



**FRIENDS OF THE
OUACHITA TRAIL**
EST 2000

Friends of the Ouachita Trail (FoOT)

History of the FoOT Shelter Projects (Part 3)

East End Shelters on the Ouachita National Recreation Trail

OT Shelter System Completed in 2025

The goal of having a complete trail shelter system on the Ouachita Trail was lacking the 30 miles of the OT east of and outside of the Ouachita National Forest. FoOT had built 12 new shelters from Highway 27 to the west end of the OT in Oklahoma from 2013 through 2016. FoOT followed up that effort by remodeling of the original 9 shelters from 2018 through 2021. These shelters covered the OT from Highway 27 east to Highway 9. Completing the shelter system to Pinnacle Mountain State Park and the east end of the OT was part of FoOT's 5-year plan under then FoOT President Bo Lea. The plan called for 2 or at least 1 additional shelter for the eastern leg of the OT.

FoOT has a partnership with Pinnacle Mountain State Park but the key player in this effort is Central Arkansas Water (CAW), which owns property and is the protector of the Lake Maumelle watershed. In November of 2023 the idea of adding two additional Ouachita Trail shelters was starting to move forward. Raven Lawson, CAW Watershed Protection Manager and Bryan Rugar, CAW Land Conservation Manager were meeting and discussing the next steps with CAW to allow shelters on their property.

FoOT President, Matt Edwards provided Raven and Bryan the formal proposal notification for the shelters FoOT had with the U.S. Forest Service as a possible model. FoOT member, Ned Skoog provided additional information for the new shelter build with drawings, specs, and amenities.

The approval did proceed and on September 12th, 2024 the “Trail Shelter Agreement” (Attachment 1) between Central Arkansas Water and Friends of the Ouachita Trail was signed. With approval in hand as well as having the necessary financial resources, FoOT could start the process of putting together a plan for two new shelters on the OT.

Ned Skoog and Bo Lea agreed to lead the effort to prepare and coordinate the implementation plan for the east end shelter project. Ned and Bo had been the leads for all of FoOT’s previous shelter builds and remodels. Ned would focus on plans and materials while Bo would coordinate tools, equipment, trailers, and manpower. Norman Brumm volunteered to once again serve as construction superintendent for the new build. FoOT volunteers from the previous shelter work were recruited and they stepped up once again to assist. Several new FoOT volunteers as well as CAW personnel also joined the team, adding their effort and talent.

The first of the East End Shelter Project’s two new shelters would be at Red Bluff Creek milemarker 196.2 on the OT. CAW donated an old hunting cabin near the Creek that had been vacant for about five years. FoOT would remodel this old cabin into a shelter for trail users. The second shelter would be a complete new build. It would be located at milemarker 210 just west of the Lunsford’s Corner OT Trailhead and north of Lake Maumelle.

In January of 2025, FoOT put out a preliminary work timeline with the necessary action points for the project. With an early spring target, the project

plan was about to be implemented. The early spring schedule was modified due to logistics and weather.

Red Bluff Creek Shelter: The remodel of the old hunting cabin would be the first such effort FoOT had undertaken during the shelter system construction. One issue right up front was cleaning up the cabin and site. The early primary problem was an environmental issue with rat activity and resulting dropping. Ned and Bo coordinated with a company in Little Rock to professionally address the problem and clean the cabin. Ned purchased bail traps and installed them at the cabin to address future rat problems. In preparation for the remodel, Ned and Bo did some outside site cleanup. Bo also built a short spur trail from the cabin north a short distance to the OT. Bryan Rugar (CAW) and his team in March removed large debris piles that were on the site.

The scope of the work for the cabin remodel included:

- Build a deck across the entire back of cabin with benches, shelves, steps
- Repair bunks in sleeping area, remove unnecessary kitchen parts, adding a picnic table in dining area
- Repair front porch, rafters, steps, plus add benches and shelves
- Cleanup pit toilet and clean out existing old fire ring
- Install an outside picnic table

The cabin remodel at Red Bluff Creek was scheduled for April 4th and 5th of 2025 but a heavy rain event moved the project to April 10th and 11th. Ned and Bo coordinated the material delivery from Plylers Building Supply in Glenwood prior to the start of work. As with all of FoOT's shelter projects, Bo kicked things off with a welcome followed by an orientation and safety briefing. The work team of FoOT and CAW volunteers completed all items in the scope of work. The finished remodel shelter was an outstanding success. The site location just off Red Bluff Creek and a short walk to the bluff overlooking the Maumelle River adds to special nature of this shelter. It will always be a unique shelter because it is the only one on the OT that is totally enclosed.

