



Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc. September 2025 Newsletter

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Election of officers for 2026 will be at our Annual Meeting September 13, 2025 at 3 p.m. in the AV room of the Visitor Center. Please make every effort to be there and to take on an office and/or chair. If you cannot be there but are willing to work to keep our organization going, please let me know of your willingness to accept a nomination for office and/or a chair position (and send a proxy form). In addition to the four officers there are committee chair positions (Newsletter, Volunteer, and Membership) that need filling (and working) if our organization is to continue. Myra and John Collins have resigned as President and Vice-President. Harry Harnish was reluctantly appointed Vice-President by the remaining officers but does not wish to continue. We have no President. Aimee and I have been doing the work of all the committees for several years in addition to our officer duties but can't do it forever.

For several years, and especially since Jack died, we have been discussing the future of our organization at meetings and in the Newsletter. The future is now. Your response or non-response to these requests dictates whether we can continue to help the Park through the years or whether we need to wrap up our business the best we can for the Park over the next few months. We need at least the 4 officers to continue. I have gotten some interest expressed from 3 new and 1 old member, one of whom has submitted a statement, below.

While we no longer handle registration paperwork for the Bike Race (all online now) we still run the t-shirt and information table at the event. Come join me from 8 to 11 the morning of the 13th near the finish line in Campground A to work the table and watch the races and talk.

I received news from Pat Huff just before press time that longtime member Barbara Huff has passed away. Our condolences to Pat and family.

John Crochet
Secretary and Membership Chair

THIS YEAR SO FAR

Summer is winding down, and while it may still be hot outside, a hint of fall is in the air. Fall is usually an American term for autumn because nowhere else is the deciduous forest so vast. For Devil's Den, the peak of fall colors typically occurs from late October to early November. While chlorophyll gives the leaves their green hue, it masks the vibrant colors of fall during the summer. As the food-making process slows down, green fades away, revealing those other dazzling hues. Clearly, the weather plays a significant role in how brilliant those colors become. While busy, the park is an excellent place to experience the tapestry of fall.

While discussing the weather, it hasn't been very kind to the park. First, in early March, we were under a burn ban. During that time, there was a wildfire just outside the park in the Ozark National Forest. Wildland firefighters with the USFS fought the fire for four days before bringing it under control. In early April, as we were planning the 36th Annual Ozark Mountain Bike Festival, a flood forced us to delay the event for a couple of weeks. Then, more heavy rain came that weekend. We finally managed to hold it with a one-day ride about a month later, with help from the Ozark Off Road Cyclists. Then, in May, the tornado. It caused extensive damage to the park. Unbelievably, no one was injured.

The park has a couple of new employees. Macy France, a seasonal interpreter from Rogers, Arkansas, recently graduated from the University of Phoenix with a degree in Environmental Science.



Before joining the park, she was a crew leader with the Arkansas Conservation Corps, working on invasive plant removal, and worked with the North Carolina disaster. She is excited to be at Devil's Den. Also, taking Terry's place is Tayler Markham. Tayler is from Van Buren, and she graduated with a BS in Geoscience and a minor in biology from the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith. Her park career started at the Crater of Diamonds as a seasonal interpreter before moving to the Mississippi River State Park near Marianna. To quote Tayler, "I plan on bringing hands-on experience to Devil's Den, supporting conservation, interpretive programming,

and community engagement to help visitors connect with the park's unique Ozark landscape." We welcome both, along with Kara, and they will be a great addition to Devil's Den. Drop by to say hello.

On a sad note, Terry Anderson, who recently retired as a park interpreter, passed away in her hometown of Jamestown, Missouri. Terry worked at the park for ten years, and before that, she served as the Volunteer Coordinator at Hobbs State Park–Conservation Area. She was a dependable employee. She will be missed.

Soon, we will start focusing on the upcoming events, such as the 36th Annual Northwest Arkansas Mountain Bike Championships. Which part of the Arkansas Mountain Bike Championship Series. We are proud to say that this event is the oldest race in the state. The Friends have been an integral part of that event. Starting with Steve Shepherd as our USAC Official, we had John, Jack, Jean, Harry, and Aimee, who helped with registration when it was live. After the Championships, fall will be here with the crowds of leaf lookers.

Devil's Den is a great place to visit, no matter what the time of year!

Tim V Scott
Assistant Park Superintendent



STATEMENT OF A PROSPECTIVE OFFICER

I'm happy to provide some background information on myself as a prospective Friends of Devils Den board member.

I have lived in NW Benton County for the past 15 years. Previously, I spent about 8 years in the Fayetteville area where I attended the U of A and began my professional career before moving out of state for several years. Currently, I am the General Manager at Rush Running Co, a specialty retailer with locations in both Fayetteville and Bentonville. For the last several years, I have served as race director for the Hobbs War Eagle Trail Races, the largest trail event at all of the state parks. Additionally, I am the race director for the Back 40 Trail Races in Bella Vista. For the last few years, I have served on the board for the Friends of Hobbs State Park. In 1996 I married my college sweetheart from Fayetteville and always knew that I would spend my life in NWA as I had fallen in love with the outdoors here in the Ozarks. Together, my wife and I have raised our kids to enjoy those same spaces. I'm excited to share my experience with the FoDD and leverage some of the contacts I have made over the years to bring some new energy to the organization.

Thanks for the opportunity,

James Reeves

AGENDA

FDDSP Membership Meeting September 13, 2025

Call to order 3:00 pm in A/V room

Approval of March 2025 minutes

Financial Report 2025 YTD

Membership Report

Old Business

 Future of organization

New Business

 Park Staff report and requests on 2025 and 2026 Events

 Purchase of rescue litter trail wheel for Park

 2026 Budget

 Election of Officers

Adjournment



Event fencing (purchased in 2013 with memorial donations received in 2012) is still in use at the NWA Mountain Bike Championships. Memorial donations for Jack Miller received in 2024 funded prizes for the 2024 and 2025 Championships.

