

MOUNT KESSLER RESERVE

Outdoor Classroom
Outdoor Recreation
Watershed Protection
Protection of Natural Resources



Outdoor Classroom (K-PhD)



Mountain Bikers on Mt. Kessler



MT. KESSLER RESERVE...
Watershed Protection...Protection of Natural Resources

DRAFT
July 11, 2013

FUTURE HOME OF FAYETTEVILLE'S REGIONAL PARK

AMENITIES TO COME INCLUDE:

Soccer Fields	Great Lawn
Baseball Fields	Tennis Courts
Softball Fields	Basketball Courts
Multi-use Fields	Volleyball Courts
Trails	Pavilions
Playgrounds	Water Features

Amphitheatre

For information
Call Parks and Recreation 444-3471



ABSTRACT

In 2004, a group of investors planned a 900 acre mixed-use development in southwestern Fayetteville, called Southpass. It was to contain over 4,000 residential units (both individual homes and apartments) and 3,000 square feet of offices and retail shops. In conformity with the City of Fayetteville's 2025 plan, the developers planned to donate 200 acres to the city for a regional park, reserve an additional 250 acres for green space and make a million dollar donation to help with the park's infrastructure expenses.

Due to the collapse in the real estate market, the investors were forced to return the land to Chambers Bank. In 2010, the bank very generously agreed to honor the Southpass pledge and donate the promised 200 acres to the City and to pay the million dollars in installments, as the property is developed. The City of Fayetteville now has a deed to the 200 acres and \$3.9 million in its Park Development Fund. Construction on the park is scheduled to begin in 2014.

**THE
200 ACRE
REGIONAL
PARK...**

**FUTURE HOME OF
FAYETTEVILLE'S
REGIONAL PARK**

AMENITIES TO COME INCLUDE:

Soccer Fields	Great Lawn
Baseball Fields	Tennis Courts
Softball Fields	Basketball Courts
Multi-use Fields	Volleyball Courts
Trails	Pavilions
Playgrounds	Water Features

Amphitheatre

**387 ACRE
MT. KESSLER RESERVE**
AMENITIES TO COME INCLUDE:
Outdoor Classroom (K through Ph.D.)
Outdoor Laboratory Hiking
Mountain Biking Trail Running
Nature Photography Nature Study
Watershed Protection
Protection of Natural Resources

For information
Call Parks and Recreation 444-3471



**...COULD
BECOME
A
600 ACRE
REGIONAL
PARK!**

About half the 900 acres is on Mt. Kessler and consists of steep bluffs and wild, rock-covered woodlands – adjacent to the proposed Regional Park. Chambers Bank (as well as adjacent property owners on Mt. Kessler) allowed the Ozark Off Road Cyclists (OORC), a regional mountain biking club, to build nature trails on the property. The group built and maintained over 8.5 miles of trails, which then became popular with other mountain bikers, hikers, trail runners, educational groups and nature lovers. Since the property is privately held, the owners asked users to sign a Waiver and Release of Liability and invited them to become Advocates- individuals dedicated to seeking preservation of the mountain in its natural state. This group now has over 300 members.

Mt. Kessler Greenways Advocates are attempting to raise funds to purchase 387 acres as a Mt. Kessler Reserve, to serve as an outdoor classroom (K through Ph.D.) for the University of Arkansas as well as local public schools, for outdoor recreation (mountain biking, hiking, trail running, nature study), watershed protection and preservation of natural resources within the City of Fayetteville.

Advocates plan to present this report requesting funding to individuals, foundations and businesses, in addition to the university and city. The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association (FNHA) has agreed to make a substantial contribution toward the purchase. Chambers Bank is amenable to sell the property at a discount.

One scenario for ownership is to follow the lead of the Walton Arts Center, with joint ownership of the property by the city and university – governed by a board consisting of appointees by the city, university and users such as the OORC, FNHA, Friends at Slaughter Pen Trails, The Nature Conservancy, Ozark Highlands Trail Association etc. This method of governance has served the Walton Arts Center well for the past twenty years.

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JULY 11, 2013

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Dr. David Stahle, *Distinguished Professor, Director Tree Ring Laboratory, UA*

Dr. Douglas James, *Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, UA*

Sawyer Burnett, *University of Arkansas Alumnus*

Tori Pohler/ John Kester, *Associate Student Government, University of Arkansas*

Dr. Mary Savin, *Professor of Soil Biology and Microbial Ecology*

Ms. Jenny Gammill, *Director of Science Teachers, Fayetteville Public School District*

Dr. Don Steinkraus, *Professor of Entomology, UA*

Dr. David Chapman, *Professor, Center of Excellence for Poultry Science, UA*

OUTDOOR RECREATION

The Ride to Save Mt. Kessler- *Ozark Off Road Cyclists, Friend at Slaughter Pen Trails*

Phil W. Penny, *President, Ozark Off Road Cyclists*

Gary Vernon, *President, Friends at Slaughter Pen Trails, Bentonville/Bella Vista, AR*

Paxton Roberts, *Advocacy Director, Bicycle Coalition of the Ozarks*

Mike R. Lemaster, *President, Ozark Highlands Trail Association*

Richard N. Cook, *Director of Development, International Mountain Bicycling Assn.*

Keda S. Steineert, *Mt. Kessler "Runner of the Year"*

Doug McKinney, *Organizer, NWA Hiking Group*

TRAILS ON MT. KESSLER

Mt. Kessler Reserve Trail Map

Active Transportation Advisory Committee, City of Fayetteville

Terry Eastin, *Eastin Outdoors, Inc., Fayetteville, AR*

Trail Log

Matt Mihalevich

PROTECTION OF WATERSHEDS

Robert Morgan, *Manager of Environmental Quality, Beaver Water District*

Jason Kindall, *Executive Director, Beaver Watershed Alliance*

Dr. Delia Haak, *Executive Director, Illinois River Watershed Partnership*

PRESERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

"A Chorus of Support" -Joseph C. Neal, *co-author, Birds of Arkansas*

Bob Caulk, *President, Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association*

Robert Cross, *President, The Ozark Society*

Kevin Pierson, *Regional Office, Lower Mississippi Flyway, Audubon Society*

Scott Simon, *Director, The Nature Conservancy, Arkansas Field Office, LR, AR*

Karen Rollet Crocker, *Emeritus Professor Landscape Architecture, UA*

Carolyn Crook, PhD, *Ex. Vice-President, Northwest Arkansas Pathology Associates, PA*

Joseph C. Neal, *Co-author, Birds of Arkansas*

Guy Headland, *US Dep't. of Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office*

Terri Lane, *Ex. Director, Northwest Arkansas Land Trust*

Patti Erwin, *Urban Forestry Coordinator, Arkansas Forestry Commission*

Erika and Sienna Gergerich, *Hikers, Citizens of Fayetteville*

Jon Beneke, *Director, Outdoor Recreation Grants Program, AR Dep't. Parks & Tourism*

Sarah Marsh, *Chair, Environmental Action Committee, City of Fayetteville*

Urban Forestry Advisory Board, *City of Fayetteville*

Tom Butt, FAIA, **Deepwood House**, *Finger Road, Fayetteville, AR.*

Stan Johnson, *President, Johnson Mechanical Contractors, Inc.*

Kenneth L. Smith, *Author, Buffalo River Country*

Dr. Pete Heinzemann, *Founder, Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association*

Joyce Stafford, *President, Stafford & Associates, Star Shopper*

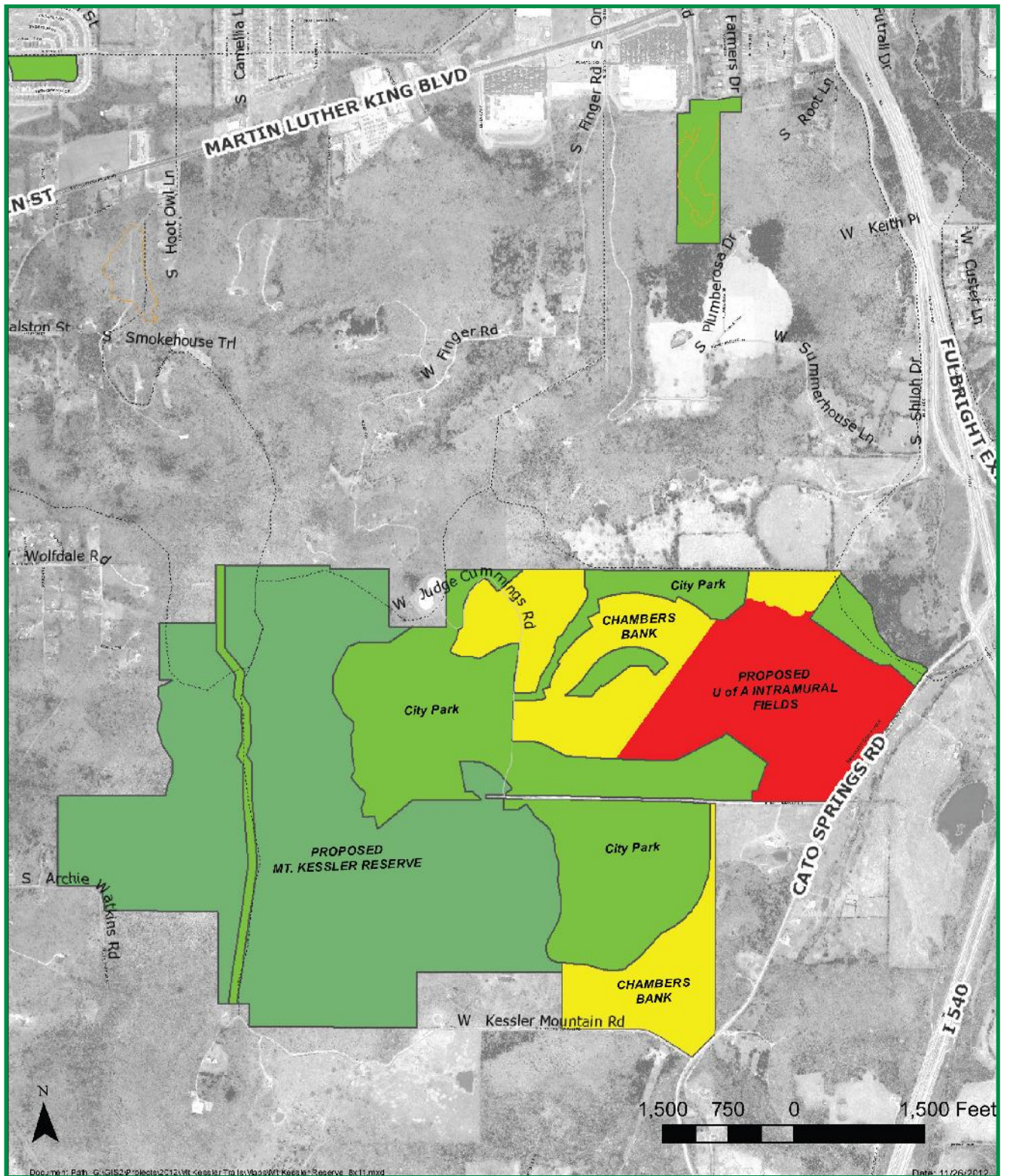
APPENDIX

Tree-Ring Analysis of Ancient Oak Woodlands on Kessler Mountain, Arkansas

Trail Log Summary

Waiver and Release of Liability Form

Joe Neal - Geology of the Ozarks



MAP OF SOUTHPASS

Proposed Regional City Park... Lime Green	.....	About 200 Acres
Proposed U of A Intramural Fields... Red	.....	About 100 Acres
Proposed MT. KESSLER RESERVE... Green	.....	About 387 Acres
Additional Land... Yellow	.....	About 200 Acres
TOTAL	.....	About 900 Acres

History of Mount Kessler

In 1951, after a hike atop Kessler Mountain, Miss Jobelle Holcombe wrote*,

As I looked out over the surrounding picturesque hills at the distant mountains against the blue sky with its gray clouds, and at the valleys between the rolling hills, I could well understand why John and Hannah (Rieff- the first pioneers of Kessler Mountain) would settle here to hew out of the wilderness an abiding place for the generations to come."

John Rieff purchased 20 acres atop Kessler Mountain on October 22, 1838 for \$35.00.

Between 1869 and 1873, notices in local papers advertised a "full supply of native grape wines and celebrated Champaign Cider. The trade supplied for sale at Dorman's Bakery." Kessler's Wine Halle opened, on West Center Street in Fayetteville, featuring "Kessler's celebrated wines and peach and apple brandies...drinks ten cents or three for twenty-five cents." The local paper described the Wine Halle as "where bad little boys of town congregate at nights and shove billiards."

Nothing remains of the Kessler house and winery, except the hand-dug well and wine cellar, adjacent to the beautiful, two-story, stone, Mount Kessler Inn.*

Phillip Kessler is buried in Rieff Cemetery, on the south end of Mt. Kessler.

KESSELER'S VINEYARD.

The undersigned is now manufacturing at his Vineyard five miles Southwest of Fayetteville, and has on hand a large Stock of the like

Native Grape Wine.

Blackberry Wine

VINEGAR.

AND KESSELER'S CELEBRATED

CHAMPAGNE

CIDER.

The Trade Supplied.

For Sale in Fayetteville at Dorman's Bakery, north side the public square.

July 31, 1869. PHILLIP KESSELER. v2n2-3m

Kessler's Vineyard Advertisement, 1869

From: Fayetteville Democrat, September 16, 1869



Mt. Kessler Inn

Kessler's Winery

Phillip Kessler was born to a wine making family in Germany, and was brought to Springfield, Missouri at a young age. He married Kate, who was also born in Germany, and they soon had a daughter, Clara Elizabeth. The Kesslers arrived in Fayetteville in 1866 "in a brand new surrey with four beautiful horses and \$11,000 in gold"***

The Kesslers purchased thirteen acres on top of the mountain, because it reminded them of stories they were told about Germany. They built a house, dug a well and wine cellar and established probably the first a vineyard and winery in the State of Arkansas. The wine business was in full operation by 1869.

Mt. Kessler Inn is currently owned by Dr. Hershey and Denise Garner.

*See Washington County Historical Association's FLASHBACK November 1951, Volume 1, Number 6, Page 7

** WCHA'S FLASHBACK, February 1984, page 24

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Creating a 387 Acre Outdoor Classroom/Laboratory for Students K-PhD



Jane Steinkraus and Malcolm Le Vois identify a Black Haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*) on Mt. Kessler, during a City of Fayetteville Urban Forestry Advisory Board hike in November 2012.

When the **Ozark Off Road Cyclists** were building their world-class mountain biking trails, they didn't realize that Mt. Kessler might become a world-class outdoor classroom as well. Students and faculty from the University of Arkansas and the local public schools discovered the trails and the potential of this rugged mountain - right in the middle of northwest Arkansas - as a convenient location for their students to study the flora and fauna of their native Ozarks.

Interestingly, the *Ecological Society of America* recognized the ecological importance of Mt. Kessler as early as 1926. It published a "*Naturalist's Guide to the Americas*" to document special features in each state that should be protected and preserved. The only feature named in northwest Arkansas was Mt. Kessler - due to the northern plants it possessed, including Sugar Maple trees. The south end of the mountain is just short of 2,000 feet, which is the height that divides the northern from the southern biota (see letter from Dr. Douglas A. James.)

Several professors and students at the University of Arkansas realized the value of a nearby outdoor classroom and wrote letters of support for the preservation of Mt. Kessler.

Dr. Steven J. Beaupre, Chair, Department of Biological Sciences

"We recently appointed a committee to name our Aspirant Peer Institutions. All of these 6 institutions have land holdings that serve as outdoor teaching and research facilities"

Dr. David W. Stahle, Distinguished Professor, Dept. of Geosciences, Director Tree-Ring Lab.

"..the highlight of Kessler Mountain to me, is the incredible ancient chinkapin oak (Quercus muehlenbergi), some of the best I have ever seen. The property would make an outstanding research natural area..of exceptional beauty and scientific value within minutes of the campus.."

Dr. Donald C. Steinkraus, Professor of Entomology, University of Arkansas

"Natural areas associated with a university provide outdoor recreation for many students, staff and faculty, as well as area residents. Increasingly, in this crowded world of malls and highways, people need opportunities to walk in natural areas to refresh their spirits."

Dr. Mary C. Savin, Professor of Soil Biology and Microbial Ecology, University of Arkansas

"I took my ENSC 3223/3221L Ecosystems Assessment class to Mt. Kessler. The students as a group loved this field trip. It is a very convenient location to campus and would make an amazing addition to the University's property, providing us with land for research sites, undergraduate and graduate projects, and outdoor laboratories for multiple courses."

John Kester, Director of Sustainability, Associated Student Government

Tori Pohler, President, Associated Student Government, University of Arkansas

"Speaking on behalf of the sustainability efforts of this institution, the university has a significant opportunity to be part of the efforts to keep the space preserved and available to the community and surrounding region. As active students, both on campus and in the community, we support the best path forward of ensuring this space's longevity for education and recreation, as well as the benefit it could bring to the University's programming and reputation."

Dr. David Stahle discovered very old chinkapin and post oaks that germinated in the 18th century prior to the European settlement of Arkansas are still present on Mt. Kessler. These trees were a hundred years old when Phillip Kessler moved to northwest Arkansas with his "*brand new surrey, with four beautiful horses and \$11,000 in gold*" to found his winery on the south end of Mt. Kessler. A tree-ring analysis of these ancient trees would be perfect for the thesis of Alan Edmondson, one of his graduate students, but the three month study would require additional funding of \$3,800. Hunter Haynes, of HCH Consulting and Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association raised the required money and the thesis will be complete at the end of the summer of 2013 (*see the appendix for the complete Tree-Ring Analysis*).

The outdoor classroom/laboratory (tentatively called the MT. KESSLER RESERVE) has recently had visits of Fayetteville High School classes, the National Science Teachers Association, Sierra Club, City of Fayetteville Urban Forestry Advisory Board, Plein Aire Painters of the Ozarks, Women Out Walking, Ozark Highland Trail Association, Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association (FNHA), City of Fayetteville Environmental Action Committee, Babes in the Wood and UA Sustainability Interns. This is in addition to the over one thousand hiker, mountain bikers, trail runners, nature lovers and photographers who individually enjoyed the woods and trails.

Ms. Jenny Gammill, Director of K-12 Science and Instructional Technology for the Fayetteville Public Schools, visited Mt. Kessler and wrote :

"I see much potential for a partnership between Fayetteville Public Schools (FPS) and Mt. Kessler Greenways. Mt. Kessler Reserve offers numerous outdoor learning opportunities. FPS students from kindergarten through 12th grade will be able to utilize this space for hiking, studying flora and fauna, learning about various rock formations, identifying native species and understanding the importance of protecting the environment. Additionally, the proximity of Mt. Kessler to Fayetteville Schools makes it very accessible for students and teachers as an outdoor classroom. Field trips can often be cost-prohibitive due to transportation.

Fayetteville Public Schools is looking forward to partnering with Mt. Kessler Greenways to provide an outdoor classroom for teachers and students!"

In October 2012, Dr. Bob Caulk, President of FNHA, led Dr. Mary Savin's Ecosystems Assessment Class of 15 students on a tour of Mt. Kessler. That evening, as FNHA was having its annual fall dinner in the Sharpridge garage (on rustic picnic tables covered in butcher paper), he invited the students to join them. Using a magic marker on the butcher paper table cloth, one of the young people summarized - dramatically and succinctly - the value of Mt. Kessler as an outdoor classroom!





UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Biological Sciences

Chancellor David Gearhart
425 ADMIN
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR. 72701

9 October, 2012

RE: Potential purchase of acreage – South Pass

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

I write to you as Chairman of Biological Sciences, regarding possible benefits of land acquisition on and near Kessler Mountain. I feel I would be remiss if I failed to comment on this potentially important decision. I understand that the UA is considering the purchase of acreage south-west of the University, near Kessler Mountain for the purpose of expansion of athletic fields. I have been informed by Mr. Frank Sharp (who I have known for several years, socially) that the UA has the opportunity to purchase additional acreage in the area, including parcels that are in a relatively undisturbed area. I strongly support the addition of this acreage to the purchase (if it indeed goes through). My primary motivation for this recommendation is the large potential benefit to teaching and research in ecology that would accrue to students and faculty in multiple programs across the UA (not just Biological Sciences).

Unlike many of the top schools in the country, the UA has no holdings that can be dedicated for use as outdoor laboratories. At other institutions, these outdoor laboratories become famous, and include icons such as The Duke Forest, Harvard Forest, University of Michigan E.S. George Reserve, The Michigan State Kellogg Biological Station, The University of Wisconsin Arboretum, Cornell's Arnot Forest, the Clemson Experimental Forest, and the University of Tennessee Arboretum, to name but a few (additional resources are listed on page 3). We (UA Biological Sciences) recently appointed a committee to name our Aspirant Peer institutions. All of these 6 institutions have land holdings that serve as outdoor teaching and research facilities (specifics appended on page 3, at the end of this letter).

As a specific example, I cite the University of Georgia, Odum School of Ecology, which is typically ranked as the number one ecology program in the country. The Odum School has several land holdings that serve as ecological field sites and laboratories. These include: The Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory (in collaboration with the USDA Forest Service), The HorseShoe Bend Ecology Experimental Research Site, The Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center, McGarity Wetlands, Odum Broad River Property, San Luis, Costa Rica Research Station (yes, in Costa Rica), Satilla River Stephens-Hunt Refuge, and several others (<http://www.ecology.uga.edu/facilitiesList.php>). All told, the UGA Odum School has over 30,144 acres in GA alone, for support of students and faculty in research and teaching. These land resources and facilities are one reason the University of Georgia is at the top in ecology, likely among several other UGA programs that utilize the resources. Obviously, the UA is a long way from such an expansive program however we should be vigilant and carefully consider opportunities to create outdoor laboratories. The Kessler Mountain purchase is one such opportunity.

