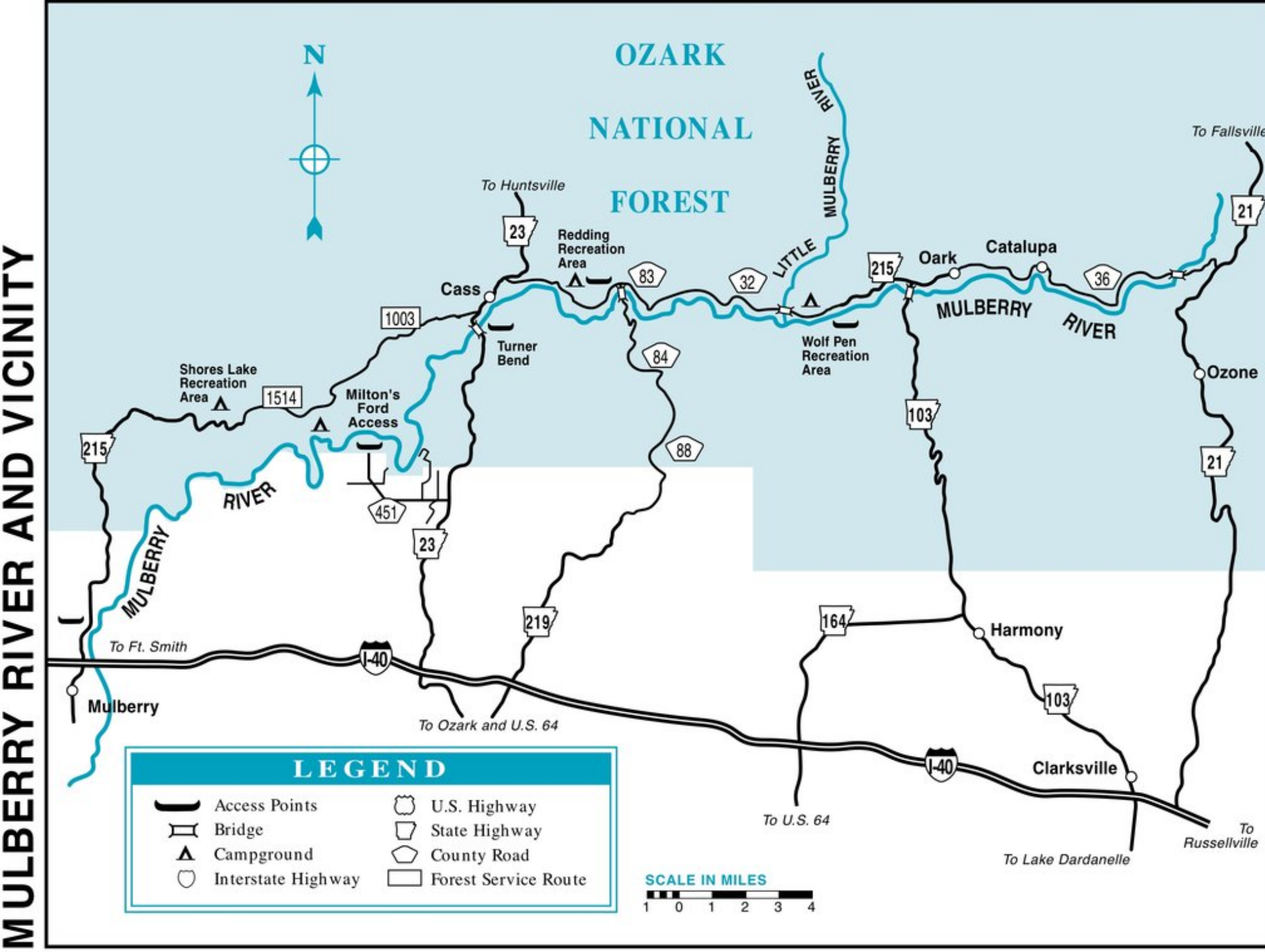


Join the Mulberry River Society

Introduction

The Mulberry River is a 70 mile long, pristine white-water river located in northwest Arkansas. It drains an area of about 373 square miles and is a tributary of the Arkansas River. It is located mostly within the Ozark National Forest in the Ozark Mountains. The Mulberry starts in Newton county and generally flows westerly through Johnson and Franklin counties. The Mulberry joins the Arkansas River south of the town of Mulberry. The uppermost 56 miles of the Mulberry were made part of the National Wild and Scenic River System by the U.S. Government in 1992.

