



The Power of Partnerships

Two Arkansas Success Stories



Program Panel

- **Moderator**
 - Tim Oosterhouse, USFS, Ouachita National Forest
- ***Lake Ouachita Vista Trail: Coalition for Trail Building***
 - Jerry Shields
- ***Friends of the Ouachita Trail: Saving an Existing Trail***
 - Jim Gifford
- **Panel Discussion**
 - Steve Weston, Recreational Trails Program, AR Hiway & Transp Dept.
 - Kirsten Bartlow, AR Game & Fish Commission
 - Brenda Meeks, US Army Corps of Engineers.
 - Al Gaithright, Citizen's Coalition

Partnerships Were Key to Both

The Lake Ouachita Vista Trail



A Coalition Built Project

Trail Concept

- 35-mile Hiking/Biking Trail on Southern Shore of Lake Ouachita
- Trail to link Seven Campgrounds and Six Resorts
- Includes a one mile ADA Accessible trail
- A Watchable Wildlife Trail Section



Coalition Members

- **LAKE OUACHITA CFC**
- **US FOREST SERVICE**
- **US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**
- **ARK GAME & FISH COMMISSION**
- **ARK PARKS & TOURISM**
- **ARK HIGHWAY & TRANSPORTATION COMM**
- **MONTGOMERY COUNTY**
- **MT IDA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
- **LAKE OUACHITA RESORT OWNERS ASSOC**

FUNDING SOURCES

- **NAT'L RECREATIONAL TRAILS GRANTS**
- **AGENCY GRANTS**
- **GRANT MATCHING FUNDS**
- **COMMUNITY IN-KIND DONATIONS**
- **VOLUNTEER LABOR**

National Recreation Trail Grants

- FEDERALLY FUNDED GRANTS**
- GRANTS ARE OFFERED ANNUALLY**
- ADMINISTERED BY A.H.T.D. IN ARK**
- GRANTS REQUIRE 20% MATCH**
- REIMBURSEMENT TYPE GRANTS**

Agency Grants



- **USFS**
- **US ARMY COE**
- **STATE Game & Fish**
- **STATE Parks & Tourism**

Grant Matching Funds

- **LOCAL AREA BUSINESSES**
- **LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
- **INDIVIDUAL TRAIL PATRONS**
- **LOCAL AREA VOLUNTEER GROUPS**

COMMUNITY IN-KIND DONATIONS



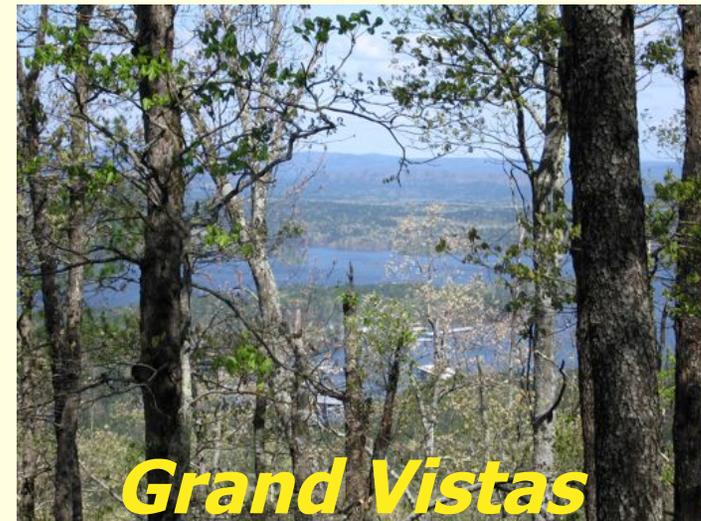
- LOANED EQUIPMENT
- DONATED MATERIALS
- VOLUNTEER LABOR
- DONATED LAND

Construction Methodology



- **Mini-excavator**
- **Mini-tracked dozer**
- **Volunteer labor**

Why Build The Trail ?



