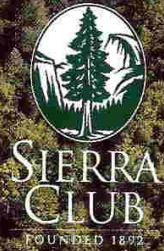


# The ARKANSAS Sierran

Fall 2015



## CLEAN ENERGY IN ARKANSAS—IT'S HAPPENING!



**Glen Hooks, Director  
Arkansas Sierra Club**

What a year 2015 has been for our state and for the Arkansas Sierra Club! This has been a year of incredible environmental victories

and progress in our state, all in the face of intense opposition from powerful foes intent on protecting polluters from any and all limits. Your Sierra Club has been firmly in the mix at every turn.

If you sometimes wonder whether all of the work you do for the environment matters, let me assure you that it absolutely does. Without your tireless efforts on our “Beyond Coal” campaign for the past seven years, we wouldn’t have seen the first-ever proposed retirement of a dirty coal-fired power plant in Arkansas. This year, it happened! Because of the Sierra Club’s work and a well-timed legal victory, Entergy has officially proposed shutting down its 1700 megawatt White Bluff coal-fired power plant in Redfield. This is an historic event that will vastly improve the health of our citizens and our air quality.

But that’s not all—while we were securing a retirement date for the White

Bluff plant, we were also welcoming no fewer than four significant proposals for home-grown clean solar and wind energy here in the state. Arkansas is currently home to zero megawatts of utility-scale wind and solar. Multiple clean energy projects on the horizon are worth a mighty celebration—and it’s only the beginning. The Sierra Club’s work to move our state off dirty fuels has created the market space for clean energy to gain a foothold here. Future victories will bring more clean energy (and clean energy jobs!) to Arkansas.

Ready for more good news? The Arkansas Sierra Club has long been a strong supporter of the proposed Clean Line Energy transmission project, which aims to transmit more than 4000 megawatts of clean wind energy from the wind-rich Oklahoma panhandle to population centers where it can serve people (and displace more dirty coal-fired power plants). Clean Line proposes to build a converter station here in Arkansas and send 500 megawatts of wind energy into our state’s system. The project gained a major regulatory approval in November and has a few more hurdles, but will ultimately add a significant chunk of clean energy to Arkansas.

Finally, your Arkansas Sierra Club has been an aggressive and tireless advocate in support of the EPA’s attempts to clean up our air and water. In the face of repeated opposition and lawsuits from our Arkansas Attorney General and others, Sierra Club and our allies are winning in court and pushing clean air and water protections across the finish line. This year, that has meant successfully defending and advocating for the EPA’s Regional Haze rule, the Clean Power Plan, new ozone protections, the Waters of the United States rule, and many more. The Sierra Club and our members will not be defeated in our quest to clean up our environment and our energy supply.

Why is the Sierra Club successful? Because we are organized, we are numerous, and we are YOU. Our thousands of Arkansas Sierra Club volunteers and hundreds of thousands more across the country make the difference. Thank you for your passion, your dedication, and your unwavering commitment to the cause.

### ONWARD!

# VICTORY!

## ENERGY PROPOSES END OF WHITE BLUFF COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT

After more than seven years of challenges from your Arkansas Sierra Club, Entergy Arkansas has proposed an end date for coal-burning operations at its massive and dirty White Bluff power plant in Redfield. The proposal from Entergy to cease coal-burning in 2027 was made as a direct result of a Sierra Club lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency, in which we successfully forced EPA to follow federal law and write a plan to reduce “regional haze” in certain Arkansas parks and wilderness areas. The EPA plan proposes

that Entergy retrofit the White Bluff plant with pollution control technology, and Entergy has decided that retiring the plant is a more sound economic decision.

Shutting down the White Bluff plant will mean substantial improvements in our state’s air quality, the health of our citizens, and—ultimately—to our state’s economic development. White Bluff is regularly listed as one of the region’s top polluters of sulfur dioxide and mercury. It also emits millions of tons of carbon dioxide every year, which is one of the main greenhouse gases leading to global climate disruption.

The Arkansas Sierra Club has fought to retire the White Bluff plant

since 2008—challenging permit renewals, filing lawsuits, supporting EPA rules that lessen pollution, and showing up at forum after forum to testify in favor of clean air and clean energy. The fight was long but worth it. The White Bluff campaign is an outstanding example of the power of Arkansans coming together to work for a better environment. Many, many heartfelt thanks to the hundreds of Arkansas Sierrans who have been part of this campaign.