In Biological Sciences, there are many potential benefits of an outdoor laboratory in close proximity to the UA. Currently, we lack an outdoor classroom of any kind, where we can take ecologically oriented laboratories. These labs would include activities in Principles of Biology, our core course in General Ecology, and a host of advanced courses including Mycology, Protistology, Dendrology, Taxonomy Flowering Plants, Ornithology, Mammalogy, Herpetology, Community Ecology, Field Ecology, Population Ecology, Ecological Genetics/Genomics, Stream Ecology, and Wildlife Ecology, among others. The close proximity of the Kessler mountain site would facilitate rapid transit (less than 10 minutes from campus by van), and allow maximal use of the time allotted to laboratories. The property would also serve as an invaluable research resource for students and faculty. We currently lack outdoor facilities for setting up long- or even short-term ecological experiments. The natural diversity of the site, including old fields, forested hillsides and ponds, would facilitate the use of the site by researchers with diverse interests. When teaching and research activities are in close proximity, we become better able to integrate research into the classroom.

I think my point is made, but I will close with the following thoughts. These days, most of our students have grown up isolated from the natural world. Organized sports, clubs, television, the internet, and strict parental supervision have taken the place of hours of idle nature observation and hiking. In some cases, the first and only exposure of our students to nature occurs in ecologically-related laboratories. This is a dangerous precedent. Profound lack of understanding leads to a devaluation of the natural world, which in turn leads to the false premise that we exist independently of nature. Students need to understand our interrelation with nature, and specifically the fact that we cannot survive without the services provided by natural ecological systems. From a societal standpoint, the stakes are great. As college educators and researchers, we have a responsibility to connect students to nature, and to push the research frontiers of sustainability. An outdoor teaching and research laboratory at the UA would greatly facilitate the fulfillment of that responsibility.

I urge you to seriously consider the purchase of the full available acreage in the South Pass area of Kessler Mountain. I know that these are not the financial times that facilitate large purchases, especially those that must be justified on the basis of long-term financial gain. However, this is a great opportunity to make the UA a better place in so many ways. I believe it is worth the institution's time to carefully consider any options that might make possible this purchase and its attendant benefits.

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven J. Beaupre". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

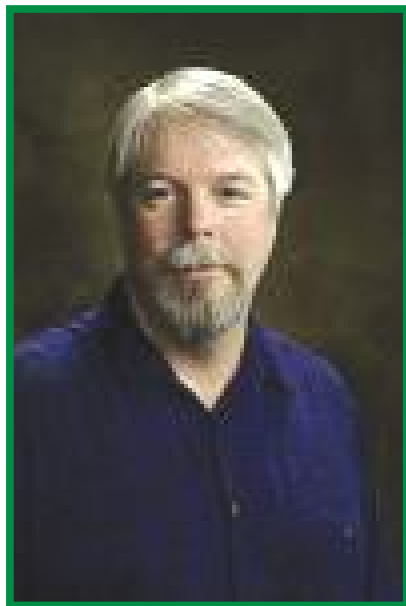
Dr. Steven J. Beaupre
Chair, Department of Biological Sciences,
602 Science-Engineering Building
University of Arkansas,
Fayetteville, AR 72701.

Outdoor Laboratories at UA Biological Sciences Aspirant Peer Institutions:

1. Department of Biological Sciences, Clemson University (Clemson)
[Clemson Experimental Forest](#)
2. Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa)
[University of Alabama Arboretum](#)
3. School of Biological Sciences, University of Nebraska (Lincoln)
[Cedar Point Biological Station](#)
4. Department of Biological Sciences, University of South Carolina (Columbia)
[Gordon W. Belser Arboretum](#)
5. Department of Biological Sciences, Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge)
[Lee Memorial Forest](#)
6. Departments of Zoology and Botany & Microbiology, University of Oklahoma (Norman)
[University of Oklahoma Biological Station](#)

Other examples of University-Based outdoor laboratories for teaching and research (websites available through Google search):

H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest – Oregon State University
Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest – University of Alaska, Fairbanks
Lubrecht Experimental Forest – University of Montana
Penobscot Experimental Forest – University of Maine
University of Idaho Experimental Forest
Pennsylvania State University Experimental Forest
University Forest – University of Missouri
Yale’s School of Forestry has 7 forests in New England
Robinson Forest, University of Kentucky
Kiamichi Forestry Research Station – Oklahoma State University
Ecology and Natural Resources Teaching Area – Texas A & M (180 acres near campus)
Piney Woods Conservation Center – Stephen F. Austin State University
Louisiana Tech University Arboretum – 74 acres near campus
Sharp Forest – Mississippi State University
Field Station – University of Mississippi (11 miles from campus)



Dr. Steven J. Beaupre
Chair, Department of
Biological Sciences

Dr. Steve Beaupre is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Arkansas. He received his Masters Degree from the Department of Zoology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1987, and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia in 1993. After two years of post-doctoral work at Arizona State University West, he was hired at the University of Arkansas in 1995. His primary area of research concerns the physiological ecology of reptiles, and the influence of environmental change on their populations. He is widely published in books and the scientific literature, and his research was recently recognized by a Fulbright College Master Researcher Award in 2009. He has engaged himself in a variety of service to the public and the scientific community, most recently as the 2012 President of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.

----- Original Message -----

From: [David Stahle](#)

To: [Kessler Greenways](#)

Sent: Friday, April 05, 2013 5:55 PM

Subject: Re: Emailing: David Stahle Letter Pg.2_bw

Dear Frank, I have an appointment, but will come if I can get out of it. I have no changes to suggest on your report.

Alan and I explored the east side of Kessler Mountain last Monday afternoon. On the steep SE-facing escarpment getting down towards the south end of the bank-owned tract we found a nice pocket of uncut ancient forest. It is not large, maybe 5 acres. But it includes old growth chinkapin oak along the escarpment and a post oak glade with very ancient trees adjacent and uphill. We cored one post oak (44cm DBH) and dated the inner ring to 1724. It did not include the center ring and the core was taken at 2m above the ground. We also cored a 70cm DBH chinkapin that had 190 rings, but the core we obtained was not close to the center at all. We guess that tree to be about 250-years old. When we get serious about this study, we will take pains to get the pith ring so we can be more definitive about tree age. I think Alan will probably concentrate his study on this new area of old growth, since it is one the property in question.

After now having seen a good fraction of the forests on Kessler they appear to largely represent second growth, but there are old presettlement age trees that escaped cutting distributed pretty much throughout the second growth woodlands. I would refer to these relict trees as 'cull,' and think they escaped logging because they were partly hollow, crooked, or in some other way were not the tree or species of choice. You also have a very few small pockets of uncut old growth as we have described. Alan's study will focus on one of those areas. But the larger message is that the forests on Mt. Kessler are in very good condition with lots of areas of mature second growth with ancient culls. Some of these so-called culls are super fat and ancient post oak. So I feel more strongly than ever about the conservation of this forest tract.

There are some badly disturbed areas as well, of course, and they include the ridgeline itself from the towers at the south end of the tract up to the vicinity of that pond we visited with you by the post oak shale glade. The other heavily disturbed area we walked through at lower elevations on the east side of Kessler, where the woods have been butchered and lonicera thickets have taken over. That area is pretty nasty. But for the most part the mid to upper slopes on both the east and west sides of Kessler retain fine mature second growth, with cull, and with pockets of uncut presettlement oaks.

Sincerely, Dave



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Department of Geosciences
Division of Geography
Division of Geology
Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences

<http://www.geosciences.uark.edu>

113 Ozark Hall
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
Office: (479) 575-3355
Fax: (479) 575-3469

January 27, 2012

Chancellor David Gearhart
Administration 425
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Mayor Lioneld Jordan
The City of Fayetteville, Arkansas
113 West Mountain Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Chancellor Gearhart and Mayor Jordan:

I have just learned of the effort to conserve the native woodlands on Kessler Mountain and the potential participation of the University of Arkansas and City of Fayetteville in that effort. This property includes some 1500 acres and was formerly part of the South Pass development. I visited a portion of the property on January 18, 2013, with Mr. Frank Sharp and Mr. Joe Neal. Mr. Sharp has devoted significant time and effort to promote the conservation of the property and Mr. Neal is a well-known author and naturalist. They are both highly respected for their many civic contributions in Fayetteville. They were interested in my assessment of the woodlands on this property and on the potential presence of uncut ancient forest. I returned the following day and explored a larger area of the Kessler Mountain property under consideration for conservation management. I have also had the opportunity to read a number of letters endorsing the conservation management of this property, including the letter from Professor Steven Beaupre, Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Arkansas. The Kessler Mountain property supports a diversity of forest environments, including some parcels that have escaped human disturbance and retain ancient presettlement trees of great age. I agree with Dr. Beaupre that the property would make exceptional natural laboratory that would enrich the research and educational opportunities for students and faculty at the University of Arkansas.

The property is beautiful, of course, and already includes a network of hiking and mountain biking trails. But I was most impressed by the ancient woodlands along the scenic escarpments that are dominated by chinkapin oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*) in the 200- to 400-year age class. These escarpment woodlands accent the interesting rock outcrops of the Atoka, Trace Creek, and Kessler limestone formations, which weather into a variety of soil chemical and textural properties that result in a high species diversity of the vegetation cover. Some of these rugged, elongated parcels were not logged because of the difficult terrain and because the beautiful curvilinear growth forms of the dominant chinkapin oak do not lend themselves to the band saw or the production of dimension lumber. But they are one component of the original natural vegetation cover of northwest Arkansas, before the heavy human disturbance of historical and modern times. The chinkapin oak probably achieve the greatest age of any tree species on Kessler Mountain, but many

other species also reach advanced age on the property, including post oak, Florida maple, American ash, shagbark hickory, and black walnut. We did not attempt a systematic analysis of stand age structure, of course, but several mature trees fell across the trail during the ice storm of 2009 and their stems were cut to reopen the trail. The great antiquity of especially the chinkapin oak can be readily observed in the annual rings exposed on the cut faces of these stems. My students and I aim to conduct more comprehensive tree-ring and forest ecological analyses of these exceptional escarpment woodlands, and that is exactly the point the Dr. Beaupre has already emphasized, that Kessler Mountain presents an unusual opportunity to install a research natural area of exceptional beauty and scientific value within minutes of the campus of the University of Arkansas.

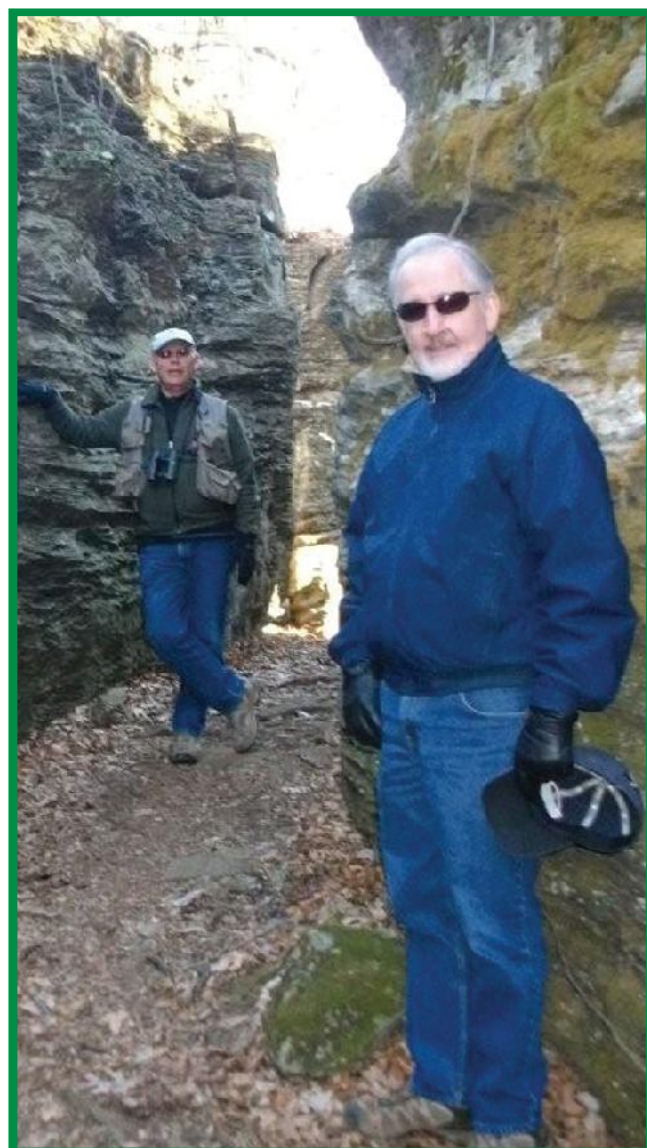
I was trained at the University of Arizona and Tumamoc Hill is located only minutes from campus, frames the western horizon, and has been the site of long-term research since the dawn of ecological science. Kessler Mountain has could become as valuable a site for environmental research in Arkansas as Tumamoc Hill is in Tucson, as Harvard Forest in Massachusetts, or Duke Forest in North Carolina. If a practical role for the University of Arkansas and City of Fayetteville can be found for the conservation management of Kessler Mountain, then on behalf of our current and future faculty and student body I would urge you to participate.

Sincerely,



David W. Stahle
Distinguished Professor
479 575 3703
<http://www.uark.edu/dendro>

David W. Stahle is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Geosciences and Director of the Tree-Ring Laboratory at the University of Arkansas (<http://www.uark.edu/dendro>). His research concentrates on the development of long, climate-sensitive tree-ring chronologies from the United States and Latin America; the reconstruction and analysis of climate variability and change; and on the social and environmental impacts of past climatic extremes. He has published over 100 articles in the peer-reviewed literature, including in the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*, *Geophysical Research Letters*, *Journal of Climate*, *Nature*, and *Science*. He is a founder and the current director of the Ancient Cross Timbers Consortium (<http://www.uark.edu/xtimber>) that promotes research, education, and conservation in the extensive old-growth woodlands that survive across the ecotone between the eastern deciduous forest and the grasslands of the southern Great Plains.



Joe Neal (L) and David Stahle (R)



Doug James grew up near Detroit, Michigan, where he began leading group birding field trips in the 2nd grade. He earned Bachelor and Master's Degrees in zoology at the University of Michigan and a Doctoral Degree in zoology and plant ecology at the University of Illinois. From Illinois he accepted a faculty position at the University of Arkansas, arrived in Fayetteville in 1953 and is still employed at UofA teaching courses in Principles of Zoology, Ornithology, Mammalogy, Ecology, and Animal Behavior. He has been awarded 3 Fulbright Professorships abroad: to Ghana in Africa, Nepal in Asia, Belize in Central America, plus a stint at Cambridge University, England. Dr. James has published over 100 articles in scientific journals covering ecology of birds and mammals, supported by \$1,400,000 in grants. He is senior author of the book "Arkansas Birds" and has mentored 82 graduate students (66 Masters, 26 PhDs). He has received recognition for his accomplishments from the National Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, SW Association of Naturalists, Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, and UofA. Also he has received 4 awards (one international) for his successes in teaching.

Dr. James is an elected Fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science and in the American Ornithologists' Union. He was President of two national scientific organizations and is current President of the NW Arkansas Audubon Society, also Chair of Audubon Arkansas' Important Bird Area Technical Committee and is on the Board of Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association. He was a member of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker Recovery Team and is a founding member of the Arkansas Audubon Society. He organized the charter meeting of the Ozark Society, which saved the Buffalo River.



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Biological Sciences

Chancellor G. D. Gearhart
Administration Bldg. 425
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

10 February 2013

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

I herewith join the many others whose voices have encouraged the university to purchase land on Kessler Mountain for use as an outdoor laboratory for classes that focus on various aspects of natural history. This area has been referred to as South Pass and Kessler Greenways.

I hereby describe my peregrinations over the years to find satisfactory field trip locations for my classes in ecology, natural history, ornithology and mammalogy. I arrived on campus in the early 1950s. Way back then there were usable habitats on campus north of Dickson Street where the Science Engineering Building presently has its footprint. My office is now in the building covering the site where I once led class field trips. Being forced from that area I next utilized a slope of natural habitat west of Garland on campus where the dormitories Buchanan-Droke and Gladson-Ripley plus parking areas now stand. From there I utilized a large area south of Leroy Pond Road extending to the 6th Street (now Martin Luther King Boulevard). This area is currently heavily developed for various activities including a large parking space. Then I moved even further from campus to an area of old field and cedar woods south of 6th street up to where 6th Street now intersects I-540. This area now has commercial developments.

After that I gained permission from now deceased sisters Joy Pratt Markham and Evangeline Waterman Archer to conduct my classes on their properties on Markham Hill west of the Football Stadium. That existed until Julian (Waterman) Archer began to develop the area. By then I had contractors build my former abode on the north end of Kessler Mountain and began taking classes to my property and to the nearby Fowler and DeMarco holdings there. I believe my former property joins the South Pass lands. At that time I also used a forest site that still existed on campus. I used it for a class exercise in determining forest structure. It was conveniently in walking distance on campus for the class. That natural forest structure was greatly modified for the construction of the present Chancellor's residence.

Recently my classes have been using various places: Sequoyah and Gregory Parks inside Fayetteville and for the ornithology class one field trip uses northern Scull Creek trail and adjacent University Farm. The above provides one aspect of my still ongoing 60 years at the University of Arkansas. It would be advantageous if the University could provide a more stable situation for those who follow, such as purchasing land on Kessler Mountain would provide.

Sincerely,

University Professor Douglas A. James, Ph.D.



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Biological Sciences

April 4, 2013

Frank Sharp
Mt. Kessler Greenways
2062 S. Smokehouse Trail
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Frank:

In 1926 the Ecological Society of America published a huge tome titled “Naturalist’s Guide to the Americas” prepared by the Committee on the Preservation of Natural Conditions. It is a documentation of natural conditions in each state, but also identifies special features in each state and lists those that should be protected and preserved.

The only feature named in northwest Arkansas, that needed to be preserved, was Kessler Mountain - due to the northern plants it possessed, including Sugar Maple trees. The south end of Kessler Mountain is just short of 2,000 feet, which is the height that divides the northern from the southern biota.

When I came to the University of Arkansas in the 1950s, I brought the Ecological Society publication with me and immediately went to investigate Kessler Mountain. I was able to detect this north/south division at my leisure, because I lived on Finger Road, located on the north end of Mt. Kessler.

I fondly remember the hours spent wandering the mountain alone, with my family and my students at the university. I sincerely hope that future generations will be able to enjoy this mountain biological treasure – a treasure realized by the ecologists over eighty years ago.

Sincerely,

University Professor Douglas A. James, Ph.D.



December 9, 2012

Chancellor Gearheart,

I would like to contact you in regards to the Mt. Kessler property that is currently owned by Chambers Bank and is up for sale.

The Kessler mountain property is a pristine historical part of Arkansas and should therefore be protected from being destroyed by land development. I recently went hiking on the Mt. Kessler trails and was very impressed at the sheer beauty and serenity of a trail so close to town. On the hike, I noticed many interesting geological formations, fossils and other natural features which compliment the beauty of the land even more. As an avid hiker in the Northwest Arkansas, it is very surprising to find such a pollution free environment so close to a city. If land developers purchase the land, all of these natural formations will most likely be destroyed and forgotten forever.

I believe that the University could greatly benefit from purchasing this land. The land could be used by many different departments such as Biology, Paleontology, and Geology as a close to campus outdoor classroom. Instead of classes having to commute to far away locations, they could have a place to do research and observe nature that could be reached within 15 minutes.

As a recently graduated alumni from the University of Arkansas, I urge you to consider purchasing this land and protecting it for the benefit of the environment and students.

Thank you for your time,
Sawyer Burnett

Sawyer Burnett grew up in northwest Arkansas and graduated from Siloam Springs High School. He attended the University of Arkansas in 2006, where he received a bachelor's degree in information systems. He currently works in Fort Smith as a programmer/analyst for Data/Tronics Corporation.

His hobbies include mountain biking, hiking, camping, playing the guitar and canoeing.

Sawyer on Mt. Kessler
December 2012.
Photo by Frank Sharp



Associated Student Government

A669 Arkansas Union
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
Tel: (479) 575-5205 Fax: (479) 575-7087
asg@uark.edu asg.uark.edu

To Whom it May Concern,

This past winter, Associate Student Government representatives had the chance to visit Mt. Kessler. We were invited by Frank Sharp who has been leading the advocacy efforts to preserve the land on Mt. Kessler, which is located in the SW corner of Fayetteville. Even though it was a rainy day, we enjoyed a short hike into the woods and even made it to Rock City. This landmark is filled with over twenty large mossy rocks that make you feel like you are in a whole other world. Frank did a wonderful job acting as a tour guide telling us about the history of Mt. Kessler and its claim to fame as the home of the first winery and vineyard in Arkansas. After our hike, we were treated to wood fired oven pizza and conversation with our peers about the benefits of visiting the outdoor space. We talked about all of the opportunities for learning in the outdoor landscape and the exciting recreation that exists right down the road from the university. It wasn't long before we lost track of time that Sunday evening and we realized school responsibilities were calling us the next day as finals fast approached. The group of students concluded and thanked Frank for his time and promised to share our experience with others. We have been telling others about Mt. Kessler and even returning during our free time, now being dubbed "friends of Mt. Kessler." This short letter is an effort to supplement these efforts and further show our support for Frank Sharp and preserving the land on Mt. Kessler.

Speaking on behalf of the sustainability efforts of the institution, the university has a significant opportunity to be part of the efforts to keep the space preserved and available to the community and surrounding region. As active students both on campus and in the community, we support the best path forward of ensuring this space's longevity for education and recreation, as well as the benefit it could bring to the University's programming and reputation.

Please contact ASG Sustainability Director John Kester (jkester@email.uark.edu) with any questions or if you want direction to take a trip to Mt. Kessler yourself to see all of the benefits the landscape has to offer in person.

Thank you,

John Kester
ASG Director of Sustainability

Tori Pohlner
ASG President



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

November 6, 2012

Chancellor G. David Gearhart
425 ADMN
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,

I took my ENSC 3223/3221L Ecosystems Assessment class to Mt. Kessler the other week as part of a field trip during our laboratory period. The students were learning about urban planning with green infrastructure. Our goal for the semester is to learn about how ecological concepts apply across hierarchical levels of ecology so that we can assess and manage ecosystems. This field trip was a nice segue into our discussions of fragmented landscapes, metapopulations, and conservation management. From there we will move into learning about urban ecology. The importance of understanding ecology from different vantage points was underscored by one of my students who asked me the other day why I would ask him to devise an experiment in an urban setting, where nothing is natural. Even though we have spent the semester investigating many concepts dealing with how people have altered ecosystems, there is still this disconnect with students where they have difficulty conceptualizing people as components within ecosystems.

