

BEAVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

Our Mission The Alliance was formed in 2011 to proactively protect, maintain, and enhance the water quality of Beaver Lake and the integrity of its watershed.

February E-News



Dear Friends of Beaver Watershed Alliance,

With the snow melting and rains coming in, that can mean only one thing, Spring is on its way! Did you know that NWA receives, on average, around 50" of rain annually? Most of that rain comes in the months of April and May, where average daily rainfall can spike to 5"+ in one day!

According to NOAA, the wettest year on record here in NWA was 75" recorded in 1990, and the driest year was 21" recorded in 1963.

We are blessed with abundant rainfall in the Northwest Arkansas region, and it's important to think about where that rain goes, what it picks up along the way, and how we can help keep our local rivers, lakes and streams flowing with clean, healthy waters.

Events

March 1
[Beaver Lake Watershed Protection Strategy Comments Due](#)

March 5
**[Invasive Plant Removal: Kessler Mountain Regional Park](#), Fayetteville
2:00 - 4:00 pm
[Click Here to RSVP](#)**

March 9

It starts with a plan. The Beaver Lake Watershed Protection Strategy is a 9-element U.S. EPA-accepted watershed-based plan that guides our work and makes recommendations for communities and stakeholders to manage water resources. The Alliance is leading the implementation of this plan and working with many of you to do so, including landowners, property managers, cities, counties, utilities, agencies and other conservation groups. We have seen great success over the past decade and look forward to the next! This watershed plan is undergoing an update, and we want you to be a part of it. Read below to see how you can review the draft Strategy and add your comments to the plan.

In this issue of our E-news, we hear from Susan Koehler, Farmland Preservation Manager, Northwest AR Land Trust on how they are helping to keep working lands in working hands. We also just released our latest podcast with Dirk Phillip on Riparian Buffers on Ag Properties. Last, check out a fun little piece for February; in appreciation and affection for our watershed, Alliance staff share some of their favorite places and spaces.

Thank you, we appreciate all you do and working with you on keeping Northwest Arkansas a great place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,

The Alliance Team

Invasive Plant Removal:
Mt Sequoyah, Fayetteville
2:00 - 5:00 pm
[Click Here to RSVP](#)

Save the Date

April 16
Invasive Plant Removal:
Lake Atalanta, Rogers
1:00 - 3:00 pm

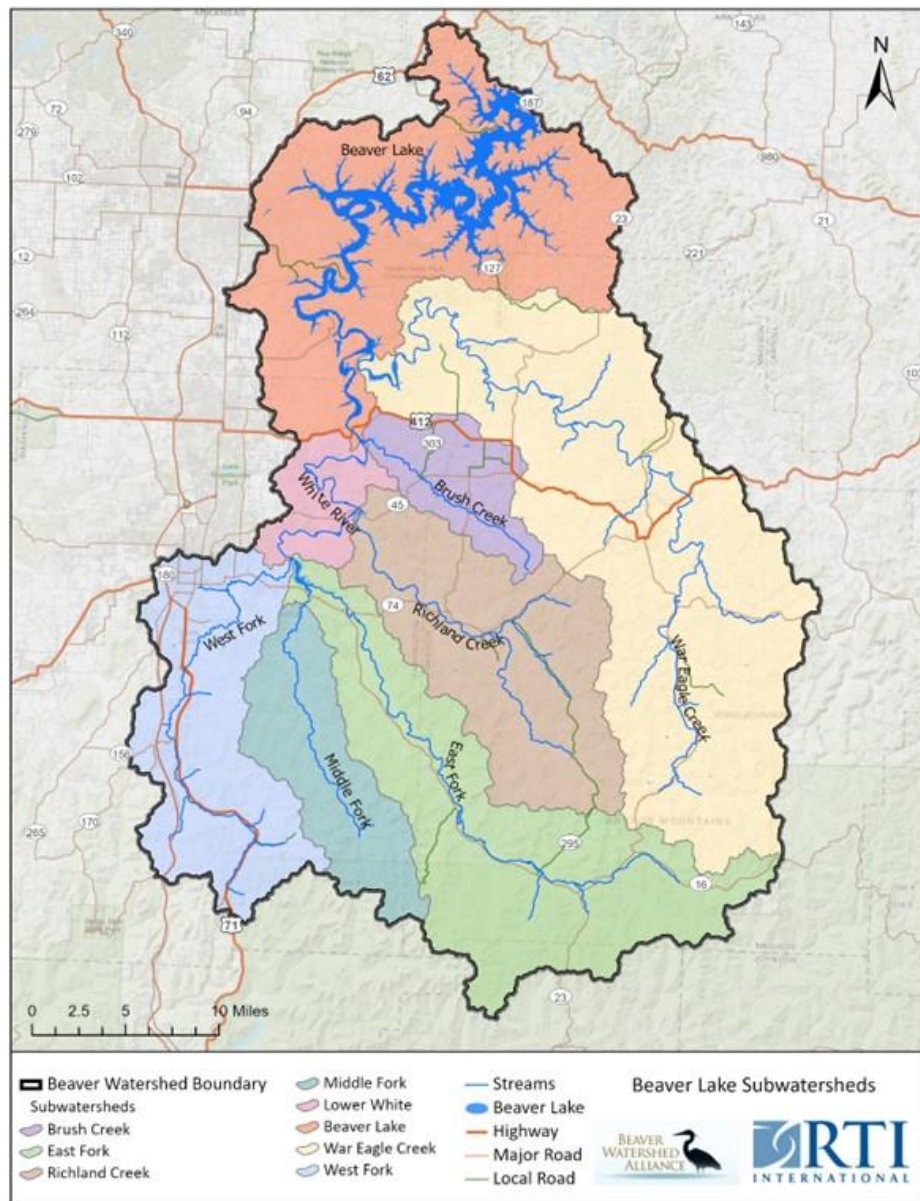
April 22
Earth Day with UA
Extension Services at
Ozark Beer Company
Rogers, AR
3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

