

## Friends to Hold Its Annual Meeting April 20

....at Gaston Visitor Center

Friends will hold its annual meeting on Monday, April 20 at Gaston's Visitor Center, from 6 pm to 8 pm.

"Friends' success absolutely depends upon everyone's active participation and membership," said President Jerry Weber. "We hope everyone will plan to attend -- both members and anyone else who might be interested."

In addition to electing officers and board members, we will also hear Dr. John Moore discuss critical challenges to keeping our water resources clean.

Moore is Executive Director of the Upper White River Basin Foundation, and is a graduate of Yale University and Harvard University. He has served in various leadership roles, including 22 years as President of Drury College.



## Multi-Organization Group Forms to Protect Ozark Streams

Meeting Co-Hosted by Friends and by Trout Unlimited



"Never doubt that a handful of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." ....Margaret Meade

"Water defines the Ozark region and our economic prosperity," said John Moore, President of the Upper White River Basin Foundation. "We have a challenge: to raise the public's awareness and understanding of the issues, and to motivate our public to keep the water clean."

Moore made the statements at a February meeting of over 25 key leaders representing conservation, advocacy and fishing organizations. The group gathered to explore working together to increase overall effectiveness at protecting and enhancing the Ozarks' rivers and streams.

When they were done, the group tentatively to be called "*Ozark Waters*" was more than a concept.

*When the group's initial meeting was ended, "Ozark Waters" was more than a concept*

Member organizations share a common commitment to these rivers. The group also had reached consensus on general goals, and agreed to work closely together toward those goals.

Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers, along with the White River Chapter of Trout Unlimited, co-hosted the event. Gene Dunaway, Immediate Past President of Friends, and currently Treasurer for Ozark Regional Land Trust, facilitated the 'round table' discussion.

Attending the organizational meeting were leaders from multiple fishing clubs, outfitters associations, Norfork Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Nature Conservancy, the Arkansas Conservation Coalition, the Upper White River

## In This Issue:

- Conservation Groups Agree to Work Together
- Two Climate Change Scenarios
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- Tribute To Russell Stanton

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Foundation and the Multi-Basin Regional Watershed Council.

James Gately agreed with Moore. "The economic development of the entire area depends on water, our great streams, fishing and recreation." Gately is President of the Multi-Basin Regional Water Council.

The groups' members expressed the greatest support for four focus areas:

- Improve relations with the Corps of Engineers, aimed to effect compliance with standards
- Address development issues, including erosion control and storm water runoff
- Increase education and incentives, while also improving regulations and enforcement
- Create a coalition communication network

# RiverReport

## Climate Change: What's In Store for Arkansas' Water Resources?

By Ellen McNulty  
Arkansas Outreach Coordinator  
National Wildlife Federation / Arkansas Wildlife Federation

Two excellent National Wildlife Federation reports recently discussed climate change and regional water issues for the southeast and midwest regions.

But after I read both reports, I realized there might be some confusion.

The first report, titled "More Variable and Uncertain Water Supply: Global Warming's Wake-Up Call for the Southeastern US," discusses the Southeast's water supplies' vulnerability to drought, and how those supplies will be more variable and uncertain in the coming decades.

Recent droughts underscore this.

The second NWF report, titled "Heavy Rainfall and Increased Flooding Risk: Global Warming's Wake-Up Call for the Central United States," describes more heavy summer rainfall events, and increased likelihood of devastating floods.

### What's the deal?

From reading these reports, should Arkansans be concerned about droughts or about floods? The answer: both!

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Ecological Society of America, climate scientists are highly confident about warming temperatures and a faster rising sea level for the Southeast Gulf Coast. Reliable predictions for inland freshwater availability and flow are more difficult, however.

Scientists use climate models to project climate futures. Models for the immediate coastal zone of the southeastern United States agree that precipitation will most likely decline. But for other parts of the region in general, one model projects drier conditions while another projects wetter conditions.

