

for bubble-  
gum pink Fluke.

Gresham and  
Denville, you  
(and I) have  
become famous!  
Have you enjoyed  
this publicity?  
Ken

device used, guest speaker and more.  
More information is available  
by calling the park at (479) 761-3325  
or by e-mailing [harry.harnish@arkansas.gov](mailto:harry.harnish@arkansas.gov).

### Withrow Springs site of paddling, events

Withrow Springs State Park near  
Denville will sponsor several ac-  
tivities today and Friday.

The Kayak Adventure program  
will be 1-5 p.m. today on War Eagle  
Lake. Instructors will teach basic  
safety and paddling techniques be-  
fore a five-mile float trip. Par-  
ticipants should bring water, sun-  
screen and shoes suitable for wading.  
Cost is \$20 and preregistration is  
required.

A guided wildflower walk will be  
at 5 p.m. Friday, beginning at the  
Wood Trailhead.

At 5 p.m. Friday at the Keith Ham-  
mon, park interpreters will pre-  
sent the Skins and Skulls program on  
the life found in the park.

The wildflower and wildlife pro-  
grams are free.

For more information is available by  
calling the park at (479) 559-2593.

### Monday is deadline for hunting applications

Applications for the 2008 private-  
land hunting season are due

Monday. Six permits are available, and  
they will be awarded June 28 during  
the Buffalo River Elk Festival.

Applicants must be Arkansas  
residents and hold a valid resident  
hunter's license. Applicants un-  
der 18 are not required to have a  
license but must hold a valid hunter  
education certificate.

Information is available at  
Arkansas Game and Fish  
at (800) 364-4263 or  
[www.agfc.com](http://www.agfc.com).

### Boating course at Barling center

A water education course  
will be held May 18 and June 19 at the  
Arkansas River Valley  
Center in Barling.

The course is 6-9 p.m. each evening.  
No preregistration is required. Par-  
ticipants must attend both sessions  
and receive a certificate of completion.  
The course teaches the funda-  
mentals of boating. Under  
the supervision of anyone born on or af-  
ter Jan. 1, 1980, must have completed  
the course and carry proof  
of completion on a motorboat or sail-  
ing vessel within the state.  
Registration is available by  
calling the center at (479) 452-3993.

### Center offers classes for ages 12-14

The Arkansas River Valley  
Science Center  
will offer its Senior  
Citizens' Day on Tuesday-June 21 for

# OUTDOORS

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

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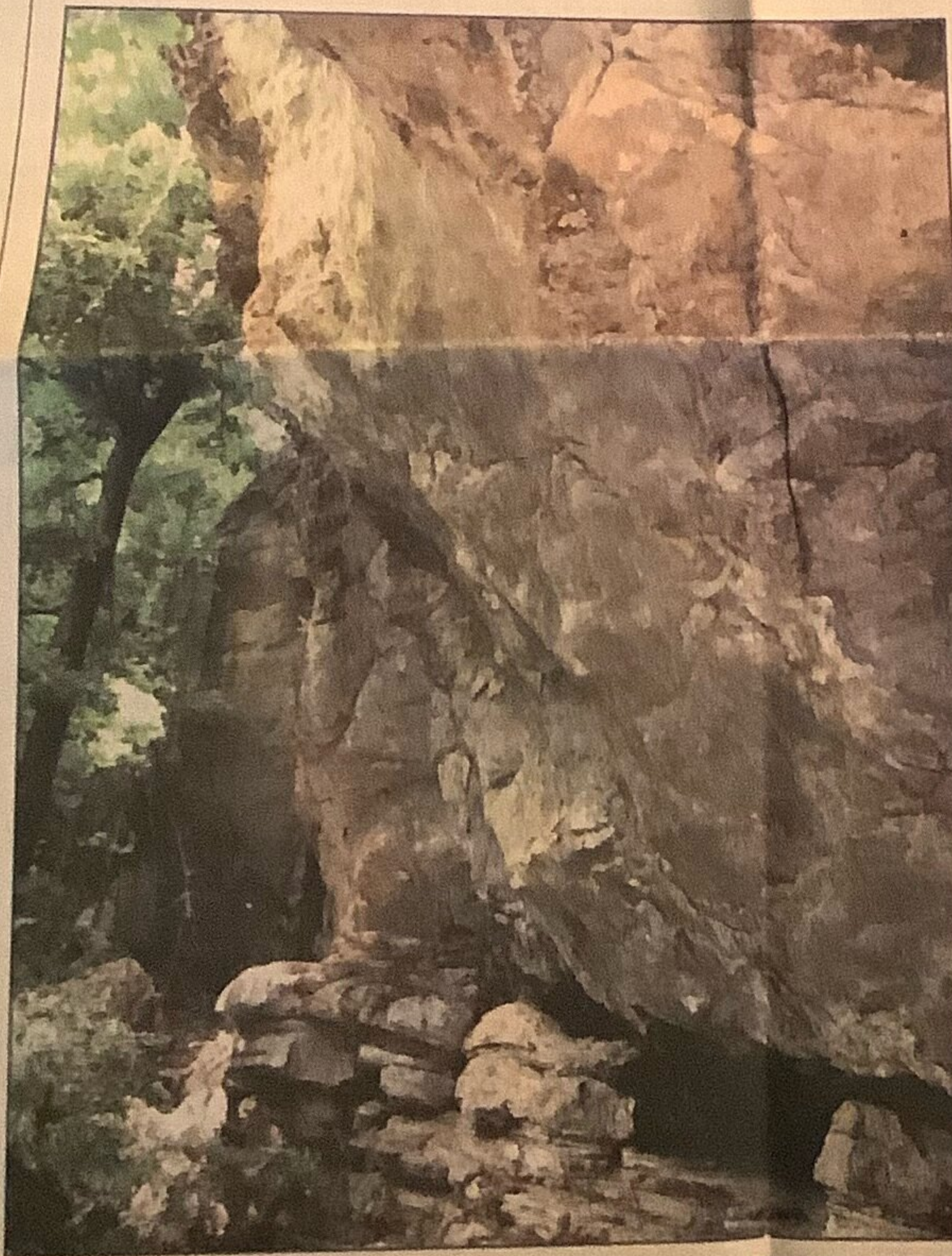
[www.arkansasonline.com](http://www.arkansasonline.com)