Scott Tarvin Shelter: The site of this last shelter for the OT system was located in a relatively flat area among some tall timber right on the Ouachita Trail. The new shelter would be at milemarker 210 and about 2 miles west of the Lunsford's Corner OT Trailhead. The shelter was funded by friends of Scott

Tarvin. The shelter was named and dedicated to Scott, who had passed away at an early age. (Attachment 2)

Once again, a team of FoOT and CAW volunteers provided the manpower and skills to construct this final new shelter. As with previous new shelter builds, FoOT used Donald Parsons and Appalachian Log Structures of Ripley, WV for the needed log kits. Maverick Trucking delivered the log kit to a drop off point on CAW property. Plylers Building Supply dropped off the remaining materials at the Lunsford's Corner Trailhead. CAW did the heavy lifting with their equipment to get the log kit and materials to the build site on Wednesday, April 30th 2025 a day planned for the delivery followed by foundation work. These actions would have everything ready for the project to begin on May 1st and 2nd to do the framing and finish work.

During prep work on the site, an old hollow tree was cut down that presented a threat to the new shelter. That tree happened to be the home of a barred owl. Team members named Bardy aka Crash. The owl was not hurt but perhaps stunned. FoOT volunteer, Joel Ward took the owl to the Raptor Rehab of Central Arkansas to be cared for. Joel later reported that Bardy had done fine and was released back into the wild. (Attachment 3)

The entire build was done with rain threatening each day. However, most of the rain fell during the overnight hours. This did make the old access road from Lunsford's Corner very difficult to drive on. (Attachment 4)

This shelter was a complete new build, which incorporated the best ideas from FoOT previous experiences with their new shelters and shelter remodels. This last shelter turned out to be an outstanding project on a beautiful site.

The Scott Tarvin Shelter was formally dedicated on the afternoon of September 27th, 2025. The dedication was attended by FoOT and CAW leadership and volunteers from both organizations. Special guests were Scott's family members and friends. FoOT President, Matt Edwards emceed the event and spoke as well as Bo Lea (FoOT), Bryan Rupar (CAW) and a Tarvin family member.

CAW provided a shuttle to the shelter for those that did not hike in. The event was very well attended. The Tarvin family was very appreciative for the shelter and those that worked on it to honor Scott.

Safety was always a top priority with the shelter project. Amazingly FoOT had a perfect safety record with a couple of very minor events over 23 shelters. But on the Tarvin Shelter we did lose our first vehicle. Glenn Wortham's truck had worked about every one of the shelter builds. On the last shelter, on the last day leaving the work site a slick hill and a big tree resulted in the Toyota's demise. Importantly no one was hurt. It was amazing where that truck had been over the years with FoOT. Glenn would get it places that seemed impossible.

The completion of the last shelter brought to fulfillment of the dream of the Ouachita Trail having a trail shelter system along its entire 223 mile length. This dream for the OT was an amazing accomplishment made possible by an outstanding group of FoOT volunteers who gave so much of their time, energy, and money to make the dream a reality. It would not have been possible without the partnerships with Oklahoma & Arkansas grant agencies, U S Forest Service and Central Arkansas Water. Also a special thanks to the families of Scott Tarvin and Art Cowley for their generous support. This accomplishment will benefit present and future users of these amazing outdoor resources.

NOTE: Attachments and Pictures Begin on Page 6 Below.

Trail Shelter Agreement between

Central Arkansas Water & The Friends of the Ouachita Trail

This Trail Shelter Agreement (“Agreement”) is entered into between Central Arkansas Water (“CAW”) and The Friends of the Ouachita Trail (“FoOT”) for the purpose of authorizing, establishing, and maintaining camping shelters along the Ouachita National Recreation Trail (“ONRT”). Each of the foregoing entities shall individually be referred to as a “party” and collectively as “parties.”