Over the next few months, the Arkansas Sierra Club will work with Entergy and the EPA to finalize the proposed retirement of White Bluff once and for all. For now, though, let’s allow ourselves a moment to celebrate the near-end of our state’s largest and dirtiest polluter!

## SLACKTIVISM OR ACTIVISM



*George Wise, Chair  
Arkansas Sierra  
Club & Central  
Arkansas Group*

### SLACKER OR SLACKTIVIST

1: a person who shirks work or obligation; especially: one who evades service in time of war (Yes we are in a war over the protecting the environment)

### SIERRA ACTIVIST

1: an especially active, vigorous advocate of a cause, especially in protecting the environment.

I wrote a similar column to this in my role as president of the Arkansas

Trial lawyers Association. I wanted to share similar thoughts as we consider the work we need to do to protect the environment. We need activist and not slacktivist helping us in our fight to save this planet. Now more than ever we need every member engaged in the activism that will protect the environment.

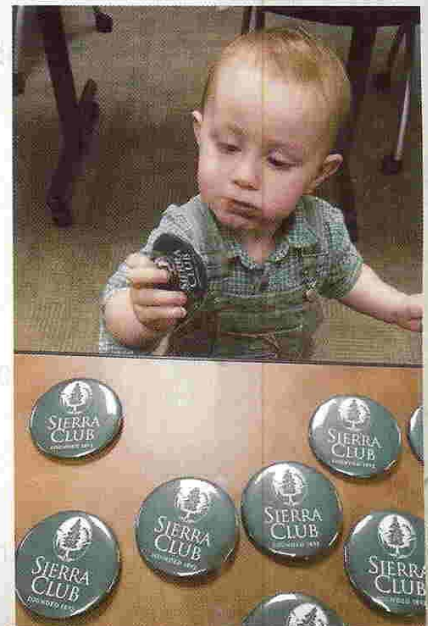
Are you a slacktivist or an activist? Here is how to tell.

An activist knows his legislators well enough to call him or her and get a return call. An activist is someone the legislator knows by name and face. An activist educates his or her legislator about the importance of clean air, clean water, wilderness and a healthy planet.

A slacktivist is unknown to his or her legislator and may occasionally send an email complaining about an issue.

An activist is involved in the Si-

erra Club and serves on committees or in other ways. An activist contributes financially to the Sierra Club and encourages others to give. An activist is engaged in the Club’s political activities



and follows the strategy developed by our leadership. An activist knows what the Club is doing and helps get it done.

A slactivist simply pays dues to get the benefit of belonging to the Sierra Club and then lets others do the work of defending the environment. A slactivist questions what the Club is doing and doesn't help get our job done.

An activist is known in his or her community as someone who cares about others. Whether through charity work, church work, involvement in local youth programs or membership in civic groups, the activist is visible to others as a caring human being. Through these activities, the activist has credibility when discussing the environment.

A slactivist is invisible to others in his or her community or is only known

as "one of those tree huggers". A slactivist lacks credibility and is unable to discuss with those in his or her community the importance of protecting the environment.

An activist educates those in his or her community about the environment. An activist speaks out at meetings on the importance of a healthy planet and how keeping the planet healthy will affect those in his or her community. An activist seeks out speaking opportunities which will give him or her the chance to educate others about the work of the Sierra Club. An activist writes op-eds for his or her local newspaper educating the public about the importance of protecting the environment.

A slactivist seldom speaks out or takes the time to educate others about

environmental issues. A slactivist assumes others will take care of educating the public. A slactivist fails to realize we are all the Sierra Club.

I promise that going forward I will be a better Sierra activist and not a slactivist. I want others to join me in making that commitment. I am convinced that more education across the state is the best way to preserve our environment. Educating voters in our communities means there is hope they will elect legislators who will protect the planet. Write an op-ed, schedule a program about environmental issues, get involved in your community as a caring human being. Do so and you will be a Sierra Club activist.

## COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS REPORT



*Veronica Mobley,  
CCL Delegate  
Arkansas Sierra  
Club*

As the recently nominated Council of Club Leaders (CCL) delegate, I represented the Arkansas Chapter of the Sierra Club at the 2015 annual CCL meeting. From September 10-12th, 2015, delegates from all over the nation convened at the Sierra Club offices in San Francisco. After three days of presentations from national Sierra Club leaders, representatives from the Student Sierra Coalition, and workshops with fellow delegates, I walked away significantly educated and truly inspired.

Having served on the Ozark Headwaters Group of the Sierra Club Executive Committee for under two years, I was grateful to receive insight into national operations and strategic planning. Throughout the presentations, great fo-

cus was given to the Sierra Club's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative (DEI), as well as leadership development. I was excited to learn that each chapter has been assigned a regional liaison to serve as a DEI source, and in general, about how many resources are available to support chapter growth; from national organizer training, to regional support teams & chapter liaisons, to online training & webinars, it is now abundantly clear how much support each chapter has from the national Sierra Club organization.

Traditionally, the main function of the formal council meeting is to deliberate and vote on resolutions that are presented at the Sierra Club Board of Directors meeting that following Saturday. During deliberations, the 2015 CCL voted in favor of redistricting reforms presented by the Ohio and Missouri Chapters, increased communication policy and resolution responses from the Board of Directors, along

with Sierra Club approval to adopt a position that asks the EPA to establish specific drinking water standards under the Safe Drinking Act. These resolutions were presented to the Board of Directors by CCL Chair John Spahr on Saturday. That evening, the Sierra Club Hosted an awards Celebration honoring the dedication and hard work of Sierra Club volunteers.

Over the course of three days in San Francisco, I was continually inspired by the work of passionate individuals and dynamic chapters. I am grateful that these new friends took the time to share their experiences with me, and I look forward to sharing the knowledge that I gained from attending the Council of Club Leaders 2015 meeting, with Sierra Club members and volunteers across our beautiful, natural state of Arkansas.

## AR SIERRA CLUB WANT ADS

Are you looking for ways to get more involved? If so, consider serving on one of the important committees below. We'd welcome your participation and perspective—contact Chapter Director Glen Hooks at [glen.hooks@sierraclub.org](mailto:glen.hooks@sierraclub.org) or (501) 301-8280.

### **WANTED: FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Are you an experienced fundraiser, or simply a passionate Sierra Club member who has no qualms about asking for donations? If so, we need your help! Fundraising Committee members will help in all areas of Arkansas Sierra Club fundraising: major gifts, small donor projects, and fundraising events. Creative and dedicated people are a plus!

### **WANTED: MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Our strength lies in our numbers—increasing our membership numbers is key to our success! The Membership Committee will work to add a significant number of new members to our Arkansas Sierra Club rolls in the next year through tabling events, public outreach, and other creative methods. Sign up today!

### **WANTED: CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The Chapter Conservation Committee identifies and researches Arkansas environmental issues of concern, and makes recommendations to the Chapter Executive Committee about our environmental priorities. The ideal Conservation Committee member is knowledgeable about Arkansas environmental issues, knows her way around state administrative and legislative bodies, and has a passion for finding solutions that will improve life here in The Natural State.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Explore the state through Arkansas State Parks! Here's a sample of parks with events coming up in the next months. Contact the park for more info. Don't forget to give your local state park a call and ask about their calendar!