The students as a group loved this field trip, partly because they got to go outside and partly because the area is beautiful. They had many positive remarks about it for days. One student commented that he did not take enough field trips or get to participate in as many outdoor laboratory exercises as he would like. Several students concurred. Many of the students asked if they could gain future access to Mt. Kessler. This to me highlights a couple of other aspects of why the students connected with this experience. People in general do not "go outside" as much anymore, and certainly in our laboratories, we are limited by where we can take students. We can only go so far during our class periods. I am lucky, perhaps, because I can and do take my students to the agricultural experiment station. Of course, there are only so many habitats at the farm. In addition to experiments that we conduct, I have scheduled a few field trips with local people this semester. I scheduled these trips because I wanted my students to connect the ecosystem ecology concepts we are learning in class with projects being implemented in the local area. While I want the students to consider global consequences and implications, I also want them to see their education matter right here in Fayetteville.

I share all these comments because, as I understand it, there is a strengthening grass roots campaign to get the University to consider purchasing property on Mt. Kessler for a new site for athletic fields. Furthermore, this campaign is pushing for acquisition of a large amount of acreage on Mt. Kessler. Much of this acreage, at least from what I observed during my one afternoon on the property, is relatively undisturbed. It is a very convenient location to campus and would make an amazing addition to the University's property, providing us with land for research sites, undergraduate and graduate projects, and outdoor laboratories for multiple courses. I understand that Biology faculty members have expressed this sentiment as well. Being in the Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences Department and working with students majoring in Environmental, Soil, and Water Science, I can attest to the utility and appeal of this site for our students and program as well.

In addition to use for field exercises in current classes, acquisition of this land would allow for future establishment of summer research and internship programs such as those supported by Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) grants. It is perhaps a long way off logistically, but to have a site for summer experiences would elevate the status of our programs. I, myself, am the product of a summer immersion program in environmental science. When I was an undergraduate student at the University of Notre Dame, I spent 10 weeks the summer before my senior year in the wilderness of the upper peninsula of Michigan and Wisconsin. There were 10 of us who lived tucked away in the wilderness on University owned land and participated in field courses and conducted research. I was so inspired that upon graduation I obtained employment in an environmental analysis unit with a consulting firm, and then went to graduate school to become better educated in environmental sciences. I really do believe these types of programs can have a profound effect on students!

I understand that there are many facets and financial considerations to land purchase decisions of this magnitude; however, I did want to add my perspective of the value of the acquisition of the Mt. Kessler property.

Regards,

Mary C. Savin
Professor of Soil Biology and Microbial Ecology

May 23, 2013

Dear Mr. Sharp,

After having recently visited the Mt. Kessler Reserve, I see much potential for a partnership between Fayetteville Public Schools (FPS) and the Mt. Kessler Greenways. Mt. Kessler Reserve offers numerous outdoor learning opportunities. FPS students from



FPS

The fine art of education.

kindergarten through 12th grade will be able to utilize this space for hiking, studying flora and fauna, learning about various rock formations, identifying native species, and understanding the importance of protecting the environment. Fayetteville teachers will be able to work closely with Mr. Sharp and other vested organizations to develop lessons and guides that make the learning both fun and valuable.

Additionally, the proximity of Mt. Kessler to Fayetteville Schools makes it very accessible for students and teachers as an outdoor classroom. Field trips can often be cost-prohibitive due to transportation. However, the farthest school from Mt. Kessler, Vandergriff Elementary, is only approximately nine miles. This will allow students in FPS to visit Mt. Kessler several times during their K-12 experience.

Fayetteville Public Schools looks forward to partnering with Mt. Kessler Greenways to provide an outdoor classroom for teachers and students!

Sincerely,

Jenny Gammill

Director of K-12 Science and Instructional Technology
Fayetteville Public Schools

FAYETTEVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1000 WEST STONE STREET | FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS 72701

PHONE: (479) 444-3000 | Fax: (479) 444-3004 | WWW.FAYAR.NET



Jenny Gammill has worked for the Fayetteville Public Schools since 2009, first serving as Director of 21st Century Learning and now in her current role as the Director of K-12 Science and Instructional Technology. Her love for science and technology was fostered at the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts, and she went on to earn her degree in the sciences from Rhodes College in 2001. She began her teaching career in Cabot, Arkansas, where she taught middle school science. After earning her masters degree in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership from Arkansas Tech University, she left central Arkansas to take on the role of Science Specialist at the Northwest Educational Service Cooperative. In addition to supporting teachers in their pursuit to educate students into science, Jenny enjoys spending time running on Fayetteville's trail system, volunteering, and going to the lake.



Center of Excellence for Poultry Science
1260 W. Maple • POSC 0-114 • Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
(479) 575-4390 • FAX (479) 575-8490

Chancellor Dave Gearhart,
Administration Building,
University of Arkansas,
Fayetteville, AR, 72701

September 19, 2012

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to you concerning the possible purchase by the University of 180 acres of land owned by Chambers Bank to relocate our outdoor recreation intramural facilities. I do encourage you to go ahead with this proposal. This provides us with a unique opportunity to contribute to the maintenance of green-space on the southwest side of Fayetteville. The area involved comprises woods, bluffs, and trails that I would like to see preserved for future generations to enjoy. The land involved is visible as one approaches Fayetteville from the south and contributes to the spectacular views of the distant University. It would be a shame if this was gradually spoilt by commercial development. I appreciate your efforts to improve material and visible aspects of the Universities "footprint" which helps serve our reputation as one of the best Colleges of education in the USA.

Sincerely,

H. David Chapman



During the week, David (far right above) is a University Professor in Poultry Science. He was educated in the United Kingdom and joined the Center of Excellence for Poultry Science in 1990. Evenings and weekends, David can be found at Lake Fayetteville - bird watching (adding to the systematic records started in the 50's or leading groups), doing restoration work on Callie's Prairie or serving on the Board of the Lake Fayetteville Watershed Partnership - or at the library doing research on the history of Lake Fayetteville.



December 27, 2012

Chancellor David Gearhart
425 ADMN
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

RE: University of Arkansas and Kessler Mountain

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

The University of Arkansas has a unique and historical opportunity to purchase and preserve land on Mt. Kessler in Fayetteville. I strongly believe that it is in the long-term best interests of the University to purchase and preserve Mt. Kessler.

I am a professor of entomology and teach courses that could derive great benefit from Mt. Kessler if it can be preserved for the use of our students and others. We need outdoor laboratories where University of Arkansas students can learn about ecology, insect habitats, and plant-insect interactions. Mt. Kessler is the ideal place for our students to do this. It is close enough to campus that I would be able to bring my students there during a lecture or laboratory period and we can explore and study insects and their interactions with the landscape and other organisms. To have a natural laboratory so close to campus would be invaluable. I cannot think of anyplace else near to Fayetteville as suitable as Mt. Kessler. If the U of A can purchase parts of the South Pass parcel, I am certain that when this is known, many of our professors will utilize it for geology, biology, and other classes.

The addition of Mt. Kessler to the University's and City of Fayetteville's parks and recreation areas, will augment the attractiveness of an education at the U of A. It will provide research opportunities for graduate students in entomology and other departments. It will provide hiking, mountain bike riding, and running opportunities for exercise for our students.

Many other universities preserve and provide natural laboratories for their faculty and students. I attended

Cornell University and it was surrounded by natural areas it had wisely purchased. For instance, Cornell owns "The Arnot Teaching and Research Forest". This forest of over 4,000 acres is used by many graduate students in biology, geology, and other fields, for their research. It is used for many purposes, including outings for freshmen to create bonds between freshmen and other students and faculty. Cornell also owns "Sapsucker Woods", a 230-acre sanctuary for birds, and also home to the famous Cornell Lab of Ornithology where peregrine falcons and other birds have been studied. In fact, I utilized the snow pools at Sapsucker Woods for some of my Ph.D. research and wrote several articles on snow pool mosquitoes.

Natural areas associated with a universities, provide outdoor recreation for many students, staff, and faculty, as well as area residents. Increasingly, in this crowded world of malls and highways, people need opportunities to walk in natural areas to refresh their spirits.

There is a window of opportunity for the University of Arkansas to purchase parts of Mt. Kessler and preserve it from development. I think that this would be a wise course and U of A students and faculty many years from now, will be thankful if this can be done.

Sincerely,

Don Steinkraus

Dr. Donald C. Steinkraus, Professor of Entomology

cc Don Pederson, Vice-Chancellor for Finance

Don Steinkraus is a professor in the Entomology Department at the University of Arkansas. He received his Ph.D. at Cornell University and has published hundreds of research articles on biological control.

He teaches "Insects in Science" an undergraduate course, "Apiculture" and "Morphology of Insects". He has given many talks on the importance of native plants and insects in our ecosystems.



Copy To Come

OUTDOOR RECREATION

After taking possession of the 900 acre failed Southpass Development, Chambers Bank, in addition to donating 200+ acres to the City of Fayetteville for a regional park, allowed the Ozark Off Road Cyclists (a regional mountain biking club) to build over eight miles of trails on the rough, wooded area of Mt. Kessler. As word of these spectacular trails - minutes from the University of Arkansas and downtown Fayetteville and Farmington - spread, they became popular with local hikers, nature lovers, bird watchers and nature photographers. A trail log, initiated in the Spring of 2013, showed that 68% of trail users are hikers, 17% are mountain bikers and 11% are trail runners. In February 2012, representatives of the International Mountain Bicycling Association, based in Boulder, Colorado, a 32,000 member group located in 30 countries, biked the trails. They described the trails as "expert level" and described Mt. Kessler as a "hidden gem".



IMBA Representatives Discover Mt. Kessler - February 2012

Access to these trails is currently from the western side of the mountain, off Smokehouse Trail. Property owners have generously allowed users (after signing a *Waiver and Release of Liability*) to use trails on their private property as access to the trail system. After the City of Fayetteville constructs parking and restroom facilities in the new regional park, access to the trail system will be from the east, off Cato Springs Road. There is no doubt that with easier access and greater visibility the trail usage will rival that of Slaughter Pen Trail in Bentonville and trails around Lake Fayetteville.

Some quotations of letters of support from trail users are as follows:*

Phil W. Penny, President, Ozark Off Road Cyclists (OORC built and maintains the trails)

"We support purchasing the acres of woodlands in hopes that this gem will be preserved for future generations of outdoor enthusiasts."

Gary Vernon, President, Friends At Slaughter Pen Trails

"Our club (with over 100 volunteers) maintains the great trail system that we are blessed with in Bentonville. We have enjoyed the Mt. Kessler property for some time now and have been concerned that it may be lost. Cycling IS the new Golf !!"

Patti Erwin, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Arkansas Forestry Commission

"Students of the UA would have an incredible opportunity for being connected between the main campus and outdoor facility. I hope you will seriously consider purchasing all of the property available for the future of the university and the community."

Paxton Roberts, Advocacy Director, Bicycle Coalition of the Ozarks

"We support the idea that the University of Arkansas and the City of Fayetteville jointly own the Mt. Kessler Reserve. The area has become a favorite of mountain bikers, and we would like to see the Mt. Kessler trail system preserved and enhanced."

Mike LeMaster, President, Ozark Highlands Trail Association

"On behalf of the Ozarks Highlands Trail Association, let me state unequivocally that we are in full support of you (Mt. Kessler Greenways) and your efforts to preserve Mt. Kessler Greenways for the community. Count on me and our membership to stand with you in this endeavor and render our assistance and support."

Richard N. Cook, Director of Development, International Mountain Bicycling Association

"Northwest Arkansas is already considered a "hotspot" for outdoor recreation and preserving the Mt. Kessler Reserve would add to this reputation."

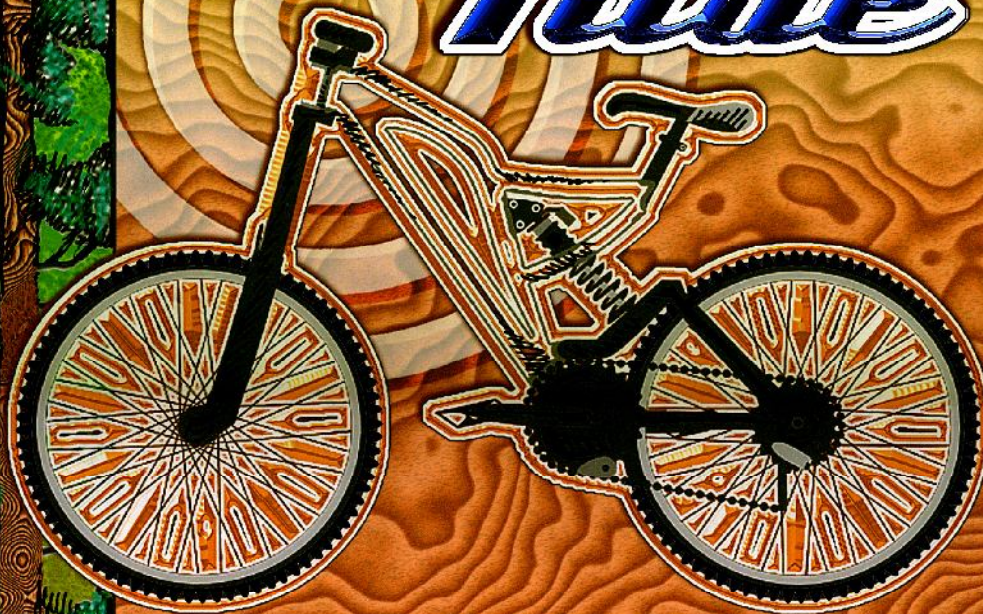
Doug McKinney, Organizer, NWA Hiking Group

"NWA Hiking Group has been hiking the trails of Mt. Kessler for years. We are also proud to support your efforts and envision many years of exploring Mt. Kessler together."

The 200-acre regional park (which will cost about \$27.7 million when completed) will address the recreational needs of soccer, baseball, softball, tennis, basketball and volleyball players. For a fraction of this amount, the park could be expanded into a 600-acre park and provide a spectacular area for mountain bikers, hikers and trail runners- minutes from the middle of Fayetteville.

*The following pages contain the entire letters of support

Low **MT. KESSLER** *Ride*



SUNDAY • OCTOBER 28TH

**Starts at Lewis and Clark on U of A campus (640 N. Garland)
around noon for beverages and preride info. Ride will leave at 1pm**

**RIDE THROUGH U OF A CAMPUS, WEST ON MLK BLVD, OUT TO MT. KESSLER GREENWAY
FOR TOUR OF THE TRAIL SYSTEM, ENDING AT THE FRANK SHARP PROPERTY WITH PIZZA AND
BEVERAGES PROVIDED! THIS IS AN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL RIDE, WITH A COUPLE MILES OF
PAVEMENT AND 8-12 MILES OF SINGLETRAC.**

**TO HELP DEFEND THE KESSLER MOUNTAIN GREENWAY, THE OORC AND F.A.S.T., ARE
TEAMING TO CREATE MORE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MT. KESSLER
IN THE HOPES THIS SPECIAL PLACE CAN BE PRESERVED AS A GREEN SPACE FOR ALL TO SHARE.
DONATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE SHARP HOME.**

SPONSORED BY:

- Mt. Kessler Greenways
- OORC (Ozark Off Road Cyclists)
- F.A.S.T. (Friends at Slaughter Pen Trail)





Good Afternoon Mr. Chancellor!

The Save Mt. Kessler Ride

On Sunday, October 28th, 2012 the Ozark Off Road Cyclists (OORC), Friends at Slaughter Pen Trails (FAST) and Mt. Kessler Greenways sponsored a ride to “create more community awareness and knowledge about Mt. Kessler in the hopes this special place can be preserved as a green space for all to share.”

At noon the Lewis and Clark store, on the University of Arkansas campus, resembled the tour de france. About eighty helmeted, brightly clad mountain bikers assembled - ready to prove their skills on the treacherous trails of Mt. Kessler.

The cyclists, led by a police escort, stopped briefly by the Chancellor’s house, then biked down Cato Springs Road to the location of the City of Fayetteville’s proposed regional park - the easy part of the ride!

The intrepid pack then biked up the rocky east slope of Mt. Kessler, past the water towers, along the historic Trent Trail (built by Phillip Kessler in 1869) and stopped to rest and to visit the remains of the old Kessler wine cellar. The ride back passed through “Rock City” on the west slope of Mt. Kessler and ended at the Sharpridge Pub. They were welcomed with lemonade and beer, followed by build-your-own pizzas and nachos - baked in a wood-fired brick oven.

NWA Media did its part to raise public awareness by printing a photo and mention of the ride in the next day’s Democrat-Gazette. Public awareness was thus duly raised - along with a few cans of Bud!



Steve Schneider’s SAVE MT. KESSLER SHIRT



Phil Penny
1245 East Columbus Blvd.
Fayetteville, AR 72701
philpenny@gmail.com
479-445-8212

26 September 2012

Chancellor G. David Gearhart
University of Arkansas
ADMN 425
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,

The Ozark Off Road Cyclists (OORC) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that is dedicated to creating, riding, and promoting sustainable mountain bike trails throughout the Natural State. As such the OORC has a long-standing, heartfelt interest in the future of Mount Kessler. Our group has helped develop and promote the trails currently established. We support the University of Arkansas purchasing the 460 acres of woodlands associated with the defunct Southpass Development in hopes that this gem will be preserved for future generations of outdoor enthusiasts.

In the long-term, our group would like to establish intermediate trails on the slope of Mt Kessler adjacent to the sports fields of the University of Arkansas and City of Fayetteville. These trails are for children and less venturesome hikers and bikers. Our hope is that the University of Arkansas will enlarge its outdoor recreation program to emphasize hiking, biking, and nature study. We view the future of Mt Kessler as an opportunity to enhance the appreciation of the Natural State.

The OORC believes in promoting the health and awareness associated with mountain biking in our community. We were awarded the Volunteer Organization of 2012 by the Arkansas Parks and Recreation Association as well as Volunteer Group of the Year from the City of Fayetteville for our continued maintenance and development of the Lake Fayetteville Trails System. The OORC would like to continue our efforts of designing, constructing, and maintaining the trail system of Mount Kessler with the understanding that they would be open to the public.

Sincerely,

Phil Penny
President
Ozark Off Road Cyclists

The OORC, is a nonprofit organization based in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas dedicated to mountain biking, whose members have been riding, building and maintaining mountain biking trails for as long as there has been mountain biking in Arkansas. They have been instrumental in creating and maintaining trails at Devil's Den State Park, Hobbs State Park, Lake Fayetteville, Lake Leatherwood, Lake Sequoyah, Lake Wilson, Lake Wedington, Mt. Kessler and other locations in northwest Arkansas.

The OORC has been a member of the International Mountain Biking Association since their inception and continually advocate for more and better trails in the region.



Rebekah and Phil Penny

" Trails Build Great Communities, Communities Build Great Trails"



F.A.S.T.

Friends At Slaughter Pen Trails

Gary Vernon, President

2 Barley Lane
Bella Vista AR, 72714
Phone 479 644 5830
gary.vernon@wal-mart.com

October 4th , 2012

Chancellor G. David Gearhart
University of Arkansas ADMN 425
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

I am the President of the Bentonville/Bella Vista volunteer group FAST (Friends At Slaughter Pen Trail), we are proud to be partners with the OORC bike club based in Fayetteville.

Our club (with over 100 volunteers) maintains the great trail system that we have been blessed with in the City Limits of Bentonville as well as the growing trail system in Bella Vista.

I am excited to hear the possibility of the University purchasing the Mt Kessler property! We have enjoyed that area for some time now and have been concerned that it may be lost due to the current situation of its foreclosure.

I am aware that you do have several properties you are reviewing but I wanted to send our support of moving forward with the fantastic property on the Kessler property.

With the over 8 miles of developed trail on such a scenic trail system, the Mt Kessler property would add additional draw to students looking at amenities of the college. As a long time Walmart Associate (28 years) and current Director in the Environmental Division, cycling IS the new Golf! We have a growing percentage of our Management here at the Home Office involved in cycling both on and off road.

I also want to ensure you have the support of FAST and our volunteer based that will assist the OORC team on any maintenance needs of the property.

Thanks again for your consideration of the Mt. Kessler property!

Gary Vernon



Bicycle Coalition of the Ozarks
P.O. Box 4173
Fayetteville, AR 72703
bco@bconwa.com
479-200-1679

March 1, 2013

Frank Sharp
Mt. Kessler Greenways
2062 South Smokehouse Trail
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

Dear Frank Sharp,

The Board of Directors for the Bicycle Coalition of the Ozarks (BCO) supports the proposal by Frank Sharp of Mt. Kessler Greenways to create a 387-acre reserve on Mt. Kessler in the city of Fayetteville. We support the idea that the University of Arkansas and the City of Fayetteville jointly own the Mt. Kessler Reserve. The area has become a favorite of mountain bikers, and we would like to see the Mt. Kessler trail system preserved and enhanced.

The BCO is a 501(c)3 non-profit formed in 1999 with the mission of creating a more bicycle friendly community in Northwest Arkansas through education programs for all users of roads and trails and advocacy for an increase in bicycle friendly infrastructure. Increasing the quantity, quality, and access to mountain bike trails in Fayetteville will help to get more citizens of the community on bikes, which will raise awareness for all cyclists and make Fayetteville a more bike-friendly city.

Sincerely,

Paxton Roberts
Advocacy Director



Bicycle Coalition of the Ozarks
P.O. Box 4173
Fayetteville, AR 72703
bco@bconwa.com
479-200-1679



Who We Are

The BCO is a 501(c)3 non-profit working to create a more bicycle-friendly community through Education & Infrastructure. A more bicycle-friendly community is a happier, safer, healthier, more people-friendly community.

What We Do

Education

The BCO develops and distributes education cycling literature. We have developed a public school bicycle safety curriculum for third - fifth grade physical education classes. We succeeded in our campaign to include bicycle-specific additions to the AR State Driver's Education Manual. The BCO offers Repair Clinics & Urban Rides (check our Events section of our website) for all ages.

