

Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc. September 2026 Newsletter

A Message from the President

James Reeves, FODD President

If you're like me, these dog days of summer have you dreaming about those cool, crisp mornings of fall. The kind of mornings when the trails are calling and there's nowhere you'd rather be than out in the woods. That was certainly on my mind this past Saturday when fellow FoDD member Will Landreth joined me for a hike on the Butterfield Trail.

We had a great time exploring this legendary trail, but we also discovered that it could use a little TLC. With fall just around the corner, we're going to organize a couple of volunteer trail workdays to spruce things up and get the trail ready for all those autumn hikers. Keep an eye out for announcements, and come lend a hand if you can. There's no better way to enjoy Devil's Den than by getting your hands dirty and helping take care of it.

We've also got some exciting news on the calendar this fall. On Saturday, November 14, the **Run the Den Trail Races** will make their debut at Devil's Den State Park. The event was held in Bella Vista for 10 years before making the move to Devil's Den this year. Runners will have their choice of 6-, 13-, and 26-mile courses, with proceeds benefiting the Friends of Devil's Den State Park.



We're hoping to see 300 or more runners out on the trails that day. More importantly, we hope they leave with a new appreciation for the place we're fortunate enough to call our backyard. As the race director, I want to give a big thank-you to Jay Schneider and his staff for welcoming us to Devil's Den. We're looking forward to working alongside them to put on a great event for a great cause.

And finally, a little business that will help shape the future of FoDD: At our next general meeting on September 20, members will vote on a proposed amendment to our bylaws. The amendment would update the process for making changes to the bylaws.

Our current bylaws have served FoDD well for many decades, but our organization has grown and changed over the years. It's time to bring the bylaws up to date so we can spend less time wrestling with the process and more time doing what we're here to do—supporting Devil's Den State Park and helping make it the special place we all love.

I encourage you to attend the September 20 meeting and **vote FOR the proposed bylaw amendment**. It's a small step on paper, but an important one as we continue working together to care for Devil's Den for generations to come.

A Dollar A Day!

Tim v. Scott, Assistant Superintendent

Yikes! It has been hot for the last couple of days, and it looks like it will continue into the middle of next week. Now that I realize it's the middle of August, I hope it has cooled down some by the time you read this. Today, we have a hard time imagining life without an air conditioner. In the 1930s, when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was building the park, air conditioning was pretty much nonexistent. As you know, the CCC was one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's programs to put young, unmarried men aged 18 to 25 back to work during the Great Depression, when their unemployment rate was around 25%. The result was the beginning of Arkansas State Parks. Without the program, parks like Petit Jean, Lake Cathrine, Mount Nebo, Crowley's Ridge, Buffalo River, and the crown jewel, Devil's Den, would not exist. The program was for young men, but there were exceptions: Petit Jean and Nebo were for World War I veterans. The camps were companies of around 200 men, run by the Army, while the park service provided the work. It was basically a military lifestyle, with enrollees living in barracks. The men were here to build a park that we enjoy today. They earned \$30 a month, with \$25 of it going back to their parents to help them. As they would say, "A dollar a day and all you can eat."

Now, needless to say, many of the guys ended up marrying local girls, and if it happened while you were still an enrollee, you kept it quiet because otherwise you would have to leave the program. Also, you couldn't bring your car if you owned one. But about three switchbacks behind the visitor center (which originally served as the park service motor pool), there was a place in the woods called the "hole." That is where you hid your vehicle—as if the Company Commanders didn't know about it. Orville Taylor told us that he and his buddies would slip around at night to siphon fuel from army

trucks to fuel their cars. The stories they would tell. Roy Lister, the Mess Sargent, told us he had 33 cents a day to feed an enrollee three meals.

The program also gave the men an opportunity to continue their education, either academically or vocationally. One of the Education Advisors was John Tate “Jack” Appleby, a Harvard University graduate cum laude from Fayetteville. Recreational activities were equally important, especially baseball. That is why one of the park's interpretive programs is softball, a tribute to the “CC Boys.” The baseball team was the



Angels, and they often played Tontitown at the start of the Grape Festival.

The program ended in 1942, when government funding and able-bodied men were needed for World War II. Nationwide, more than 3 million men passed through the program.