**Hobbs State Park and Conservation Area** (479-789-5000; 20201 E. Hwy 12, Rogers, AR 72756)

Eagle Cruise - December 26, 2015

Sweetheart Lunch and Cruise - February 13, 2016

Hobbs Celebrates Leopold - March 5, 2016

**Mississippi River State Park** (870-295-4040; 2955 Highway 44, Marianna, AR 72360)

Enchanted Christmas Forest -

December 1, 2015 - January 4, 2016

5th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count -

December 17, 2015

Birding Van Tour - January 16, 2015

**Lake Dardanelle State Park** (479-967-5516; 100 State Park Drive, Russellville, AR 72802)

Wearable Water Cycle - December 13, 2015

What's for Lunch? - December 22, 2015

Wetland Safari - December 26, 2015

**Cane Creek State Park** (870-628-4714; 30 State Park Road, Star City, AR 71667)

First Day Trek - January 1, 2016

Eagle Watch Tour - February 14, 2016

Dutch Oven Outdoor Cooking Workshop -

March 12, 2016

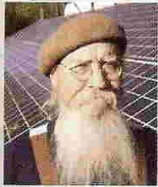
## PAPERLESS OPTION FOR NEWSLETTER

In an effort to save trees and money, your Arkansas Sierra Club newsletter is available in an electronic format. If you'd like to receive your newsletter electronically rather than via U.S. Mail, please email your address to [glen.hooks@sierraclub.org](mailto:glen.hooks@sierraclub.org), with "ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER" in the subject line.

NOTE: You will still receive a paper newsletter at the end of each year (including this issue), so that you may receive and return your Sierra Club officer ballots.

The Arkansas Sierra Club newsletter is sent out on a quarterly basis. More frequent information and updates are available on our website at [sierraclub.org/arkansas](http://sierraclub.org/arkansas). If you haven't received any Sierra Club messages in the last few months, we may not have your email address. To be added to our email list, please send your email address to [glen.hooks@sierraclub.org](mailto:glen.hooks@sierraclub.org).

# BUFFALO RIVER HOGWASH



*Dr. Bob Allen,  
Vice Chair  
Arkansas Sierra  
Club*

A coalition of four environmental groups have joined together to try to stop pollution of the Nation's first federally protected river. Although the Buffalo National River park boundary is only a narrow strip of land a scant mile or less on either side of the river, the watershed that drains into the Buffalo is several thousand miles.

A Hog factory was permitted by a previously unused process that allowed for scant public notification and no consideration of site specific conditions such as the Karst topography which underlies the factory. The park service and several other agencies were unaware of the plan to house 6,300 hogs in the watershed. Although the park service can't control the watershed, they should certainly have some input. They didn't.

C & H Hog Farm is in the watershed on Big Creek about six miles upstream from the Buffalo, but outside the park boundary. The farm is described by an ecologist for the National Park as the largest hog operation in the state. Disposal of the hog feces and urine is by land application to several hundred acres of hay fields bordering Big Creek and very near the Mount Judea Public Schools. The total volume of waste is on the order of 2 to 3 million gallons per year.

The coalition won a lawsuit in federal court, which ordered a new environmental assessment of the operation and enjoined the Farm Services Agency and the Small Business Administration from guaranteeing several million dollars of loans which make the factory possible. The draft

report for the environmental assessment is out and appears to be a whitewash, or as Mike Masterson called it a "hogwash."

The draft report finds "no significant impact." The coalition has filed an extensive rebuttal of the finding. Here are some salient facts not in the report. The data comes mainly from the Big Creek Research and Extension Team, BCRET. This is a multi-year study by the University of Arkansas Agriculture Division and funded by state tax payer's dollars.

The nitrate concentration in Big Creek, which drains much of the spray fields, is some 10 to 12 times higher than in the Buffalo, just a few miles downstream. Nitrate is a nutrient pollutant which can cause algal blooms, lowered dissolved Oxygen content, fish kills, and die-offs of benthic organisms such as caddis and dragonfly larva, just to name two. Most telling is that the nitrate concentration downstream is double that of upstream of the spray fields. A nearby spring, an ephemeral stream, and a sampling trench below the waste holding ponds all show elevated levels of nitrate.

Also troubling is evidence of bacterial contamination. The hog feces sprayed on the hay fields contain *E. coli*, a bacterial contaminant. Levels of this biological pollutant are elevated in Big Creek below the spray fields, and in a spring nearby. *E. coli* is even showing up at levels well beyond the drinking water standard in the "house well," which is used by both employees and to water the

hogs. It appears likely that the porous Karst topography that underlies the region allows penetration of the wastes through the soil and into the well.

Cargill, in direct meetings with representatives of the coalition essentially admitted that it was a mistake to locate the factory there. It currently has a 12 year (9 years remaining) contract to buy the hogs



produced there. Cargill assured the coalition that it would take several steps in mitigation but would neither close nor relocate the operation.

Recently Cargill sold all their hog operations in the U.S. To a Brazilian Corporation, JBS. We now have a foreign owned corporation feeding hogs whose urine and feces are sprayed onto fields which drain into the Buffalo National River. They take the profits, we get the poop.

