmittable and potentially fatal to all waterfowl. The destruction of the tundra not only affects the food source of snow geese, but a myriad of other waterfowl and mammals.

There are several things the average person living near the Delta can do. It is well known that snow geese utilize soybean and rice stubble, as well as wheat, as a food source during their fall and spring migration. Fields are popular for hunting snow geese. Find someone who hunts snow geese and tag along. The seasons are long and the limits are very liberal. And despite rumors, if cooked properly snow goose is comparable to any waterfowl in taste. Finally, if you are a landowner, encourage hunters to hunt your fields. If snow goose populations aren't brought to a manageable level soon, the results could be disastrous for many species of Arctic inhabitants.



Thousands of snow geese fill a field near Bayou Bartholomew.



## **I-69 Connector Highway Route Discussed**

The Arkansas Department of Highway and Transportation (ADHT) has recently begun the initial planning stages for a connector highway from the 530 Bypass around Pine Bluff to near Monticello. The new highway is intended to connect the 530 Bypass with the future Interstate 69, which will eventually connect Mexico with Canada. The ADHT has contracted with Michael Baker Jr., Inc., an environmental consulting firm, to determine the feasibility and potential impacts of constructing the highway. Michael Baker Jr. Inc. has sponsored several meetings for civic and business leaders as well as several public comment meetings in towns that will likely be affected by the new road.

A list of proposed construction routes, or corridors, has been presented at many of the meetings. Each corridor has advantages and disadvantages. Factors that are considered include the location of homes and businesses, cemeteries, historic structures, and archeological sites. The impacts upon the wetlands and rivers within the path are also taken into account. All of the possible I-69 corridors include the addition of a bridge over Bayou Bartholomew and several tributaries, as well as the possible loss of adjacent wetlands. The BBA will continue to send representatives to future meetings to voice our concerns in an effort to keep the environmental damage within the Bayou Bartholomew drainage to a minimum. For times and locations of future meetings or additional information on the I-69 connector project, contact Michael Baker Jr. Inc. at (870) 247-3979.



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