*Should Arkansans be concerned about droughts or about floods? The answer: BOTH!*

### Arkansas on the boundary

Arkansas teeters on the regional boundary of the climate change dilemma. In 2007-2008 Arkansas experienced major flooding in the north central area along the White River as well as crippling drought throughout the Delta's farming area.

Because future trends in rainfall and runoff are critical to human and ecological



*Drought conditions cause crop damage, decreased tourism and severe economic damage. (photo US Army Corps of Engineers)*

health, the most prudent approach is to assess the potential impacts of both a drier scenario and a wetter scenario.

### Scenario One: Drier Climate

A drier climate does not mean it doesn't rain. More frequent and/or intense rainstorms increase the amount of runoff - and the amount of pollutants entering the water - compared to a slow soaking rain.

The increased runoff and pollutants could cause changes in aquatic ecosystems, which would affect commercial and recreational fisheries. Decreased stream flows and higher water temperatures reduce water quality and impact fish and other aquatic organisms.

A drier climate also means a higher risk of wildfires and would cause losses to forestry and private homes.

Higher temperatures in a drier climate scenario could bring more frequent and intense drought conditions, even if average rainfall remains the same. That

means that crops that require irrigation would become less profitable. These same conditions favor the spread of harmful invasive species and increase soil salinity.

Water shortages can drive up water prices and production costs and lead to conflicts around water use.

Presently, water shortages create pressure to transfer water to other places, causing both

environmental and political problems. Water transfers can transport pollutants, invasive species, pathogens, nutrients and sediments.

In June 2008, EPA finalized a rule exempting these water transfers from the permitting requirements of the Clean Water Act. The exemption is currently being challenged in court.

### Scenario Two: Wetter Climate

In this scenario, frequent and/or intense rainstorm runoff increases river flooding and stresses urban sewage systems. Flooding and erosion would impact private property and public infrastructure, affecting the construction, real estate, tourism, and insurance industries - and have a devastating impact on individuals in the community.

Additional resources would be required to maintain, repair and expand flood response infrastructure such as levees, flood storage basins, and emergency facilities.

More moisture would increase the heat index and lead to favorable conditions for

*Arkansans teeters on the boundary of the regional climate change dilemma*



*Floods cause lasting damage to agricultural lands, housing, and infrastructure.*

# RiverReport

## Climate Change: What's in Store for Arkansas' Water Resources (continued)

agricultural and forest pests. Increased risk of harmful algae blooms and water-borne and vector-borne diseases would require extra vigilance and greater investment in public health.

Increased runoff would cause soil erosion and fertility losses in upland areas, while transporting excessive nutrient enrichment in downstream ecosystems.

Soil fertility losses upstream would create higher cost for agriculture and forestry because more fertilization would be necessary to maintain productivity. Maintaining water quality downstream would also cost more with excessive nutrients in the water.

### What this means to Arkansans

Arkansas has already experienced both scenarios. So Arkansas must develop a State Water Plan that addresses both drier and wetter climate scenarios. The State Water Plan must contain the following components:

- Inventory, assess and monitor water resources and the various needs;
- Consideration of both future and immediate water supply and demand;
- Include water needs of ecosystems in the competition for the available fresh water; and
- Priorities for allocation of scarce water resources, with efficiency and justice.

### Shed Old Assumptions

Managing water supply in a more variable climate means shifting from an assumption of plentiful water, with an

occasional and short term event of too little or too much.

Instead we must move to a strategy that plans for more extreme weather events, and results in more sustainable water use.

Several strategies will be crucial to our success:

Improving water-use efficiency and conservation will reduce overall demand and provide some relief of problems with drought.

Risk-based, integrated water management strategies can help prepare for increasing population, more competition for water resources, and a more variable water supply.

Integrated planning helps to make the best use of existing reservoirs and infrastructure and can often resolve problems created by dependence on a single source.

