



The VOTER

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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 10 (Tuesday) • EARLY VOTING BEGINS: FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

SEPTEMBER 17 (Tuesday) • FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION • Article by Kelly King • Page 2

SEPTEMBER 25 (Wednesday) • 6:00 to 7:30 PM • PUBLIC PANEL DISCUSSION - STRATEGIES FOR CONSERVING OUR TWO MAJOR NORTHWEST ARKANSAS WATERSHEDS: THE ILLINOIS RIVER AND BEAVER LAKE in the Fayetteville Public Library Walker Room. • Article by Angela Danovi & Karen Rollet-Crocker • Page 2

OCTOBER 4 (Friday) • 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM • HWOA 13th ANNUAL CONFERENCE • Guest Speaker: Henry Cisneros • Jones Center, Springdale • Advertisement • Page 6

OCTOBER 8 (Tuesday) • 6:00 to 7:45 PM • MOUNT KESSLER “TREE-RING” TALK: ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY & RELICT OLD-GROWTH OAK FORESTS in the Fayetteville Public Library Walker Room. • Additional details • Page 3

OCTOBER 17 (Thursday) – Reception • 6:00 PM / Program • 6:30 PM • DEBORAH ROGERS, FINANCIAL ANALYST, INVITED TO DISCUSS SHALE GAS ECONOMICS in the Pat Walker Senior Center • Article by Joyce Hale • Page 3

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FROM THE LWVWC PRESIDENT

By Mary Alice Serafini

While the League has taken a summer break, public policy has not. We have watched the nation struggle with immigration reform, voting rights, the Affordable Care Act, and a number of other issues very dear to a League member’s heart. We are appreciative of the LWVUS efforts to advocate and speak up on our behalf. I hope you have responded to the calls for contact about these important issues.

We are pleased to start our 2013-2014 League year with new members and great programs. On Wednesday, September 25, we will have an outstanding panel share facts and expand our understanding regarding important Northwest Arkansas water issues. We hope this panel will attract new members, so invite your friends to experience the quality of League programs. On Thursday, October 17, we will host a national expert on the economic impacts of gas drilling, Deborah Rogers, who will speak with us, along with collaborating organizations and the community. Come November, we invite our legislators to inform us about past accomplishment and future public policy endeavors. December will be a celebration with members of our Marshallese community, which will, hopefully, better educate us on matters pertaining to public policy challenges they face.

Kudos to Joyce and Jay Hale for preparing a banner and signage for League members to carry and wear at the Support the Affordable Care Act Rally on August 19. We set an example of democracy in action and let the gathering at Wilson Park know that together, we can continue to bring this Act into reality to make health insurance financially accessible and economical health care available for those who are most in need.

FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

By Kelly King

The city of Fayetteville will soon be rushing to the polls to elect a member of the school board. Five of the board members are elected from the school board zone where they live, and two members are elected at-large. The upcoming election is for the second at-large position. **ELECTION DAY IS SEPTEMBER 17TH, AND EARLY VOTING BEGINS ON SEPTEMBER 10TH.** The At-Large, Position 2 election is the only school board election this cycle. Susan Winborn Heil and James McGinty are competing for this important seat on the board.



The League is also working to arrange a candidate forum as this newsletter goes to press. Filmed during the week of August 26th, this moderated forum will air on Fayetteville's Government Channel and will also be posted to the League's web page.

We are working hard to solicit questions from the community. A group of juniors at Fayetteville High School is brainstorming questions and important issues with their classmates in social studies, civics, and history classes. We hope to include at least one of these student questions in the forum. We are also attempting to crowd-source questions via the LWVWC Facebook page and the *Fayetteville Flyer*. Please check Facebook and e-mail often for updates on this election and other important League events coming up this fall.

PUBLIC PANEL DISCUSSION - STRATEGIES FOR CONSERVING OUR TWO MAJOR NORTHWEST ARKANSAS WATERSHEDS: THE ILLINOIS RIVER AND BEAVER LAKE

By Angela Danovi & Karen Rollet-Crocker



Northwest Arkansas water resource concerns and conservation issues are critical topics to be addressed in a public panel discussion hosted by the League of Women Voters of Washington County. A group of watershed specialists will lead the event on **Wednesday, September 25 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Fayetteville Public Library Walker Room.**

With increasing economic development and a growing population, Northwest Arkansas (NWA) will be facing escalating consumer demand for and intensifying pressure on high quality water resources in the coming years. The Illinois River and Beaver Lake are the major water bodies that support NWA and Northeastern Oklahoma communities and commerce.