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2008



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BUDDY GOUGH

Ken Smith of Fayetteville admires a panoramic view of the Buffalo River that highlights a small section of the new trail between Dillard's Ferry and Spring Creek Road.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BUDDY GOUGH

The irregular and highly eroded face of Kimball Bluff is a scenic feature notable for the brown and orange colors of sandstone rock.

## Some pain, great gain

Steep climb on new trail  
pays off with scenic view

BY BUDDY GOUGH  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

**D**ILLARDS FERRY — The new section of the Buffalo River Trail is an outdoors version of a stair-climbing machine, but it won't leave hikers huffing and puffing with aerobic boredom like those contraptions found in fitness centers.

The six-mile trail from the Arkansas 14 bridge over the Buffalo National River at Dillard's Ferry to Spring Creek Road includes 288 stone steps leading from Kimball Creek to the rim of Kimball Bluff.

The 400-foot climb certainly presents hikers with a decision: which way to take the trail. From the Dillard's Ferry trailhead, the trail leads down the stairs. From Spring Creek Road, the trail goes up. Depending on fitness and the condition of knees and ankles, hikers will surely have their preferences.

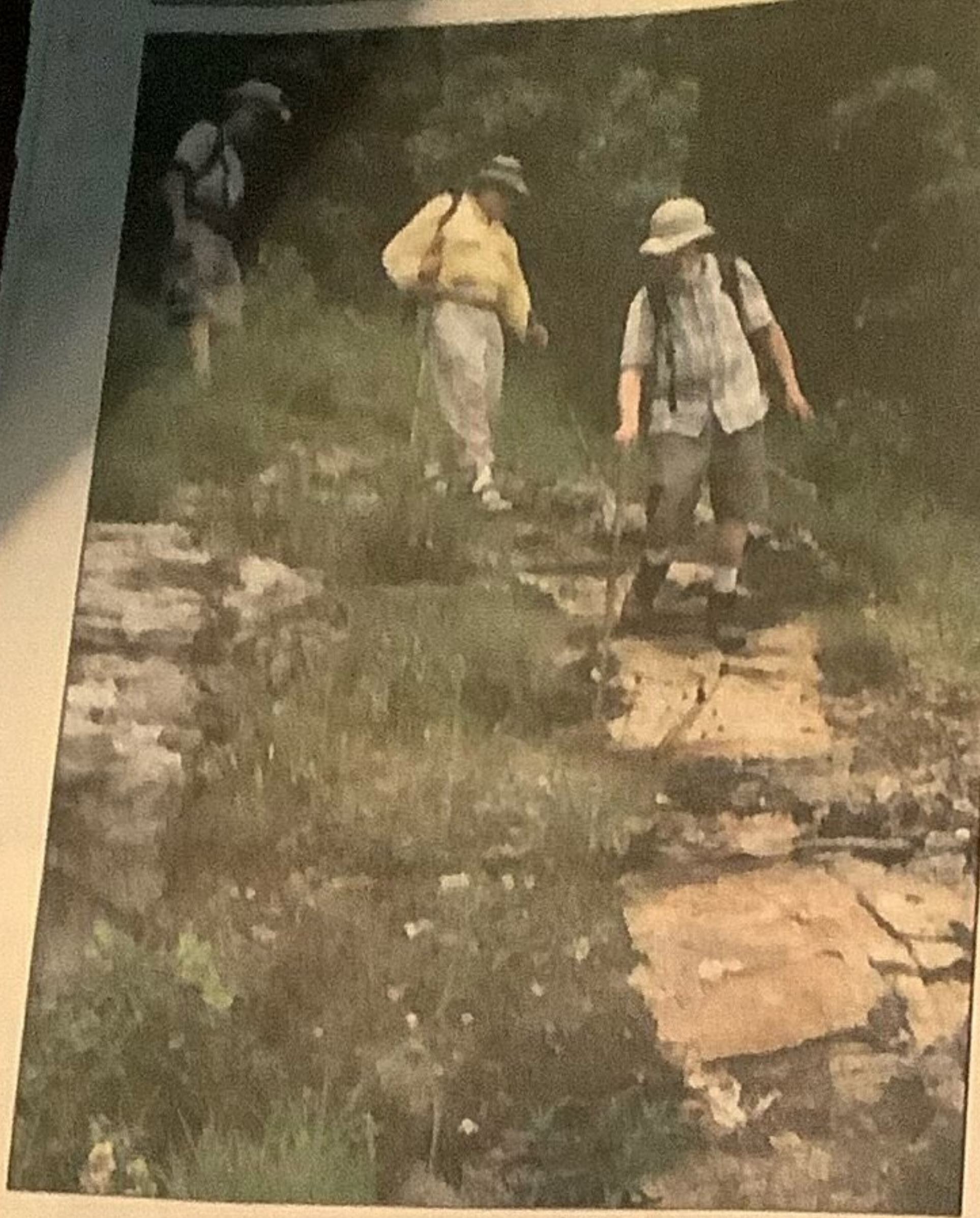
See BUFFALO RIVER on Page 4G



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BUDDY GOUGH

Signs mark the trailheads near the Arkansas 14 bridge over the Buffalo River and on Spring Creek Road.





Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BUDDY GOUGH  
Rick Davis (left) and Richard McFadden of Conway follow Ken Smith down the beginning of the 288 steps that make up the only major difficulty along the trail.

## Buffalo River

Continued from Page 1G  
Either way, there is plenty of scenic beauty to provide inspiration.  
Such were the assurances given Sunday morning when members of the Ozark Society and staff of the Buffalo National River gathered beneath the Arkansas 14 bridge for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open the trail to the public.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BUDDY GOUGH  
