

Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers Member News



WINTER 2022

Wastewater Updates

In this middle White River watershed, several city wastewater facilities and their collection systems are in violation of their permits and have been discharging untreated or partially treated sewage into streams.

Here is a list of towns and institutions that are under a Consent Administrative Order (CAO), a legal order with fines, given to the city to force a schedule toward obtaining permit compliance:

Yellville Flippin Cotter-Gassville Mountain View
Melbourne Batesville Arkansas Department of Corrections, North Central Unit

A CAO is given by the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality after a long history of noncompliance. Many small towns have not adequately maintained and updated their systems. This jeopardizes the local economy, the health of residents and the environment. It is the responsibility of each community to live up to their legal health and environmental obligations.

Here is a list of entities with the most critical problems. The amount of funds received through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) announced on December 2 is included. These funds will help bring the wastewater facilities into compliance. It will not build a new system entirely, nor does it provide for routine maintenance in the future. Also included is the internet link to the public database of the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality where you will find the history of inspection and enforcement reports.



City of Yellville

\$4,000,000 needed. None received through ARPA. \$195,800 received from Community Development Block Grant. \$137,109 received from Arkansas Economic Development Commission. \$2,160,000 received from the Fiscal Year 2023 federal omnibus package. Discharges into Crooked Creek. [ADEQ DETAILS here](#)

City of Flippin

\$9,400,597 needed. \$3,289,037 received through ARPA. Discharges into Fallen Ash Creek. [ADEQ DETAILS HERE](#)

City of Mountain View

\$3,046,5308 needed. \$2,284,881 received through ARPA. Discharges into tributaries of South Sylamore Creek. [ADEQ DETAILS here](#)

City of Melbourne

\$2,163,925 needed. None received through ARPA, although on the wait list. Discharges into Mill Creek. [ADEQ DETAILS here](#)

North Central Unit (Prison)

\$11.7 million was recently approved by the state legislature for updates to the wastewater facility as part of the prison expansion to be completed in 2025 or 2026. The wastewater facility continues to discharge 70,000+ gallons per day in excess of plant capacity into Moccasin Creek. [ADEQ DETAILS here](#)

What the Heck! This HUC8 is now Priority

Did you know the Middle White River, as a Hydrologic Unit Code 8-Digit watershed, is now upgraded to a Priority Watershed according to the 2022 Watershed Matrix Update? We know you are as excited to read this as we are.

Ok, it means more funding is now available to projects that are designed to reduce nonpoint source pollution. This means projects that reduce stream sediment or that reduce excess nutrients such as nitrogen from human and animal waste will receive a higher probability of funding. In a scoring matrix used by the EPA, our watershed is among the top twelve priority watersheds in the state targeted for this type of pollution reduction. Our water quality is “good” and, as such, the waters and the aquatic life are more sensitive to factors that cause impairment. And those impaired stream segments that are known cause this watershed to rank higher.

The funds are administered by the Natural Resource Division of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture NRCS and other farm related agencies. But even Stream Team projects could receive help. County-wide efforts, such as the Unpaved Roads Program, are eligible.

For those that really want to know more about how this came about, [there is a downloadable file on our webpage](#).

Caring for Your Streambank

A healthy streambank promotes an abundant fish and wildlife population.

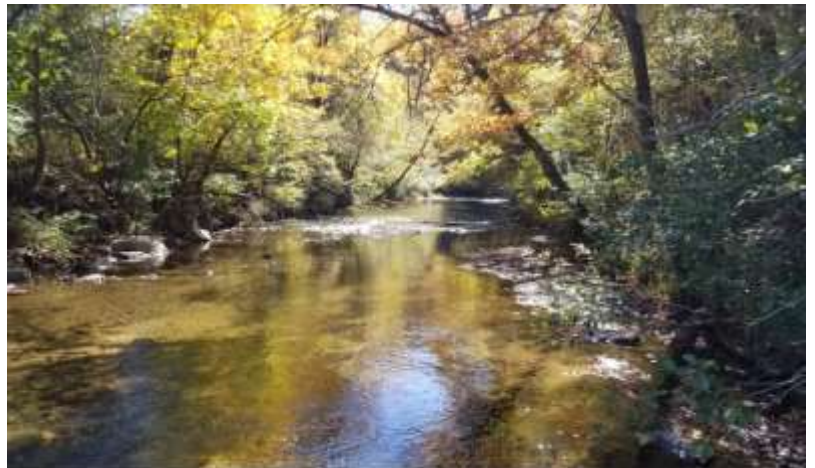
A riparian area is a strip of vegetation bordering streams and rivers. Healthy riparian areas are characterized by abundant vegetation with dense root structure. This provides habitat and food for water and land organisms.