Well-maintained natural forest and wetland systems absorb flood waters, provide efficient water storage, and are critical for water purification and groundwater recharge. (Natural forest and wetlands also provide important fish and wildlife habitat. These ecosystems can also sequester carbon that would otherwise contribute to global warming. These natural lands provide multiple benefits to the environment.)

### The Way to Avoid Catastrophe

Clearly, climate change presents new

challenges for managing America's water resources. To prevent the worst impacts of climate change on communities and wildlife, we must reduce global warming pollution.

The National Wildlife Federation recommends that policy makers, industry, and individuals take steps to reduce global warming pollution from today's levels by at least 2 percent per year, and by at least 20 percent by 2020.

Science tells us this is the only way to hold global warming to no more than 2 degrees Celsius in the century.

### What You Can Do

The NWF's legislative arm, National Wildlife Action, has established a website (<http://www.targetglobalwarming.org>) where you can download these and other reports about global warming. The website was created to engage sportsmen and women across the country on the issue of global warming.

While you are at the site, take the time to sign-on to the coalition letter urging Congress to protect America's sporting traditions from global warming. Your children and grandchildren will be glad you did.

National Wildlife Federation is America's conservation organization inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.

*Editor's note:* Contact Ellen (870-329-1396 or at [awf.ellen.mcnulty@gmail.com](mailto:awf.ellen.mcnulty@gmail.com)) for more information about climate change, or to arrange a presentation on global warming for your organization.

*Arkansas must develop a state water plan that addresses both a wetter and a drier scenario.*

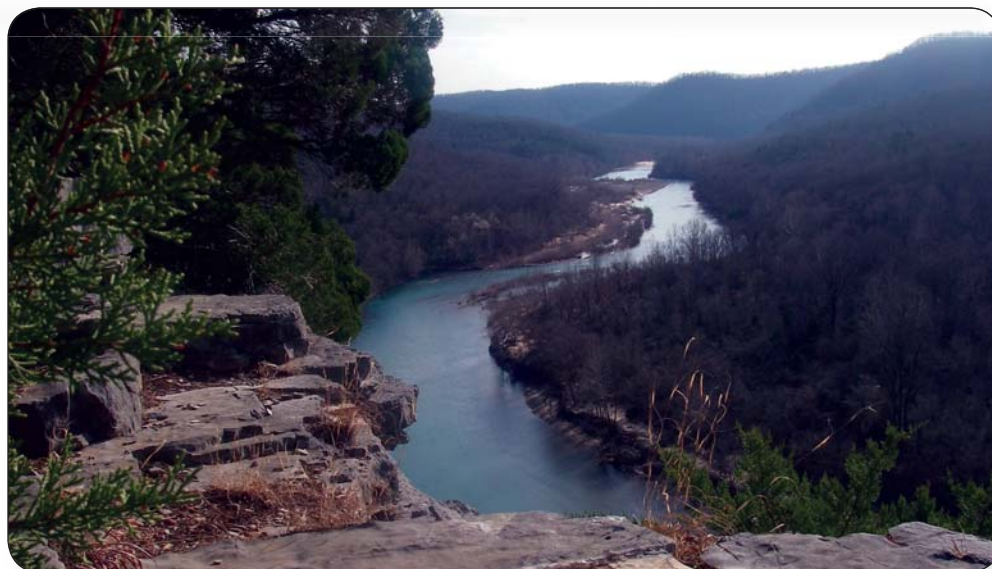
*Sign on to National Wildlife Federation's letter urging Congress to protect sporting traditions from global warming.*

## State Water Plan To Be Written

An appropriation to the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission has been passed by the Legislature and awaits the Governor's signature. The funds will support writing a State Water Plan.

Sources say environmental groups want to see a water plan based on science, and want to see the plan include the hydrology of Arkansas streams and rivers.

Further, the groups want to see the State's water plan acknowledge nature among the primary water users -- rather than relegate to nature any water remaining after meeting the needs of farming, industry and drinking water.