Gerhard and Danielle Laule of Shawnee, Okla., rated the new six-mile trail as a "terrific" hike with scenery comparable to the best trails along the Buffalo River.

Among those on hand were many who helped build the trail over the past 2½ years, the foremost being Ken Smith of Fayetteville, who coordinated the work of the volunteer crews on behalf of the Ozark Society.

Starting in 2004, the Dillards Ferry-Spring Creek Road Trail was destined to be part of a 26-mile extension of the Buffalo River Trail from the U.S. 65 bridge near Tyler Bend to Dillards Ferry. Smith was instrumental in laying out the route, and when it came time for the work to begin, he decided to put the last stretch first because of its many natural features and panoramic views of the river.

He was eager Sunday to personally show off some of the best parts.  
Also in attendance were Gerhard and Danielle Laule of Shawnee, Okla. Gerhard Laule did volunteer work on parts of the trail, and he and his wife arrived Saturday to be among the first to hike the new stretch.

The couple gave the trail rave reviews from the perspective of having hiked many other trails along the river, including the Old River Trail and the Buffalo River Trail from Steel Creek to Kyle's Landing.

"It was a terrific hike," Danielle Laule said. "I loved the bluffs and the big views of the Buffalo River."

Naturally, she mentioned ascending the stairs.

"I was concerned about them, but I made it up them just fine. Except for that one steep place, the rest of the trail was pretty easy," she said, noting that the hike took three hours.

"Scenery-wise, this trail beats them all, in my opinion," her husband added.

### TRAIL SAMPLER

After that review, not even a painfully twisted ankle could keep me from hobbling behind Smith to view a sample of the trail's highlights.

Joined by Richard McFadden and Rick Davis of Conway, we drove south on Arkansas 14 for a couple of miles and turned onto a rough, narrow forest road that had been used by work crews during trail construction.

After parking at the end of the road, Smith led us through the woods to the edge of the high ridge, where we intersected with the new trail.

"This part of the trail to the right and left and below



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BUDDY GOUGH  
Curves on the Buffalo River appear tiny when viewed from high points of the trail between Dillards Ferry and Spring Creek Road.