Infrastructure

The BCO supports the proper design of the roadway system so that it transports people safely, not just more people faster. Many cities in Northwest Arkansas are developing comprehensive multi-modal transportation plans that encourage cycling.

Policy

The BCO hopes to 'grow' cycling and increase the safety of ALL road and trail users by introducing bicycle driver education into our daily lives. Though the BCO recognizes the importance of effective, safe, connecting infrastructure for cyclists, we also recognize that bicycle driver education can have an immediate and drastic effect on the safety of a cyclist behavior. Cyclists who learn to follow the rules of the road and trails will lead healthier, safer, less stressful lives, and be more inclined to include bicycle transportation into their daily lives.

Contact

Bicycle Coalition of the Ozarks
P.O. Box 4173
Fayetteville, AR 72702
bco@bconwa.com
479-2001679

No Hike is Complete Without...



Feeding the Goats or a...



Pizza from Frank's
Wood-Fired Oven!

Ozark Highlands Trail Association



March 27, 2013

Mount Kessler Greenways
% Frank Sharp
2062 Smokehouse Trail
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Frank:

On behalf of the Ozark Highlands Trail Association, let me state unequivocally that we are in full support of you and your efforts to preserve Mt. Kessler Greenways for the community. OHTA was established in 1981 by Mr. Tim Ernst and a handful of volunteers to “build, enjoy, and maintain” the Ozark Highlands Trail for the enjoyment of generations of hikers and outdoor enthusiasts in perpetuity and today, we take that responsibility as seriously and intensely as our founder and his original group demonstrating that commitment by currently spending over a 1,000 hours annually maintaining the OHT.

Our members including myself have many times visited and hiked Mt. Kessler and observed the raw beauty of the flora and landscape and consider your endeavor valiant, noble, and necessary for the community to come together in support of this pristine preserved wilderness within our increasingly urban growth area. The OHT has grown in popularity over the years and we are witness to an increasing appetite of our youth to have wild scenic but accessible places to get away and recreate in solitude and what you are proposing with Mt. Kessler is very much in line with that same vision. The proximity of Mt. Kessler to our members has only heightened our excitement over the prospect of having mountainous hiking trails available.

Count on me and our membership to stand with you in this endeavor and render our assistance and support.

Best personal regards and your friend in the cause of conservation,

Mike R Lemaster

Mike R. Lemaster, President
Ozark Highlands Trail Association



Hare Mountain Hike-In

October 2012



INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION

March 22, 2013

Mayor Lioneld Jordan
City of Fayetteville
113 West Mountain Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Mayor Jordan,

I am writing on behalf of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) to express IMBA's support for the conservation of non-motorized recreational opportunities through the purchase of the Mt. Kessler Reserve, 387 acres of the former Southpass development. This trail system provides a year-round opportunity for thousands of trail users every month to easily and safely access natural environments.

IMBA US is a non-profit educational organization whose mission is to create, enhance and preserve great mountain biking experiences. IMBA staff who have experienced the existing trail system – accessible to not only mountain bikers but hikers, runners, dog walkers, bird watchers and other outdoor enthusiasts – consider the trails to be world class and sustainably built and designed.

The Mt. Kessler trails increase the quality of life for all Northwest Arkansans by offering countless opportunities for fit, active, and fulfilled lifestyles; and truly complement the variety of other exemplary trail systems in nearby Bentonville, Devil's Den State Park, and the Buffalo River Headwaters. Each of these systems offers a different experience to trail users. Northwest Arkansas is already considered a "hotspot" for outdoor recreation, and preserving the Mt. Kessler Reserve would add to this reputation.

I strongly urge you to consider the purchase of Mt. Kessler as an investment in the health and wellness of the Northwest Arkansas community. In addition, the trails on Mt. Kessler Reserve will continue to offer positive economic inputs into Northwest Arkansas from local and out-of-state trail-centered tourism and business members; as well as educational opportunities for all ages. With this purchase, that investment will only grow.

IMBA would like to join the University of Arkansas Departments of Biological Sciences, Crop, Soil & Environmental Sciences, Entomology and Poultry Science; University faculty, students and alumni; City of Fayetteville Urban Forestry Advisory Board; Ozark Off Road Cyclists; Friends at Slaughter Pen Trails; NWA Hiking Club; Ozark Highland Trail Association; Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association; Ozark Society; Bicycle Coalition of the Ozarks; Beaver Lake Water District; and many other community members in encouraging you to purchase the Mt. Kessler Reserve.

Please feel free to contact me if you'd like to discuss the benefits of this potential purchase further.

Sincerely,

Richard N. Cook
Director of Development

Cc: Frank Sharp
2062 S. Smokehouse Trail
Fayetteville, AR 72701



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

Office of the Chancellor

April 3, 2013

COPY

Mr. Richard N. Cook
International Mountain Bicycling Association
P. O. Box 7578
Boulder, CO 80302

Dear Mr. Cook:

Thanks so much for your recent letter regarding the purchase of the land on and adjacent to Mt. Kessler as the University of Arkansas considers its options to build an outdoor sports complex. I appreciate your interest in the "Natural State."

I couldn't agree with you more that Mt. Kessler and the geographical area—with its extensive and sophisticated trail systems and easy access to the natural environment—provides the ideal setting for outdoor recreation of all kinds. Please know we are well aware of what the preservation of the 387 acres would mean to solidify this region's reputation as a "hot spot" for outdoor activity and send a clear message that the university values the importance of maintaining the historical site.

As I've told Frank Sharp and other Northwest Arkansas community leaders whom you mention in your letter, the purchase price of the property, total cost of construction (including infrastructure), and expansion and annual maintenance costs for the mass transit remain huge considerations for the university.

Many thanks again for your letter. Best wishes.

Sincerely,

G. David Gearhart
Chancellor

c: Frank Sharp



Without question, Keda Steinert is Mt. Kessler's Runner-of-the-Year! Keda teaches third grade at St. Joseph's School in Fayetteville. To unwind after a hectic day with her third-graders, Keda usually runs the eight and a half miles of trails four or five days a week!

Kathlene, Keda's mother, is a businesswoman, and also uses the trails and woods of Mt. Kessler to unwind – at a slightly slower pace.

Keda is getting married on Saturday, April 13th, 2013, and her husband, Jamie, proposed to her on Mt. Kessler!

09/17/2012

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,

I have recently been informed that the University is looking at & evaluating four sites for its outdoor recreation intramurals program. One of those sites is the former Southpass development on MT Kessler.

There are many reasons why I ^{hope} ~~hope~~ this is your choice. Mt Kessler is a place I love!! I - we - have often gone there for running and hiking on the fabulous well maintained trails. Expanding this beautiful asset for our community would be such a great bonus for UofA students & the Fayetteville community.

I feel the purchase of the former Southpass development will greatly benefit the University community as well as the city of Fayetteville.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely

Kathleen Steinert

Kedar S. Steinert

834 N Greg Ave
Fayetteville AR
72701



The NWA Hiking Group



April 15, 2013

Dear Frank;

On behalf of the NWA Hiking Group, I would like to fully endorse your efforts to preserve the Greenways acres on Mt Kessler. Your vision for this land complements the existing plans the City and University of Arkansas have. Further, it illustrates how lovers of Nature can come together to provide all of us a natural resource in our back yard that promoted education, sports, and a variety of outdoors recreation.

NWA Hiking has been hiking the trails of Mt Kessler for years. At least once annually we explore Rock City and the rest of the mountain and always look forward to Frank's pizza afterwards. We are a committed supporter of preserving Mother Nature so it can be enjoyed by many different groups in different ways. We are also proud to support your efforts and envision many years of exploring Mt Kessler together.

Thank you Frank, for your never tiring efforts to save this local treasure!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug McKinney".

Doug McKinney

Organizer, NWA Hiking Group



To whom it may concern,

The Kessler trails have become a part of my experience of NorthWest Arkansas; a gem that needs to be preserved for those today and into the future.

I am an outdoor enthusiast, drawn to locations that fulfill my desire to experience and enjoy the wonders of nature. NorthWest Arkansas has blossomed over the years to cater to those who have a passion for the outdoors, opening an opportunity to expand that niche with the addition of the Kessler trail.

I spent my childhood and adolescence in NorthWest Arkansas, beginning a lifelong passion of mountain biking. I have since moved to various areas of the country, from Oregon to Georgia riding trails all over the country, yet always come home to the trail I love the most. I spent my undergraduate career on a collegiate mountain bike racing team, riding trails in fifteen states, yet to this day call Kessler my overall favorite.

I currently attend the University of West Georgia as a graduate student and understand the importance of extracurricular activities provided by a school. I am a member of the University of West Georgia cycling club, a student organization providing social connection with a diverse group of students and cultivating a sense of pride for the university I attend. As an outdoor haven, Kessler provides students the opportunity to connect with the community in which they live through club or student organized activities such as running, mountain biking, hiking, geocaching, and outdoor nature classrooms. I understand retention is an issue most schools grapple with and the addition of a trail system in which clubs and organizations utilize is a proactive option in cultivating an experience for students to call the U of A home.

Kessler is a piece of NorthWest Arkansas to be treasured. I have come to love the Kessler trails and hope in the future others will be able to experience the same. If you would like more input regarding my personal experience with Kessler or thoughts on the applicability to the university/community feel free to contact me at cyclist.for.life@gmail.com

Best Regards,

Rachel Millsop

Rachel Millsop is a current graduate student at the University of West Georgia studying Psychology. Through her educational endeavors she plans to pursue a career in wilderness therapy focusing on autism spectrum and other neurobiological disorders.

Alongside her educational endeavors she pursues a life full of the outdoors. Throughout her undergraduate career she raced on a collegiate mountain bike team, earning a USA National Championship title in the 2010 Mountain Bike Collegiate Nationals. She has raced and ridden trails from coast to coast, building a solid repertoire of knowledge and experience in mountain biking. In 2012 she helped start the University of West Georgia cycling club, encompassing a variety of cycling disciplines for all levels and interests in cycling.

She maintains strong ties to the Northwest Arkansas area, visiting multiple times throughout the year. As her outdoor interests increase her ventures into new areas with continue to proliferate; yet outdoor sanctuaries such as the Kessler trail will draw her back for years to come.



Copy To Come



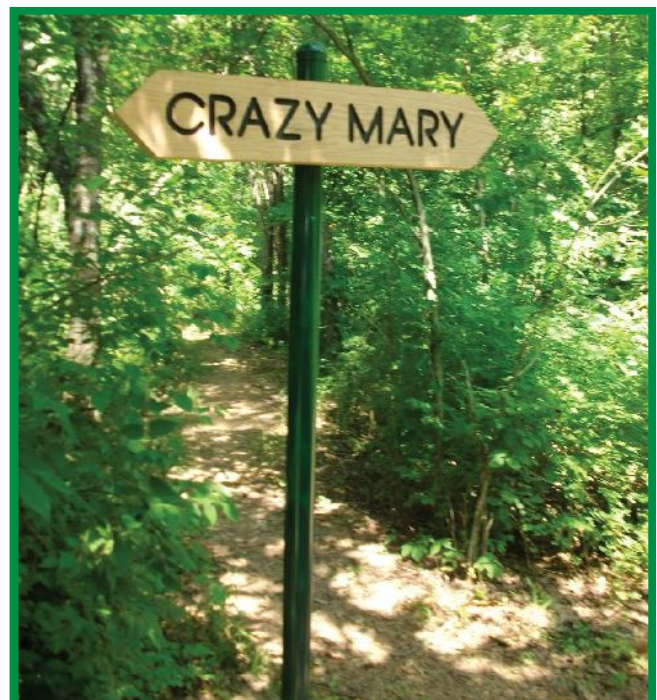
TRAILS ON MT. KESSLER

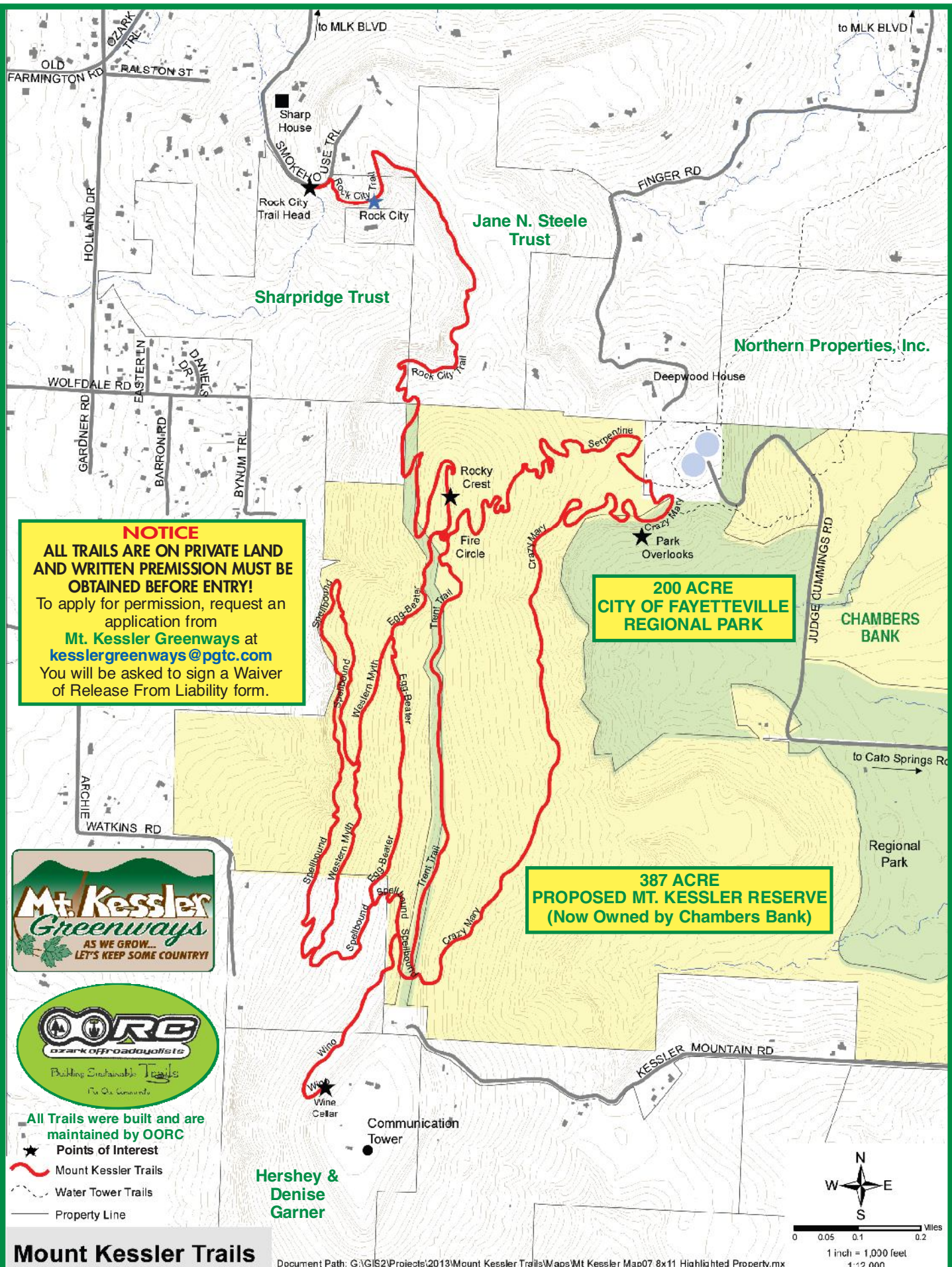
The Ozark Off Road Cyclists have constructed over 8 miles of mountain biking trails on Mt. Kessler. The trails have become extremely popular with hikers, trail runners and lovers of nature. Presently, access is through private property, but future access will be from the adjacent, 200 acre, regional park - when restroom facilities, parking, etc. are constructed. With public access and better visibility, it is felt that usage of the trails will rival that of Slaughter Pen Trails and the trails around Lake Fayetteville.

It is planned for these trails to connect with a southern extension of the Razorback Greenway, along Cato Springs Road (on the east) and to Ruppel Road on the west - allowing access to the regional park for students at Owl Creek School and the Boys and Girls Club.

Engraved trail signs, on native red oak lumber, are at present being installed at trail intersections (see right).

Mt. Kessler Greenways plan to work closely with Mr. Charles A. Flink, of Alta Planning and Design to insure that our trails mesh with future regional trails.





NOTICE
 ALL TRAILS ARE ON PRIVATE LAND
 AND WRITTEN PERMISSION MUST BE
 OBTAINED BEFORE ENTRY!
 To apply for permission, request an
 application from
Mt. Kessler Greenways at
kesslergreenways@pgtc.com
 You will be asked to sign a Waiver
 of Release From Liability form.

**200 ACRE
 CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE
 REGIONAL PARK**

**387 ACRE
 PROPOSED MT. KESSLER RESERVE
 (Now Owned by Chambers Bank)**



- All Trails were built and are maintained by OORC
- ★ Points of Interest
- Mount Kessler Trails
- - - Water Tower Trails
- Property Line

**Hershey &
 Denise
 Garner**



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles
 1 inch = 1,000 feet
 1:12,000

Mount Kessler Trails

Document Path: G:\GIS2\Projects\2013\Mount Kessler Trails\Maps\Mt Kessler Map07_8x11 Highlighted Property.mxd

MOUNT KESSLER RESERVE TRAIL MAP

Active Transportation Advisory Committee

The purpose of the committee is to review public comment and advise City Staff on the prioritization and land acquisition/easements for sidewalks and trails within the City. They are also responsible for adopting Sidewalk and Trails Master Plans. Recommendations relating to trails are forwarded to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

January 11, 2013

RE: Mt. Kessler Greenways

City Council,

During the January, 9th 2013 meeting of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee a presentation was given by Frank Sharp about the history of the land surrounding Mt. Kessler and the potential to preserve a 387-acre property known as "Mt. Kessler Reserve". The Active Transportation Advisory Committee supports the of the preservation of the Mt. Kessler Reserve to provide public access to trails and wilderness for the enjoyment of all.

In the near future, Ruppel Road will be extended from Persimmon south to MLK Jr. Blvd (Hwy 62) at the intersection of Smokehouse Trail. This new street is shown on the Fayetteville Alternative Transportation and Trails Master Plan to include wide sidewalks and/or bike lanes to provide a safe and accessible connection for bicycles and pedestrians from Owl Creek School, the Fayetteville Boys and Girls Club and surrounding neighborhoods to Mt. Kessler and the future Regional Park. With the future trail connectivity and existing network of natural surface trails, Mt. Kessler has the potential to become a significant destination for mountain biking, hiking and other recreational activities.

Our committee advises the City Council that this is a unique opportunity for Fayetteville to extend public access to the diverse ecological and recreation activities at Mt. Kessler.

Sincerely,



Alan Long
Active Transportation Advisory Committee, Chair

The committee is comprised of eight (8) voting members and seven (7) non-voting staff/support members as follows:

- (1) City Council member
- (1) Planning Commission member
- (1) Parks and Recreation Advisory Board member
- (5) Community/Citizens-at-Large members shall be qualified electors residing in the City of Fayetteville and appointed by the City Council, at least one of whom shall represent bicycle advocacy.
- (5) Non-voting Staff/Support members representing the City of Fayetteville: Transportation Division, Parks and Recreation Division, Fayetteville Police Department, Planning Division and Information Technology Divisions
- (1) Non-voting Washington County Planning Staff representative
- (1) Non-voting Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission representative



May 7, 2013

Chancellor G. David Gearhart
University of Arkansas
ADMN 425
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

As owners of Eastin Outdoors, Inc., a 25-year old landscape architecture consulting firm, my husband and I have facilitated the development of anywhere from 1-mile to 3,000-mile trail systems in both built and eco-sensitive environments within the United States.

Years of research into the benefits of communities that have a variety of well-developed trail systems are illustrative of a variety of community benefits – population health and wellness, quality environmental conservation, and economic development that attracts high wage-paying positions.

The 386-acre Mt. Kessler property offers a wealth of opportunity for recreation and research opportunities for university students and the general public alike. The proposed soft surface trail system allows for multiple types of recreation and enjoyment of natural resources offered by this unique property.

As you may be aware, every facility in our city that offers trails is beloved by our citizenry. So much so, that many existing areas are already at maximum use capacity. To link this icon with the rest of the city trails system and to the proposed regional park will create a gem for Fayetteville unlike anything currently available.

In my professional capacity, I have co-hosted a 1,200 attendee National Trails Symposium in Arkansas: received the National Geographic/Kodak, American Greenways Award for 10-state trail development; was awarded the Arkansas Governor's Council on Physical Fitness Health Award; and was given the Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association Presidential Award for promoting Arkansas parks and trails. I currently serve as the National Park Service liaison on the development of the Center for Natural Resource Innovation here in Fayetteville and was instrumental in securing a National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance office within the School of Architecture.

My husband, Ken, served as Landscape Architect, Outdoor Recreation Grants Administrator, and Trails Coordinator for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism for 14 years. He is a board member of the national Professional Trailbuilders Association, and has consulted, designed, and constructed facilities for more than 25 Arkansas communities in recent years.

As UA alumni, Fayetteville citizens, and experts in the “business of trails”, we wholeheartedly urge the University's assistance in the preservation of the Mt. Kessler property.

