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2017 SPRING NEWS & EVENTS

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GREETINGS FROM TURNER BEND JUNCTION OF THE PIG TRAIL AND THE MULBERRY RIVER

INDIAN CREEK and HIGH BANK

This past summer Mulberry River Society volunteers led by Tom Perry worked every weekend for two months to build the beautiful native rock ramp that leads down to the confluence of Indian Creek and the Mulberry. Turner Bend donated 15 days of labor and 10 trailer loads of rock to the project. The momentum from Indian Creek then carried over to High Bank. MRS volunteers again answered the call to move a massive pile of donated rock to High Bank in anticipation of a project to rebuild that landing. Pending Forest Service approval we expect to be working on High Bank when the boating season winds down.

INTRODUCING THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

We have just completed a one room rental cabin on our Round The Bend property that makes up in charm what it lacks in size. It features a nice covered patio and lots of parking. Maximum occupancy is two adults.

MISADVENTURE ON THE MULBERRY

Last season we had to retrieve a hapless and helpless paddler off the Mulberry after he assured us he was an "experienced canoeist". Nothing new about that claim but turns out this fellow's only experience was the "canoe simulator" app on his cell phone. Apparently the app prepped him up for something milder than the Mulberry at 3'. Then there was the modern day Tom Sawyer who glued several pieces of styrofoam together to form a makeshift raft. His homemade paddle looked like a beefed up fly swatter and apparently worked about as well. He ended up trudging out through the flood plain after running his raft into a tree and breaking it to bits.

THE BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER MULBERRY

Not much news to pass on other than we expect the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Dept. to be releasing preliminary plans sometime this year. Target date for rebuilding/replacement of the bridge is the year 2020. Meanwhile the need for a public access at the junction of Hwy 23 and the Mulberry grows each year. This absolutely should be addressed in conjunction with the bridge project.

BEAR STORIES

We had just opened up one morning when a pick-up truck dropped off a hiker in front of the store. We were supposed to move his car several miles down the trail for him in a couple of days, but from the look of things his hike was over. He had a dazed / crazed look about him. "Give me my keys, I'm going back to Wichita!" he demanded. I could tell he was in no condition to drive so I stalled while trying to get his story out of him. He was camping alone on top of Hare Mtn. and decided it would be great to have his peanut butter with him in his tent. A hungry bear caught wind of the Peter Pan and wanted some of it too. Meanwhile the hiker was shouting and backing up against the side of the tent when the bear circled around and bit him in the shoulder. With that, the poor fellow burst from his tent and skedaddled down the mountain in the dark. There there was the time I was driving a van load of boaters upriver when a woman seated behind me asked "Sir. Are there a lot of bears around here?" Like a dummy I rattled on "Oh yes ma'am the first bear ever killed in Arkansas was checked at Turner Bend, etc. etc." She replied, "That's not what I meant. What I really mean is, are there a lot of bears by the river?" The van grew silent as I summoned up my best reply "Oh no ma'am. You see bears are really intelligent. They won't come near the river this time of year because of all the snakes!" The doors almost burst off the van with laughter, with her husband laughing so hard we had to stop and let him walk around a bit.

MARK THESE DATES

March 4th

26th Annual Mulberry River Spring Clean Up Day.

The MRS is working to make it better each year with an infusion of energy, enhanced door prizes, and a canoe raffle. Similar efforts on Lee Creek and the Kings River have used this event as a template.

MARCH 12TH

Bang the Gong then Get it on!

The 36th Annual Jungle Boater Race

MAY 5-7

42nd Annual Arkansas Canoe Club School of Whitewater Paddling.

The best paddlers from several states around gather on the Mulberry for this signature clinic.

WHAT'S IN A NICKNAME

For one thing it's easier for us to remember one name instead of several as in "Hey guys, It must be Hell or High Water time". As you might guess the Muddy River Gang, and the Red River Rapid Riders (say that three times real fast) both hail from down south. There's the Whitewright Crew from Texas, the K C Crew from guess where, and then there's the Bayou Krewe from Louisiana. The Kings of Kansas and the Kansas Highbankers derive their name from their place of origin while The Bucksnot Boys are named for the place where they gather. The Bubbas have other nicknames that aren't appropriate for a G rated newsletter, while Ronnie and the Henchmen got their name because the group leader was also the hometown mayor. The River Krackens are best known for having gotten photo bombed by a stunning brunette in a wetsuit. Despite their nickname The Buffalo River Sports are just as likely to be found on the Mulberry. The Mulberry Madmen have a wooden paddle with each member's name embossed on it that is to hang in Turner Bend after the group's last float trip. Hopefully that is many years from now. Speaking of longevity it would be hard to beat the Boozer Canoezers who have made an annual trip to the Mulberry since before yours truly took up his broom at Turner Bend. That's almost ancient history. Long years ago we were waiting for some member's of the Hollow Log Gang to paddle up to Mill Creek. Instead of arriving by boat they came swimming in just before dark after having wrapped their rental canoe around a tree at the old Stem Winder rapid about three miles upriver. The next day was Saturday so we had to rent boats before going after the pinned canoe. Knowing that any "would be pirate" had a lengthy head start on us we put on at Mill Creek and pointed our canoes upstream. We paddled up the edges of the pools and pulled up the rapids. After two hours of fighting the current we could see the Stem Winder and sure enough there was a gang of pirates pulling our boat off the tree as we approached. They were high fiving each other so hard they didn't see us paddle up from downstream. "That's my boat" I hollered out as we drew near. They hung their heads and silently hopped into their canoes not knowing they would be forever know as the Limp Sword Pirates. First time visitors to the Mulberry need to beware. The Mulberry just might end as your last put in. Just ask Pat Franke who made a pilgrimage to the Mulberry last summer to deposit the ashes of the next to last member of the Knights of the Mystic Sea.