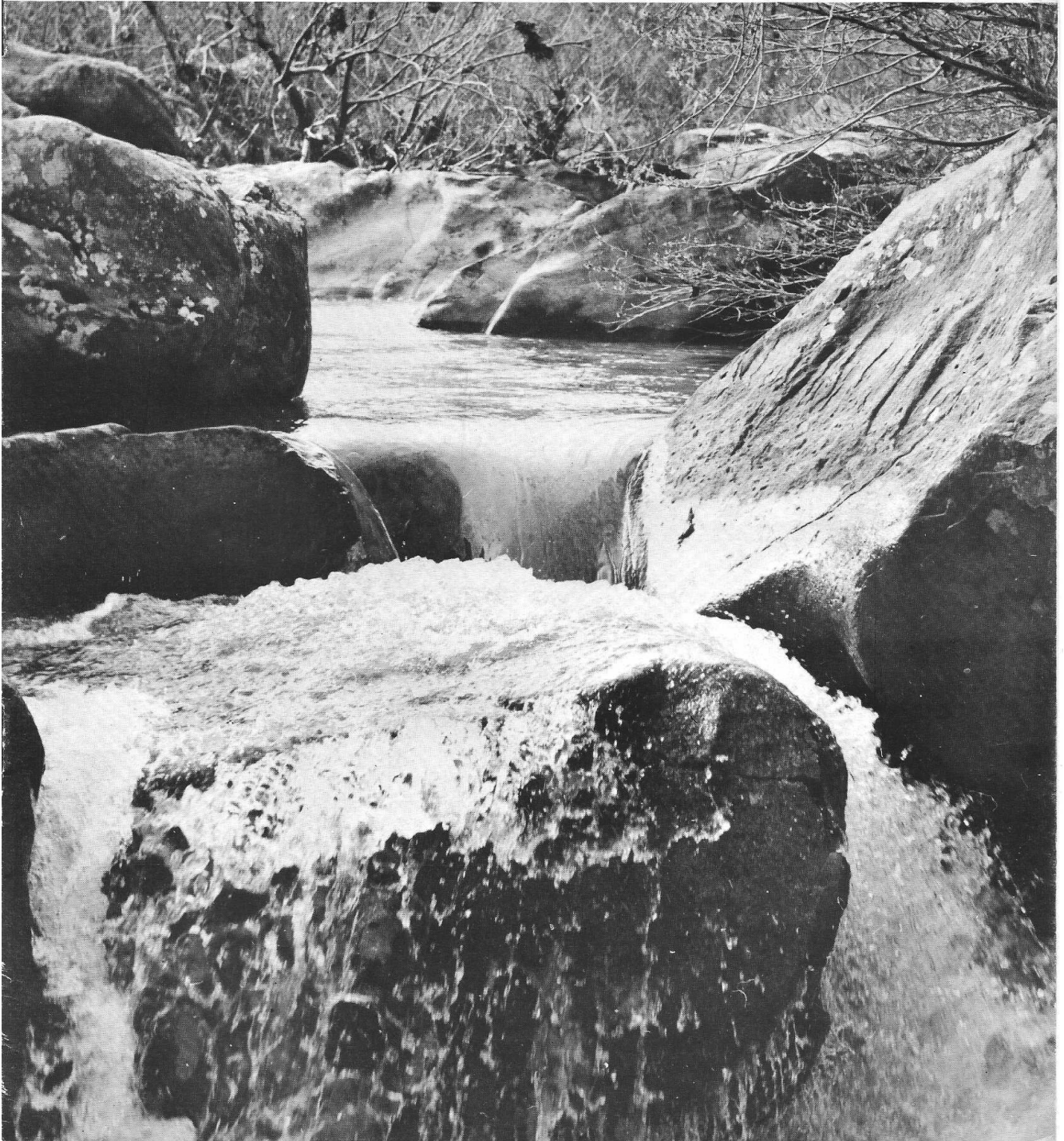


# Ozark Society Bulletin

THE NARROWS,  
KINGS RIVER

Spring 1967



# OZARK SOCIETY BULLETIN

SPRING 1967

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P. O. Box 38, Fayetteville, Ark. 72701

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1724 Rockwood Trail, Fayetteville, Ark. 72701

Photographs by Dr. Neil Compton

Pen drawing by Katherine Winckler

This issue of the Ozark Society Bulletin is our first attempt at a magazine type of publication in an effort to establish better communication between members of the Society.