As of this year, new "Watershed Protection Plans" have been adopted that provide comprehensive strategies to best manage and preserve our precious water resources. However, protecting water resources and implementing the protection strategies requires the help and support from all Illinois River and Beaver Lake "watershed stakeholders" (i.e., everyone who lives, works, or plays in these watersheds).

Panelists will present overviews of the watersheds, information about the protection strategies, and opportunities for the public to become active participants in watershed protection. Time will be allocated for the public to ask questions and learn more information about watershed protection in Northwest Arkansas.

Participating water resource management expert panelists are: John Pennington, Executive Director of the Beaver Watershed Alliance; Delia Haak, Executive Director of the Illinois River Watershed Partnership; Angela Danovi, Arkansas Projects Manager of Ozarks Water Watch; and Brian Haggard of the Arkansas Water Resources Center. Mike Malone, of the Northwest Arkansas Council, will serve as panel moderator.

DEBORAH ROGERS, FINANCIAL ANALYST, INVITED TO DISCUSS SHALE GAS ECONOMICS

By Joyce Hale



Messengers who bring news that people do not want to hear are often brushed aside and ignored. It took a child, who was not affected by peer pressure or ridicule to declare “the Emperor has no clothes!” When Deborah Rogers first reported her findings that the natural gas industry’s claims and their real world production numbers did not jibe, the industry tried to discredit her in an effort to draw attention away from what she said. Since that time more data and more independent reports confirm her early assumptions. Policy makers, financial advisers, and investors should be aware of natural gas boom/bust possibilities since resource extraction historically follows this pattern. The industry’s marketing campaigns claim natural gas is an energy bridge to a sustainable future. Ms. Rogers describes the economic future she sees for unconventional gas and questions the predictions of it being a hundred year supply.

Deborah Rogers is a financial analyst and founder of the Energy Policy Forum. She was appointed to the U.S. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and serves on an advisory committee within the U.S. Department of Interior. Her professional experiences in investment banking and Wall Street have prepared her for evaluating business policy and financial issues. Ms. Rogers lectures on shale gas economics throughout the U.S. and abroad at Universities, business venues and public forums. She has been featured in articles discussing the financial anomalies of shale gas in the New York Times, Rolling Stone Magazine, the Village Voice and London’s Guardian.

Most people have heard about the environmental problems of fracking, but do not see this directly impacting them. What is less known are the financial risks of natural gas investments and its potential to disrupt the economy and delay moving to a more sustainable energy future.

A reception to welcome Ms. Rogers will take place in the Pat Walker Senior Center on Thursday, October 17 at 6:00 PM. The program will begin at 6:30 pm in the auditorium. A Q&A will follow. Sponsors for this activity are the League of Women Voters of Arkansas, Ozark Headwaters Group of Sierra Club, OMNI Center, and Arkansas Interfaith Power and Light.

MOUNT KESSLER “TREE-RING” TALK: ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY & RELICT OLD-GROWTH OAK FORESTS

All who are interested in knowing more about local natural history, the “ancient” botanical treasures of Mount Kessler, and the meaning of “ecological integrity” are invited to attend the **Tree-Ring Analysis Talk with Alan Edmondson & David Stahle in the Fayetteville Public Library Walker Room from 6:00 to 7:45 PM on Tuesday, October 8.**

The presentation is sponsored by the City of Fayetteville Environmental Action Committee (EAC), the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association (FNHA), the Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC), and Kessler Greenways.

Research project details are provided in the article that follows on the next page (previously published in the Spring 2013 FNHA Newsletter (<http://www.siteground176.com/~fayettev/pdfs/87.pdf>). Also, for additional information on Mount Kessler conservation efforts, see “FNHA ADVOCACY FOR MOUNT KESSLER GREENWAYS” by Bob Caulk on page 3 of the LWVWC VOTER November 2012 Volume 59, Issue 6 (Link to the November 2012 VOTER FNHA/Mt. Kessler article: <http://www.lwvarwc.org/newsletter/2012nov.pdf>).



(Photo by J. Froelich/ KUAF)
David Stahle, Alan Edmondson, & Mt.
Kessler Chinquapin Oak
Source Link:
<http://kuaf.com/content/sampling-ancient-chinquapin-oak-forest-mt-kessler>

FNHA SPONSORS TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF ANCIENT OAK WOODLANDS ON KESSLER MOUNTAIN, ARKANSAS

By David Stahle and Alan Edmondson

(Previously published in the FNHA Spring 2013 Newsletter and re-printed with permission.)