Kindest Regards,

Terry Eastin

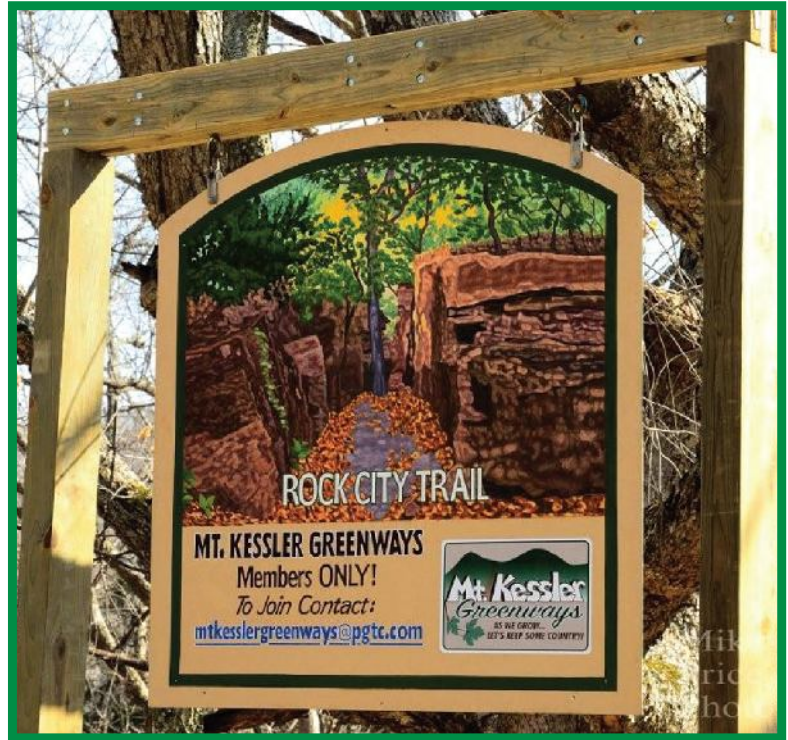


Terry Eastin, B.S.P.A., University of Arkansas

Terry Eastin, owner of Eastin Outdoors, Inc. is Executive Director of Mississippi River Trail, Inc. Through out her career, Terry has worked tirelessly to bring attention to the conservation, health, and economic benefits of urban trails. She is the recipient of the coveted Kodak American Greenways Award presented by National Geographic Society, Eastman-Kodak, and the Conservation Fund (2007) for her work on the Mississippi River Trail. She is the recipient of a Presidential Citation (Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association – 2008), and Delta Tourism Person of the Year (Runner-up – 2007). In 2008, Terry assisted with the creation of a bi-regional partnership with the National Park Service and other federal/state/regional and local agencies to expand and develop tourism, conservation education, and cross promotion of a broad variety of park/refuge facilities along the Mississippi River.

Terry served as Co-Chair of the 2008 National Trails Symposium in Little Rock, Arkansas, earning a “Visionary National Trails Co-Chair Award” and a “Medical Mile Visionary Award”. She is the former Chair of the Arkansas Trails Council, and recipient of the American Trails “Trails for Health” Award (2006). Creator of the Arkansas River Trail Medical Mile Project as a Consultant for the City of Little Rock, Terry worked with Heart Clinic Arkansas, a statewide group of 22 cardiologists, to raise \$2.1 million dollars for development of the nation’s first “outdoor linear health museum.”

Terry is also a member of the U.S. Bike Routes Task Force, League of American Bicyclists, American Trails, Rails to Trails Conservancy, Bicycle Advocacy of Central Arkansas, and a life member of the Ozark Highlands Trails Association.



TRAIL LOG

In February 2013, a metal box with a Trail Log was placed at the trailhead of the Rock City Trail. As of mid May, there have been 721 trail users, of which 69% were hikers, 16% were mountain bikers and 11% were trail runners. When parking and restrooms are available in the regional park, access will be from the east side of Mt. Kessler instead of through private property. With better access and visibility, the usage of the trails on Mt. Kessler should rival those at Lake Fayetteville and Slaughter Pen in Bentonville.*

The “others” category (6%) consists of groups such as school field trips to Mt. Kessler. We have had groups such as science students from Fayetteville High School and the National Science Teachers Association from the UA and Jenny Gammill, Director of K-12 Science and Technology of the Fayetteville School District. From the reaction of the science teachers and students, it is felt that Mt. Kessler, minutes from the school campuses, will become extremely popular as an outdoor classroom/laboratory.

The Trail Log asks for the ZIP Code of the users and 27% are from out of Fayetteville. With a significant number of trail users coming from outside Fayetteville, it might be possible to funding from the Advertising and Promotion Committee.

Surprisingly, 38% of trail users have an affiliation with the University of Arkansas! Due to this, it is hoped that the University of Arkansas will be another source of funding.



*See a Trail Log Summary in the Appendix

Charles A Flink
STILL TO COME

June, 24th 2013

Mt. Kessler Greenways

Re: Proposed Trail Connections to Mt. Kessler

Dear Mt. Kessler Greenways:

The Fayetteville Alternative Transportation and Trails (FATT) Master Plan identifies over 100 miles of future trails including two trails connecting from the Razorback Regional Greenway to Mt. Kessler and the future regional park as shown on the attached map. The most direct connection will extend from Frisco Trail at Walker Park west along the Town Branch Trail to the Cato Springs Trail and extend southwest crossing I-540 to Mt. Kessler through the future regional park. To the west, another trail is planned along Ruppel Road and will provide a connection to Mt. Kessler at Smokehouse Trail.

Sections of the Frisco Trail and Town Branch Trail will be under construction soon and the extension of Ruppel Road is currently in the design stages. As the regional park develops and if more land becomes available to the public, these trail connections will likely become high priority as the area becomes a major destination for the people of Fayetteville and the surrounding region.

Sincerely,



Matt Mihalevich
Trails Coordinator
City of Fayetteville



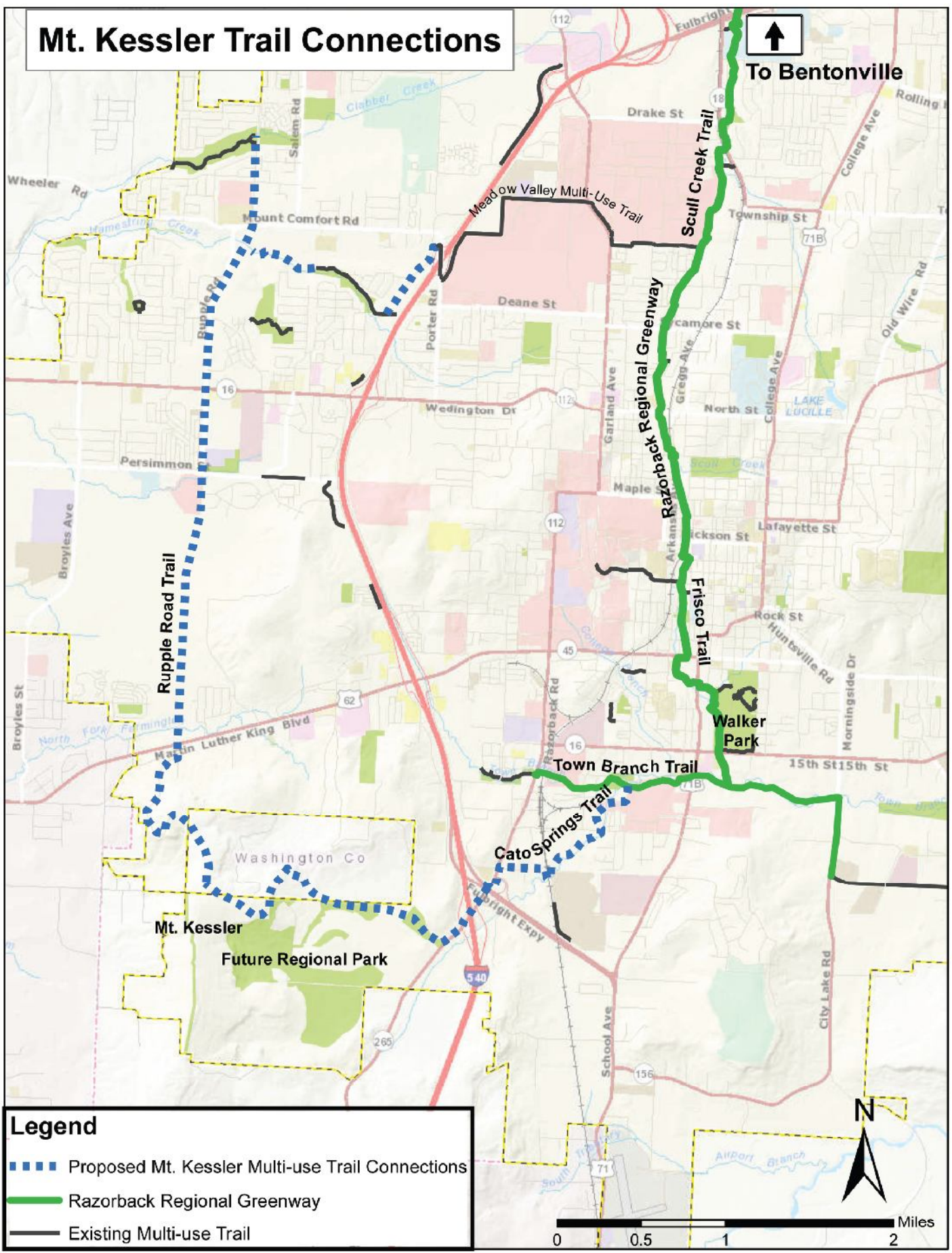
Dr. Stahle And Friends In Rock City



A Winter Hike Atop Mt. Kessler

Mt. Kessler Trail Connections

↑
To Bentonville



Legend

- ■ ■ Proposed Mt. Kessler Multi-use Trail Connections
- Razorback Regional Greenway
- Existing Multi-use Trail



Copy To Come

WATERSHED PROTECTION

The crest of Mt. Kessler divides the watersheds of the Illinois and White Rivers. The property will be kept in its natural state to protect the two watersheds.



Jason Kindall, Executive Director,
Beaver Watershed Alliance

"..The conservation of this natural landscape is critical to protecting the water quality, preserving habitat and contributing to the quality of life in the region."

Robert Morgan, PE, PhD
Manager of



Environmental Quality, Beaver Water District.

"As the provider of drinking water for more than 300,000 residents of Northwest Arkansas, Beaver Water District has a critical interest in the protection of our source of water, Beaver Lake. ..acquisition of this property could be a win-win for the University and the local community at large."

Dr. Delia Haak,
Executive Director
Illinois River
Watershed Partnership



"Conservation is the most cost effective watershed protection strategy. Therefore the acquisition of the Mt. Kessler site would contribute to maintaining the integrity of the watershed."



EPHEMERIAL STREAMS ON THE WESTERN SLOPES OF MT. KESSLER, AFTER A HEAVY RAINFALL, FLOWING FROM PROTECTED WOODLANDS INTO THE ILLINOIS RIVER



Beaver Water District

September 18, 2012

Chancellor G. David Gearhart
University of Arkansas
Administration 425
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Re: Mt. Kessler property

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

As the provider of drinking water for more than 300,000 residents of Northwest Arkansas, Beaver Water District has a critical interest in the protection of our source of water, Beaver Lake. The University of Arkansas is currently considering purchase of property on Mt. Kessler in Southwest Fayetteville for relocation of its outdoor recreation intramural facilities. I urge you to consider this acquisition positively, as well as acquisition of the remainder of the property currently available.

In 2009, the Northwest Arkansas Council hired the international environmental firm TetraTech to develop a watershed protection strategy for Beaver Lake. The Council was, and still is, concerned about the sustainability of Beaver Lake as the drinking water source for all of Northwest Arkansas, including the University. One of the core best practices recommended in the strategy is voluntary conservation of forest and farm land within the Beaver Lake watershed. Approximately three-quarters of the Mt. Kessler property falls within the watershed. Purchase of the Mt. Kessler property provides opportunity for the University to accommodate its intramural facilities as well as to provide for outdoor recreation and nature study. As a byproduct, a large parcel of land can be preserved in its natural state helping the region to implement the watershed protection strategy.

As an alumni of the University of Arkansas, I can assure you that I would have loved to have such a facility within walking distance of campus. Also, having such a facility near campus provides opportunity for undergraduate as well as graduate study and research. I am currently an adjunct faculty member in the Biological and Agricultural Engineering department. The class that I teach, Watershed Hydrology, could definitely use the property for study in watershed and stream processes. I am sure other departments could find similar uses in their particular fields of study.

In summary, acquisition of this property could be a win-win for the University and for the local community at large. I urge you to seize this opportunity for the good of our region.

Thank you,

Robert Morgan, PE, PhD
Manager of Environmental Quality
Beaver Water District

cc: Alan Fortenberry, CEO
Beaver Water District

BEAVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

December 20, 2012

Chancellor G. David Gearhart
ADMIN 425
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,

I was recently made aware of the opportunity for the University to acquire land on Mt. Kessler as a site for the outdoor recreation intramural program. From my understanding, the University's motivation in purchasing the property is for the expansion of athletic fields. In addition to space for fields, the 387 acres in the southwest corner of Fayetteville includes relatively untouched bluffs and forest ecosystems. Furthermore, much of the property is in the West Fork-White River sub-basin of the Beaver Lake watershed. The conservation of this natural landscape is critical to protecting water quality, preserving habitat, and contributing to the quality of life in the region. As the Executive Director of the Beaver Watershed Alliance, I am advocating in support of the purchase of this land.

We at the Alliance believe that the University has a vested interest in the conservation of this property. As one of the largest employers in Northwest Arkansas and as a leader in conservation and adding to region's "quality of place", it is critical that the University play an active role when possible in protecting our region's drinking water supply. That opportunity is before us, as land conservation is the most cost effective watershed protection strategy. Therefore the acquisition of the Mt. Kessler site would contribute to maintaining the integrity of our watershed. This would be an excellent way for the University to continue taking steps to ensure that the water quality of Northwest Arkansas as well as the ecological function of a very unique land parcel on the Beaver Lake watershed is protected for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Jason Kindall
Executive Director

P.O. Box 319 / Goshen, Arkansas 72735 / (479) 966-9391
e: info@beaverwatershedalliance.org
www.beaverwatershedalliance.org

About the Alliance

The Beaver Watershed Alliance was formed in 2012 to establish programming to maintain high quality drinking water in Beaver Lake and improve water quality on the Beaver Lake Watershed. The Alliance represents a diverse stakeholder groups from agriculture, conservation, education, water utilities, technical and science, business and local government groups working together for the cause of clean water.



Chancellor G. David Gearhart
University of Arkansas ADMIN 425
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,

We were recently made aware of the opportunity in the Illinois River Watershed for the University of Arkansas to acquire land on Mt. Kessler as a site for the outdoor recreation intramural program. From our understanding, the University's motivation in purchasing the property is for the expansion of athletic fields. In addition to space for fields, the 387 acres in the south west corner of Fayetteville, includes relatively untouched woods and bluffs. Much of the landscape is in the Illinois River Watershed.

The conservation of this natural landscape is critical to protecting water quality, preserving habitat, and contributing to the quality of life in the region. As the Illinois River Watershed Partnership, a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the integrity and health of the Watershed, we are advocating in support of the University's purchase of this land.

We believe that the University has a vested interest in the conservation of this property. As one of the largest employers in the region and as leader in conservation and adding to Northwest Arkansas's "quality of place", it is critical that the University play a prominent role in protecting our region natural resources. Conservation is the most cost effective watershed protection strategy. Therefore the acquisition of the Mt. Kessler site would contribute to maintaining the integrity of our watershed. This would be an excellent way for the University to continue taking steps to ensure that the water quality of Northwest Arkansas is protected for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Dr. Delia Haak
Executive Director

PO Box 8506 Fayetteville, AR 72703

A CHORUS of SUPPORT for the MOUNT KESSLER RESERVE!



Last night I was up on Kessler Mountain, in southwest Fayetteville, in a spring rain, with Mitchell Pruitt, he of 311 Arkansas bird species in one year, now UA-Fayetteville freshman. We were not birding. We were looking for spotted salamanders.

We found them, plus a bonus: a robust Greek chorus of spring peepers. Did anyone mention it was January 29th?

There is an effort to save at least 400 acres of rugged, rocky top Kessler as park and natural area. Part of the mountain holds an old growth forest of chestnut oak. On top there is an elfin forest of stunted post oaks and a shale glade with native grasses.

Fayetteville is growing up the slopes and beyond. In terms of habitat protection, it is now or never. The efforts to protect Kessler are headed up by my old friend Frank Sharp, he of the famous Ozark Mountain Smokehouse.

Come spring, Neotropical migrants will dominate the rocky slopes. Based upon birding over the years, it will be Summer Tanagers, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Yellow-throated Vireos, Black-and-white Warblers, Indigo Buntings, Eastern Wood-Pewees, Great Crested Flycatchers, White-breasted Nuthatches, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, probably Wood Thrushes, and the like.

This list will swell temporarily as Neotropical migratory songbirds pass through Fayetteville for nesting elsewhere: Ovenbird, Worm-eating Warbler, Hooded Warbler.

Mitchell and I had Kessler more or less to ourselves last night. Actually, Kessler belonged to spotted salamanders and peepers. Neotropical songbirds lie in the immediate future. We got to enjoy an ancient rite.

Portland, Oregon, where my daughter Ariel lives, saved a 5,000 acre forest years ago. This expansive green space is an internationally renowned springboard for making Portland one of the most livable cities in the world.

Yes, cities need businesses, jobs, and neighborhoods. Cities that work also require expansive green as an essential raw material fueling productivity. Otherwise, they are vast prisons shackling our genius and spirit.

So about the future: based upon what we do and how well we understand our self-interest as a community, Kessler can be where salamanders walk to ephemeral pools after heavy rains and where Neotropical songbirds continue ancient Ozark Mountains ways. And also where common folks like you and I enjoy them.

In this process, we refresh our spirits. That's what I hear in that Greek chorus of peepers.

Joseph C. Neal January 30, 2013





FAYETTEVILLE NATURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

Because of a passion for preserving a heavily wooded hillside in Fayetteville, a small group of Fayetteville citizens gave birth to a new organization in early 2003 that has completed several impressive projects in its short history.

The members of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association have contributed over \$500,000 to the City of Fayetteville toward the conservation of more than 130 acres of natural areas. Contributors have grown to over 800. Our group also developed an innovative method for identifying and ranking natural areas using a sophisticated GIS mapping system that has won regional and national awards. We recently completed development of a Green Infrastructure Plan for our area that is an important part of Fayetteville's City Plan 2035 and also won a national award. We are working with the City Parks Department to reclaim about 40 acres of an upland prairie on the Butterfield Trail and improving access to the Brooks-Hummel Nature Reserve. FNHA recently established the Founders Scholarship Endowment to help young residents attend the summer naturalist programs at the Ozark Natural Science Center.

Max, Margo Heinzelmann, Bob and Sara Caulk and Bob Harpster



The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, Inc. is dedicated to conserving natural areas of Fayetteville and its environs for the benefit of present and future generations.

Chancellor G. David Gearhart
University of Arkansas ADMIN 425
Fayetteville, AR 72701

September 15, 2012

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,

It has come to our attention that the University is evaluating sites for the outdoor recreation intramural program and that one of these sites is on Mt. Kessler adjacent to the proposed Fayetteville regional park. This presents a strategic opportunity to contribute to the future quality of life for the University community and the region's citizens.

Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association is an advocate for the Mt. Kessler Greenway on the south west corner of Fayetteville. The east side of Fayetteville has significant greenspace which includes Mt. Sequoyah Woods, Lake Fayetteville, Lake Sequoyah and Lake Wilson. Population growth to the west has made protecting greenspace on the west side of town a priority. Today, three property owners on Mt. Kessler have put over 200 acres in conservation/agricultural easements and the City of Fayetteville has 200 acres for a regional park plus a corridor on the ridge line for a trail. A University of Arkansas purchase of property on Mt. Kessler to relocate its outdoor recreation intramural facilities would be a welcome addition. There is, however, an additional 460 acres of property owned by Chambers Bank containing woods, bluffs and trails that we hope can be preserved for future generations.

Chambers Bank owns the property due to foreclosure and would probably provide a good price to the University if they would purchase the whole property. This could help the University meet the urgent needs created by the recent and planned growth for the Fayetteville campus. About 30 acres along Cato Springs would be a superb location for student housing. Using the balance of the land to add hiking, biking, running and nature study to its outdoor recreation program is a low cost way to promote student and staff health improvements. The Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association and, we are sure, other local volunteer groups would partner with the University to unlock the potential quality of life benefits.

Sincerely,

Bob Caulk

Chairman

Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association.

October 2, 2012

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,



I'll wear my emeritus professor and president of the Ozark Society hat for this e-mail. I am writing on behalf of our 1,000 Ozark Society members in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, 300 of whom live in northwest Arkansas. We support the petition of Frank Sharp and many other individuals and organizations that the University purchase the land of the former Southpark development, not only 200 acres to be used for intramural athletic fields but the remaining 460 acres to become a nature preserve and passive recreational area with hiking trails.

Let me present an aspect of this that perhaps you haven't heard from others. One of my daughters attended Duke University and I hiked in the Duke Forest, a 700-acre nature preserve and outdoor laboratory. I looked further into how many U. S. colleges and universities have similar resources. The number is substantial. Just to name a few they are Binghamton University (190 acres); Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and the University of Massachusetts (sharing of 65 acres); Cornell (2,800 acres); Emory (100 acres); Auburn (120 acres); Indiana University (185 acres); University of Northern Florida (382 acres); University of Wisconsin - Madison (300 acres); Stanford (1,189 acres); Kent State (127 acres), Iowa State (76 acres). The list goes on and on. In general these have hiking trails and are also used for research in the natural sciences. Such a resource would be a plus in moving our University further up the list of top schools.

Having such a resource close to campus would help in recruitment. I understand that a large percentage of high school seniors now look at how "green" a college or university is in making their selection. Our University has made great strides in this regard and a nature preserve would be a further high mark. It would also provide a place near the campus for hiking and perhaps mountain biking. I lead hikes for the Ozark Society and have hiked the trails on Kessler Mountain. With their bluffs, forests, wildflowers in the spring, hills, and views, they rival many of the trails in the Ozarks and along the Buffalo River. Our students are becoming more and more engaged in outdoor activities. If you are not completely aware of the latest trends, ask Jennifer Hazelrigs of the Outdoor Connection about the demand she is seeing for hiking and backpacking trips. A close-to-home resource would be great for this program.

I could continue but I think I've said enough. While I understand the Kessler Mountain property would cost more and is somewhat further from the University than some of the alternatives you are considering, I suggest that over the long term it is a much better choice.