Central Arkansas Water is a public water utility whose mission is to deliver high-quality, affordable, abundant, dependable water services to more than 500,000 Arkansans in central Arkansas. CAW’s watershed protection goals are to protect, restore, and enhance the natural watershed environment of the Utility’s two water sources through a variety of pollution prevention, watershed, and source water protection approaches as part of an overall strategy to maintain and enhance ecological and community sustainability and ultimately to ensure that CAW can provide high-quality water with minimal treatment.

FoOT is a non-profit organization (IRS 501(c)3) organized exclusively to assist with the maintenance, enhancement, and use of the trails in the Ouachita National Forest, with the primary emphasis on the Ouachita National Recreation Trail (ONRT). Since 2004, FoOT has partnered with the Ouachita National Forest and contributes over 3,000 volunteer hours per year to the maintenance and enhancement of the ONRT.

1. **PURPOSE:** The 224-mile ONRT spans from Talimena State Park in Oklahoma to Pinnacle Mountain State Park in Arkansas. The Ouachita National Forest owns 192 miles of the trail and has a series of 19 camping shelters located roughly every 10 miles. CAW owns 25 miles of the trail, which is the second longest section of the ONRT. Prior to this Agreement, there has only been one designated camping area in CAW’s section, north of Lake Maumelle, on private property, which requires a spur trail that leads to a campsite within the pipeline right of way. The inconvenience of the private camping area off the trail and the lack of designated areas in this section causes many hikers to set up unauthorized campsites along the trail and the lake shore.
2. **OBJECTIVE:** The objective of this Agreement is to establish designated trail shelters along the section of the ONRT owned and overseen by CAW and to establish maintenance expectations for FoOT. For purposes of this Agreement, “trail shelter” means a permanently established and purposefully built structure with the intended use as a single-night location for hikers to use when through-hiking the ONRT.
3. **TERM and TERMINATION.** The term of Agreement shall begin upon the entering of the Agreement by the latter of the parties and conclude on December 31, 2049. Either FoOT or CAW may terminate Agreement upon notice to the other party.
4. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES:**
 - a. Central Arkansas Water:
 - i. Will identify designated areas for shelters beyond the Red Bluff Shelter and the Scott Travin Shelter;

Attachment 1

- ii. Will obtain any building or other necessary permits as required by the county of concern; and
 - iii. Will provide reasonable access to areas for establishment and maintenance of shelters when/if necessary.
- b. Friends of the Ouachita Trail:
- i. Renovate the Red Bluff Shelter and construct the Scott Tarvin Shelter at locations depicted on the map attached as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference;
 - ii. Will work with CAW to identify appropriate locations for trail shelters on CAW-owned properties other than the Red Bluff Shelter and the Scott Tarvin Shelter;
 - iii. Agree to perform all related activities in compliance with current CAW Rules regarding use of public lands and applicable Maumelle River Wildlife Management Area Regulations;
 - iv. Will fund materials and build/construct or rehab shelters in accordance with specifications agreed upon by CAW. Furthermore, no modifications or appurtenances shall be made to the original, approved design without the approval of both CAW and FoOT;
 - v. Provide a minimum of two maintenance days per year for the surrounding trail and shelter areas; and
 - vi. Report to CAW and keep records of trail and shelter maintenance activities.
5. **LIABILITY.** Each party shall be solely responsible and liable for the actions or omissions of its own employees, agents, and representatives involved with the activities contemplated under the Agreement, including any related damages, losses, and claims to or by third parties. Nothing herein shall be construed as creating joint and several liability between the parties. Nothing herein shall be deemed as a waiver of statutory immunity as to any party afforded such liability protection under law.
6. **ASSIGNMENT.** Neither party may assign or transfer its rights and obligations under the Agreement without the prior written consent of the other party.
7. **COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS.** The parties will observe all applicable laws and regulations during the execution of the work implemented under the provisions of the Agreement.
8. **AMENDMENTS.** The Agreement, including any material modification to Section 2, may only be modified by a written amendment signed by both parties.
9. **NONDISCRIMINATION.** FoOT shall not discriminate in its employment practices, engagement of volunteers, or in its provision of goods or services on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability.

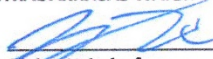
Attachment 1

10. **BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL.** By entering Agreement, FoOT certifies that it is not currently engaged in and agrees for the duration of the term of Agreement not to engage in a boycott of Israel.