Buffalo River view (photo by Bob Waldeck)

# RiverReport

## ... From the President

Dear Friends,

Winter in the mid-south has again been a rough one. The ice storm caused massive power outages - many of us were without power for an extended period. A few of our members have just recently gotten their power and telephone service restored as of this writing. We saw massive damage to trees.

My sympathy goes out to all who suffered through this latest disaster.

### Joining Forces

Together with Trout Unlimited, Friends is pursuing the formation of an Ozark regional water coalition. As a first step, we jointly sponsored a meeting with representation from organizations across the region, with the hope that many organizations working together could more likely succeed - there is power in numbers! The groups who attended this initial meeting each share common goals about our watersheds, waterways and environment.

We convened February 7th in Mountain

Home, to identify common ground.

We decided to call the group *Ozark Waters*.

Next, group members must come together on how we will operate. It appears a "coalition" model with a representative and alternate from each organization may evolve. Although the group might eventually have some sort of executive board and a secretary, a separate organization may not be needed: the member groups would retain their own autonomy. We will do updates on Ozark Waters.

### Legislation

A quick comment on the current Arkansas legislative session. Several bills are of interest to our members and affiliated groups. Some bills propose tax credits for energy efficiency and alternative energy incentives. Others may impact ADEQ's operations.

*Friends* may ask for your action relating to specific proposals, if the proposed legislation might help or hurt these watersheds, waterways and the environment. We will likely do this through

our *Friends* e-mail list.

Nationally, a critical item on the horizon will be the U.S. Clean Water Restoration Act. Over the years since the Clean Water Act was passed in 1972, several court cases and judicial interpretations removed protection from many wetland areas, upland "non-navigable" tributaries and intermittent/ephemeral streams.

This bill, when it is introduced into the 2009 US Congress, will need all the support it can get from the public. Hundreds of thousands of pothole ponds, small streams/creeks, ephemeral streams, and watersheds, which all feed our navigable waters and play a major role in the quality of our aquifers, continue to receive pollution.

### Spring is here

Yes, it was a hard winter, but spring is here and these waters are flowing and beautiful.

Sincerely,



## Tribute to a Lost Fishing Buddy

by Mike Marshall

Once in a great while you will meet a person with whom you develop a lasting, life-long friendship. Such was the case when I met my friend, Russell Stanton, over twenty years ago. Russell was the husband of a dear friend, and my wife's co-worker.

Over the ensuing years Russell and I formed a lasting friendship. One sometimes wonders how these relationships mature. It is true we had many common interests (such as duck hunting, fishing, and reading). We also really enjoyed each other's company. And then there was fly fishing.

Russell and I entered the magic kingdom of fly fishing about the same time fifteen to twenty years ago. Now Russell had been through many hobbies, which included music, photography, wing shooting, and probably others of which I'm not aware.

However, Russell, being the perfectionist that he was, mastered these pursuits to the extent that they were no longer challenging to him. And then there was fly fishing.

Russell plunged into this hobby with the same determination and enthusiasm

that he had with prior hobbies. He and I began to study fly tying, fly casting, and of course, the actual activity of fishing itself. It wasn't long before I realized that he had developed superior skills in both fly tying and fly casting. His expertise in these areas easily surpassed mine. (I was jealous!)

I have many fond memories of our fishing trips both locally and in more distant, exotic places. We had a memorable trip to the Cascapedia River in Quebec for atlantic salmon. (He caught a 32 pounder and I didn't even get a bite!) Other memorable trips included those to the San Juan River in New Mexico and the Rio Grande near Creede, Colorado. We also fished extensively in the Arkansas tail waters, mainly the North Fork River.

We had numerous trips to the North Fork since I own a home near the river. I would say the North Fork River was home waters to Russell.

On these multiple trips we also engaged in lively conversations and I came to understand what a remarkable mind I was observing. Not only did he possess the usual lawyer mind where everything seems so logical, but his powers of perception and reason were quite extraordinary.

Several months ago after Russell and I

had come in from fishing I noticed Russell's physical stamina was progressively worsening. I attributed this to his smoking. I was right but it was more serious than I had realized; he had lung cancer and it had already spread to his brain.

