



December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Dear Army Corps of Engineers,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Arkansas Audubon Society, a statewide organization committed to fostering a greater knowledge of the natural history of Arkansas and promoting conservation of our natural resources. We would like to voice our support of going forward with the *individual permit process*, as opposed to issuing a nationwide permit, for PROJECT SWL-2016-00063, which would replace Lake Bella Vista dam on the Little Sugar Creek in Bentonville, Arkansas.

In our view, the economic, ecological, and public benefits of returning the Little Sugar Creek to its natural course greatly outweigh the benefits of rebuilding the dam. Not only would rebuilding the dam be much costlier than stream restoration, but the current problems surrounding the dam would continue. For example, the small 22-acre lake is not large enough to process the sediment and nutrient inputs from its 50,000-acre watershed. Managing water quality for wildlife and recreation would be a continual struggle. Properly restoring the flow of the creek will allow for natural ecosystem functioning to return, and new recreational opportunities to flourish.

Given the many concerns surrounding this dam reconstruction project, we hope you will strongly consider moving forward with the individual permit process as this will allow for more environmental assessment and public comment on this matter. We strongly feel this opportunity to restore environmental function to this natural area is a chance to show responsible stewardship of the land and to use tax dollars wisely for the good of citizens and nature.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. R. McClung".

Maureen R. McClung, Ph.D.  
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