To start with no background and little money is an uneasy experience. We do have a wealth of ventures into deep Ozark valleys and woodlands, and have canoed in the currents of many streams.

We want to share with others the accounts and pictures of these trips and to influence them to accompany us on future trips.

We will be glad to receive for consideration articles and pictures appropriate for publication in the BULLETIN. The articles should be typed and double spaced on one side of standard typewriter paper. Photographs should be 8 by 10 glossy prints.

## OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President .....Dr. Neil Compton, Bentonville, Ark.

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## PUBLICATION FUND

Our plans for the BULLETIN will require more money than can be allotted from the dues. We have hopes of making the BULLETIN bigger and better. Any donations, large or small, to a publication fund will be most welcome and will help to assure the continuance and growth of the publication.

## OZARK SOCIETY SPRING MEETING, 1967

April 8th and 9th

MATHER LODGE, PETIT JEAN STATE PARK

### Saturday, April 8th

9:00 a.m. REGISTRATION

10:00 a.m. REMARKS ON CONSERVATION  
Dr. Neil Compton, President, Ozark Society

11:00 a.m. OUTDOOR RECREATION IN THE  
OZARK NATIONAL FOREST  
Alvis Z. Owen, Forest Supervisor

1:30 p.m. BOTANY OF SCENIC AREAS,  
ARKANSAS OZARKS  
Maxine Clark, M. S., Botany

2:30 p.m. NEW PLANS FOR THE BUFFALO  
NATIONAL RIVER  
Bernard Campbell, Superintendent, Hot Springs National Park, Ark.

4:00 p.m. THE GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON  
STREAM PRESERVATION  
H. Charles Johnston, Jr., Chairman

7:00 p.m. OPEN YOUR EYES SO THAT YOU  
CAN SEE  
Howard Stern, M.D.

8:15 p.m. THE CAVES OF ARKANSAS  
16mm color film with sound  
Jim Schermerhorn, President Arkansas  
Speleological Survey

### Sunday, April 9th

9:30 a.m. THE CURRENT CRISIS ON THE PRO-  
POSED BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER  
Panel discussion

11:00 a.m. BUSINESS SESSION

12:00 a.m. ADJOURNMENT

# Ozark Society Exploratory Hike

## Upper Kings River

by Dr. Neil Compton

On the last Sunday in January seven members of the Ozark Society met at the home of Arlis Coger in Huntsville preparatory to a hike on the upper Kings River along a little known stretch from above the waterfall to the Bolinger place.

A thin high overcast was present and persisted more or less throughout the day. The temperature at departure time was about 40 degrees with a rise to around 50 or 55 degrees in the afternoon with a wind from the south. This proved to be stimulating weather for this sort of activity and also provided ample light for photography.

It was decided to send five of the group to the point of departure in one car and for Coger and me to proceed to the pickup point where Arlis's truck was to be left as a means for the hikers to return for their own vehicles at the end of the hike.

When we finally arrived at the Mart Ledbetter place we found the remainder of our party waiting and wondering why we had been so long. The reason for this is good enough since it is more than twenty miles around from the point where the truck was left to the Ledbetter farm. All this notwithstanding, the distance down river from where the hike was to begin to where the truck was left was only seven miles, according to local advice.