Sincerely,

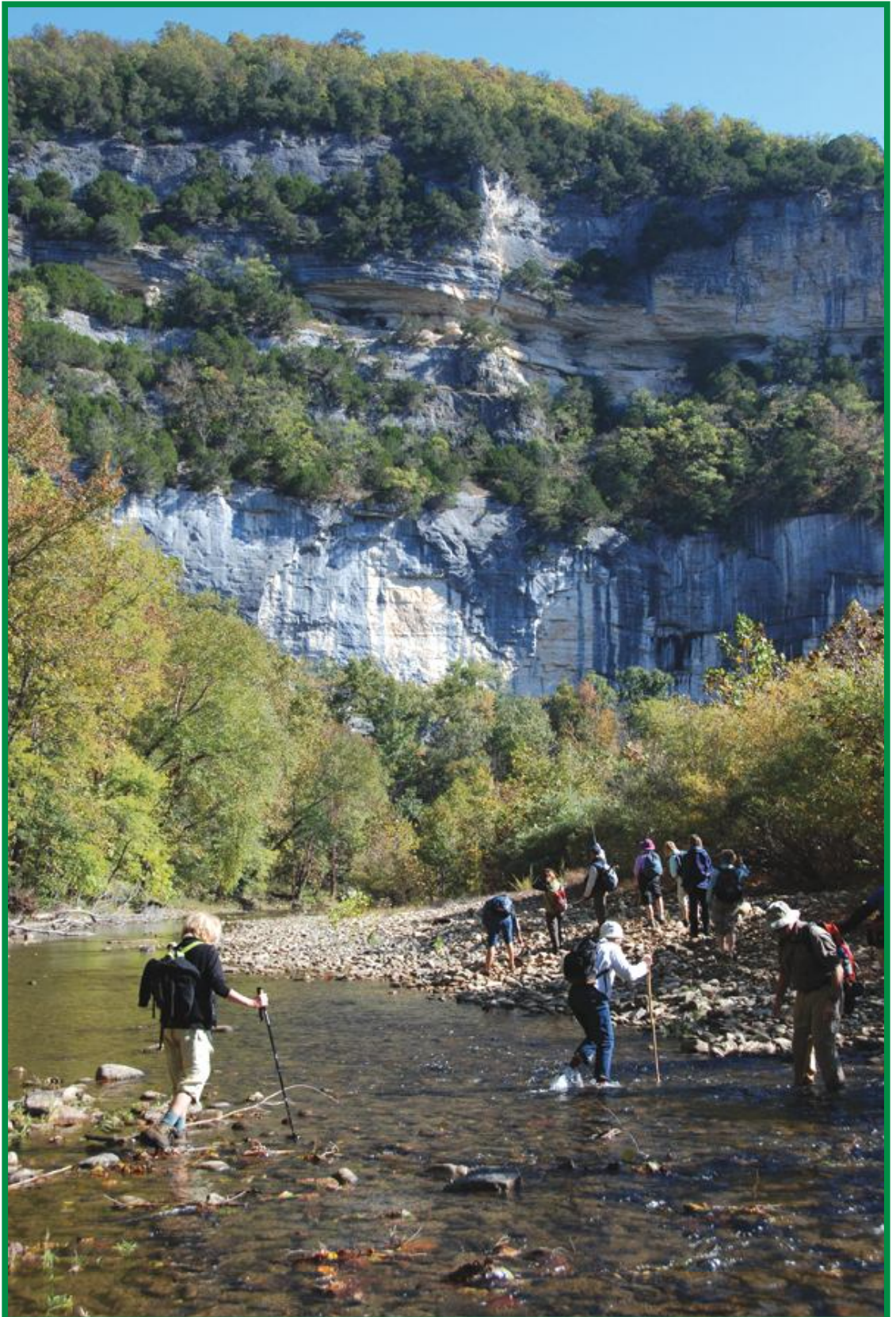
Robert Cross
President, Ozark Society
Research Professor Emeritus, Ralph E. Martin Department of Chemical Engineering

About the Ozark Society

The Ozark Society, Inc., was founded in 1962 by Dr. Neil Compton of Bentonville, an Ozark native, and a group of associates for the immediate purpose of saving the Buffalo River from dams proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It took ten years, but Congress passed legislation to create our nation's first "national river" in 1972 and it is now one of mid-America's most outstanding river-oriented attractions.

The Ozark Society has remained a strong regional organization because it has not allowed itself to be diverted from its principal purpose – the preservation of wild and scenic rivers, wilderness, and unique natural areas.

The Society's motto is 'Conservation- Education - Recreation' and all its activities revolve around this theme.



September 19, 2012

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,

I am writing to you about the Mt. Kessler Greenway, one of the last large and beautiful natural areas left in Fayetteville. I have hiked this mountain with Frank Sharp and others and my son, Andy, and his friends have biked it and built trails on it. It is a beautiful wooded mountain with gorgeous views from its ridges especially to the west. It is a special place.

In 2001, many of us realized how valuable areas such as Kessler Mountain are to this community when a large grove of ancient trees was destroyed to make room for the construction of two big box stores south of the NWA Mall. Shortly after this, several of us formed the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association (FNHA) so that citizens could work together to save these priceless areas for the future before they were lost forever. It wasn't much later that Mount Sequoyah Woods was put up for sale. The FNHA worked hard to raise money to help the City save this special urban forest and now it will be here for all future generations to enjoy. I see Mt. Kessler in much the same way. It is a mirror image of Mt Sequoyah but larger and on the west side of town. It really is a priceless part of our natural heritage and has so many potential uses. In some way, it needs to be preserved.

The University has some obvious uses for Mt. Kessler Greenway: Intra-mural fields and student housing, outdoor recreational courses and biological and environmental study (just as Professor Doug James has done on Mt Sequoyah). I also see other values. It could become the site of a retreat center, like a "Camp David". A peaceful place where faculty, students, staff and guests can get away from the hub-bub and noise of the main campus to meet, think, talk and share ideas. I'm sure that there will also be many other important uses for this special place that are not apparent now but will be in the future.

It is my hope that the University will take this great opportunity and secure all of the Mt Kessler Greenway, for today AND for tomorrow.

Sincerely yours,

Pete Heinzelmann

Dr. Peter (Pete) Heinzelmann graduated from high school in Knoxville, Iowa, where his particular interests were the great outdoors and medicine. After obtaining a bachelor's degree from Grinnell College, he enrolled in the University of Iowa Medical School, where he met Margo. Pete says *"The luckiest thing that ever happened to me was meeting Margo, and the smartest thing was marrying her!"*)



While serving in the U. S. Army in Korea, the couple had their two children, Sarah and Andy. Pete chose to do a residency in orthopedic surgery at the UAMS in Little Rock. The Heinzelmann family then moved to Fayetteville, where he joined the Ozark Orthopedic Clinic and began a 31 year career, specializing in hand surgery.

Committed to the preservation of the natural beauty that drew them to northwest Arkansas, the Heinzelmanns were active in formation of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association (FNHA) in 2003, where Pete served as its first president. FHNA spearheaded the successful drives to preserve 100 wooded acres on Mt. Sequoyah and 14 acres north of Lake Lucille in Fayetteville.

Pete and Margo established the Fayetteville Natural Areas Foundation Fund to provide grants to acquire parkland within the city.



Chancellor David Gearhart
425 ADMN
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Lower Mississippi Flyway
Regional Office
34 East Center Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701
Tel: 479-527-0700
Fax: 479-527-0701
www.audubon.org

February 5, 2013

RE: Potential purchase of acreage – South Pass

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

I am the Deputy Director of the National Audubon Society's programs along the Mississippi Flyway. The National Audubon Society (Audubon) is an American, non-profit, environmental organization dedicated to conservation. Incorporated in 1905, Audubon is one of the oldest of such organizations in the world and uses science, education and grassroots advocacy to advance its conservation mission.

I am also a University of Arkansas graduate and currently occupy a small regional office on the historic square here in Fayetteville. Hunter Haynes, Audubon Arkansas State Board member, stopped by my office recently and shared with me a set of plans focused around Kessler Mountain. He also informed me that the UA was considering the purchase of acreage south-west of the University, near Kessler Mountain, for expansion of athletic fields. I must admit that I am far removed from the details of the various options before the University, but would like to add my thoughts to the list of letters and commenters that Hunter showed me in his file. I only hope that I am not too late to weigh in.

In the Mississippi Flyway region, Audubon is proud to host 5 state offices, 120 local chapters, 10 Nature Centers, and 59 Globally Important Bird Areas. It is a great region and we get to work in a lot of fantastic communities, including Fayetteville. What interests me most about what I saw from Hunter was the opportunity to couple land protection, through conservation easement, with dedicated recreational open space.

As a non-profit manager I understand the financial challenges of these times, but I also understand the need to gauge investments across a broad set of values and potential returns. In the last fifteen years of building a network of over 47 Nature Centers, Audubon has had to hone these skills and improve our evaluation techniques to look at quality of life, environmental services, and other non-traditional measures of Return on Investments. I encourage you to also think broadly with the opportunity before you around Mount Kessler.

Best Regards,

Kevin Pierson

March 11, 2013

Chancellor G. David Gearhart, University of Arkansas
The Honorable Lioneld Jordan, Mayor of Fayetteville
The Honorable Members of the Fayetteville City Council
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Dear Community Leaders:

I am writing to support the Mt. Kessler Reserve project, which will greatly expand and enhance the proposed Regional City Park.

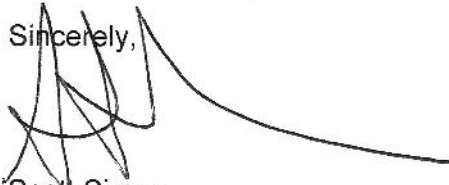
This project aims to purchase and conserve 387 acres of woods and bluffs, with more than eight miles of nature trails, on Mt. Kessler. It will provide a beautiful setting for those who are interested in hiking, trail running, biking, nature study and the preservation of natural areas. Hundreds of acres that are conserved in their natural beauty will be a treasure for the citizens of Fayetteville and all of northwest Arkansas for years to come. The Nature Conservancy supports the plan to use this area for outdoor teaching and research, for watershed protection, for outdoor recreation opportunities.

The natural beauty of northwest Arkansas attracts worldwide attention, boosting the economic development of the region. This project provides the opportunity to be strategic in preserving the quality of life in this beautiful setting.

The timing of the project is excellent, as it complements and expands plans by the City of Fayetteville to create a regional city park for sporting and leisure activities. I am grateful to Mr. Frank Sharp for his insight regarding this opportunity to go beyond the basic city park concept and to develop a model that showcases the beauty and value of the natural environment.

I commend all of you who are committing your resources and collaborating to preserve the Mt. Kessler property. You are ensuring a gift beyond measure to future generations of northwest Arkansas.

Sincerely,


Scott Simon
Director

September 20, 2012
Chancellor G. David Gearhart
University of Arkansas
Administration 425
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Sir:

As an Emeritus faculty member of the Landscape Architecture Department, I would like to add my thoughts to the question of the University of Arkansas' opportunity to purchase what was once the proposed Southpass Development, now owned by Chambers Bank.

In looking at the quality of this property for outdoor recreation intramural facilities, it seems that such activities would occur on the lower slope. However, there are several reasons why it may be important to purchase the whole property.

Part of the lower slope could be privately developed as student housing or quality condominiums accessible by the Razorback bus system. In the future, this development might help to raise funds for building the intramural facilities. Since 200 acres of the land already belongs to the city, it is likely that some of the development for public recreation will use grant funds to improve the site.

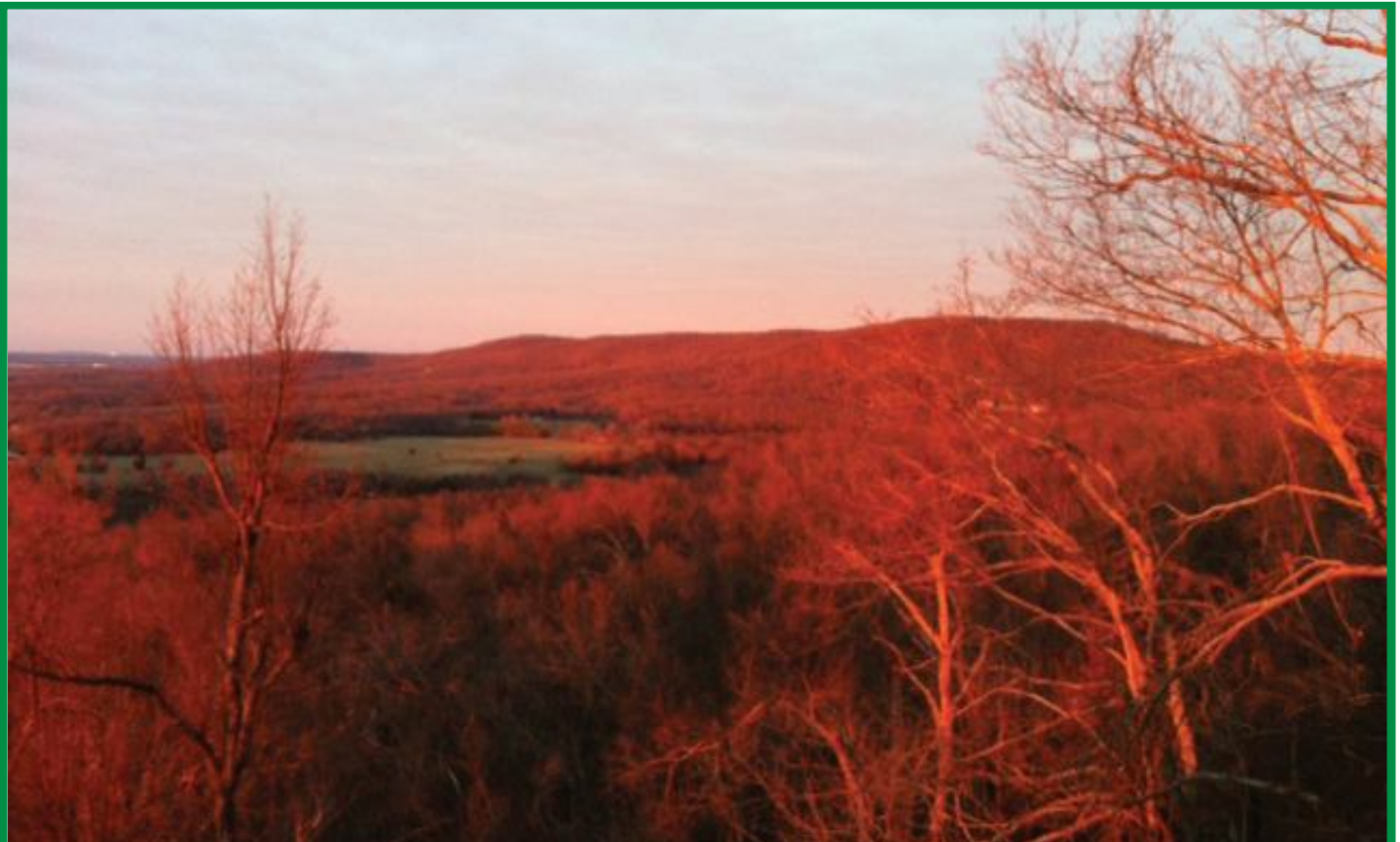
The upper slope is a natural area of woods, bluffs and trails. Planning for use and maintenance of this area can be a scientific educational process for the Environmental Science Program in the School of Agriculture, the Landscape Architecture Program, and programs at the College of Education and Health Sciences. Students with this background will be able to work in private and public arenas. State agencies could assist faculty and students in learning to assess this site and manage it. This effort would produce graduates with the kind of knowledge needed for our Arkansas tourist industry in "The Natural State".

I serve on the Board of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, and in 2006 was the Project Director for a study entitled the Urban Forest Conservation Assessment for Fayetteville, Arkansas. It used GIS mapping for ranking of properties in and around the city. We found that this Mt. Kessler property had the highest "aquatic" ranking in our study area, due to its streams and ponds. The area also had a high "terrestrial" ranking.

It is crucial for our future that the City of Fayetteville and the University of Arkansas continue to be a nationally known resource both economically and educationally. As our growth continues, we don't wish to find that our university has been left in the center of a city that has become environmentally degraded and less economically viable. A far reaching decision such as this will keep that from happening.

Sincerely,

Karen Rollet Crocker, Emeritus



Mt. Kessler at Sunset

Photo by Eric Yates

Northwest Arkansas Pathology Associates, P.A. NWAPath.COM

390 E. Longview St., Fayetteville, AR 72703 Phone: 479-442-0144 Fax: 479-442-4557

Chancellor Gearhart:

It is my understanding that the University is looking to purchase 180 acres of the failed Southpass project for intramural sports. This is a great idea, but what would make it even better for the community is for the University to purchase the additional 460 acres that can continue to be used for hiking, biking, running and just plain walking and enjoying nature. This additional purchase would allow the university and the surrounding communities to continue to enjoy and use some high quality outdoor space. Preservation of the outdoor spaces in our area makes our area a prime location and drawing point for people to relocate to our area. The people that I know who are professors and/or students at the U of A use the parks and trails and see this as a benefit to being in our part of Arkansas. Please consider adding the additional 460 acres to your purchase.

Thank you for your consideration



Carolyn Crook, Ph.D., SC (ASCP), CHC
Executive Vice-President
Northwest Arkansas Pathology Associates, PA
390 E. Longview
Fayetteville, AR 72703

December 13, 2012

Chancellor David Gearhart
425 ADMN
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR. 72701

Subject: Southpass property

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

I am writing you about the potential acquisition of open lands close to the University near Kessler Mountain. As an Arkansas native and lifelong stakeholder in the University of Arkansas, I urge your support for the relatively undisturbed tracts adjacent to areas that would be developed as student athletic fields.

I have studied birds and plants there for many years, which included information that became part of the book *Arkansas Birds* (with Douglas James, University of Arkansas Press, 1986). My preparation for the geology chapter of my *History of Washington County, Arkansas* (Shiloh Museum, 1989) was aided by the chance to study formations on Kessler.

The Kessler Mountain properties adjacent the proposed athletic complex provides the best opportunity for the University to control an area with exquisite natural features only minutes from campus. Ecologically and environmentally, it makes sense to acquire and protect an opportunity for student and faculty to study of birds, plants, fossils, a pioneer landscape, plus a typical Ozark upland.

Kessler Mountain would not impose high transportation costs, like those often involved in reaching a study area. As importantly, would not impose high time costs on both faculty and students.

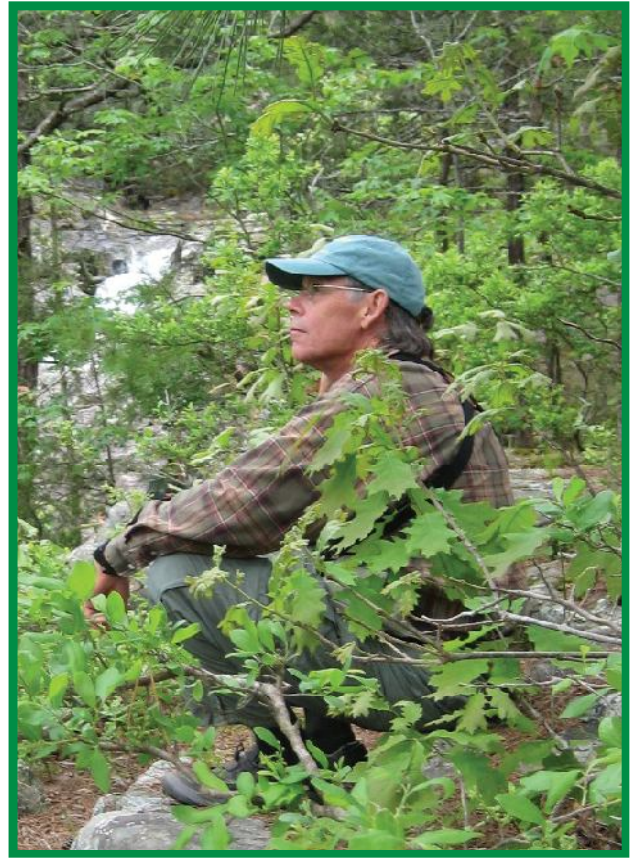
I am a stakeholder in the future of the University of Arkansas and it goes back to the University's origins. My relative Willis Hayden "Buck" Neal of Van Buren was among the first 8 graduates listed for 1876, and inscribed on the first block outside the formal east-facing entrance to Old Main. I hold 2 degrees from the University myself: BA History (1968) and MS Zoology (1992).

The upper portions of Kessler are much like descriptions of the hill where the AIU opened after the Civil War and what is now the crowded center of a growing campus. We need the open space still. Kessler Mountain will nurture future healthy growth and development. The acquisition would be very much in the long term interests of our institution.

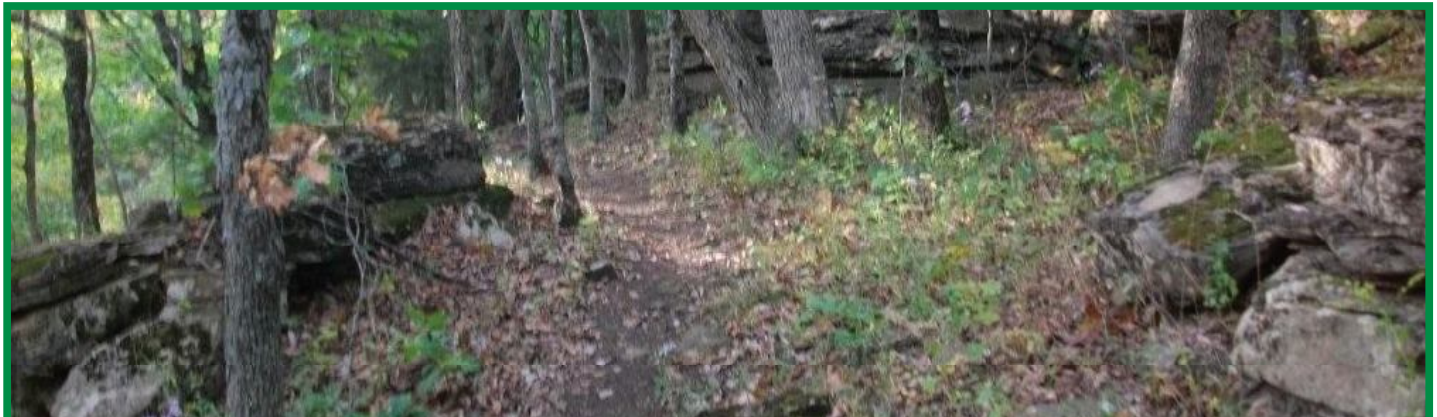
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH C. NEAL



Joe Neal grew up in Fort Smith, graduated from the University of Arkansas (BA History, 1968; MS Zoology 1992) and served as a wildlife biologist on the Ouachita National Forest. He is coauthor of *Arkansas Birds* (with Douglas James, University of Arkansas Press, 1986) and author of the general history section *History of Washington County Arkansas* (Shiloh Museum, 1989). He has one grown child, Ariel Kate Edelman Neal. He is a life member of Arkansas Audubon Society, the Ozark Society, and Wilson Ornithological Society. His hobbies include birding, outdoor sound recording, and digital photography, especially of native birds and flowers.