Russell never again was able to return to the Norfork River (except in his memories). Every time I stepped into the water I could still see him perched on a large river rock smoking a cigarette or standing in the water working his soft hackles in the ripples behind Charlie's, one of our favorite fishing spots. I would remember the day he caught a nice brown trout below an overhanging sycamore tree. All these memories and many more still haunt me.

In this goodbye to Russell, I appreciate the opportunity to share the thoughts of a fly fisherman who has lost his fishing buddy.

I hope to be able to meet Russell someday again on some heavenly stream. In the meantime I will continue to fish the Norfork River for us both.

*Editor's Note: Russell Stanton died recently, and at his request memorials were donated to Friends of the Rivers in his name.*

## Arkansas General Assembly: Potential Legislation Affecting Watersheds

By Gene Dunaway

The 87th Legislative Assembly is now in session; all proposed Bills have been introduced.

Next comes the most important part of the session, as legislators consider the bills.

*Friends* members and supporters have a chance to impact public policy affecting our waters: our aim is to assist you in that effort. Your *Friends'* Board of Directors will recommend a few bills for your support and consideration, and likely some we oppose.

We've struggled with the question of whether to support more general environmental bills that directly impact energy, water pollution from oil and gas drilling outside our watershed, global warming, etc. As a middle ground, we'll generally let you know about those broader Bills, but keep our focus on mission-critical Bills that might impact our local rivers and their watersheds.

### Getting Yourself Ready

We will be sending you *Action Alerts* and asking you to contact your legislators and express your opinion.

In addition, we will provide you with the information you need to identify and contact your representative:

- You can already find much of this information at *Friends'* web site (<http://www.friendsoftherivers.org/TrackingLegislature.html>), including an explanation of how Bills move through the process.
- You will find links to maps so you can find your legislators.
- You should also check out the Legislature's own site (<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2009/R/Pages/Home.aspx>) which has been recently updated and is very usable. You can enter bill numbers (enter with no space like HB1577; Senate Bills are SB####); you can find the Bill's status, and research which legislators sit on critical committees to which the Bill is assigned.

### Make Your Voice Heard

Your opinion only has an impact if it is actually expressed to your legislators. There are two important steps:

- Contact your senator or representative
- Write others who are on the Committee, or write the Committee Chairperson.

### Bills That Friends supports:

- **HB1746** (Edwards/Johnson) prohibits surface discharges from waste treatment facilities in certain watersheds where there are public water utilities.
- **SB1968** (Webb) will end the appearance of conflicts of interest on regulatory boards and commissions in Arkansas. It requires members of state regulatory boards and commissions to disclose their financial interests and recuse from votes where they, their employer or their family members have a direct financial interest. It empowers the Arkansas Ethics Commission to investigate violations and complaints.

### Bills that Friends is Following:

- **SB115** expands the authority of the Department of Environmental Quality to regulate and issue permits for waste disposal from crude oil and natural gas production. The new shale developments in Arkansas stand to create millions of gallons of toxic waste and companies are looking to dispose of some of it on Delta farm land.
- **HB1424** (Webb) requires financial assurance of "landfarms" where drilling wastes are disposed so that someday remediation can take place.
- **SB1131** (Ragland) does not look like a good bill, as it repeals all energy conservation laws in Arkansas.

### Energy Bills

These bills are from the work of the Global Warming Commission that was created last legislative session:

- **HB1903** (Cash) The Energy Efficiency Performance Standards Act of 2009 will require the Public Service Commission to expand existing utility programs that help make homes and businesses more efficient, to make free or low-cost energy audits for all Arkansans, to provide incentives for insulation and weatherization and to create jobs by expanding businesses involved in energy efficiency.
- **HB1851** (Webb) will help lower barriers to creating a renewable energy market in Arkansas and help consumers and Arkansas companies upgrade to renewable energy. It will create new energy technology companies in



Arkansas' 87th General Assembly is now in session, considering conservation, water, energy and other bills related to our watersheds.