The natural woodlands on Kessler Mountain near Fayetteville, Arkansas, are being considered for the establishment of a regional park and outdoor laboratory for the University of Arkansas. Preliminary survey of the forests along the Kessler Mountain biking trail has identified several parcels of relict old-growth oak woodlands that were not logged and still contain canopy dominant post oak and chinkapin* oak in the 200- to 300- year age class. These ancient oak were not cut because they are non-commercial for timber production. Some post oaks on dry shale glades were too stunted and many chinkapin oak on rock outcrops were too contorted for logging. The terrain where these ancient oaks are found is also too steep, rocky, or infertile for agriculture. As a result, very old trees that germinated in the 18th century prior to the European settlement of Arkansas are still locally present on Kessler Mountain. These old-growth woodlands may represent the areas with the highest ecological integrity on Kessler Mountain.

Public and private forest lands on Kessler Mountain that are being considered for conservation management, were surveyed with the goal of mapping and describing the best parcels of uncut ancient oak woodland. This project constitutes the masters thesis research of Mr. Alan Edmondson, Department of Geosciences,

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. The research objectives will include:

1. A survey of the property to identify all remaining parcels of old-growth forest on or adjacent to the proposed regional park. These remnants will be located with global positioning system (GPS) surveys and will be incorporated into a geographic information system (GIS) developed during this project.
2. The two largest or highest quality parcels of ancient woodland will be selected for careful mapping and randomized field sampling to quantify the tree species composition of the stand.
3. The age structure of the dominant oak species, *Quercus muehlenbergii* and *Quercus stellata*, will be quantified based on randomized core sampling and dendrochronology (tree-ring dating).
4. The oldest individual trees and dead logs of any species will also be sampled across the property to document the maximum longevity of the trees still present on Kessler Mountain.
5. Analyses of the proposed data will include: estimation of the total acreage of uncut old-growth forest still present at Kessler Mountain; estimation of the density and basal area of tree species present on the two intensive study sites; estimation of the age structure of the dominant chinkapin oak and post oak on the two study sites; and development of numerical tree-ring chronologies for both chinkapin oak and 3 post oak, using the core specimens taken from the randomly selected trees and the oldest individual trees and logs located during the proposed research.
6. A final report and draft masters thesis will be prepared during the proposed research and will be submitted to the project sponsors by August 31, 2013.



200-year old Chinkapin (*Quercus muehlenbergii*) Kessler Mtn, AR



(Photo by J. Froelich/ KUAF)

Core sample from an Ancient Chinkapin Oak on Mt. Kessler.

Source Link:

<http://kuaf.com/content/sampling-ancient-chinquapin-oak-forest-mt-kessler>

Project sponsors include the Arkansas Forestry Commission, FNHA, Hunter Haynes, Kessler Greenways, and Ozark Ecological Restoration, Inc. The research was conducted by Mr. Edmondson under the direction of his faculty advisor Dr. David Stahle. Preliminary research began in the spring semester of 2013, and the funded field and laboratory research was conducted from May 16 to August 15, 2013.

(*Editor's Note: According to Merriam-Webster.com, "chinkapin" is a variant of the standard word form "chinquapin.")

“DON’T REPEAL MY HEALTHCARE” RALLY

By JP Peters



On August 19, the League of Women Voters of Washington County (LWVWC) participated in a rally in support of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). The “Don’t Repeal My HealthCare” rally was held at Wilson Park in Fayetteville. Various community and state leaders spoke of the many benefits of the PPACA and challenged the audience to “hold firm” with efforts to stop those who would seek to repeal the Act. The League’s presence at the rally was very visible. In addition to displaying the League’s banner, members wore and distributed signs to supporters stating that the League supports the ACA.

While the LWVWC supports the PPACA, it is important to mention certain factors, both nationally and at the state level, that could potentially impact the implementation of the Act. At the national level, the sequester could affect implementation. Although key parts of the health care law are exempt from the sequester (i.e., money to subsidize insurance for eligibles and the Medicaid expansion) inconsistencies exist between the Budget Control Act (BCA) and the PPACA. These inconsistencies relating to some mandatory provisions and discretionary spending and whether reductions apply or what is fully sequestrable is of concern. Clarification will be needed as to whether the automatic spending reductions will impact implementation of the PPACA.