April 22
Earth Day with City of
Fayetteville - more details
soon!

April 23
Invasive Plant Removal:
Lake Atalanta, Rogers
1:00 - 3:00 pm

April 30
Invasive Plant Removal:
Mt Sequoyah, Fayetteville
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**Beaver Lake Watershed Protection Strategy - Draft Report
Comment Period Open**



The Beaver Lake Watershed Protection Strategy (Strategy) is a [9-element US EPA](#) watershed-based management plan which details a community's water quality concerns and a strategy to address these concerns. It is developed by people who live and work within the watershed with support from local and state agencies. The nine minimum elements are intended to ensure that the contributing causes and sources of nonpoint source pollution are identified, that key stakeholders are involved in the planning process, and that restoration and protection strategies are identified, that will address the water quality concerns.

Part of this watershed-based management plan includes adaptive management as things change in a watershed area, e.g. land use, population growth, water quality, etc. As part of this adaptive management approach, the Beaver Watershed Alliance has initiated an update of the Strategy.

Some of the key changes include:

- An additional section on progress since the adoption of the 2012 Lake Protection Strategy (Section 1.3)
- A summary of the development of the 2023 revision (Section 1.4)
- Updated maps, land use, and climate information (Section 2)
- Updated watershed modeling under baseline and future land use and climate scenarios (Section 2.2)
- Updated model inputs related to managed sources (Section 2.2)
- Discussion of river instability and streambank erosion (Section 2.2)
- Updated water quality data and inclusion of new graphics (Section 2.3)
- Reorganization of the components of the Protection Strategy (Section 4)
- Information on the Beaver Watershed Alliance (Section 4.1)
- Updated conservation practices and priority areas included (Section 4.2.2)
- Updated education and outreach initiatives in the region (Section 4.2.3)
- Summary of Beaver Lake Watershed Success Metrics (Section 4.2.4)
- New Section on Management Measures, Costs, and Load Reduction Estimates (Section 4.3)
- Updated prioritization based on land management priorities and streambank priorities (Section 5.1)
- Updated Appendices including a case study on the economic benefits of pasture restoration (Appendix A)

A draft of the 2023 Beaver Lake Watershed Protection Strategy is now available for review and open for comments. **Comments will be accepted through March 1, 2023.**

[Review & Submit Comments to Strategy Here](#)

Thank you to the Alliance Technical Committee, Alliance Board of Directors, and community partners for your contributions to this update. Thanks to the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) group for the draft report. This update is funded through a generous grant provided by the Walton Family Foundation. For any questions, please email Becky Roark, Executive Director, Beaver Watershed Alliance, at becky@beaverwatershedalliance.org.

To view the 2012 Beaver Lake Watershed Protection Strategy, click [here](#).

NWA Farm-Link Aims to Keep Working Lands in Working Hands

Article by Susan Koehler, Farmland Preservation Manager, Northwest AR Land Trust, Feb 2023



Whether you have called Northwest Arkansas home for a lifetime or recently, it's undeniable that the demand for developable land for housing, and retail in the area is intense.

Thankfully, concerned institutions and individuals are leading several efforts to help keep our corner of the Natural State, natural, and to preserve our agricultural history. In 2019, as part of the NWA Food Systems Initiative funded by the Walton Family Foundation, the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust (NWALT) was asked to join the University of Arkansas and other organizations to grow more farmers and local fruits and vegetables for area residents.

NWALT's role is specific to farmland preservation in addition to access and support programming for new or expanding farmers. One of the key elements of the work is the NWA Farm-Link website the Land Trust manages. Here, farm seekers and farmland owners can connect, as well as get access to resources. "We joke that NWA Farm-Link is a true farmers-only platform," said Susan Koehler, farmland preservation manager. "While dating app analogies can simplify these types of programs for newbies, NWA Farm-Link is an important new tool for us."

Farm Seekers from anywhere can create profiles and share about the type of the farm or land they want. Farm Seekers with an interest and skills in growing fruits or vegetables may benefit more greatly from participating, but any land seeker is welcome to join. Farmland owners create profiles too, but with an emphasis on what type of farmer they need or the characteristics of their land. At this time, NWA Farm-Link is focused on assisting land and farmland owners in Benton, Carroll, Madison, and Washington counties given the increasing urbanization of these areas. If privacy is a concern, NWA Farm-Link can accommodate these wishes and work with individuals behind the scenes.