TRAILDOG VOLUNTEERS

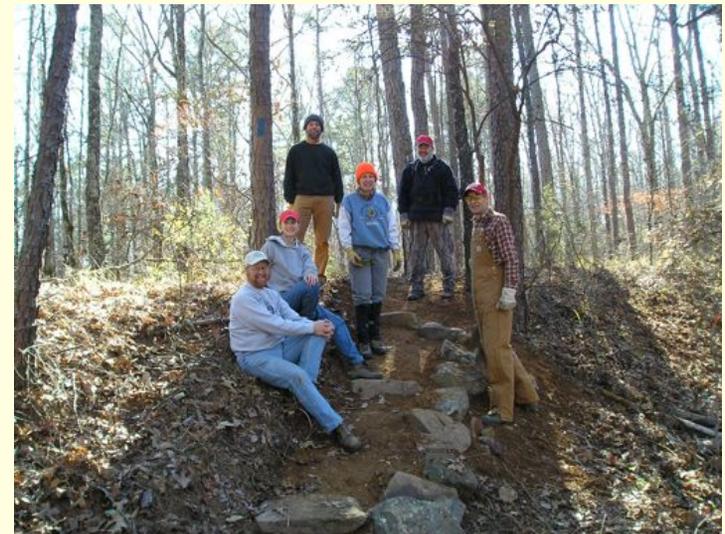


- **40 VOLUNTERS**
- **OVER 2500 CONSTRUCTION HOURS**
- **500 HOURS OF MAINTENANCE SUPPORT**



The Power of Partnerships

Friends of the Ouachita Trail

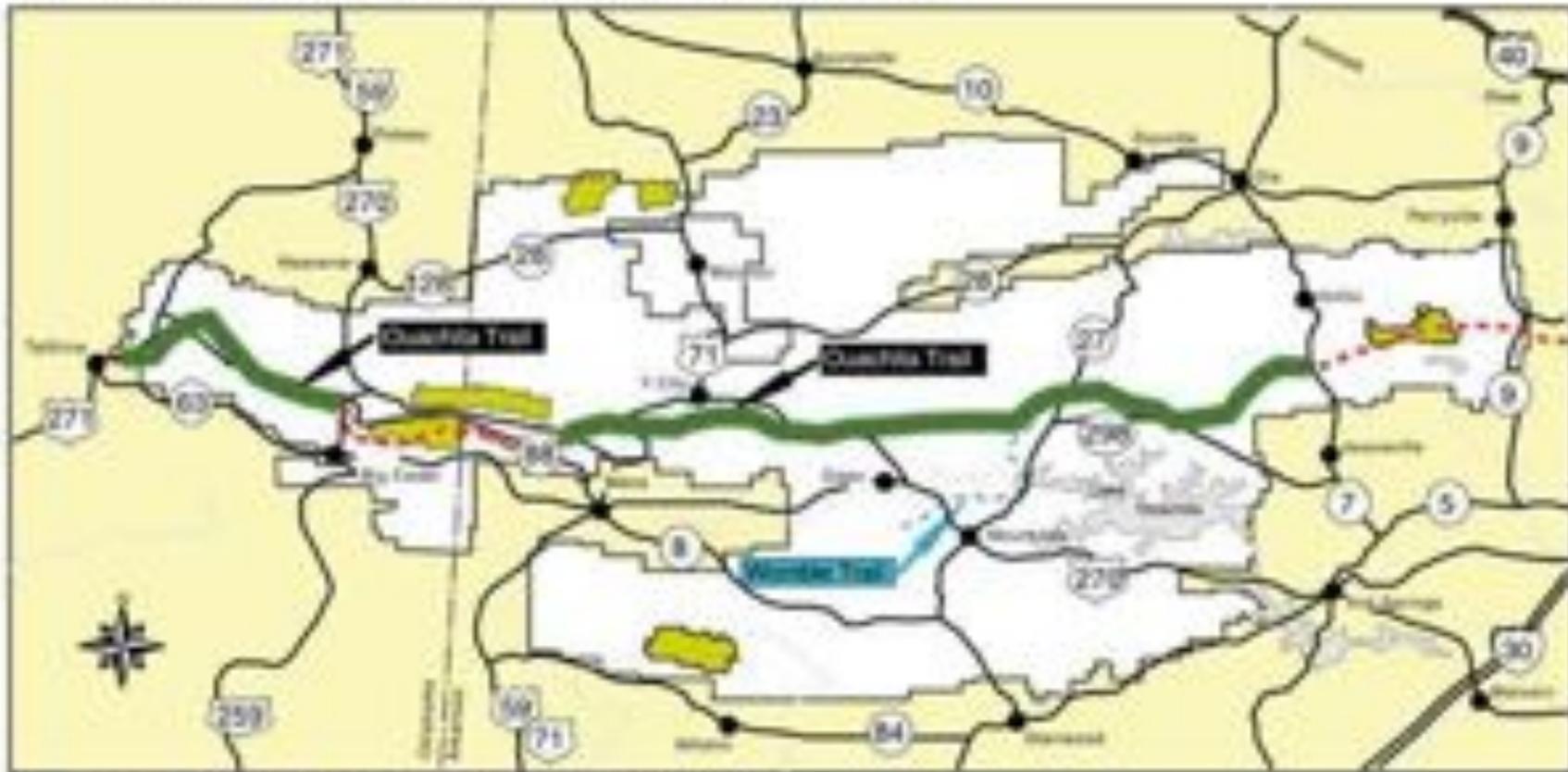




What is Ouachita National Recreation Trail ?