Arkansas, positioning us to lead the new energy based economy.

- **HB1663** (Webb) will increase efficiency in schools and government buildings by creating a timetable for carefully assessing and gradually retrofitting state buildings to improve their energy efficiency - resulting in substantial savings for the state.
- **SB584** (Broadway) will provide low-cost financing to be used to retrofit state government and school facilities and remove legal barriers to the funding that would make them more energy efficient.
- **SB440** (Broadway) allows the work of the Task Force to continue. Its mission is to review, discuss and advise on issues related to sustainable building design.
- **HB1902** (Cash) will amend the Arkansas motorcycle code to allow highly efficient 3-wheeled electric vehicles on the streets regulated as cars and not motorcycles.
- **HB2008** (Webb) gives a tax credit to encourage the recovery and use of landfill methane gas.
- **NO NUMBER:** A bill may be coming soon which will expand the ability of people to sell back to the utilities electricity which they generate by solar, wind or other means.

### A Disappointing Bill...

One disappointing bill has already passed: HB1026. This bill requires a majority of members of the Oil and Gas Commission be from the industry. All our Senators and Representatives voted for it.

*Friends'* Board believes that regulatory commissions should represent the interests of citizens, not the industries they are regulating.

*Note: Many important bills were just filed before this update was put to bed, so we will keep you posted!*

# RiverReport

## If You're Not a Friends Member

Many of you receiving this newsletter and emails support the work of *Friends* but have not become members. Your support is important, but belonging is even more important. Memberships are the only way we have to fund all our efforts.

Paid membership costs very little (\$25 for individual or \$35 for family).

You can join online at our website (<http://www.friendsoftherivers.org/MmberShip.html>), or call our membership chair at 870-430-5777.

Won't you please consider joining *Friends*? We need you.

## Correction: Minimum Flow Info

Shawn Egan (Bayou Resort) pointed out a needed correction to information in one of our emails regarding Minimum Flow.

The correct Cost/Benefit ratio for implementing Minimum Flow on the White River is 3.48, and the correct ratio on the Norfolk is 0.96. In our email, we had incorrectly reported the Corps' DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) findings of 11.78 and 1.39 respectively.

We failed to catch the Corps' revision at its FINAL EIS.

Thanks, Shawn, for your help!

## Minimum Flow Gets Stimulus Shot

The federal stimulus bill holds \$5 million for use by the US Army Corps of Engineers toward the implementation of minimum flows from Norfolk and Bull Shoals dams.

Senators Lincoln and Pryor, and Congressmen Berry and Boozman all signed onto the measure.

Even after construction is complete, the Corps may not impound the waters needed for minimum flow until the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission has addressed the impact to lakeside interest affected by new higher lake levels.

## Cotter Trout Festival To Be April 17 - 18 in Cotter City Park

Cotter will hold its annual Trout Festival mid-April, under the old Cotter bridge in the city park. *Friends* will be among the exhibitors. There will also be demonstrations, lectures and of course good food.

Cotter received an award from the Arkansas Department of Tourism honoring its Trout Festival. The award nomination said, "Cotter is all about trout, especially in the spring when it hosts 'The Great Cotter Trout Festival.' The whole town takes part, helped out by those who know trout, giving free seminars 'near the rail cars' in Cotter Big Spring Park."

"Even if rainbow trout were not in the White River at the dawn of creation, they've been here for more than 50 years. They thrive in the ever-cool tail waters below the Bull Shoals dam."

Come celebrate trout !



Historic Cotter Bridge, photographed in the early morning while the fog rises from the cold, clear White River. The Trout Festival will be held near the east end of the bridge. (Photo Jelier Dorst)

*Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers, Inc. is an Arkansas non-profit organization -- 501(c)(3) -- devoted to creating an ongoing dialogue where individuals, groups, and government agencies can work together to conserve, restore and enhance these beautiful rivers.*

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