Nature Trail on Mt. Kessler Reserve



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Midwest Regional Office/ Arkansas Field Office
Rivers and Trails Program
112 West Center Street, Suite 700
Fayetteville, AR 72701

L74(MWR-P/RTCA)

COPY

January 18, 2013

The Honorable Lioneld Jordan
The City of Fayetteville, Arkansas
113 West Mountain Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Mayor Jordan:

I am a Landscape Architect with the National Park Service and the Fayetteville, AR Field Office contact for the N.P.S. Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA).

The Vision of RTCA is a network of parks, waterways, trails, greenways, and open spaces that links all Americans to the natural world and promotes quality of life. Our Mission is to assist community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation initiatives that lead to protected waterways, conserved open space, and the development of trails and greenways.

The ongoing efforts of Mt. Kessler Greenways toward preserving 387 acres on Mt. Kessler for conservation, natural resource education and trails development is an example of the type of community-led work that our program supports, because it would be another sign of the dedication already evident in Northwest Arkansas to connect its citizens to their land and water resources through conservation and outdoor recreation projects.

I have hiked the site with Frank Sharp of Mt. Kessler Greenways and Bob Caulk of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, and found it to be richly endowed with cultural, natural and scenic resources. The proximity of this project to the urban center of Fayetteville and the University of Arkansas make it ideally suited for providing access to such resources to great numbers of people.

The Fayetteville field office of RTCA is available to provide technical assistance and collaboration with community partners in the development of conservation assets similar to that being proposed by Mt. Kessler Greenways.

Sincerely,

Guy Headland

cc:

Mr. Frank Sharp, c/o Mt. Kessler Greenways, 2062 S. Smokehouse Trail, Fayetteville, AR 72701-7723



NORTHWEST ARKANSAS LAND TRUST

Dedicated to responsible use
of land and water.

Chancellor Gearhart and Mayor Jordan,

The Northwest Arkansas Land Trust (NWALT) is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization established in 2003 by a group of local business and conservation leaders who recognized that with the increasing development pressures and rapid land use changes in Northwest Arkansas, there was a need for protecting the natural and cultural resource values that define our region.

It is in that spirit that the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust joins with the Mt. Kessler Greenways Association in support of the proposed 387-acre "Mt. Kessler Reserve". This property presents our community with a unique opportunity to collaborate in preserving one of our region's most ecologically significant areas, a critical piece of a regional enduring green network.

The Northwest Arkansas Land Trust pledges our commitment and expertise to explore the proposed purchase and a potential role in the long-term protection of this outstanding property, much like the Wilson Springs Conservation Area and other properties that we steward, for the benefit of all current and future residents of Northwest Arkansas.

We strongly support the opportunity for this land to be used as an educational, ecological research, and outdoor recreation resource for the University of Arkansas, the City of Fayetteville, and the greater Northwest Arkansas region, while protecting its immense natural and cultural resource values.

Sincerely,

Terri L. Lane
Executive Director

www.nwalandtrust.org
tlane@nwalandtrust.org

Northwest Arkansas has a wealth of scenic, natural, and cultural assets, which the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust (NWALT) works to preserve. NWALT strives to promote efficient urban planning, sustainable conservation of natural resources, and protection of our region's abundant heritage.



Terri Lane, Executive Director

Terri was raised in Northwest Arkansas, on a small farm on Mt. Kessler. She is a graduate of the University of Arkansas with a degree in Environmental Soil and Water Sciences. Her career in conservation has included environmental education and small business ownership. She joined NWALT in July of 2012.

The mission of the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust is to provide a vehicle for donors and landowners to preserve land of agricultural, ecological, scenic, historic and recreational significance primarily in Northwest Arkansas.



**Planting a tree at the Arbor Day Farm on 4/25/09.
L/R: Karen Rollet-Crocker, Bob Caulk and Patti Erwin.**

**Patti S. Erwin, State Urban Forestry Coordinator
Arkansas Forestry Commission
2752 North Garland Avenue, Fayetteville, AR 72704**

Ms. Erwin is employed as the State Urban Forestry Coordinator for the Arkansas Forestry Commission and is responsible for establishing and directing program policy of the state urban forestry program. This involves managing grant programs, overseeing district arborists, green infrastructure planning, organizing state, regional and local training programs and presenting to various organizations.

Her position involves helping communities learn how to manage their trees and educating people about the benefits of trees. Programs she administers include the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Grant Program, the Tree City USA program as well as training and educational programs in arboriculture.

Ms. Erwin attended the University of Arkansas and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Landscape Design and Urban Horticulture. She continued with training in urban forestry at the University of Florida's Urban Forestry Institute and the National Arbor Day Institute's National Urban Forestry School. She was the City Horticulturist for the City of Fayetteville for 9 years. She is a certified arborist and the State Representative with the Southern Chapter International Society of Arboriculture. Natural Resource Planning is her private consulting business that provides tree assessments, tree appraisals and expert witness services.



ARKANSAS FORESTRY COMMISSION

2752 North Garland Avenue
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72704
(479) 442-4963 fax: (479) 587-1442

Joe Fox
State Forester

Hello Chancellor Gearhart,

It has been brought to my attention that the University is considering purchasing the property on Mt. Kessler to relocate the outdoor recreation intramural facilities. I believe that purchasing the entire property available would be a wise economic decision by the University.

This property ties in to an already existing conservation area for hiking, biking and wildlife habitat and as the trails continue to be developed in the City, students would have an incredible opportunity for being connected between the main campus and outdoor facility.

Outside Magazine had an article titled Outside University: The Top 40 and one of the main attractions to students was the opportunities to hike and bike in natural areas which this piece of property provides with the forest, hills, bluffs and trails.

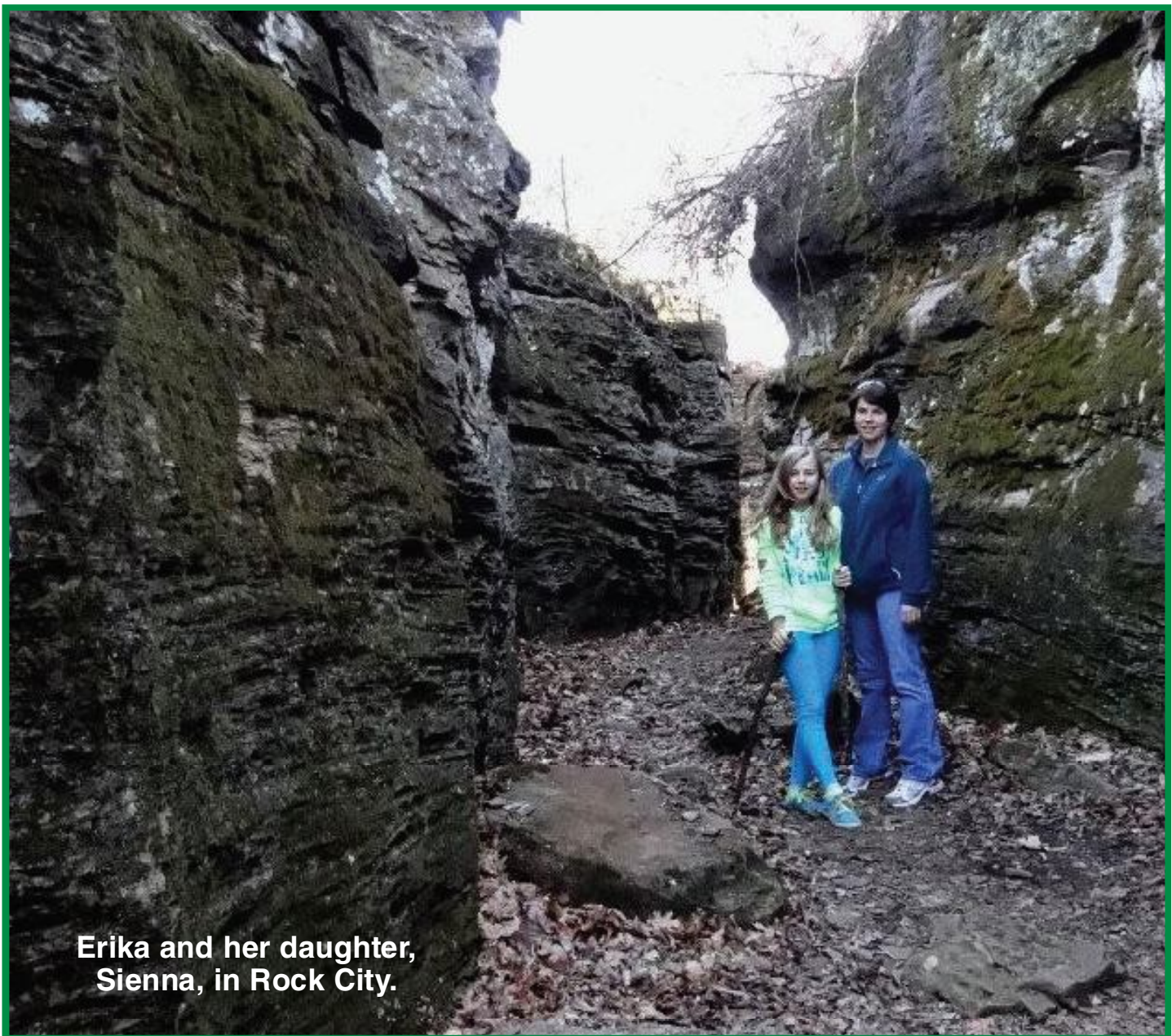
Educational wise, this property lends itself to providing many opportunities for various studies that the University offers and the convenience to the faculty and students would be a bonus as well. In addition, at some point if housing was part of the equation, I cannot imagine a student who would not want to live next to something as beautiful and engaging as this property.

I hope you will seriously consider purchasing all of the property available for the future of the University and the community.

Best regards,
Patti Erwin, Urban Forestry Coordinator
Arkansas Forestry Commission
Alumni 1982

Arkansas Urban & Community Forestry

The Urban and Community Assistance Program was authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 and amended by the 1990 Farm Bill. From this bill the Arkansas Forestry Commission created the Urban and Community Forestry Program to provide technical and financial assistance to local governments and others to develop urban forestry programs that protect and improve community forests and associated natural resources. The goal is to conserve working forest landscapes by building local capacity to insure that urban forests are managed to maximize their ability to clean air and water, conserve energy, reduce the impacts of urbanization, mitigate climate change, and make communities more sustainable for the citizens who live there.



**Erika and her daughter,
Sienna, in Rock City.**

March 16, 2013

I grew up in Fayetteville in the early 1980s and spent much of my time in the back seat of my father's bicycle, riding around northwest Arkansas. Our family regularly hiked around local trails on places such as Markham Hill and Mount Kessler and I have many fond memories of the natural beauty and the people we would meet.

After leaving for college, having a child of my own, and returning to Fayetteville, two decades later I now am able to enjoy walking with my parents and daughter through the same beautiful woods on Mount Kessler. Having such a treasure right here within the city limits is priceless to a busy working mother, who values family time in the outdoors. Watching my parents identify trees and fossils with their granddaughter, as they did with me 30 years ago, is something that I deeply appreciate.

In my opinion, preservation and educational use of this natural area would help "Keep Fayetteville Funky." I am reminded of other great cities I love to visit, such as Austin, Texas and Boulder, Colorado – cities that have made an effort to provide large amounts of natural green space for their residents to hike.

My only additional suggestion would be for the city to provide additional parking space for this area. Many residents enjoy these trails and at times there is insufficient room to park.

Sincerely,

Erika Gergerich



**DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS & TOURISM**

1 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
501-682-7777

Great River Road Division
501-682-1120
Arkansas.com

History Commission
501-682-6900 (TDD)
Ark-hvs.com

Human Resources Section
501-682-7742 (TDD)

Keep Arkansas
Beautiful Division
501-682-3507 (TDD)
KeepArkansasBeautiful.com

State Parks Division
501-682-1191 (TDD)
ArkansasStateParks.com

Tourism Division
501-682-7777 (TDD)
Arkansas.com

**Mike Beebe
GOVERNOR**

**Richard W. Davies
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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HISTORY COMMISSION

Robert Phelps
KEEP ARKANSAS
BEAUTIFUL

**AN EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY/
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/
AMERICANS WITH
DISABILITIES ACT
EMPLOYER**

Arkansas[®]

THE NATURAL STATE

March 22, 2013

Mr. Frank Sharp
Mt. Kessler Greenways
2062 S. Smokehouse Trail
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

RE: Mt. Kessler Greenways

Dear Frank,

Our program within the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism provides technical assistance and grants to local government for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreational facilities.

I support your efforts to preserve the natural character of a portion of Mt. Kessler for public enjoyment and education. Although our state has an abundance of natural areas, Mt. Kessler is particularly attractive due to close proximity to one of the fastest growing populations in the state. Its natural character and location at the western edge of Fayetteville provides a convenient opportunity for citizens and students to get outdoors and learn about northwest Arkansas's rich natural heritage.

I appreciate having the opportunity to hike the Mt. Kessler trail and was truly impressed with the area and the work accomplished by you and countless volunteers. Please feel free to call me at (501) 682-1301 if I may be of any assistance with continued efforts toward establishing this valuable outdoor recreation asset.

Sincerely,

John Beneke, Director
Outdoor Recreation Grants Program

KENNETH L. SMITH
469 WEST CLEBURN STREET
FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS 72701

SEPTEMBER 21, 2012

CHANCELLOR G. DAVID GEARHART
425 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
FAYETTEVILLE, AR 72701

DEAR MR. GEARHART :

I HEAR THAT CHAMBERS BANK HAS PUT THEIR
PROPERTY AT RESSLER MOUNTAIN UP FOR SALE
AT AN ATTRACTIVE PRICE.

I HOPE THAT THE UNIVERSITY, PARTNERING
WITH THE CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE, CAN TAKE ADVAN-
TAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY AND ACQUIRE THE ENTIRE
PROPERTY. IT COULD WELL SERVE THE UNIVERSITY'S
NEED FOR INTRAMURAL FIELDS, AND FOR A CLOSE-
TO-CAMPUS SITE FOR NATURAL HISTORY FIELD
STUDIES, ALSO FOR PROGRAMS RELATED TO
OUTDOOR RECREATION.

MANY OF US WHO SUPPORT THE UNIVERSITY
WOULD HOPE THAT YOU CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
THIS OPPORTUNITY.

SINCERELY,

Kenneth L. Smith

Ken Smith is the author-photographer of *The Buffalo River Country*, a classic description of the river now in its ninth printing. Smith also is the author of *Sawmill*, an award-winning history of cutting the virgin forest of the Ouachita Mountains in Arkansas and Oklahoma. For the Buffalo he has been a conservationist, park planner, and designer and construction supervisor for many of the river's hiking trails.





The purpose of the Environmental Action Committee is to address environmental concerns, promote a safe and healthy environment and maintain the natural beauty of the environment within the city.

City of Fayetteville Environmental Action Committee

January 10, 2013

RE: Mt. Kessler Greenways

City Council,

Members of the Environmental Action Committee recently had the privilege of touring Mt. Kessler and seeing first-hand the immense natural and cultural resource values this property holds. Upon review and consideration of the issue of whether the 387-acre property should be preserved as a "Mt. Kessler Reserve" as proposed by the Mt. Kessler Greenways Association, the Environmental Action Committee voted in our meeting of December 13, 2012, to support the Mt. Kessler Reserve and advise the City Council of our support.

The City of Fayetteville, and the greater Northwest Arkansas community, would benefit from the ecological services, water quality protection, and enduring green network linkage that this critical piece of property could provide. Further, this property was identified through studies conducted by the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association as one of Fayetteville's most critical "habitat hubs". As our committee, and our city, support local wildlife populations through our Community Wildlife Habitat Project™, we encourage appropriate use of this property for the protection of the diverse plant and wildlife communities it supports.

The Environmental Action Committee also found that the University of Arkansas, the State's land-grant grant institution of higher education, would benefit by use of this property as an immense "outdoor classroom" for ecological research and project-oriented environmental learning opportunities, as well as expansion of its traditional "athletic/recreational" offerings.

Our committee advises the City Council that this is a unique opportunity for Fayetteville and an opportunity for further collaboration with the University of Arkansas to meet the needs of the City of Fayetteville, the University of Arkansas, and the ecological importance of this particular acreage of land.

Sincerely,

Sarah Marsh
Environmental Action Committee, Chair



Urban Forestry Advisory Board

To: Chancellor G. David Gearhart
From: City of Fayetteville Urban Forestry Advisory Board
Date: December 12, 2012
Subject: Letter of Support to Preserve Mount Kessler

Mount Kessler Greenways is an advocacy group in Fayetteville, AR seeking to preserve the natural woodlands of Mount Kessler. It includes about 1,500 acres, a thousand of which lie within the limits of the City of Fayetteville. The land is mainly privately-owned but about 200 acres are owned by the City of Fayetteville and are dedicated as a regional city park. Currently, most of the 1,500 acres is urban forest.

It is the purpose and intent of the Urban Forestry Advisory Board to advise the City Council on urban forestry and arboricultural related issues as an integral part of the City's green infrastructure. The Board also promotes urban forestry growth and outreach throughout the Fayetteville community. Preservation of the proposed Mount Kessler Reserve—387 acres of privately-owned woodlands situated south of highway 62 and west of Interstate 540—is supported by the Urban Forestry Advisory Board.

Mount Kessler has much to offer the community of Fayetteville. It is important to maintain the natural character of the mountains, woods, trails, wildlife, and other natural features. Located approximately three (3) miles from the University of Arkansas, Mount Kessler offers a place to serve as an outdoor classroom. The landscape and wildlife provide a learning environment for students in the biological sciences and the earth sciences. It is an ideal location for outdoor recreation. There are over eight (8) miles of trails that are currently used for mountain biking and hiking. A preserved Mount Kessler landscape is also essential in protecting the watershed and natural resources found in the area for generations to come.

The Urban Forestry Advisory Board supports the preservation of Mount Kessler for use by the public as a natural wildlife habitat, outdoor classroom, and outdoor recreation area.

Thank you for your consideration.

City of Fayetteville Urban Forestry Advisory Board

Henry Gaston, Kathy Launder, Malcolm LeVois, Betty Martin, Lacy Nelson, Donald Steinkraus, Nancy Varvil



Pete and Margo Heinzlmann, founders of Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, receive trees at the City's annual Celebration of Trees event. Organized by the Urban Forestry Advisory Board and the Parks & Recreation Department, over 600 trees were given to City residents at the 2012 event.



2012 UFAB Sustainable Landscape Competition

The mission of the Urban Forestry Advisory Board is to promote programs and policies that support, maintain, and grow our urban forest; to increase public education; and to establish recognition programs as incentives to encourage a healthy, safe, and attractive natural environment for the City of Fayetteville.

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,

I am very much interested in the development of the Mt. Kessler Greenway in the southwest section of Fayetteville. As a member of the board of directors of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, I have been involved in efforts to identify and protect green infrastructure in Fayetteville and the surrounding area. FNHA has monitored annually the land on Mt. Kessler which Frank Sharp and his family have put in trust as a conservation area to be preserved and made available to hikers and other trail-users. I was pleased that a total of three property owners on Mt. Kessler have recently put more than 200 adjacent acres into conservation and agricultural easements. The City of Fayetteville holds an additional 200 acres for a regional park and a corridor on the ridge line for a trail.

Although I don't know all of the details, I understand that the University is considering purchase of some property adjacent to the proposed park for intramural fields. I hope that the University will consider purchase, not only of the potential intramural site, but of the entire property currently owned by Chambers Bank. The bank would probably offer very favorable terms for such a purchase, and the property could provide the University an excellent site for student housing in the 30 acres along Cato Springs Road. The woods, bluffs and trails in the remaining bank-owned property could add hiking, biking, running and other recreational opportunities for the entire University community as well as a nearby outdoor laboratory site for geosciences, biological sciences, outdoor recreation and other classes.

The synergy created by the combination of private landowners choosing conservation easements, the City developing a park and trails and the University using adjacent land for multiple academic, recreational and other uses is exciting to imagine. The three forces together could provide appropriate functions for a beautiful and valuable natural site and could also create a treasured natural heritage for future generations of students, faculty, staff, alumni, Fayetteville residents and visitors.

I'm excited about the possibilities and hope that you will consider seriously this rare opportunity to create a nature-based legacy for the University and its supporters.

Sincerely,

Barbara

Barbara G. Taylor has lived in Fayetteville since 1974. She retired from the University of Arkansas in 2010, where she held the position of Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources.

Barbara has been active in a number of local, state and national organizations, including several that focus on the environment, water resources and green infrastructure. She served two terms on the Washington County Quorum Court. In the early 1980s, when she was president of the Washington County League of Women Voters, she helped prepare a pamphlet on phosphates in cleaning products and their effect on water quality. She also co-led a state-wide educational effort on water issues in Arkansas for the Arkansas League of Women Voters and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. From 1980 to 1984, she was a member of the City of Fayetteville Citizens Advisory Committee on Wastewater Treatment.

She was an active participant in Fayetteville's watershed education series and riparian zone protection activities. She is currently a member of the board of directors of the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association whose newsletter she co-edits and of the Beaver Watershed Alliance, where she serves as treasurer and as chair of the Awareness and Education Committee.