Ouachita National Recreation Trail



PMSP ^

- - - - Ouachita National Recreation Trail
- Open For Mountain Bikes



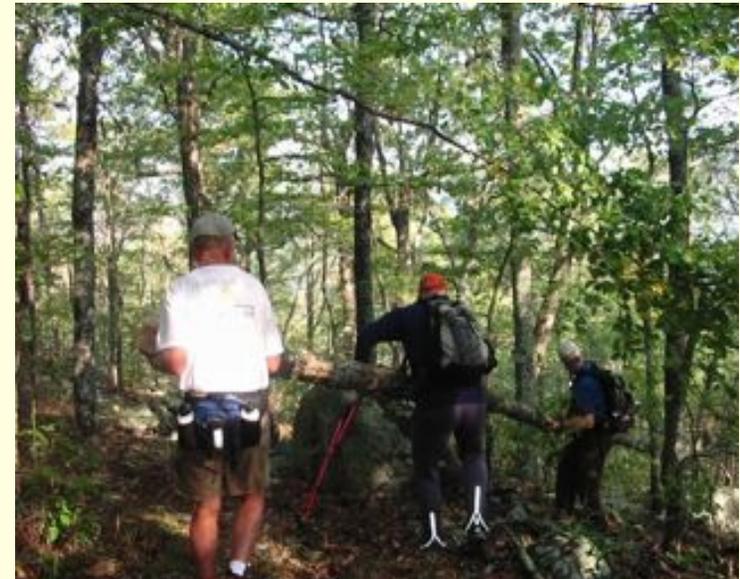
Who Are Friends of the Ouachita Trail ?



- **FoOT is an Organization of *Trail Users* Dedicated to Maintaining the Ouachita Trail As a Healthy and Enjoyable Outdoor Recreation Asset**
- **FoOT is an Arkansas Non-profit Corporation**
- **FoOT Works *With* the Responsible Agencies**

FoOT Mission:

FoOT is organized exclusively to provide assistance for the maintenance, enhancement and use of the Ouachita National Recreation Trail





FoOT History



- **2000/01: Storms Devastate the Ouachita NR Trail**
- **2002: Trail Heavily Overgrown; Disappearing**
- **2003: *Hikers and Bikers Collaborate***
- **Jan 2004: *Organizational Meeting with USFS***
- **Dec 2004: 200 Miles of Trail Adopted**
- **Feb 2005: FoOT Incorporated as AR Non-profit**
- **Jun 2005: Entire Trail Adopted for First Time**
- **Feb 2007: IRS Exemption Under 501(c)3**
- **Sep 2007: First Grant Application (AHTD; *with USFS*)**
- **Nov 2008: Over 150 Members from 6 States**

FoOT History Based on Team Work



How FoOT Operates Maintenance



- **Adopt -a- Trail Program**
- **FoOT Patrol**



- **District Captains**
- **Special Projects**

Trail Users Maintaining the Trail



How FoOT Operates Agency Interface



- ***Partnership With Agencies***

- Joint Efforts Accomplish Tasks Neither Could Do Alone
- Common Priorities
- Resources Flow Where Needed Most
- FoOT Fund Raising Supports USFS Projects



- **Jan 2008: USFS “Exemplary Volunteer Service Award”**

FoOT Works with the USFS and AR SP



How FoOT Operates Trail Users



- **Services for Trail Users**

- Web Page
- Trail Condition Report
- Trail Information / Hike Planning



***Increased Trail Usage
Improves Trail Condition***



Results



- **November 2004:**
 - **34** Miles of Trail “**Red**” (Major Obstacles; difficult to follow)
 - **112** Miles of Trail “**Yellow**” (Needs Major maintenance)
 - Only **77** Miles of Trail “**Green**”
 - *Trail Usage way down*
- **Nov 2008**
 - **6.2** Miles of Trail “**Red**”
 - **75** Miles of Trail “**Yellow**”
 - **143** Miles of Trail “**Green**”
 - *Trail Usage up dramatically*



Trail Users Notice the Difference



How FoOT Operates Future



- **Take Advantage of our 501c(3)**
- **More Major Projects**
 - Working with agencies
- **Expand the String of Shelters**
 - Nine (9) to Twenty (20)



We Hope to Do Even More



Why Have We Been Successful ?



- ***Collaboration***
 - Hikers and Bikers Overcame Differences
- ***Cooperation***
 - Partnership with Agencies from the Beginning
- ***One Step At A Time***
 - Started Small, Simple; Expanded As We Grew and *Learned*
- ***Flexibility***
 - We Learned ***a Lot*** and Were Willing to Modify as We Went
 - ***All Volunteers Are Not Equal, But They Are All Volunteers***
- ***The Power of the WWW***

Team Work !!!!



What Are Our Challenges ?



- **Continuous Recruiting**
 - *All User Groups*
- **Improve Our Communication**
 - *Internal and external*
- **Get a Lot Smarter About Running a Non-profit**
- **Expand Experience with Grant Programs**
 - *Execute FoOT funded projects with the USFS*
- **Identify Successors to Perpetuate the Organization**

We Must Perpetuate the Team