The Mulberry River is a well known destination for recreational boating with canoes, kayaks, and rafts. About 45 miles of the river is floatable beginning at Wolf Pen and ending at the confluence of the Arkansas River. During wet periods there are Class I to III rapids at many points in the river and the river can be dangerous if the water is high. Fishing on the river is also popular, with species including largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, sunfish, catfish, and rockbass, among others. Camping, swimming, and hiking along the Mulberry are enjoyed by tens of thousands of people each year.



The Mulberry River is easily accessible from I-40 via highways 215, 23, 103, and 21. There are several campsites along the river maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. Campsites are also available at Turner's Bend and Byrds. These businesses also have canoes, kayaks, and rafts for rent, along with other gear needed for paddling the river and will provide shuttle service along the river.



The Mulberry River was designated as a "National Wild and Scenic River" by Congress in 1992.



This year is the 23rd Annual Mulberry River Cleanup. Brad and Vien Wimberly have played an important role in the effort by sponsoring this event.



Each year about 130 people help collect tons of trash during the Cleanup.



Earlier this year, Brad and Vien Wimberly won the Envy Award from the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) for this effort. Pictured above is Teresa Marks, Director of ADEQ presenting the award to Brad and Vien.

The Mulberry River Society is born.

The first meeting of the Mulberry River Society occurred at Turners Bend store on Jan. 18th of this year. The discussion was lead by Dave Robertson. The topics of conversation including the following items;

- 1) Starting small and becoming a recognized entity;
- 2) Watershed protection and water quality monitoring;
- 3) Continuation of the annual Mulberry River cleanup;
- 4) Discuss potential names for organization and goals;
- 5) Obtain formal status as a non-profit organization;
- 6) Decide on a registered agent for Arkansas and three people of record.

The first thing that was decided on was the name. Cheryl Perry suggested the name "Mulberry River Society". After some discussion that name was unanimously adapted.

We also decided that membership in this organization should be free.

MRS CARES

Although we didn't decide on specific goals, we did come up with a motto for the Mulberry River Society (MRS). It is "MRS CARES". CARES is an acronym for Conservation, Appreciation, Recreation, Education and Stewardship.

It was also decided while Philip Moore went to the restroom that he would be the registered agent for Arkansas and the three people of record would be Philip Moore, Dave Robertson and Tom Scott.

Finally it was decided upon that in addition to taking care of the river, one of the goals of the organization is to have fun!



Startup funding for the Mulberry River Society was collected by Bud Bond, who worked a beer tent at Wakarusa last year. He presented a check to the group for on the first meeting for \$1800.

The Mulberry River Society is a now a non-profit organization.

Last month Rick Leding from Ozark helped us file for our non-profit tax status with the state of Arkansas. We are now a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to our organization are tax deductible.

As a non-profit organization we can write grants for conservation and education projects on the watershed.

Non-profit groups also have some political clout. When there is an opportunity to influence lawmakers to protect the river, we should take it.

Future Activities

- The Mulberry River Society (MRS) will continue to help with cleanups in the watershed whenever these events occur.

- MRS will develop a website for disseminated information.

- MRS will help with tree plantings and other projects that result in streambank stabilization.

- MRS will collect signatures to present to the Game & Fish Commission to restore the fish stocking program that was so successful in the 1990s.

- MRS will provide help to water quality monitoring projects, such as the Arkansas Stream Teams.