It provides shade and nutrients for the stream. A dense root structure strengthens soil and increases absorption of surface and subsurface runoff.

Conversely, a steep streambank without vegetation or an eroded shoreline results in poor habitat for fish and other aquatic life. It increases the stream velocity on floodplains during floods which increases streambank erosion.

Before you, as a landowner, make alterations to your river or stream bank, consult with a stream habitat biologist at the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. They can look at your land and make suggestions that will improve or maintain the riparian area most effectively and naturally.

Here is the AGFC contact information and links to additional resources:



Trout Habitat Program
201 E. Fifth St.
Mountain Home, AR 72653
877-425-7577

www.adeq.state.ar.us
www.uark.edu
www.watershedconservation.org
www.cowsandfish.org

www.nrcs.usda.gov
www.arnatural.org
www.anrc.arkansas.gov
www.swl.usace.army.mil

NABORS Landfill Update

For background information on the sale and activation of the NABORS landfill, please refer to the article provided by Friends (Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers).

[Landfill to Be Sold | Friends of the North Fork & White Rivers \(friendsoftherivers.org\)](#)

Recently, two very important questions have been answered. This is found in the article in the [Mountain Home Observer found here.](#)



Any reopening of any cells in the now closed NABORS landfill site will require modifications to the existing ADEQ permit. The modification process will have to involve a robust public (stakeholder) comment period, as part of EPA permit rules. A stakeholder comment period would also apply to any new permits required if the property owner were to build additional landfill cells adjacent to the NABORS 56-acre site.

A public hearing may be requested by the public in their comments regarding any new permit or significant permit modification. To date, there has been no official request to transfer the NABORS landfill site permit to LRS.

The other answered question involved the hydrogeologic studies conducted by the purchaser (LRS) on the 698-acre property that surrounds the NABORS landfill. That investigation has not been completed. ADEQ indicates that it is not required to release the results of the studies since it is being conducted privately.



Would LRS, if the corporation were to operate landfills at the site and become responsible for monitoring and remediation of hazardous leachate, be transparent in with their information gathered by ongoing monitoring? And would LRS perform all the necessary remediation for the ongoing groundwater contamination from the NABORS landfill and all needed remediation for any new landfills for decades to come? Is ADEQ capable of providing the oversight of these permits?

These are other important questions required of stakeholders (you) as we consider any action to oppose the sale of the closed landfill.

A Look Back at 2022

The “Middle” White River watershed extends from Bull Shoals to Batesville where the waters leave the confines of the Ozark Mountains. It is marked geologically by the Ozark and Springfield Plateaus as well as the Boston Mountains near Batesville. These geologic features create an array of habitat for unique species of aquatic life and other wildlife. It supports a burgeoning tourism industry and thriving communities. But sustaining water quality in this environment is being challenged in a number of ways



2022 brought several watershed issues to the forefront for our organization. Yet, education projects continued with Mountain Home High School students performing water quality and macroinvertebrate measurements in Dodd Creek. Two senior students each received \$2500 in college scholarship funding. They were selected by a committee of educators and FNFWR board members based on written reports stemming from experience with the Stream Team creek studies. Another \$1000 scholarship was awarded to a Lyon College student who majors in biological or environmental science. This deserving student is chosen by Lyon College science instructors.

One of the important issues affecting the entire watershed is municipal wastewater. Many community wastewater systems are older and are failing. Leaking collection pipes and overloaded wastewater plants can lead to the discharge of untreated sewer. The failing of aging systems is very costly to correct and maintain. Friends is monitoring situations that are critical and is informing the residents of risks that are posed.

On another front, Friends has led the establishment of a task force devoted to the issue of riparian habitat destruction along the White River. The Riparian Task Force, a collaborative group, is investigating ways to help landowners become aware of the importance of a healthy river riparian zone and the resources that are available to correctly avoid and manage any streambank degradation. This is important because the White River is slowly losing vital fish habitat due to the erosion and sedimentation that results when trees and plants along a healthy streambank are removed.

An emerging regional issue involves the sale and possible re-opening of part of a leaking, closed landfill near Mountain Home that is responsible for polluting groundwater for over 30 years with hazardous organic compounds and heavy metals. If the sale is finalized, the new owner will be able to pursue permits for new landfill sites on the property. Our Friends board and members are actively opposing any new landfill activity at the site of the old NABORS landfill.

We continue to follow changes in EPA (federal) and ADEQ (state) policy that affect our water. We will keep you abreast of these changes. This is done through emails, Facebook posts and our website.

There are a number of opportunities for you to be involved with Friends. We need Stream Team volunteers, help with stream cleanups, and committee volunteers. We need members who have an interest in serving on our Board of Directors. Being a member and donating to Friends is foundational and so important. Let us know if you can help!

We thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing you on the water.

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