After arranging our gear and equipment we set out across Ledbetter's field and soon were trudging along the old abandoned wagon road toward the Kings River Falls. We found the river to be running at about its normal level but with the water dingy from recent rains. Through the winter up until this time the level of the water has been much below normal due to the prolonged drought. The rain had brought it up to its

normal flow but in doing so had somewhat muddied it and the usual milky green color of streams flowing from the Boston Mountain crest was not at its best on this date. As it was, the milky and almost muddy appearance of the water was to remain with us all the way down to the pickup point at the Bolinger place.

Both banks of the Kings River above the falls and below Ledbetter's field, a distance of a little more than a quarter of a mile, are heavily populated with wild azaleas (*Rhododendron roseum*). These are all mature plants of unknown age and have grown back in an area once heavily utilized by man before the time of the Civil War. We checked them for buds and were pleased to note that they were well budded for a good bloom this next May. After a short inspection of the waterfall and the cliffs nearby we set out down stream with some doubts in our minds as to whether or not we would be able to get to the Bolinger place before dark. There was some thought of turning

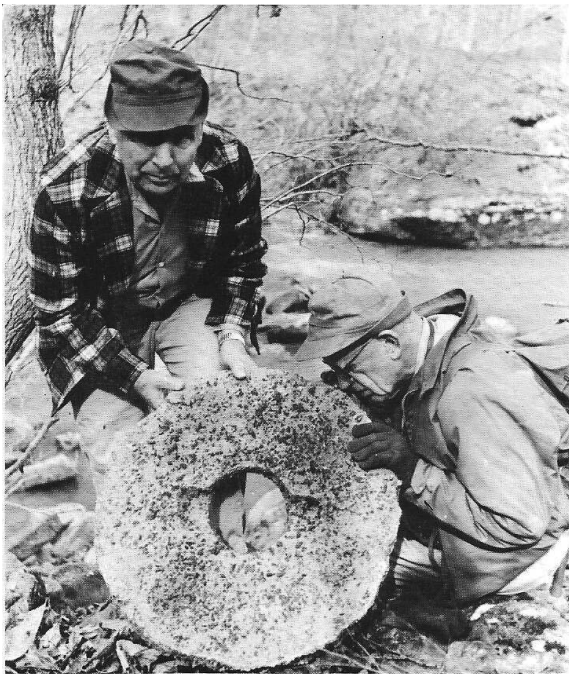
back after proceeding a short distance down from the falls.

About a hundred yards below the falls we came to the buhr from the old mill that had been discovered at the time of our last visit. According to statements of those who knew, the old mill is supposed to have washed away in 1914 and no vestige of it now remains, but tradition had it that the millstones were still in the river bed somewhere. At the time of our last visit, Arlis Coger and Clayton Little had located one of these during the period of extreme low water that existed then. They had carried it to the river bank and here we found it and inspected it carefully. Joe Clark, our geologist, after checking over it with a hand lens, stated that it was composed of limestone with thickly imbedded particles of flint. After photographing it and studying it we proceeded on our way under tall cliffs and beside large pools and through a thick growth of alder and witch-hazel immediately along the river bank. The cliffs along this part of Kings Riv-



KINGS RIVER FALLS





ARLIS COGER  
AND  
JOE CLARK  
EXAMINE OLD  
MILLSTONE  
(JOE WITH NOSE  
TO GRINDSTONE)

er demonstrate an interesting cap-rock which projects out from the very top like a shelf or balcony or the edge of a table. They are streaked and colored by iron salts in the soil and by tannic acid stain from the vegetation above. Also they are colored red and yellow along with various shades of blacks and grays by lichens that grow on them. These bluffs do not tower as high as those along the Buffalo but prove to be as interesting and beautiful because of the caprock and of the relatively undisturbed forest that grows throughout the entire gorge.

