

Dear City Council,

The Council has requested that the Environmental Action Committee provide an opinion on the zoning request for agenda item B2, the rezoning request for N. Truckers Drive/The Lennon 208. We have considered this issue carefully, some of us have toured the area, we have consulted with local ecologists, the Fayetteville chapter of the Audubon Society, and heard the opinion of the NW Arkansas land trust. Our conclusions are as follows:

Note that this property (former wet prairie) currently gives the City of Fayetteville these ecosystem services: 1) flood control (think of it as a big sponge), 2) water purification (the sponge is a very effective water filter), 3) cooling effects of the plant communities, 4) a carbon sink, contributing to the city's climate action goals, 5) sediment capture, which protects downstream creeks, 6) groundwater recharge, and of course 7) habitat protection for the many endangered amphibians, reptiles, fish, and birds that move through this area including the Virginia Rail and the endangered Arkansas Darter fish.

This is all part of the Greater Wilson Springs and Clabber Creek ecological community.

The City of Fayetteville went to great lengths along with the NW AR Land Trust to protect Wilson Springs. Allowing more upstream development will, according to Marson Nance from the land trust, endanger the quality of the water and negatively impact the flow rate of the water—endangering the delicate community that depends on these waters. The spring is just downstream from the land in question.

Development will also impact downstream Clabber Creek, increasing sediment, detrimental nutrients, and pollution. It will increase the likelihood of more stream bank erosion along the Creek.

Building on wetlands complicates the construction process, and it leaves future residents dealing with long term water issues. At least two of the EAC members experience flooding on their properties and would like to see the City stop encouraging development in areas that are likely to be impacted by future heavy rain events. One member notes that in her neighborhood in West Fayetteville (near the Woolsey Wet Prairie) that was built on wet prairie, the residents are constantly mitigating flooded yards and even houses in big rain events. There are challenges in building and living on this sort of land that can be avoided. The water table is high and there's nowhere for the water to go when it arrives in excess.

One of the guiding principles of the City's Vision 2050 is ecosystem preservation. It is particularly significant that the Truckers Drive property has creeks on two sides, and a cattail marsh on the third side. It is an integral part of the Wilson Springs ecosystem and should be protected.

For all of these reasons, we advise the City **not** to pass zoning that will allow construction on this property. Instead, we recommend zoning the property R-A (Residential Agriculture) since it is the option that would provide the greatest ecological benefit consistent with the City's environmental goals.

Respectfully,  
Environmental Action Committee  
September 4, 2023