The final Company at the park, 3795, had its last reunion in 2012. It was a real honor to meet the men who built the park. They considered Devil's Den as a second home. As for the CCC program, it helped save them, their families, and possibly the nation.

AGENDA

FDDSP Membership Meeting September 20th, 2026

- Call to order 10:00 AM at the pavilion
- Approval of March 2026 minutes
- Financial Report 2026 YTD
- Membership Report
- Old Business
- New Business
 - Park Staff report and requests on 2026 and 2027 Events
 - Bylaw Amendment
- 2027 Budget
- Election of Officers
- Adjournment



The Softball Field Gets a New Look!

In spring of 2026, a few of our members and some very hard working families gave the Devil's Den softball field in area E a touch up! Rocks were removed, the entire field was leveled, the fence was repaired, and base anchors were installed. BIG thanks to the Easterling family for donating their time, hard work, and a much needed tractor to improve the field, and thank you to Gary Schwartz and his family for donating our new bases!



The Devils Den Games: Celebrating 250 Years of our Nation!

This Fourth of July, we celebrated 250 years of our great Nation. We had fun games, including the return of the cross cut saw competition, a favorite Devil's Den game from decades ago! We also played softball, horseshoes, and had tons of fun games for kids. Here our own vice president, Wesley Schwartz, competes in the cross cut competition, and is spotted playing the national anthem with his trumpet at the beginning of the championship softball game!



Shane, Zach, Jonathan, and Bradley are pictured here showing off their first and third place horseshoe awards!



Amendment to Bylaws on the Agenda

All members will be receiving a summary edition of this newsletter despite (and in addition to) being signed up for an electronic edition, in order to distribute self-addressed stamped postcard proxy forms to all members to make it easy to vote on a proposed bylaw amendment to reform the amendment procedure. The current procedure requires a majority of all voting members to cast a vote for an amendment for it to pass and this has proven to be almost impossible to do even for entirely uncontroversial proposals (in 2011 an amendment failed 20 for to 0 against, but that fell short of the 28 needed for passage). There are several other bylaws that need updating (including the one requiring the Fall meeting to be held the weekend of the NWA Mountain Bike Championships which originally tended to boost attendance but now creates scheduling problems—the upcoming meeting is on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. to allow Park representatives to attend) but without a change to the process to make it reasonably possible for any to pass without such extraordinary efforts and expense.

Therefore the membership at the March meeting established a bylaw revision committee which proposed the following amendment which was adopted by the Board of Directors and will be voted on at the September 13, 2026 general membership meeting. Please return your proxies with instructions to vote for or against the amendment (the absence of a vote effectively counts the same as a vote against under the current rule) early enough to get to the West Fork post office by September 12. Even if you plan to attend (which we strongly encourage and would be thrilled to see you), please send in the proxy anyway in case something comes up to change your plans. Every vote counts, but unfortunately in this instance so do all non-votes.

MOTION TO AMEND ART. XIV OF THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF FRIENDS OF DEVIL'S DEN STATE PARK, INC.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Article XIV of the Constitution and Bylaws of Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc. be amended to read as follows:

“ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENT

- A.** Proposed amendments or revisions to these bylaws must be submitted in exact text, identifying the provisions to be amended, deleted, or added, at least two months before the meeting at which the proponent wants them considered. Proposals may be submitted by mail or email to the organization or in writing to any officer. Unless otherwise specified, the proposal will be considered at the first general meeting following two months from submission.

- B. The Board shall consider the proposal at least one month before that meeting and recommend adoption, modification, or rejection. The proposal and the Board's recommendation shall be published in the newsletter or other official communication to the general membership at least two weeks before the specified meeting. Any proxy solicitation shall include options to vote for or against the original proposal and for or against any Board-proposed modification.
- C. The proposal shall be considered at the specified general meeting. If the Board has proposed a modification, that modification shall be considered as a Motion to Amend the original proposal. No further Motions to Amend shall be allowed. The proposal, as amended by any approved Board modification, shall be adopted upon receiving two-thirds of the votes cast."