NWA Farm-Link is a free service and receives no commissions for possible transactions or matches. Members receive consultation and guidance and can be referred to area experts if needed. NWA Farm-Link has produced lease templates and other legal document templates around land transfer that can be made available to members working to finalize an arrangement.

"We meet people where they are in their journey to farm or create a legacy," said Susan. NWA Farm-Link can help facilitate leases or possible sales of farmland. Real estate professionals are welcome in the process but not required. "We've also helped farm owners hire managers for farm businesses and found caretakers. We counsel landowners to be realistic about their expectations. We consider it a win if we can help members avoid a possible arrangement that does not truly meet their goals," said Koehler. Other recent wins include helping a young farmer couple find land on a City of Fayetteville-owned property and helping an established farmer expand onto a large historic farm donated to the Land Trust.

For more information visit www.nwafarmlink.org or call 479-466-9666.

We Are Water Podcast



EPISODE #27

RIPARIAN BUFFER ZONES WITH DIRK PHILIPP

We Are Water podcast by
BEAVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

Did you know the Alliance has a podcast? Dirk Phillip, associate professor at the University of Arkansas, joins us on our latest episode to discuss riparian buffer zones with a focus on agricultural properties. Riparian buffer zones are the important vegetated areas around streams and rivers that prevent erosion and property loss, provide wildlife and pollinator habitats, and protect downstream areas from flooding. Click the link below to listen on Spotify, or search "We Are Water" on any major podcast platform. [CLICK HERE](#) to listen.

The Beaver Watershed Alliance can help landowners, farmers, and producers of any scale learn how to manage soil and water better to protect our vital natural resources. For questions, email info@beaverwatershedalliance.org



A Love Note to the Watershed

With Valentine's Day approaching, we wanted to extend our love to one of the things that matters most to us: the beautiful Beaver Lake watershed! Our staff not only works to protect the watershed- they also live, recreate, relax, and explore it frequently. Check out some more reasons to love the watershed from our staff below.

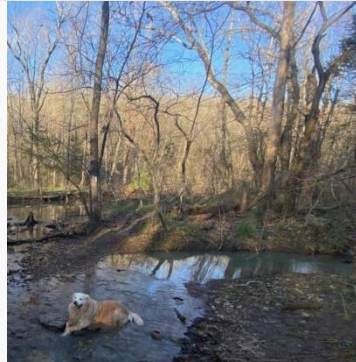
I love that we can travel any direction and in 20 minutes, you can be on a creek, stream, or lake. So many recreational activities are within a short distance, you could spend a lifetime exploring the Ozarks! My family and I especially love to float and fish War Eagle Creek, a hidden treasure in NWA. – Becky

I love the variety of landscapes, plants, and animals the watershed shares with us human inhabitants. From the steep headwaters in the Boston Mountains to more gentle valleys in the Springfield Plateau, I find it awe-inspiring to observe the life supported in these rugged landscapes and luscious floodplains. - Larry

I love the diverse recreation opportunities and history found throughout the Beaver Lake watershed. Every place you explore has interesting stories from the past; you just have to look closely or ask the right person. - Daniel

I love the incredible natural beauty of the Beaver Lake watershed that provides us all with amazing opportunities to escape into nature. Hiking and kayaking the watershed gives me a chance to reflect, slow down and remember how fortunate I am to live where beautiful hillsides and waterways are so easily accessible. - Barbara

I love the Beaver Lake watershed for the quiet, calm escape that it provides. Sitting next to the clear water of the West Fork, hiking with my dog at Lake Wilson, or swimming in Beaver Lake with friends always puts my mind ease! -Anna



Our key focus and metrics include Education and Outreach, Technical Assistance and Best Management Practices, and Planning/Analysis.

Education and Outreach: With nearly thirty people moving into the Northwest Arkansas region per day, and 1 in 5 Arkansans relying on Beaver Lake as their drinking water source, a major component of the Alliance effort is to provide outreach and education programming. We provide education and outreach to over 30k landowners, work with hundreds of volunteers, and inform cities, counties and planners on water quality trends and topics.

Technical Assistance: The Alliance offers technical assistance to address water management on the farm, along waterways, and on forest, pasture and urban properties. We encourage and implement voluntary best management practices (BMPs) such as planting native trees, pasture aeration, rain gardens and riparian restoration to prevent or reduce non-point source pollution and mitigate flooding to help achieve water quality goals. Sediment and phosphorus are currently the two pollutants of highest concern regarding the quality and cost of our drinking water.

Planning and Analysis: We are committed to providing a science-based approach to watershed management through research and development, water quality monitoring, strategic planning, and coordinating with partners to ensure long-term high-quality water for the region.

About Beaver Watershed Alliance

The Alliance represents a diverse stakeholder group from conservation, education, water utilities, technical and science, agriculture, recreation, business, and local government groups working together for the goal of clean water.

Beaver Watershed Alliance Staff



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Great Partners = Clean Water

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Get Social With the Beaver Watershed Alliance



"We Are Water" Alliance Podcast

www.beaverwatershedalliance.org

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