The Private Option is the result of the passage of the Arkansas Health Care Independence Act of 2013 (SB1020/HB1143). This Act provides the legislation necessary for the State to use Federal monies “that have been set aside for Medicaid Expansion” to be used for the funding of premium payments being paid to private insurers to cover eligible individuals with incomes up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level. Appropriation bill (HB1219) provides the spending authority. The future of the Private Option will be dependent on the approval of funds each year by the Legislature, even though funding will be 100% Federal funds through the year 2016. This results in uncertainty and will depend on the political environment at the time.

During the last session, many legislators stated they wanted to “do away with the Medicaid Program.” This sentiment was included in the legislation - “...reduce the size of the state-administered Medicaid program.” There are still questions as to what services will be provided by a Qualified Health Plan (QHP) as opposed to services an individual would receive under the Medicaid program. If the intent is to gradually remove recipients from the Medicaid program and place them in a QHP, this may not be in the best interest of the individual.

The Private Option is NOT Medicaid Expansion as specified in the ACA. Since the State decided not to opt for Medicaid Expansion, it has to submit a waiver and gain approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. On August 2, 2013, the State submitted a Section 1115 Research and Demonstration Waiver application to DHHS/CMS. Now, the approval process begins.

UA COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSOR PREMIERS NEW “INFORMED COMMUNITIES” COURSE

Source: eMail from Ron Warren/UA Communications Associate Professor adapted for The VOTER

A new “Informed Communities” course, makes its debut this semester in the University of Arkansas Department of Communication Catalog of Studies. The expressed intent of course creator, Associate Professor, Ron Warren (ronw@uark.edu), is to “design the class to give students some experience “in the field,” so to speak, and to engage professionals in conversations about the issues we cover. One of those issues will be communication and information systems’ role in local democracy and civic engagement.”

League Member Laura Kellams recently accepted Dr. Warren’s invitation for “someone in the League to come to the class, on a Tuesday or Thursday during the week of either Sept. 17th or Sept. 24th, to share thoughts on the importance of good information and communication for participatory democracy, relate the League’s experiences in these areas, and field questions from the students.”



LWVWC WEBSITE UPDATE

By Sally King

Be sure to visit the LWVWC website at <http://www.lwvarwc.org> for upcoming meetings, current and past issues of the Voter, the latest League happenings, national and local League policy stands, links to useful resources, and much more. Resources added recently include:

Homepage--Arkansas Voter ID

1. Rules proposed by the secretary of State under the Voter ID law and revised after a public comment period to be effective January 1, 2014.
2. A summary and explanation of the changes with a summary of the public comments.
3. The text of the Voter ID law.

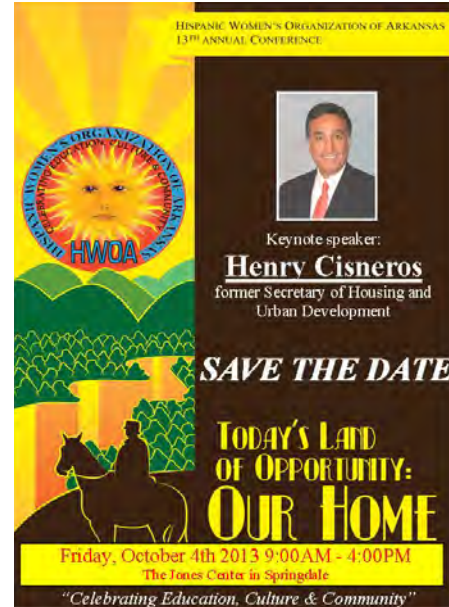
Links Page—State Government Section

1. *The Arkansas Code* which is a subject compilation of Arkansas laws.
2. 2013 amendments to the Code by Code section.
3. *The Arkansas Register*, which publishes new final and emergency rules promulgated by administrative agencies.

Immigration Resources Page

1. A link to a video on YouTube of the April 24 program giving an overview of immigration law, a review of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy, and a summary of the comprehensive immigration reform bill passed in the Senate.

2. Undocumented Immigrants' State and Local Tax Contributions (Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, July 2013)
3. The Economic Benefits of Fixing Our Broken Immigration System (White House, July 2013)
4. CRS Report for Congress: Border Security: Immigration Enforcement Between Ports of Entry (Congressional Research Service, May 2013)



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