11. **BOYCOTT OF ENERGY, FOSSIL FUELS, FIREARMS, AND AMMUNITION INDUSTRIES.** By entering Agreement, FoOT certifies that it is not currently engaged in and agrees for the duration of the term of Agreement not to engage in a boycott of energy, fossil fuel, firearms, and ammunition industries.

Central Arkansas Water and Friends of the Ouachita Trail hereby enter the Agreement.

CENTRAL ARKANSAS WATER

By: 
Blake Weindorf
Chief Operating Officer

Date: 9/12/24

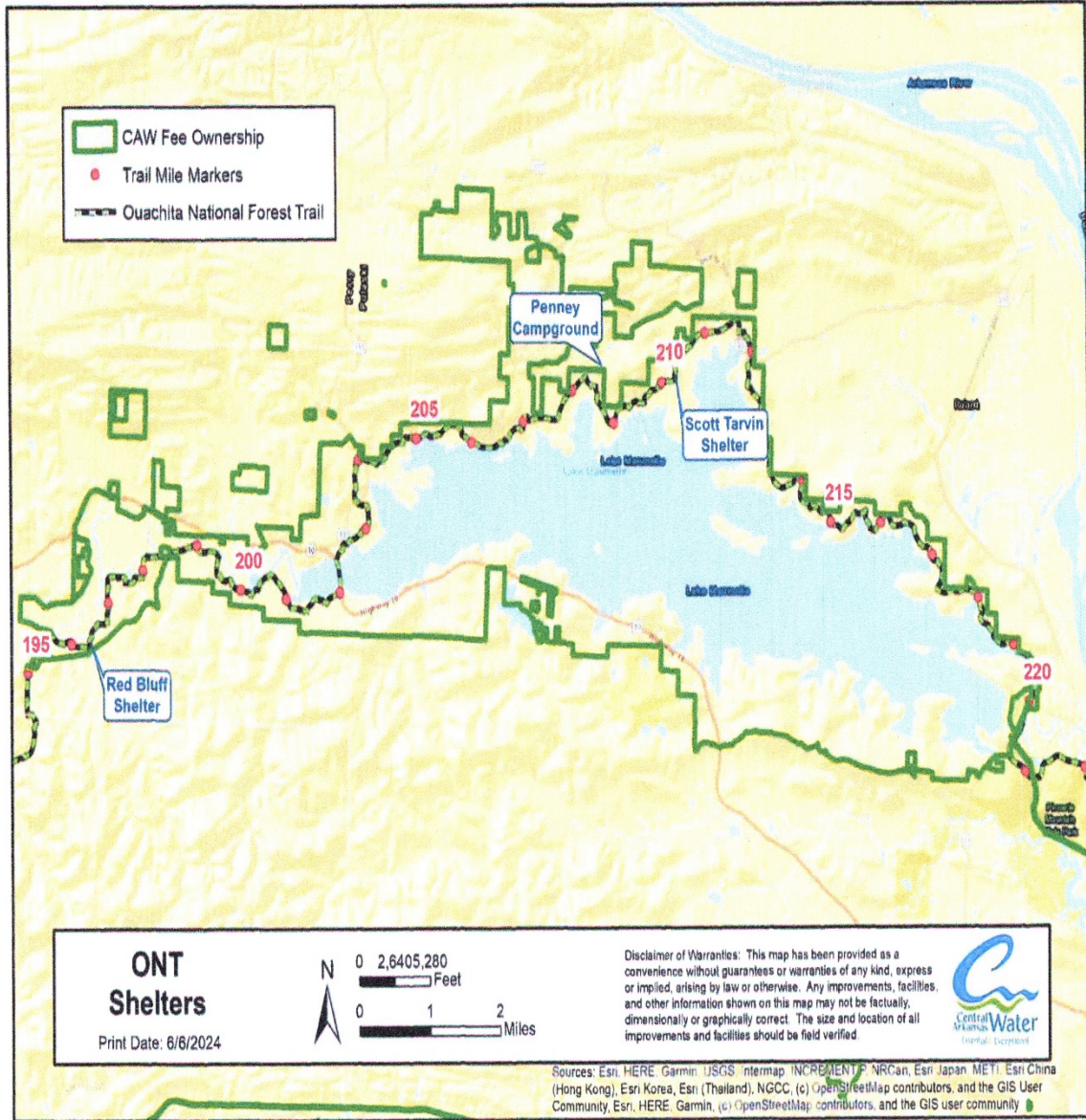
FRIENDS OF THE OUACHITA TRAIL

By: _____
Matt Edwards
President

Date: _____

Attachment 1

EXHIBIT A



Attachment 1

Michael Scott Tarvin



MICHAEL SCOTT TARVIN, 50, of Little Rock, died unexpectedly Sept. 2, 2017 at Baptist Hospital in Little Rock. He was born Dec. 17, 1966 in Little Rock to Larry A. and Maurine "Mimi" Tarvin. Scott is survived by his wife of 28 years, Debbie Dunn Tarvin; his sons, Haydon Michael Tarvin and Collin Scott Tarvin; his parents of Little Rock; his brother, Keith Tarvin and wife, Mary Tarvin of Oberlin, OH; his mother-in-law, Jane Dunn Hairston of Enola; and a host of relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, State Representative Paul and Royce Van Dalsem and Autrey and Sybil Tarvin, all of Perryville, Ark. Scott grew up in Perryville and attended schools there, quarterbacking the football team, loving the

woods and water and playing music with his friends. He began working on the family sod farm at a very early age and it would turn out to be the work he loved best. He attended Hendrix College, UCA, and later, UALR, worked in various businesses, had a landscaping business with Debbie, but returned to become an owner and manager of Rivergreen Grass Farm, Inc. Fatherhood fit Scott. He and Debbie were a great tag team taking care of twin boys who are now high school seniors. He was a nurturing, caring dad. A talented musician, he, along with good buddies, Ken Womack, Tim Moritz, Kevin Massey and Paul Shell, formed The Dirt Clods, Cosmo Clods, and more recently, the Fractones, writing and performing in local venues. He co-engineered and produced their