This forest is composed of pine on the tops of the cliffs, with oak, hickory, sweet gum, black gum, linden, magnolia, and many other trees on the slopes below. As has been stated, along the river bank there is a thick growth of alder and witch-hazel. On this day the spring witch-hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) was in full bloom; the small ribbon-like flowers of this large shrub were quite conspicuous and occurred in various shades of yellow, orange, and red. The most delightful attribute of these plants, however, is the perfume which emanates from the blossom and fills the air of the valley on such mild winter afternoons. Azaleas also were observed all along the river in various places but never were there any populations as thick as those around the waterfall itself. Only in one area did we observe the ef-

fects of destructive timber cutting operations such as are common in many of the other mountain ravines in the Ozarks these days. This activity was limited in extent and shortly after noting it we were thrilled to come upon an area of several acres which remained in its virgin condition and which was populated by tremendous forest trees of many species. Elsewhere there was evidence of timber cutting back to the beginning with some old stumps obviously fifty or sixty years old and still not entire-

ly rotted away. These older timber cutting operations appeared to have been selective in nature and at the present time the appearance of the woodland is relatively undisturbed in this respect.

A lunch stop was made on a large ledge of shale and sandstone which bordered the river in a place where it was filled with enormous boulders and flowed over a long expanse of solid rock. At this point we decided to continue the journey on to the Bolinger settlement and not to return to the falls. In this we knew we were running a real risk of being caught out in the wilderness after dark but all concerned were so entranced with the beauty of the valley that we all wanted to see what the remainder looked like. Soon thereafter it narrowed into a V-shaped gorge which rendered the traverse of the stream itself impossible and we had to take to the hillside with strenuous effort in order to make our way among the boulders and rocks of all sizes and shapes. All along we could see the stream below flowing through the boulders and hear the roar of its rapids. At one point, called the "Narrows" by the local people, the stream makes its way through a number of channels carved in the solid rock with great boulders lying about on all sides. In this area there are several free falls but none as large as the main fall at the beginning of the hike.

KINGS RIVER NEAR THE NARROWS



After leaving the Narrows we picked our tedious way among the boulders along the hillsides and through the thickets of hazel and alder and as the sun descended toward the western rim we began to feel really concerned as to whether or not we would be able to make our way to our source of transportation before dark.

At last, however, the narrow V-shaped valley began to widen and suddenly we emerged upon a cleared field about a quarter of a mile long and several hundred yards wide with high hills arising on both sides. From this field we soon passed into another and saw in the distance the high caprock of Penitentiary Mountain rising into the sky. Here we thought that surely the truck must be around the end of the next field, but at the end of it a still larger one presented itself and we trudged across these wide open spaces admiring the beauty of the high Ozarks that lay all about us. In this part of the valley the size of the trees increased until we walked under towering forest giants the like of which we had never seen before in this part of the Ozarks. They serve to give us some comprehension of what our land must have looked like in the days of the Indian. By now we were walking easily along the old wagon road which before the Civil War served the pioneers all up and down the Kings River. Finally, as dusk descended, we came in sight of the swinging bridge and soon the truck was ready to transport us back to civilization. For some of us this proved to be a genuinely airy or breath taking experience but all arrived back at Coger's in good condition, tired, hungry, but thoroughly satisfied with this adventure in the wilderness.

In summary one can say that this part of the upper Kings River represents as primitive an area as is to be found in the Ozarks today. We were impressed by the fact that no previous evidence of grazing by livestock was to be seen, and there had been relatively little cutting of the remaining timber. The question then arises as to what might be done to preserve it as it now exists. The upper mile does lie within the Ozark National Forest boundary, but the remaining portion is without. The area of

## LOST VALLEY STATE PARK HIKE DRAWS LARGE TURNOUT

It was a cold, grey day, but sixty-two enthusiastic hikers enjoyed their outing on February 26. The party varied in age from Jim Heuston, aged 10 weeks, of Mountain Home, who elected to stay in the Lodge, to Mr. Bill Hood, 92 years, of Bentonville. Hikers came also from Fayetteville, Prairie Grove, Springdale, Rogers, Harrison, Little Rock and Altheimer.