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July 5, 2013

To: Mt Kessler Greenways,

My family came to Fayetteville, Arkansas in 1951 when I was a junior in High School. The population was around 17,000 then, with as few as 5,000 students at the University of Arkansas. The towns of Farmington, Fayetteville, Springdale and Rogers were separated by long stretches of farmland. One of my friends lived on Mission Street near Fairview Cemetery, which was considered "out in the country" at that time. Fiesta Square was then the location of the 71 Outdoor Theatre, and a trip to Springdale to see a movie was a rare trip way out of town.

Now these communities are separated only by road signs. The farm lands have given way to businesses, car dealerships, malls, etc. With the exception of the Lake Fayetteville area, it is one continuous corridor of buildings from one town to the next. Obviously, our green spaces are shrinking, and quickly so, as our once small towns have merged to become one big metro area.

As a young girl growing up in a small Wisconsin town, I spent most of my time outdoors. My backyard edged a forest of pine trees and it was just a short path through the woods to the lake where I boated and swam and fished. My friends and I hiked along creek beds, and slid down deep ravines made slippery by pine needles. In the winter we ice skated on the frozen lake and tobogganed down a steep hill at a nearby farm. No matter what the season, we treasured our times alone or with friends enjoying the beauty of nature.

I was just sixteen when we moved to Northwest Arkansas. Busy with school, I didn't find much time for the outdoors, but loved the hills and beauty of my new home town. After college, I left for Chicago to have a career, got married and started raising a family. But how I missed those hills. In the city, my boys were scouts, but den activities mostly consisted of doing crafts.

I was in the advertising business and heavily involved in community theatre in Chicago, but wanted to raise my family back home in Arkansas. Having just enough savings to invest in a new business, we finally moved back to Fayetteville and started publishing the Star Shopper, a weekly advertising paper. My children were now able to enjoy the outdoors, and became very active in scouting, camping, fishing and hiking. They were able to appreciate nature the way I did as a child. My young scouts had camped where Locomotion is today, and fished in Mud Creek near a farm where Butterfield Trail Village is built. More and more, our precious green spaces have disappeared as our city has developed.

The boys grew to be scout counselors and staffers at Camp Orr. Even my daughter ended up as a camp counselor in Texas and spent time working in Florida for Outward Bound. As adults, they still revere the great outdoors and have passed that love of nature along to their children.

As our region grows, I believe it is important to set aside and preserve places for our families to experience the joys of spending time in nature's beauty... hiking and biking on wooded paths, seeing wildflowers growing, creeks and streams flowing by. We must do something now, before we lose what's left of our "nature" in the natural state. This said, I heartily encourage and support the vision for Mt. Kessler Greenways.

Joyce Stafford
Owner and Founder



Stafford & Associates / Star Shopper Crew - July 1, 2013

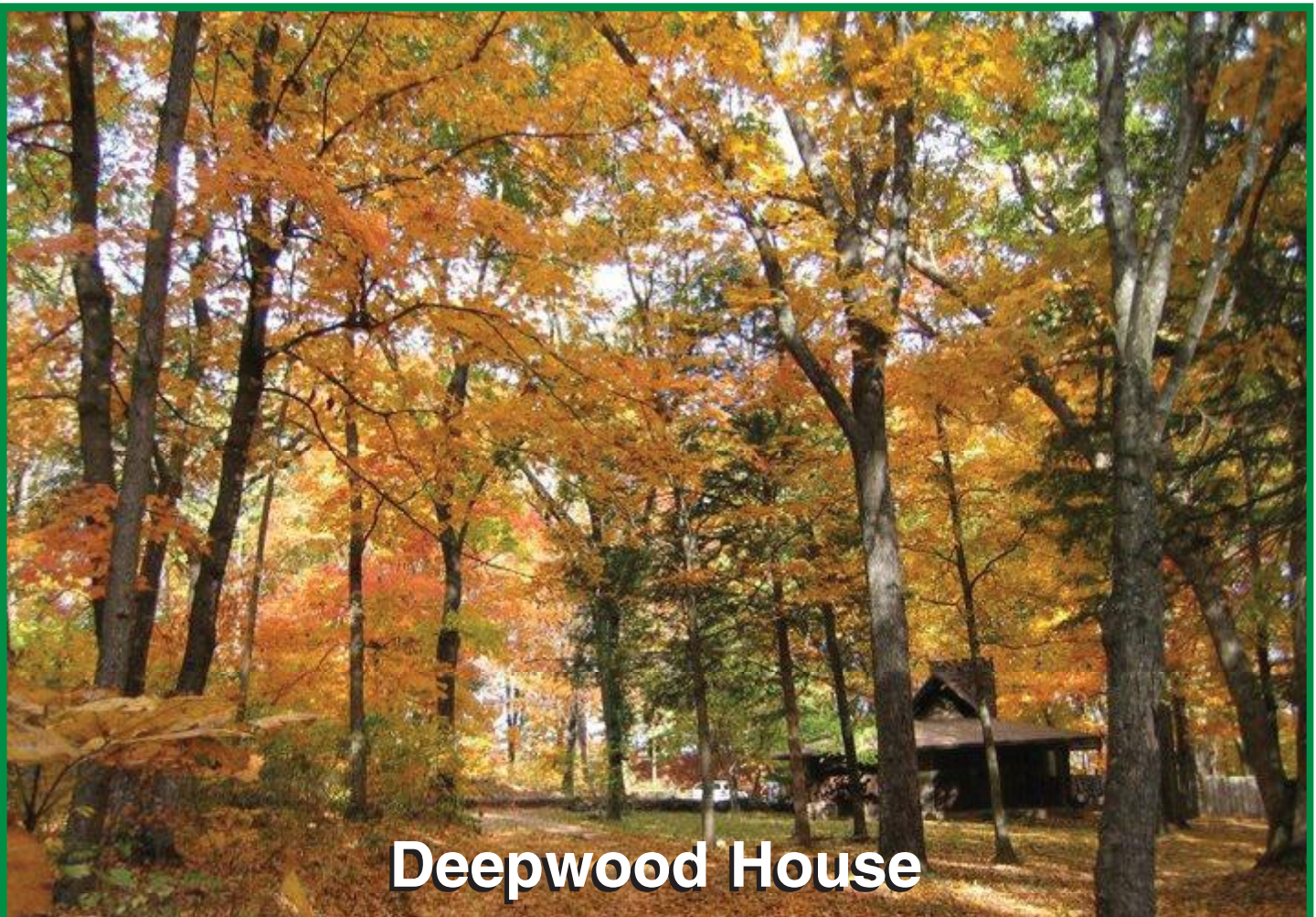


Bill Stafford - President

As a child, Bill Stafford's parents moved him to Northwest Arkansas from Chicago, so he could enjoy the natural outdoors. He became active in the Boy Scouts, hiking, camping and fishing. The Staffords started the Star Shopper in 1973 and it thrives today as a family owned business. Bill is now the president of the company.

Bill has agreed to serve on the Mt. Kessler Greenways' Advisory Committee, where he helps with design and printing of informational material.

Stafford and Associates, at no charge to Mt. Kessler Greenways, designed and type-set all of the material for this report - a contribution amounting to at least \$2,000. If the campaign to preserve Mt. Kessler is successful, a large part of its success is due to the Stafford family!



Deepwood House

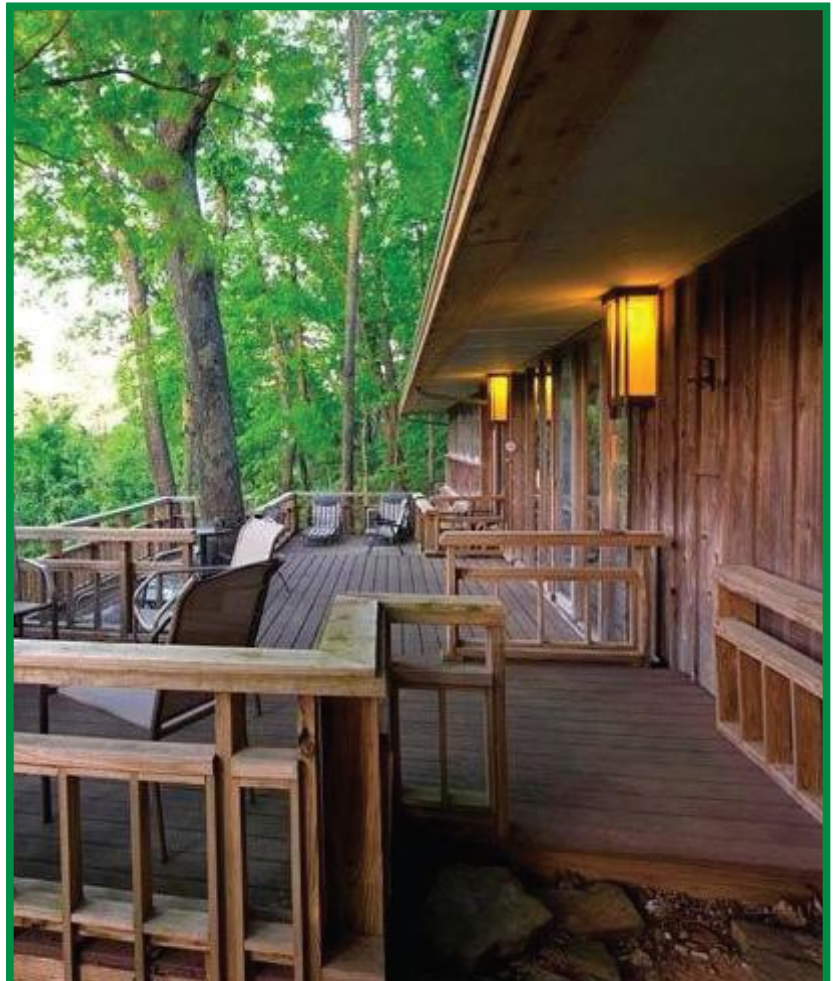
Welcome to Deepwood House

Your Home Away From Home
in Fayetteville, Arkansas

Located on the crest of Mount Kessler, at 4697 W. Finger Road, surrounded by forty acres of wooded hills and pastures, and engulfed in a tranquil forest of maples and oaks, Deepwood House provides an ideal retreat for small groups, families or individuals who desire a unique, private and relaxing place to stay while visiting Fayetteville.

The award-winning architectural masterpiece, constructed in the Ozark tradition of cedar wood, stone and glass, was designed by former University of Arkansas professor Herb Fowler, who aptly christened it "Deepwood".

www.deepwoodhouse.com





~ Deepwood House ~

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS



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December 20, 2012

Chancellor David Gearhart
425 ADMN
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR. 72701

Subject: Southpass

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

I want to add my name to the hundreds of people who have already contacted you urging the acquisition by the University of the property known as "Southpass" for athletic and recreational use.

Our family owns approximately 40 acres at the end of West Finger Road immediately adjacent to and north of the Southpass property. It includes a home, a caretakers's cottage, a barn and pastures with livestock, and is our "home away from home" in Fayetteville as well as a rental lodging (www.deepwoodhouse.com).

The home is quite unique and was designed and built by former UofA architecture professor Herbert Fowler. It has already been popular with visitors associated with the UofA, including parents of students, sports fans and visiting professors as well as mountain bikers, trail runners and hikers.

We cannot imagine a more compatible neighbor than the UofA, and we will do anything we can to assist and accommodate the University if such an acquisition were to take place.

Sincerely,

Tom Butt, FAIA





JOHNSON MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS, INC.

March 19, 2013

Frank,

As you know my family (Mother) owns property that boundaries the old Cummings property (Southpass/Mt Kessler) on the north. My wife and I own approximate 80 acres (on Washington Mountain) that joins the "family" property. So collectively we own about 320 adjacent acres which lies between Wal-Mart on MLK and the Southpass/Mt. Kessler property.

Currently I am unsure if our property borders the 387 acres that "Kessler Greenways" seeks to preserve but it would be great if we could look at somehow creating/preserving a corridor between the two properties for future trail connections.

The west side of Mt. Kessler is one of my absolute most favorite places. Mt. Kessler has an abundance of wildflowers on both east and west side. In fact the wildflowers are just now beginning to carpet the floor of Kessler's forest floor again this spring.

Arkansas has already become a destination location for mountain bikers with world class trails located in the Ozark Mountains, Boston Mountains and Ouachita Mountains. This destination activity results in a positive economic impact for both business owners and citizens.

As you know I have been an active part of the mountain bike community here in NWA for the past 20 years. I have also ridden trails in Oregon, Utah, Colorado, North Carolina, New Mexico, Wyoming, Montana, Missouri, Oklahoma and Tennessee. The community of mountain bikers is a good group of people, environmentally conscientious and willing to work so that trails are built right and maintained for all to enjoy. You can no doubt vouch for the OORC group of volunteers who have worked diligently to build/maintain trails on Kessler.

I do have one concern of note – horses and/or pack animals should never be allowed access to the trails on Kessler. I have seen really nice trails absolutely ruined by allowing horses on them. Some trail systems (Hobbs State Park for instance) tolerate the use of livestock but Kessler does not contain the high concentration of cherty gravel/clay that will hold up under the heavy load concentration that comes with livestock use.

I appreciate your efforts to preserve the treasure we know as Mt. Kessler.

Sincerely,

Stan Johnson, President
Johnson Mechanical Contractors, Inc.

513 Prairie Street Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
Telephone 479-442-5287
FAX 479-444-7572

APPENDIX

**Cover Copy
To Come**

Tree-Ring Analysis of Ancient Oak Woodlands on Kessler Mountain, Arkansas



±200-year old Chinkapin oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*)
Kessler Mountain, Arkansas

Tree-Ring Analysis of Ancient Oak Woodlands on Kessler Mountain, Arkansas

Alan J. Edmondson and David W. Stahle
Department of Geosciences
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701
479-575-3703
aje01@uark.edu
dstahle@uark.edu
February 7, 2013

The natural woodlands on Kessler Mountain near Fayetteville, Arkansas, are being considered for the establishment of a regional park and outdoor laboratory for the University of Arkansas. Preliminary survey of the forests along the Kessler Mountain biking trail has identified several parcels of relict old-growth oak woodlands that were not logged and still contain canopy dominant post oak and chinkapin oak in the 200- to 300-year age class. These ancient oak were not cut because they are non-commercial for timber production. Some post oaks on dry shale glades were too stunted and many chinkapin oak on rock outcrops were too contorted for logging. The terrain where these ancient oaks are found is also too steep, rocky, or infertile for agriculture. As a result, very old trees that germinated in the 18th century prior to the European settlement of Arkansas are still locally present on Kessler Mountain. These old-growth woodlands may represent the areas with the highest ecological integrity on Kessler Mountain.

The proposed research will survey the public and private forest lands on Kessler Mountain that are being considered for conservation management, with the goal of mapping and describing the best parcels of uncut ancient oak woodland. This project will constitute the masters thesis research of Mr. Alan Edmondson, Department of Geosciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. The research objectives will include:

- A survey of the property to identify all remaining parcels of old-growth forest on or adjacent to the proposed regional park. These remnants will be located with global positioning system (GPS) surveys and will be incorporated into a geographic information system (GIS) developed during this project.
- The two largest or highest quality parcels of ancient woodland will be selected for careful mapping and randomized field sampling to quantify the tree species composition of the stand.
- The age structure of the dominant oak species, *Quercus muehlenbergii* and *Quercus stellata*, will be quantified based on randomized core sampling and dendrochronology (tree-ring dating).
- The oldest individual trees and dead logs of any species will also be sampled across the property to document the maximum longevity of the trees still present on Kessler Mountain.
- Analyses of the proposed data will include: estimation of the total acreage of uncut old-growth forest still present at Kessler Mountain; estimation of the density and basal area of tree species present on the two intensive study sites; estimation of the age structure of the dominant chinkapin oak and post oak on the two study sites; and development of numerical tree-ring chronologies for both chinkapin oak and post oak, using the core specimens taken from the randomly selected trees and the oldest individual trees and logs located during the proposed research.
- A final report and draft masters thesis will be prepared during the proposed research and will be submitted to the project sponsors by August 31, 2013.

The proposed research will be conducted by Mr. Edmondson under the direction of his faculty advisor Dr. David Stahle. The requested funds (\$4800.00) will cover the salary expenses for Mr. Edmondson for a three-month period in the summer of 2013. Preliminary research will begin in the spring semester of 2013, and the funded field and laboratory research will be conducted from May 16 to August 15, 2013.

Biographies:

Alan J. Edmondson is the son of Dr. Steve and Annie Edmondson of Fayetteville, Arkansas. He received a BS in Earth Science from the University of Arkansas in May 2010 and is currently enrolled in the MA program in the Department of Geosciences. He has conducted tree-ring research for the U.S. Geological Survey in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, North Dakota. He has also conducted biological field research for the Biological Sciences Cooperative Research Unit of the USGS at the University of Arkansas.

David W. Stahle is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Geosciences and Director of the Tree-Ring Laboratory at the University of Arkansas (<http://www.uark.edu/dendro>). His research concentrates on the development of long, climate-sensitive tree-ring chronologies from the United States and Latin America; the reconstruction and analysis of climate variability and change; and on the social and environmental impacts of past climatic extremes. He has published over 100 articles in the peer-reviewed literature, including in the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*, *Geophysical Research Letters*, *Journal of Climate*, *Nature*, and *Science*. He is a founder and the current director of the Ancient Cross Timbers Consortium (<http://www.uark.edu/xtimber>) that promotes research, education, and conservation in the extensive old-growth woodlands that survive across the ecotone between the eastern deciduous forest and the grasslands of the southern Great Plains.

Geology of Mt. Kessler

Joe Neal

We all call them the “Ozark Mountains,” but geologists prefer the term, “Ozark Plateaus.” Therefore, Kessler “Mountain” is in fact a plateau, like other plateaus in the northwest Arkansas area. Fayetteville was long promoted as the “Athens of the Ozarks” because the city includes at least seven “hills” that are plateaus like Kessler. Kessler is the last of these old plateaus that has not yet been changed beyond recognition by development for homes and businesses. As such, it is an ideal place within our urban environment to see the natural forces that provide the basis for living in our area. The fossils and natural formations speak for themselves.



Geologically speaking, mountains are formed by forces of uplift over vast periods of time. The Ouachita Mountains to the south were formed, for example, when 120 miles of sediments were forced into half that distance, resulting in vast long, uplifted ridges and deep valleys. By contrast, the different elevations in the Ozark reflect erosion of relatively level beds of sediments by the down-cutting forces of wind and water. This is what has produced the bluffs and deep valleys associated with Kessler.

Kessler Mountain is a perfect place to see these forces and they are still at work. A short hike through only part of the area, Rock City, shows the ancient forces. Layer upon layer of deposits of sand and quartz are readily apparent in the rocks. Fossils associated with marine animals are visible all over this “mountain,” including along the path through Rock City.

Huge rock masses that constitute Rock City and visible elsewhere on Kessler result from the breakdown of vast strata of sandstone and shale. The path through the area traces such cracks and shows how the rocks move over vast periods of time. This is how what we know today as northwest Arkansas got its start. You can see all of this within a 5 minute walk from the parking area on Kessler.



Soils resulting from the breakdown of these ancient plateaus have long provided for a diverse flora of native Ozark wildflowers, plus many species of birds and other living creatures, like butterflies. These changed throughout the seasons, making interesting repeated visits to Kessler .

Photos by: Joe Neal

**WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY
OF PROPERTY OWNERS
OF MT. KESSLER GREENWAYS**

Property Owners include, but are not limited to, The Sharpridge Trust, Kathryn Keller, Eric Wailes, Jane N. Steele Trust and Chambers Bank

In consideration for receiving permission to hike/ bike or run on the trails of Mt. Kessler Greenways, I hereby agree forever to **RELEASE, WAIVE, DISCHARGE and COVENANT NOT TO SUE** any property owner, land managers, sponsors, volunteers, representatives, employees, agents, contractors and any of their successors, for any and all personal injuries, death, or damages whatsoever, from whatever cause, supervised or unsupervised, including but not limited to negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons named in this waiver.

I covenant and agree that by signing this release, I am waiving all known or unknown risks of harm, including but not limited to, the risk of running/hiking or biking near vehicular traffic, running/hiking or biking on a trail, running/hiking/biking through woods, getting lost, falling, bites by snakes, dogs or other animals, personal harm or death due to the length of the hike/bike/run,, other runners/hikers/bikers, inclement weather, trail/road/sidewalk conditions and failure to abide by all Mt. Kessler Greenways rules.

I know that hiking/biking/running is a **potentially hazardous activity** that could cause injury or death. I should not enter Mt. Kessler Greenways unless I am medically able and properly trained, and by my signature, I certify that I am medically able to hike/bike/run on the trails, am in good health, and am properly trained.

I hereby agree that in the event any claim arising out of our incidental to personal injury or damages to me shall be filed against the Released Parties. I shall indemnify and hold harmless such Released Parties against any and all such claims, including attorney's fees incurred by any property owner in defending such claims.

I have CAREFULLY READ the **Release and Waiver of Liability** and FULLY UNDERSTAND and am AWARE of its contents, and I sign it of my own free will.

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF MT. KESSLER GREENWAYS

1. I agree to stay on the trail at all times and not hike/bike/run/trespass on any land adjacent to the trails.
2. I agree to respect the trails and their environment by not leaving any trash, defacing any tree, rock, sign or any other feature.
3. I will not use any alcohol or any illegal substance while on the Mt. Kessler Greenways.
4. I agree that use of the trails may be **SUSPENDED** at any time by the property owners.

ADVOCACY

I will be an **ADVOCATE** of Mt. Kessler Greenways according to my skills and talents: YES) _____ (NO) _____

DATE: _____ NAME (PRINTED) _____

SIGNATURE _____ E-MAIL _____

PHONE NUMBER _____ PRINT MAILING ADDRESS (BELOW)

THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR USAGE OF THE TRAILS, BUT YOU MAY MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO FAYETTEVILLE NATURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION (MT. KESSLER FUND)

ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS PAGE, PLEASE TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF. ALSO, PLEASE LIST SOME WAYS THAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP US AS AN ADVOCATE OF MT. KESSLER GREENWAYS AND TRAILS.