recordings in his home studio. He was an eclectic and enthusiastic cat. He loved outdoor activities (he hiked much of the Arkansas portion of the Ouachita Trail), he was a pretty darn good poker player and he could hit a golf ball into the next county. He enjoyed travel (especially New York City with his family) and was constantly building or inventing new things and new ways to do things more efficiently. He loved to have fun! Clever, funny and smart, he was our golden boy. A memorial service will be Saturday, Sept. 16 at 2:30 p.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 4501 Rahling Rd., in Little Rock with a reception to follow. Rev. Jeff Price will officiate. In lieu of flowers, treasure your loved ones, travel and explore, go outside more, enjoy music, food –go write a song. Arrangements by Little Rock Funeral Home, (501)224-2200. Scott's online guestbook may be signed at www.littlerockfuneralhome.com.

Attachment 2



Bardy, the barred owl (alias Crash), was mildly inconvenienced during construction of the shelter. He was rehabilitated at Raptor Rehab of Central Arkansas, kept a good attitude, grew up, and was released. You might hear him at night.

Attachment 3

Scott Tarvin Shelter April 30th, May 1st & 2nd, 2025

Red Bluff Creek Shelter April 10th & 11th, 2025

Volunteer	Work Hours	Miles Driven
Bo Lea	39	440
Brenda Lea	33	0
Danny Owens	41	380
Lisa Owens	41	0
Ned Skoog	41	650
Mark Been	38	600
Jodi Been	22	0
Joel Ward	44	540
John Benton	16	684
Bill Pell	32	310
Matt Edwards	24	150
John Carroll	25	142
Ron Mayfield	33	570
Debbie Mayfield	25	0
Rich Stich	8	120
Kristy Dodd	8	80
Glenn Worthan	25	270
Norm Brumm	25	380
Janeen Bickham	25	440
Karen Hall	8	90
Steve Heye	6	30
Bart Hammers	9	120
Robby Beach	25	700
Ravin Lawson	2.5	TNC
Anna Miller	22	CAW
Nash Fortson	22	CAW
Bryan Lupar	20	CAW
Jeff Reed	30	CAW
Ryan Spotts	14	CAW
Ben Thesing	14	CAW
Brad Meredith	14	CAW

Attachment 4

Red Bluff Creek Shelter - Pictures



Cabin Remodel
Before



Cabin Remodel
After



Scott Tarvin Shelter - Pictures





Tarvin Family







FoOT & CAW
Volunteers



Construction Lead Team
L – R Bo, Norman, Ned