PLEASE  
**RECYCLE**  
THIS NEWSLETTER!

# COMING CLEAN – THE PIPELINE STOPS HERE

**Michael Brune, Sierra Club  
(National) Executive Director**

The Keystone XL tar sands pipeline was supposed to reach from Canada clear to the Gulf of Mexico. Today, it ended in the Oval Office.

President Obama's decision to deny a permit for the pipeline is a tremendous victory for the millions of people who for years have been raising their voices, organizing their communities, and demonstrating in the streets to stop this polluting project that would have signaled "full-speed ahead" for tar sands oil. In 2008, when alarms were first raised about Keystone XL, we were up against incredible odds. Every expert on energy policy believed that approval of the full route to the Gulf was a done deal, and with good reason. Big energy projects like Keystone XL had almost never been rejected—and certainly not on the basis of climate disruption.

What set Keystone XL apart, though, was how it dramatized the disconnect between reducing carbon emissions and opening up vast new sources fossil fuels. And in the case of tar sands, we are talking about a source that is not only enormous but also carbon intense. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made it clear: For us to have at least a 50 percent chance of limiting global temperature rise to a survivable level, fossil fuel corporations must leave three-quarters of their known reserves in the ground.

Faced with the

sudden realization that the fight to save our climate could be lost on the tar sands fields of Alberta, a seemingly quixotic opposition movement began to spread the message that we could instead say "no" to dirty fuels like tar sands and "yes" to clean energy alternatives. It was a message the ultimately reached all the way to the White House.

But although President Obama took decisive action today, the real heroes are the ordinary people who refused to give in, give up, or give way. They came together from an incredible array of backgrounds and communities—united by a determination not to let Big Oil have its way. From climate activists marching in the streets of Manhattan to farmers, ranchers, and Tribal leaders in Nebraska who stood up for their land and water, this was a broad, deep and powerful coalition. And in that sense, it's a vital model for the greater clean energy and climate-action movement that can move our country—and the world—from the dirty fossil fuels of the past to a 100 percent clean energy future.

But let's not forget the man who got the people's message. For Barack Obama, this was a principled decision in the tradition of our greatest presidents. By saying "no" to Keystone XL, he has established an Obama Climate Test: All energy projects are not created equal, and it can never be in the best interests of the United States—nor any nation—to steal from our children's future for the sake of reckless profits today.

As the President said today, approving this project would have undercut American leadership on climate, and that's not something we can afford. The President noted that we will have to leave some fossil fuels in the ground, unburned, if we hope to protect the future of our planet. That message needs to resound here at home, around the



world, and wherever politicians run the risk of settling for what seems expedient versus what is truly right. When the world gathers in Paris later this year for the next big round of climate talks, we can take real pride in the climate leadership the United States has shown under President Obama.

So let's thank the president for doing what is right for both America and the planet. But let's also remember that this will surely not be the final test of his resolve, as the fossil fuel industry uses all its enormous financial resources to maintain its grip on our society. President Obama has proven that he knows how make the right decision. Our job is to help him keep doing it.

*This blog post was originally published on November 6, 2015*

# TPP POSES GRAVE THREAT

**Robin Rumph**  
*Central Arkansas Group Member*

For those of us who care about strong environmental protections, there is a significant threat on the horizon.

The Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) is ostensibly a trade treaty among twelve countries, but trade is the least important feature of what the TPP is really about. Ralph Nader described the TPP this way: "The TPP along with the WTO and NAFTA is the most brazen corporate power grab in American History. It allows corporations to bypass our three branches of government to impose enforceable sanctions by secret tribunals. These tribunals can declare our, consumer and environmental protections {to be} unlawful, non-tariff barriers subject to fines for noncompliance. The TPP establishes a transnational autocratic system of enforceable governance in defiance of our domestic laws."

The TPP may not be widely known perhaps because it has been negotiated in secret over the past six years by the trade representatives of prospective signatory states and approximately 600 multinational corporations. Even the US congress was not allowed to know the contents until recently. Originally, the public wasn't to be allowed to know what was in the treaty until four years after the agreement was in effect! Thanks to a fight in congress over granting President Obama fast track authority in the spring of 2015 the American public will have a minimum of 90 days to weigh in. The vote in Congress will be an up or down vote without the possibility of amendment. In the senate filibusters will not be allowed so that a simple majority vote wins the day.

