

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

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Spring Creek Coalition
2434 East 56 Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105

Spring Creek Watershed Landowners Fall 2016 Newsletter



Est. 1994

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

Phone: (918) 906-6762
Email info@springcreekok.org
www.springcreekok.org

GIVE BACK TO YOUR CREEK FALL CLEAN-UP COOPER'S BRIDGE AREA

Saturday, November 5, 10am – 12pm
Rain or shine
Gloves and trash bags provided
Hot lunch for all participants
Contact: Beth Rooney, 918-906-6762

Directions: Cooper's Bridge is south of the old Twin Bridges area, where the Cedar Crest dam starts to back up the water. Young people come here to picnic and jump off the bridge. This area needs our help!

Take Ear Bob Road off Highway 82 and travel approximately two miles to the new bridge, 439.2 Road. Cross Spring Creek. Turn left. Travel two miles to your first left. Cross Cooper's Bridge and park in the mowed areas where you will see the Spring Creek event sign..

November 8th: Know Before You Vote — SQ777

"Right to Farm" and "Right to Harm" are both phrases used to describe State Question (SQ) 777, which will appear on the Oklahoma ballot on November 8, 2016. As the Kirkpatrick Foundation states on its website, "this bill affects everyone who lives in Oklahoma who breathes air, drinks water or eats food, so it's important to know what it's really about."

The SCC board is against this bill. If approved, we believe that it will hamper Oklahoma's ability to protect its water. SQ777

"is a complex constitutional amendment with far-reaching consequences."

To help you make an informed choice, here is a link to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Kirkpatrick Foundation website: kirkpatrickfoundation.com/sq777-right-to-farm .

Your decision at the polls is important. Know before you vote!



FALL OUTING SPECIAL: RIDGE CLIFF TRAIL HIKE

Saturday, October 15, 10am – 1pm

Join us in a unique opportunity to hike the cliffs across the creek from Lucky Springs road. Enjoy beautiful views of the creek from up high.

We will be hiking about a half mile in, over rough terrain (fallen logs, uneven ground) for the first part, then to a path along the ridge covered with pine trees. We'll stop to have lunch (bring your own) and enjoy the view before hiking a half mile back out.

The hike is not appropriate for exuberant children who might run and tumble as we will be on a high cliff top. Participation is limited to 16. Call Beth Rooney, 918-906-6762 to reserve your spot. Directions will be sent a week before the outing.

Interests Shared at Board Meeting

Stonerollers Featured

Footage Filmed at Spring Creek

Calendars Available

Enthusiasm High at Aug Board Meeting

The enthusiasm of shared conservation interests filled the library meeting room when your Spring Creek Coalition board and representatives of three other agencies exchanged ideas at our August 11 board meeting. First was a captivating presentation of underwater photography in northeast Oklahoma streams by Brandon Brown of Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC). "I'm always impressed by Brandon's videos," noted Board Director Donna Drury. "His messages - that our Ozark streams with their clear water and abundant fish are the best kept secret in North America and that they are fragile - were important for everyone to hear."

Dr. Darrell Townsend, assistant general manager of Grand River Dam Authority ecosystems, then spoke about the progress at their agency. Their capability in environ-



Board President Beth Rooney introduces Brandon Brown of ODWC.

mental issues has been increased recently by the addition of Ed Fite of the former Scenic Rivers Commission. GRDA has added law enforcement staff to the Illinois River, freeing Ed to take care of the water. "I was impressed that Dr. Townsend was interested enough to attend and participate in the business portion of our meeting," notes Board Director George Kamp. "This is a continuation of interactions between our Coalition and the GRDA which started in June, 2015, and we were glad to have Dr. Townsend there."

The Oklahoma Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was represented by Jay Pruett, Director of Conservation. He indicated TNC could be helpful to property owners interested in conservation easements. Pruett also stayed through and contributed to our business session, which was appreciated.

Discussion was lively, everyone learned something new, and conversations went on into the parking lot after library staff turned off the lights.

Local Stonerollers Featured in Documentary By Brandon Brown, ODWC

Walk up to the bank just about anywhere on Spring Creek and you probably won't have to look very hard to find a big school of stonerollers. They're one of our most common Ozark stream fish and spend most of their lives more or less unnoticed. Pay attention, though, and you'll see large schools of them roaming the shallow riffles and runs with head down using their chisel-like cartilaginous bottom lip to scrape and feed on algae and bacterial mats growing on the streambed.

Because they're so common and plain looking, it's easy to take them for granted, but stone-



Stonerollers scrape algae off rocks with their cartilaginous bottom lip. © Brandon Brown

rollers are actually a keystone species. They are to streams what buffalo were to the Great Plains and play a vital role in maintaining the health of Ozark streams. Stoneroller research done on an Oklahoma stream in the early 1980's by Dr. Mary Powers and Dr. Bill Matthews has been recognized by ecologists around the world for demonstrating the positive effects of stonerollers on stream communities. In fact, it's become so well known, that Dr. Powers and her research are being featured in an upcoming documentary on pioneers in the field of ecology.

A United Kingdom producer, who has worked with such ecological celebrities as Jane Goodall and David Attenborough, was in Oklahoma in July to film footage for this documentary. His crew filmed in Spring, Snake and other northeast Oklahoma streams, spending five days in Ottawa, Delaware, Cherokee and Mayes coun-

ties.

Dr. Powers' research revealed that when stonerollers are excluded from a reach of stream, green filamentous algae will very quickly begin growing and can completely cover the streambed. Eventually, the habitat is altered to the point that it becomes unsuitable for some species.

The producer emphasized the importance of the research and added, "The work done by Dr. Powers in Oklahoma not only demonstrated the importance of stonerollers, but contributed to the larger concept of community ecology and predator-prey relationships, which has had implications in other systems around the world."

The producer and film crew admitted they didn't know what to expect when they heard they were going to Oklahoma, but ended up ranking the water quality, fish abundance, and overall beauty among the best kept secrets and top places they've worked. Powers is just one of several well-known ecologists that will be highlighted in the documentary, which should be released in 2018.

Editor's Note: Brandon Brown was instrumental in locating film sites for the crew.

2017 Spring Creek Calendars Now Available

Reserve yours at 918-906-6762.