KINGS RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

"Protecting the health, purity, and economic viability of the Kings River Watershed, now and for future generations."

Stream Line

October 2020 Volume 7 Issue 4

2020 Kings River Cleanup

This year's river cleanups proved to be a difficult challenge to organize. COVID-19 shutdowns, reschedules, heavy rains, and flooded waterways all proved to be roadblocks. Despite the setbacks, volunteers from all over Northwest Arkansas were able to clean up over 20 miles of the Kings River and its tributaries.

Two teams took part in the Earth Day challenge and worked sections of the upper Kings and the upper Osage. High waters posed a problem for the Madison County cleanup on May 16th, but 5 paddlers were able to work a lower section of Dry Fork Creek down to Rockhouse Access. For the Carroll County cleanup on May 30th, the Kings River was flooded again, but 27 people helped cleanup two sections of Osage Creek covering 13 miles.

Over the course of the cleanups, volunteers managed to remove 46 tires, about 1000 lbs. of metal and two pick-up loads of trash out of the watershed this year. The Kings River Watershed Partnership would like to thank all of the volunteers, landowners, and sponsors that helped to make the cleanups a success in such a difficult year.

Volunteers stage their boats before setting off to clean a section of Osage Creek.
Photo Courtesy of Lin Welford

The History and Restoration of Berry Spring

In 1850 Blackburn Henderson Berry decided to build a town. He picked his location carefully and one of the deciding factors was a large year-round spring located just north and west of his selected town site. This spring provided the majority of the water used by the citizens of the town and their livestock for the next sixty years. The spring also provided a focal point for social gatherings and mundane chores like doing the weekly laundry. Freighters often camped near the spring as it provided a good stopping point on a shortcut between the Wilderness Road and the Old Military Road.

Locals gather around Berry Spring and the recent stonework.
Photo Courtesy of Carroll County Historical Society

It is not known when the first mill was established below the spring, but a steam powered roller mill was put into operation in 1870. In the mid 1870's, a well was dug by hand in the center of the square to provide easier access to water for the hotels located nearby. When the well got low in the summertime, water was pumped from the spring to keep the well usable. In 1909, the city hired local stonemason Hardy Beal to do rock and cement work around the spring. In 1912, the city drilled a deep well on the south side of town and that became the main water source for the town. The town spring remained a popular gathering spot for picnics and other events because of the attractive stone work, cool clear water, and easy accessibility.

Berry Spring before restoration work.
Photo Courtesy of Gray Squires

With the progression of the automobile age, the spring's importance to the town diminished. As the roads were improved and bridges built over areas prone to flooding, Berry Spring disappeared behind a series of gas stations and automobile dealerships; becoming overgrown and forgotten by all but a few interested individuals.

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The History and Restoration of Berry Spring Cont.

In the spring/summer of 2020 the Berryville City Council and Mayor embarked on a project to restore the spring and surrounding park to a usable area once again. Thanks to Barrows Construction and stone mason, Bruce Wright, progress has been made to restore and expand the original stonework. Swing by today to help rejuvenate Berry Spring as a popular destination!

Berry Spring before and after restoration work.
Photos Courtesy of Gray Squires

Kings River Watershed Partnership board members and friends recently undertook a clean up of Mill Creek, a small urban waterway that drains a major part of the city of Berryville and eventually flows into the Kings River. With the city restoring the original Town Spring behind the old Williams Gas Station building, the group decided it would be a good time to remove accumulated trash and debris. They started at the spring and worked their way down along the Community Center skate park.

KRWP received a grant 10 years ago to re-engineer Mill Creek, which was heavily eroded and unsightly at the time. A series of stone weirs and drop pools helped to tame storm flows, and plantings of native trees and shrubs helped to protect the bank and naturalize the site. Local business man, Jimmy Jones, donated equipment, materials and labor that helped the project come together.

KRWP Members cleaning up downstream of the spring.

Rockhouse Creek Restoration Recap – July 2020

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is pleased to announce the completion of a half-mile stream restoration project on Rockhouse Creek, an important tributary to the Kings River. The primary goals of the project were to improve public safety at the deteriorated low-water crossing on Rockhouse Road, restore fish access to Rockhouse Creek from the Kings River, and reduce loss of land from erosion and sediment going into the Kings River. The project was made possible thanks to the partnership and in-kind support from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) Stream Team Program and Madison County Roads Department, in addition to funding from partners including the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership, Tyson Foods, Inc., Patagonia, and generous support from neighbors.

Upstream portion of the new creek channel.
Photo Courtesy of Chas McCoy

Our assessments indicated that erosion on Rockhouse Creek was generating up to 10-thousand tons (about 800 dump truck loads) of gravel each year that flowed into the Kings River. Excess gravel and fine sediment from Rockhouse Creek and other tributaries overload the Kings river, degrades habitat, and causes further bank erosion for downstream landowners. The low-water crossing on Rockhouse Road was impassable regularly, posing a safety hazard to local residents and visitors needing to cross Rockhouse Creek. Additionally, the crossing had approximately 8-feet of drop on the downstream side, preventing fish from migrating up Rockhouse Creek to seek refuge and spawn.

Downstream portion of new creek channel before Rockhouse Access and confluence with Kings River.
Photo Courtesy of Chas McCoy

After five months of construction, we completed the project in March 2020. The result is a new section of channel that is stable and free flowing with increased aquatic life. The abandoned section of old channel will serve as flood relief and store sediment generated from upstream erosion.

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Rockhouse Creek Restoration Recap – July 2020 Cont.

The new channel-spanning bridge is about 6 feet higher than the old crossing and will overtop much less frequently. TNC, key partners, and volunteers planted native grasses and wildflowers throughout the site and installed nearly 3000 native trees and shrubs. Madison County put the finishing touches on the project with road improvements around the new bridge at the end of June, to much appreciation by landowners, recreational users, and other members of public.

Looking upstream at new bridge. The rock structures help maintain proper channel elevation.
Photo Courtesy of Chas McCoy

Our partners at University of Central Arkansas have been monitoring the restoration project and have observed an increase in fish diversity and abundance since the project was completed. Chance Garrett, a Biology graduate student at UCA working with Ginny and Reid Adams, is researching how removal of the low-water crossing is affecting movement of fishes back into Rockhouse Creek. TNC is excited to be working with Chance and UCA faculty on this research and look forward to the results to inform future projects.

New road over the old crossing, heading toward the new bridge. Two large culverts will pass flood flows in the old channel.
Photo Courtesy of Chas McCoy

Are you interested in helping? There will be additional volunteer days planned this fall to plant additional trees and shrubs on the site. For more information and details of the project, please visit kingsriverpreserve.org or contact Chas McCoy with questions at Charles.mccoy@tnc.org.

Don't Forget to Renew Your Membership!

Early in March, the board members made the difficult decision to cancel our Annual General Meeting due to public health concerns. Originally we intended to reschedule the meeting, but now rescheduling is unlikely to happen this year.

A lot of our members used the annual meeting as an opportunity to renew their memberships with KRWP, but obviously that wasn't possible this year. If you'd like to renew your yearly membership or join the KRWP, membership is open to any individual, business, or organization that supports the mission of the Kings River Watershed Partnership. Dues are $20 per year. print the membership form at the bottom page of this newsletter to apply.

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Membership Form

Membership is open to any individual, business or organization that supports the mission of the Partnership. Membership dues are $20 per year.

I support the mission of the Kings River Watershed Partnership and want to become a member of KRWP.

Enclosed is my check in the amount of $ _____ .

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone : _____Email: _____

Mail to:

Kings River Watershed Partnership
P.O. Box 961
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