### Trail at a glance

**LOCATION** Dillards Ferry (Arkansas 14 bridge) to Spring Creek Road

**DISTANCE** 6.1 miles

**DESCRIPTION** The trail provides many scenic features and views along the Buffalo River and the Kimball Creek drainage. The hiking is easy, except for a steep series of 288 steps about 1½ miles from the Spring Creek Road-Trailhead.

**ACCESS** Dillards Ferry Trailhead: near the south end of the Arkansas 14 bridge. Spring Creek Road Trailhead: From the bridge, go south on Arkansas 14 for 3.8 miles. Just past a sign indicating the Spring Creek Access to the Buffalo National River, turn right on Spring Creek Road and go 1.7 miles to the trailhead sign on the right. The trailhead is about 200 yards past a sign marking the boundary of the Buffalo National River.

**SHUTTLE SERVICE** Available from canoeing outfitters located at nearby Buffalo Point.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BUDDY GOUGH  
A botanical delight seen along a section of trail along the Buffalo River were butterflies attracted to a bright-orange milkweed.

"gorgeous" and "awesome" summed up their exclamations.

"This bluff line goes along the entire length of this side of the canyon and wraps around to the other side," Smith said. "I looked all along it for an easy way up, but right here is the only gap I could find, and that's why we had to have all the steps here."

Doubling back, we returned to the top of the bluff and reversed course on the trail, continuing past where we had started and following the trail through a wooded area.

"When I was laying out the trail, I was thinking this part was pretty blah, but that was before I saw this," Smith said as he stepped out onto a promontory atop Kimball Bluff and spread his arms wide to a spectacular view.

Far below and stretching wide to the right and left was the green ribbon of the Buffalo winding through its wild and rugged valley.

Following the trail along the rim of the bluff, we continued to be rewarded with impressive views of the river, where passing canoes looked as tiny as water bugs.

"I call this area the Trail in the Sky," Smith said.

All too soon, we cut back through the woods to return to my vehicle and conclude a small sampling of the trail.

Although the Kimball Bluff area is special, Smith said the trail provides many other scenic features and views that begin showing up within short distances of either trailhead.

"If you wanted to make a short round trip hike, you could start from the bridge and go six-tenths of a mile to a big panoramic view or start from Spring Creek Road and go about 1½ miles to reach the top of Kimball Bluff," he suggested.

It will probably be many years before the other 20 miles of the Buffalo River Trail extension are complete, but the small part of it seen Sunday made it clear that putting last first was a good decision.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BUDDY GOUGH  
Orange lichen and blooming wildflowers add to the colorful scenery along a section of trail hiked recently along the Buffalo River.

## Trail dedication thanks volunteers from 27 states

BY BUDDY GOUGH  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

There was plenty of thanks to go around during the ribbon-cutting ceremony Saturday to dedicate and officially open a new six-mile section of the Buffalo River Trail at the Arkansas 14 bridge over the river near Harriet.

On hand for the ceremony were employees of the Buffalo National River and members of the Ozark Society, representing the primary partners in the trail project.

Those singled out for special recognition included Ozark Society member Ken Smith of Fayetteville, who coordinated the volunteer work on the trail for the past 2½ years, Buffalo National River Trails Supervisor John Deming, who supervised the building of hundreds of stone steps along the trail and Jim Liles

of Yellville, who single-handedly built 1,558 feet of trail.

After receiving a plaque honoring his 23 years of dedication to trails along the Buffalo River, Smith thanked the many other volunteers who worked to complete the trail section between the Arkansas 14 bridge and Spring Creek Road.

Those included Ozark Society members and volunteers from Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma who regularly showed up for work weekends.

Praise also went to groups including the American Hiking Society, Sierra Club and Wilderness Volunteers, who camped out during week-long work sessions.

Altogether, 137 volunteers from 27 states and one from England showed up for the work weeks, paying their own travel and camping expenses. Many

came several times for stays of two to nine weeks.

Out-of-state volunteers included 23 from Texas; 20 from Illinois; 12 from Wisconsin; 10 from Missouri; five each from California, Connecticut, Ohio and Oklahoma; four each from Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana and Pennsylvania; and fewer from Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

Rather than adhering to the rule of leaving no trace in the backcountry, the volunteers sought to leave a permanent trail to be enjoyed by all hikers in the Ozarks.

Many are expected to return to help build an additional 20 miles of trail between U.S. 65 at Tyler and the newly dedicated section.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BUDDY GOUGH  
Jim Liles of Yellville (right) presented Ken Smith an honorary plaque to recognize his efforts in coordinating the construction of the new Buffalo Trail near Harriet.