The party gathered at Lost Valley House where a short meeting was held by Mr. John Imhoff, the leader for the day. Then, for the benefit of those who had not been to Ponca before, a brief stop was made at the Ponca "put-in" on the

Buffalo River where floats embark.

The group proceeded up Lost Valley, enjoying the caves, waterfalls, tremendous limestone bluffs, and studying the trees of the valley. Following a pleasant lunch in Cob Cave, an historic Indian bluff shelter, the party returned to the Lodge, where Mr. Hood told some of his early experiences in traveling the United States.

Many newcomers to the Ozark Society enjoyed the day and we hope that they and other members will participate in the coming spring activities planned by the Society.

## Upper Richland Creek Hike

The Richland Creek hike of Saturday, March 18 was one of the most strenuous but most rewarding of any yet made by members of the Ozark Society.

In order to get an early start, hikers camped Friday night in near freezing temperatures at the confluence of Falling Water and Richland Creeks in southwestern Searcy County.

Three men well acquainted with the area drove in early the next day to lead the group up the creek to a water-fall which was the object of the hike. These were Julius Williams, Arthur Lee, and Wesley Robb. Mr. Williams took the party the entire distance.

The hikers were led upstream out of Searcy County into southeastern Marshall County, the scene of the falls. Not only were the falls of upper Richland Creek seen, but the party was led to a twin falls on Devils Fork and then back to camp. The trip ended near dark.

These falls were the most beautiful we have seen in Arkansas. In a forthcoming issue of the Bulletin there will be an article accompanied with photographs describing these falls.

the Kings River falls is owned by Mr. Coger, who would be glad to see it incorporated into some sort of preservation program.

For us this was as moving an experience as we have ever had in our quest for wilderness. Its most delightful recollection is that of the fragrance of the witch-hazel, the aroma of spring here wafted on the breezes of January. Upon considering the beauty of the upper Kings River we are even more resolved to redouble our efforts to temper man's now fantastic power, power which transcends that of the natural forces which shaped these hills and populated them with the myriad forms of life in such delicate balance as we have seen on this January Sunday. We would hope some day to bring our society to the realization that our every move might now upset this balance and destroy it, that our own survival ultimately depends upon the integrity of this balance and order of life on earth that we have been privileged to witness in this wild gorge of the Kings River.

## — 0 — NEWS ITEM

The part of the Eleven Point River that flows through northern Arkansas is included in a nine stream system of scenic rivers recommended in legislation and sent to Congress early this month. This will insure its preservation in its entirety from its source in Missouri.



## BOTANICAL NOTES

By Maxine Clark

Buffalo River Bank, Marion County, Arkansas

As the current carries you swiftly by rich wooded terraces lying at the base of north facing bluffs, you catch glimpses of golden yellow intermingled with bright clear blue, and feel impelled to back paddle and find a spot where a safe jump can be negotiated between a tipsy canoe and a muddy bank. Your reward is a veritable early spring garden of the Ozark's most beautiful early spring wild flowers. Yellow of celandine poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*), blue of wild sweet William (*Phlox divaricata*), pale pink of Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), and a variety of delicate shades of greens seem to proclaim, "I'm new and untouched by the elements".

Let's make the most of our exploratory venture. The waxy white petals and numerous stamens of the bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) have fallen and exposed the erect seed capsule, the stem of which is sheathed by the distinctive leaf never forgotten once recognized. The red juice of the rootstock was used by the American Indians as a stain for war paint and for dyeing the quills of their arrows. The roots have certain medicinal properties as emetics and purgatives.

*Uvularia grandiflora*, commonly called merry-bells, has yellow, drooping, lily like flowers and clasping leaves which appear to be threaded on the stem. Though not flamboyant like the celandine poppy, it is a distinctive member of the lily family.

Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) which belongs to the birthwort family, Aristolochiaceae, as does the vine, Dutchman's pipe, is not to be confused with the one of gingerbread fame, which is a tropical plant and not botanically related to *Asarum*. However, wild ginger is one ingredient in an apple chutney recipe given in the southern cookbook section of The Greater American Cookbook. Let us examine the plant; if you gently pull back the soil, a hairy, brownish purple flower will be found in the axil of two equally hairy stems of the two heart shaped leaves.

The handsome, peltate leaves of May-apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) have emerged from the soil, and we confirm a former observation that stems bearing two leaves have a flower bud in their axil; single leaved stems are sterile. The rootstock, stems and leaves are poisonous, but are avoided by animals because of the bitter taste. The ripe fruit is edible and when made into a jelly, marmalade or preserves has a flavor suggestive of guava jelly. Recent study of the rootstock as a possible remedy for cancer has not been conclusive.

*Iris cristata*, the crested dwarf iris, with its exposed, knotty rhizomes and short stemmed flowers of delicate blue, forms a large colony in the thinner soil surrounding a large tree trunk.

Flower buds of spiderwort (*Tradescantia*) are expanding) and we recall that two species, *T. ernestia-*

*na* and *T. ozarkana* are indigenous of the Ozark and Ouachita areas of S. W. Missouri, N. E. Oklahoma, and Arkansas.

Wooly fiddle heads of Christmas fern (*Polystichum arostichoides*) and fragile stems of the northern maidenhair (*Adiantum pedatum*) will be fully developed fronds in a few weeks.

A spicy fragrance prompted us to make a quick inspection of the bordering limestone bluff, and it was no surprise to find the fragrant gooseberry (*Ribes odoratum*) with its clusters of small yellow flowers. This shrub may be found blooming with redbud in all sorts of rocky situations, even on the bleak Narrows that separate the Buffalo and Richland Creek valleys.

Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema atrorubens*) stands knee high at the base of the bluff and we remember Ken Smith telling us of the unusually large plants of this species to be found in Indian Creek Canyon in May. The arums have net veined leaves and are an exception to the rule that monocots have leaves with parallel veining.

We must hurry and not cause the other canoeists concern. As we drift through the next quiet pool, we contemplate and realize that in a few minutes observation of a small area, we have seen representatives of eleven plant families. On a return trip next month we could surely add many more, including the Orchidaceae.



## COMING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES FOR SPRING

April 8, 9: Ozark Society Spring Meeting, Petit Jean State Park (See program.) Dr. Neil Compton.

April 16: Hike, Indian Creek Canyon, Joe Marsh Clark. This hike will be very strenuous.

April 29 through May 6: Wild Rivers Week, on various wild rivers in the Ozarks scheduled by Ozark Wilderness Waterways Club. Dr. Neil Compton.

April 29: Walking tour, upper Kings River azalea in company with Southern Chapter, American Rhododendron Society. All day trip leaving Holiday Inn, Fayetteville, at 8:30. All going contact Dr. Neil Compton a week in advance.

April 30: Spring bus tour, Dr. Dwight Moore, botanist. Those interested write the Society, Box 38, Fayetteville.

May 6, 7: Float, Buffalo River from Pruitt to Mt. Hersey. Bill Saunders, 2100 Rebsamen Park Road, Little Rock.

May 6, 7: Camping or cabin facilities (for non-paddlers), Buffalo River State Park. Ozark Society, Box 38, Fayetteville.

May 28, 29, 30: Ozark Wilderness Waterways Club Memorial Day float, upper Buffalo, Ponca to Pruitt, with Ozark Society participating. Joe Marsh Clark.

## NEWS ITEMS

The Stream Preservation Committee established late last year by Governor Faubus has been approved and made official by both houses of the legislature.

The forthcoming book by Ken Smith on the BUFFALO RIVER COUNTRY will soon be published. It will have a large number of colored plates, excellent maps and an interesting text. Workers will be needed to sell and distribute it as the book is to be published (though not financed) by the Society.

