Mission: to unite as citizens and actively engage in the preservation of the Spring Creek Watershed

Spring Creek Coalition
2434 East 56 Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105

Please contact SCC to be removed from or added to this mailing list

Spring Creek Watershed Landowners

Fall 2013 Newsletter

PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES
SPRING CREEK COALITION

Est. 1994

THE MOST PRISTINE LARGE OZARK STREAM IN OKLAHOMA MANAGED AND PROTECTED BY PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

Phone: (918) 637-1449
Email info@springcreekok.org
www.springcreekok.org

2013 Fall Outing: Archeology and Artifacts in the Spring Creek Area

Saturday, September 28
1pm – 3pm
Peggs Community Center
Highway 82, Peggs, Oklahoma

Have you happened upon arrowheads, scrapers, knives, pottery or other interesting artifacts in the Spring Creek area? Although we are in the heart of Cherokee Nation, these items were most likely made and used by the ancestors of the Caddo and Wichita people.

On Saturday, September 28, Dr. Scott Hammerstedt of the Oklahoma Archeological Survey and the University of Oklahoma will talk to our group about the Reed site, which is now under Grand Lake near Grove, but was first excavated in the 1920s and again in the late 1930s, and produced some interesting artifacts.

"Some fancy artifacts like a copper plate shaped like falcons came out of a burial mound at the Reed site which dates from A.D. 1000 - 1400," notes Dr. Hammerstedt. "These people were probably the ancestors of the Caddo and Wichita. The Osage came in later. And the Cherokee arrived in the 1830's."

People who lived at the Reed site are part of a much larger mound-building tradition called the Mississippian that extends all across the southeastern US. We here at Spring Creek and places such as Spiro Mounds in Spiro, OK, are on the western fringes of this culture.

Learn about your collections: Although he doesn't do dollar evaluations, Dr. Hammerstedt said he would be glad to look over the items you bring and tell you about them. "Every once and awhile I see something that will stump me," he notes, "but I usually do pretty well."

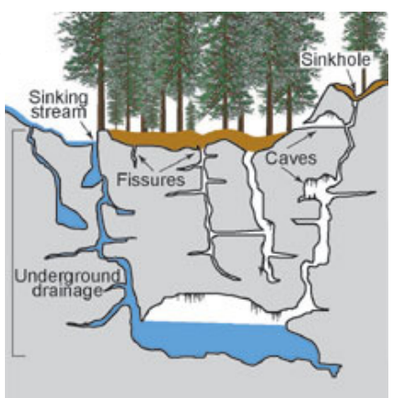
Longer Than We Can Fathom...

Earlier this year members of the Spring Creek Coalition gathered at the site of Lucky School. Several of our elderly citizens spoke about the school and how more than 70 years ago they used to float their milk jars in the water to keep them cold. I started wondering how long Lucky Spring and the creek itself have been flowing, and what formed these hills. Here are a few interesting facts I uncovered.

First, the land. Some 300 million years ago, the Pennsylvanian Period of the early Paleozoic Era was a time of dramatic geologic change. A deep ocean basin existed in what is now southern Arkansas, extending into the Spring Creek valley. This explains the remains of a coral reef I know of in an exposed bluff up a holler near the creek. When South America seemingly struck Texas

and Oklahoma, the Ouachita orogeny occurred, folding the land into what is now the Ouachita Mountain chain in Arkansas and Oklahoma, and uplifting the Ozark Plateau. Waters falling on the uplifted plateau found the paths of least resistance, formed our hills and valleys, and left us with flat topped hills and mountains. Have you noticed when driving into Spring Creek how you suddenly drop off the "flats", usually down a holler and into the valley below, suddenly surrounded by hills?

Karst topography. You may have heard the word "karst" used to describe the Spring Creek area. Karst is a landscape formed when acidic rainwater dissolves soluble rocks such as limestone, dolomite and gypsum. It is characterized by sinkholes, caves, springs, and sinking streams such as Spring Creek and Double Spring Creek which both run underground in places. This topography gives us the many springs that keep our creek cold and pristine.



Features of a Karst system
Source: University of Texas, Austin

Then life. The Ozarks have supported life for 225 million years, having been unaffected by oceans or glaciers in that time period. One hundred and sixty species of plant and animal occur only in the Ozarks. One of these is the Ozark Hellbender, a salamander which has been living in Ozark streams for an estimated 100 million years. The Hellbender, at about two feet long, is one of the largest salamanders in the world. Its existence is threatened due to habitat changes and there are an estimated 600 in existence today. If you see one (range is the Missouri and Arkansas Ozarks), take a picture and call a Wildlife Ranger. Call me too for that matter.

Ozark Hellbender

And finally, people. It is estimated that humans came around after the last ice age some ten thousand years ago. Little is known of the original inhabitants. More is known about those that lived here from about 650 A.D. onward. Their artifacts are found regularly in the Spring Creek valley. Why not? Who wouldn't want to inhabit this beautiful stream and dip pots and cups into the springs flowing from these hills?

How old is the creek? How long have these springs been flowing? Longer than we can fathom. We are here for a speck of time and have been given this place as a gift to care for and protect. Let's be worthy of such a gift.

Wes Combs, Spring Creek Resident, Teresita area

Temperature Loggers Placed In Spring Creek

As part of their study of smallmouth bass populations in streams in northeast Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) fisheries group has placed four temperature loggers in Spring Creek. The temperature loggers are waterproof and record a temperature reading every 15 minutes for up to six years.

The Spring Creek Coalition board approved the purchase of one temperature logger at a cost of $125 which ODWC matched 3 to 1. The loggers have been placed in the Twin Bridges, Thompson's slab, Teresita, and Rocky Ford areas.

Mike Harper of OKC helping with the 2012 clean-up

As of mid-August, stream temperatures are running about 6-8 degrees F cooler than they were for the same period in 2012.

GIVE BACK TO YOUR CREEK—FALL CLEAN-UP

Saturday, November 2nd
10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
Cave Springs Area

Weiner roast for the kids
Rain or shine
Gloves and trash bags provided
Contact Jennifer Owen at 918-637-1449 for information

Directions:

From Tulsa: Take Hwy. 412 east to the Cherokee Turnpike. Exit at Locust Grove (toll ¢25). Go South (right) on Hwy. 82, and travel about 8 miles to Peggs.

From Tahlequah: Take Hwy. 82 north to Peggs.

……

Both: At Peggs, turn north on N440 Road. You will pass the Peggs Cemetery. In less than two miles, you will come to the Cave Springs low water bridge, the site of our clean-up.

Tip: One of our board members highly recommends bringing a pair of tongs and a small trash can which he says can really help grab and load trash.