



May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Dear Mayor Jordan and Fayetteville City Council Members:

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 natural resources in Arkansas. For the sake of the ecological integrity of Woolsey Wet Prairie (WWP) and the surrounding area, we urge you to consider adopting conservation zoning between Broyles Road and Ruppel Road as this area develops with the proposed Ruppel Road extension.

Woolsey Wet Prairie is a conservation success story of which the city of Fayetteville can be proud. The careful planning and execution during its restoration and continued informed management have resulted in quality wetland habitat that boasts a documented 450 plant species, 202 bird species, and 24 species of reptiles and amphibians, including some species that are uncommon in Arkansas (e.g., smallmouth salamander, crawfish frog, Nelson's sparrow, and Brewer's sparrow). This natural gem within the city's limits benefits plants and wildlife that claim the city as their home, as well as migratory species stopping over on their long journeys. Human citizens and visitors benefit immensely from this area in the form of recreation (such as wildlife viewing) and education.

While WWP has demonstrated the fruits of smart conservation, there are further actions that could be taken to uphold the ecological integrity of this area. The fields east of Broyles Road are scheduled to be developed in the summer of 2015, and surveys of these areas conducted by researchers at the University of Arkansas and local naturalists indicate that not only do these fields contain remnant prairie habitat, but they also host species that have been found in WWP. In an effort to protect these natural landscape features and to provide an opportunity for improving habitat and movement corridors for wildlife, we ask that the City Council consider conservation zoning for this area. This zoning might include regulations for conservation design, which places homes in clusters while maintaining open green spaces that preserve the natural attributes of the land. This sort of zoning strikes a more equitable balance between the goals of conservation and development. An additional benefit to citizens is green space that improves aesthetics and recreational opportunities.

The city of Fayetteville has demonstrated a commitment to the health of its citizens and natural areas. We hope to see this trend continue as you make decisions about this important matter. Thank you for considering this proposal.

Sincerely,

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

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