## RENDEZVOUS ON THE BUFFALO

## THE CRISIS IN OUR PUBLICITY AND PARKS COMMISSION

Since the appointment of an ardent advocate of big dams on the Buffalo River to the Publicity and Parks Commission two years ago, the commissioners have moved steadily toward a confrontation with the Ozark Society on the issue of the Buffalo National River. That confrontation has now come about following the revelation that the commissioners have taken clandestine action which places them, despite denials by their chairman, in opposition to a major national park area for Newton, Searcy, Marion and Baxter Counties.

Mr. Edward Tudor, pro-dam member, influenced the other commissioners to secretly pass a resolution withholding the Buffalo River State Park from inclusion in the National Park project, in which the State Park was to have been a major visitor center.

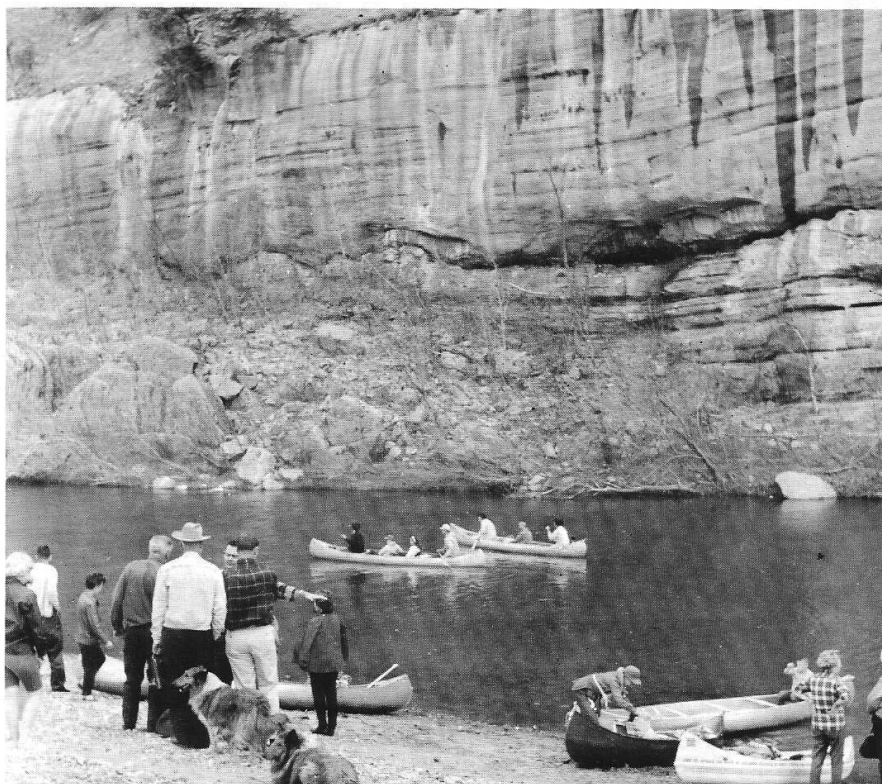
We are appalled that the commissioners should lack the courage to oppose this obstructive resolution or that they should not have been interested enough to inform themselves of the economic significance