MINUTES

Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc.

Membership Meeting

March 8, 2025

The March 8, 2025 Membership Meeting of Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc. was called to order at 10:01 a.m. in the Café by President Myra Collins. Present were Vice President John Collins, Secretary John Crochet, and Thurman & Martha Ragar. Also attending were Park Superintendent Jay Schneider and Interpreter Kara Helton.

John Crochet presents proxies from Thurman and Martha Ragar (their presence revoking the proxy), Pat and Carole Huff, and Aimee Crochet. Also a proxy from Fay Driggers with a printed second name for William Driggers with the signature line marked "Deceased" to John Crochet, who questions whether that should count as one or two voting members as the Bylaws on such Family Memberships state that "The family will be entitled to two votes" and a Family Membership is counted as two members for determining the quorum, while the proxy form states "For family memberships, complete for second voting member:" with name and signature lines below that, and it has been counted as two voting members for determining a quorum whether there is a second member living in the household or not. The Chair rules that it counts as two voting members and that the proxy authorizes two votes

Approval of minutes: John Crochet moves and John Collins seconds that we waive reading of the minutes of September 14, 2024 and adopt them as printed in the newsletter. Without objection it was so ordered.

Financial Reports: Former Treasurer John Crochet presented the 2024 final financial report, and also on behalf of current Treasurer Aimee Crochet presented the 2025 Year to Date financial report.

Membership Report: Membership Chair John Crochet reports 5 Individual Memberships, 14 Family Memberships, 1 Lifetime Member, for 19 Total Memberships, with 33 Voting members resulting in Quorums of 4 for on agenda and 11 for off agenda questions.

Requests from Park Staff: Jay presents a written proposal to amend the 2025 budget to remove the line items for Holiday Open House (Oct & Dec) \$50.00, Master Naturalists (gardening) \$200.00, and Signs of Spring \$253.26 and instead authorize \$475.00 for a paint sprayer. John Collins offered for West Fest to fund that instead, and Jay withdrew his request to us.

Old Business

Water outside Visitor Center has already been fixed, and Jay reports that they are looking into a filter system to improve the taste.

Future of organization including input and offers of assistance from James Reeves and Jay Schneider: Myra has met with Jay and with James Reeves (involved in trail running and Friends of Hobbs) to discuss ways to increase membership.

Jay brought up several possibilities, including upgrading our brochure, stickers, and publicizing visible Park improvements we might be involved in.

Thurman asked about discounts on Park purchases and rentals for Friends members, Jay will look into that.

John Crochet brought up an additional old business matter, inquiring whether the Park was able to cover the refreshments at the Holiday Open Houses in 2024 as discussed last September. Jay reported that they were able to do so.

New Business

The Park Staff reported on upcoming 2025 Events:

Signs of Spring (April 26) will be more of a "Spring appreciation" event with volunteer activity (planting native plants). The cooking event on our budget will not be happening.

Bat o Rama (June 6-8) will have speakers Mark Sybrant and Matt Covington.

Lynn Sciumbatto will be coming with birds to the Birder Weekend May 3 (fee already in the budget). Other speakers may also be presenting.

Spring Break is the week of March 24.

Bike Festival is April 4-6, volunteers needed.

A Kids Fishing Derby will be June 21.

Devils Den Games will be July 4. Myra and John will man a table.

Lee Creek Cleanup tentatively September 6.

Bike Race September 13.

Fallfest will be the weekend after the Bike Race (Park will supply refreshments). Opt Outside Weekend will be the one after that.

Holiday Open House December 20. Park will provide refreshments.

Jay announced several capital projects in the Park ongoing or in the near future, including installing fiber optic cabling for internet to/wifi from every Park building, cabin renovations, horse camp renovations, kayak vending machine, expanding Fossil Flats trailhead parking. John inquired if the AV room will be done by the Bike Race and it should be. Jay also announced new staffing coming up including a new front desk clerk, a seasonal interpreter, and Terry's replacement as permanent interpreter.

Website and creating fillable forms: John Crochet will look into reports that the Join button on the website is not working, and will remove the link to Covid information.

The Chair presented the following awards:

Pat & Carole Huff, Dillwyn Paxson and Devil's Den

John & Aimee Crochet, Yellow Rock

John & Myra Collins, Butterfield Trail

Charles & Reba Hughes, Butterfield Trail

Rick Turnbull & Karen Shapland, Butterfield Trail

Stan & Julie Vogt, Butterfield Trail

Dennis & Kathy Shelton, Quail Valley

Thurman & Martha Ragar, Quail Valley

John Crochet moved and John Collins and Harry Harnish seconded that we adjourn. Next meeting will be after the Bike Race September 13, 2025 at 3pm in the AV room.

John Crochet, Secretary



Lynn and Igor

Calendar of Events 2025

Lee Creek Cleanup	September 6
NWA Mountain Bike Championships*	September 13
Fall Fest	September 20
Holiday Open House	December 20

**Denotes a Friends of Devil's Den sponsored event or activity*

 Please fill out and sign if you are unable to attend our meeting. Mail to Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc., PO Box 623, West Fork, AR 72774-0623

PROXY

I hereby appoint _____, or, in his/her absence or inability or unwillingness to serve or if left blank, a person present appointed by the presiding officer, as my proxy at the September, 2025 membership meeting of Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc., with the following instructions:

To abstain on all other matters.

Date: _____

This proxy is revocable upon written notice to the Secretary or upon my attendance at the meeting.

Print

Name(s): _____ Signature(s): _____

For family memberships a single signature authorizes two votes.