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
BYLAW REVISION COMMITTEE:

Wesley Schwartz, Chair
Sydney Schwartz
Jay Schneider
James Reeves
John Crochet

MINUTES

Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc.
Membership Meeting
March 7th, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Directors of Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc. on March 7th, 2026 was called to order by President James Reeves. Also present were: Wesley Schwartz, Vice-President; John Crochet, Treasurer; Sydney Foster, Secretary and Newsletter Chair; Matthew Myers, Volunteer Chair; Jay Schneider, Park Superintendent and club member; Tayler Markham, Park Interpreter; Harry Harnish, club member; and Daniel Schwartz, club member.

Reading and Acceptance of September 2025 Minutes:

- John moved that we waive reading of the September 13, 2025 minutes and approve them as published in the newsletter with one correction of the September 2026 meeting date to "actual date 9/20/26". Motion was seconded, and motion passed.

Financial Reports:

-Treasurer John Crochet presented the 2025 final financial report and the 2026 Year to Date financial report. Motion was made to accept the financial report, and motion was passed.

Membership Report:

Membership chair John Crochet presented the membership report as follows:

- 8 individual memberships
- 20 family memberships
- 1 lifetime member

Totals: 28 memberships with 48 voting members resulting in quorums of 5 for on agenda and 16 for off agenda questions.

Proxies:

-Proxies were presented representing Pat Huff and Steve Shepherd.

Old Business:

-None to report

Announcements from Park Staff:

-Jay discussed the ongoing closure of the Devil's Den Trail. Plans to reopen are tentative and no concrete date for reopen has been set. Plans have been put in place to update the trail signs and maps.

- Regarding the recent homicide on the Devil's Den Trail, all efforts are being made to protect employees of the park from excess attention from curious onlookers. Jay has coordinated counseling for all employees who need it after the event, and is encouraging all visitors to withhold their questions regarding the ongoing case.
- Tornado and flood damage was discussed with plans to clean up debris around the park. The butterflyfield is still closed as fallen trees block the path. The Friend's service project this morning worked on clearing parts of the path, and about 2-3 miles were cleared.
- The park is almost finished with renovation of the upper loop of the cabins! Cabins are being outfitted with various upgrades including updated furniture, roofing, windows, cabinets, and sinks. The lower loop should be finished around October of this year.
- Tayler is working on pressing native Arkansas plants for display in the visitor center.
- CAST (Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies) was mentioned- a digital archive created by the U of A which 3D scans and digitally preserves historical artifacts and places. Plans are also to create updated digital renderings of the park trails that will be free to the public to view and save.
- Trees in areas A and E have been pruned to help RVs maneuver through the park. This will also be the first year wifi will be easily accessible throughout the park.

New Business:

- A motion was made by Wesley to change the meeting for this fall to Sunday, September 20th, at 10 AM. The motion was seconded by John and passed.
- John motioned for the formation of a committee to allow for revision of current bylaws to update the voting process. This was seconded by Jay.
 - Members of this committee were elected as follows: Wesley Schwartz (as chair), Sydney Foster, Jay Schneider, James Reeves, and John Crochet.
- Updates to our website were discussed. Suggestions of alternative website builders such as Squarespace were made. Wesley has some experience in creating websites and will work on an interface that is easier to maneuver.
- Wesley proposed an update to the softball field in area E, which could use leveling and new bases. Daniel and Wesley will get in touch with friends of the park with a tractor and follow up on this.
- In discussions to make the July 4th 250th year celebration memorable, bringing the cross cut saw competition back was mentioned. Jay said this was a good idea and will follow up with us on this.
- Suggestions for an updated/digital membership form and possible QR code for the visitor's center to join the Friends of Devil's Den was suggested.

Awards

- Pat and Carole Huff→ Yellow Rock
- John and Aimee Crochet→ Butterfield Trail and Dillwyn Paxson
- Rick Turnbull→ Butterfield Trail
- Stan and Julie Vogt→ Butterfield Trail

- John and Myra Collins→ Quail Valley
- Thurman and Martha Ragar→ Quail Valley

Upcoming 2026 Events Reported by Tayler:

- Signs of Spring/Wild Edible Workshop→ weekend of April 26th
- Birder Weekend→ weekend of May 3rd
- Bat-O-Rama→ weekend of June 13th
- Devil's Den Games→ July 4th
- NWA Mountain Bike Championships→ September 19th
- Fall Fest→ October 11th

A motion was made by John Crochet to adjourn. This was seconded by Wesley Schwartz.
Sydney Foster, Secretary