Perhaps the most egregious aspect of the TPP is its establishment of secret international tribunals consisting of three corporate lawyers who

decide disputes among countries and corporations. Corporations are given the same status as sovereign nations. Corporations would only be allowed to seek dispute resolution with foreign nations who are signatories to the trade agreement. The tribunal would determine the penalties without any mechanism for appeal or review by other judicial bodies. The tribunal can decide the amount of damages based on the victor's expected loss of future profits. Individuals and communities have no standing in this system. American environmental laws that protect clean air, clean water, federal land and endangered species can be challenged by foreign governments and corporations. Any bans on technological processes like fracking of oil or gas, mountain top removal and tar sands extraction could be challenged. Agreements coming out of the Paris climate talks can be trumped by these international trade tribunals. Likewise, US collective bargaining and minimum wage laws can be challenged in these tribunals. The list of foreign corporations and their subsidiaries that can launch legal attacks on the US is doubled to approximately 19,000 with the TPP, ultimately to be paid for by US taxpayers.

Recently, a WTO tribunal ruled against the United States in favor of Mexico and Canada that a US law requiring country of origin labeling for meat was unfair so now the US government would have to repeal its law or face financial penalties. Despite President Obama's insistence that trade agreements would not affect US legislation the US house quickly followed suit and voted in June to repeal the labeling law.

The scope and impact of corporate governance of the world economy under the TPP are sweeping by itself. In combination with previous trade agreements that produced the WTO

and NAFTA and other trade agreements such as the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement and Trade in Services Agreement, which are currently being negotiated in secret and likely to come up for approval as quickly as possible should the TPP be ratified by Congress, will account for 80 percent of the world economy. Increased prices for drugs, depressed wages for American workers, jobs exported to other countries shackled democracy and national sovereignty will be some of the impacts of the TPP. In addition, according to journalist and activist Kevin Zeese foreign corporations will be allowed to compete within the US against American companies and bring with them their own labor force to be paid wage levels existing in the corporations' home countries.

The TPP documents are approximately 6000 pages. Few among us are likely to read the whole document. The Sierra Club and Public Citizen Trade Watch are two good sources for the environmental implications and for broader implications of the TPP (URLs appear below). Please keep informed. We will update developments regularly on the chapter webpage. The TPP and other trade agreements may pose the gravest threat to the environment that we have every faced.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/uploads-wysiwig/tpp-analysis-updated.pdf>

<http://www.citizen.org/documents/analysis-tpp-investment-chapter-november-2015.pdf>



**SIERRA  
CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

Sierra Club of Arkansas  
1308 W. 2nd Street  
Little Rock AR 72201

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Little Rock, AR  
Permit No. 1377



Printed on  
recycled paper.

Check out our redesigned/updated  
website at [www.sierraclub.org/arkansas!](http://www.sierraclub.org/arkansas!)

## SUPPORT YOUR ARKANSAS SIERRA CLUB WITH AN END-OF-YEAR GIFT!

2015 has been one of the most productive years in the Arkansas Sierra Club's history. We've spent the year working tirelessly for clean air, water, and energy in The Natural State: and we are winning. Despite opposition from state elected officials, utilities, and agencies, the Sierra Club has led the way toward a cleaner future for our state. 2015 is the year we officially started to shut down dirty coal-fired power plants here and started building solar and wind projects—the first four in our state's history were proposed this year.

**Will you support our work as we strive for more environmental victories next year?**

Your Arkansas Sierra Club plans to aggressively continue working to retire more dirty power plants while making way for wind and solar projects across the state. This work is rewarding and meaningful, but it takes your help to fund our efforts.

Invest in the financial strength of your Arkansas Sierra Club by making a gift at [www.sierraclub.org/arkansas](http://www.sierraclub.org/arkansas). You can make a one-time gift or spread a larger gift out by making an automatically recurring monthly pledge. Each dollar you give stays right here in Arkansas to fund our work in The Natural State.

**THANK YOU!**