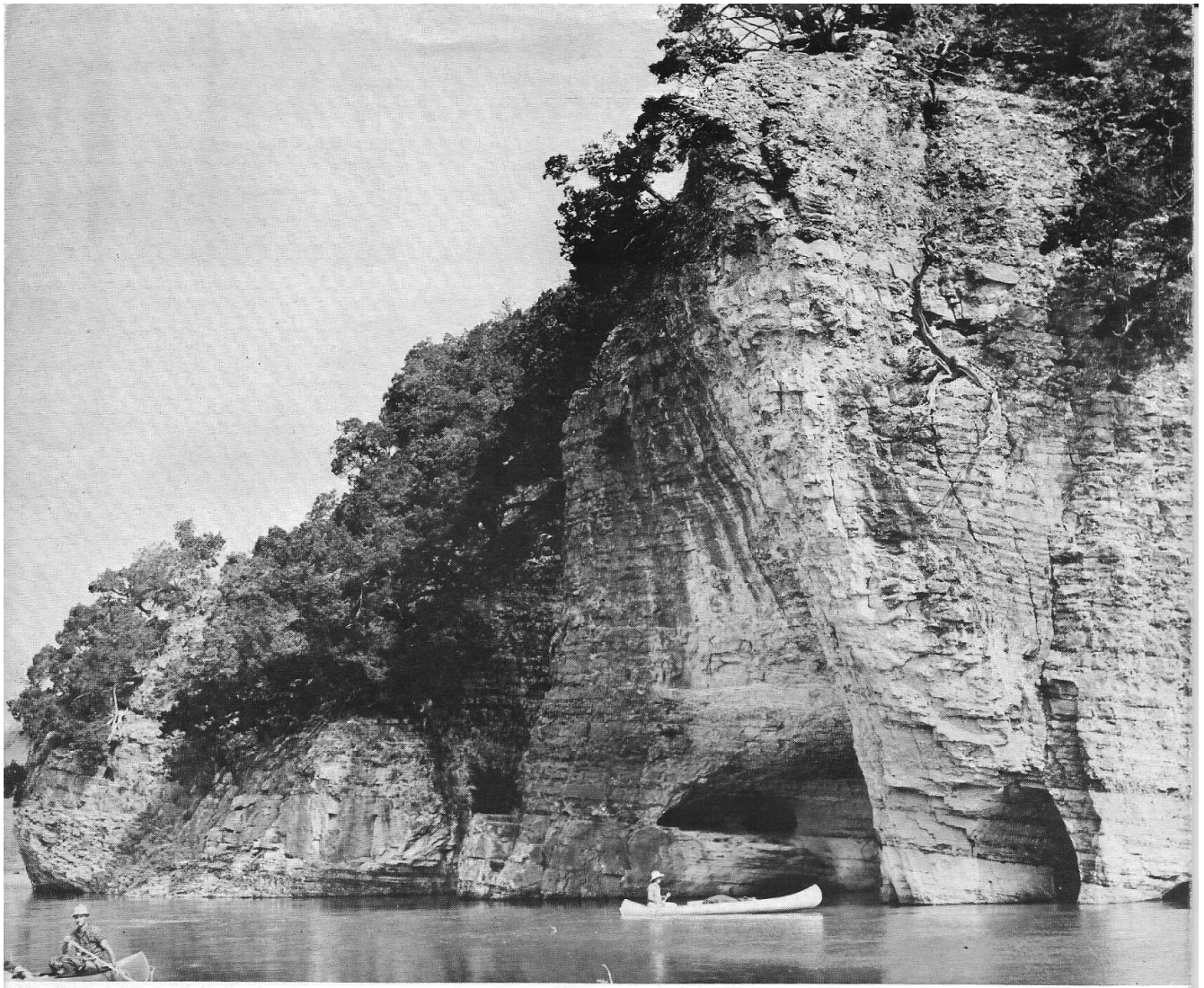
of the Buffalo National River to Arkansas. Their action becomes intolerable when one considers that while opposing Buffalo National River, they have expressed intentions to aid in the development of "Dogpatch".

Members of the commission may simply lack adequate information about National Park Service plans. Every member of the Ozark Society should personally contact them to plead for a reversal of the resolution or else write or call. The commissioners must be told that the people of Arkansas do not approve of the underhanded manner in which one of our finest natural assets is being sabotaged by disgruntled dam supporters.

The names and addresses of the commissioners:

L. C. Dial, Brinkley, chairman  
H. H. Fisher, Malvern  
Ovid Switzer, Crossett  
James McKinley, DeQueen  
Russell Horne, Russellville  
Lloyd Fish, Mountain Home  
Edward Tudor, Marshall





CANOEISTS AT SKULL BLUFF, BUFFALO RIVER