

Heritage Working Group Report

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Green Infrastructure Planning

Heritage Mapping is concerned with elements and issues of heritage, i.e. places of historical and cultural significance. These places are representative of the unique land use of our communities of Johnson, Farmington, Greenland, Fayetteville, and parts of Washington County.

The Heritage Working Group has defined heritage sites as:

Places that have a number of regionally distinctive natural, cultural, historic, or scenic resources that, when linked together, tell a unique story about our community.

Further, they may be:

- Places that are 'icons' in the community
- Places that are accessible via trails, greenways, or roads
- Places that are complete or still have integrity -much of the site, building, farm, etc. is intact and gives a sense of what was there
- Places that have a relationship/proximity to linkages and other cultural sites
- Places that play a role or function of importance in the community. They are influential in the development of the area, or are linked to events or individuals that have been part of local history.
- Places that have a story to tell and enough information is known about the site to paint a picture of its importance
- Places that are endangered sites

Based on these criteria, heritage sites are understood as significant landscapes that may or may not contain buildings. Categories of heritage sites considered to be appropriate for mapping are:

- University of Arkansas (mapped as U of A)
- working family farms (mapped as Farm)
- urban open space remnants (mapped as Farm Remnant)
- conservation sites (mapped as Conservation Site)
- historic parks (mapped as Park)
- camps and recreation areas (mapped as Camp & Recreation)
- historic building sites (mapped as Nat'l. Reg. Bldg.)
- heritage routes (mapped as Historic Route)
- Northwest Arkansas Heritage Trail Plan (mapped as NAHTP)
- Historic railroads

- gardens (mapped as Garden)
- historic settlement sites including springs (mapped as Spring), mills (mapped as Mill), bridges (mapped as Bridge), churches (mapped as Church), cemeteries (mapped as Cemetery), and historic communities (mapped by Name).

A note about the ice storm of January 2009: as we collected information about our green sites of every sort for this report, nearly every tree in our region suffered from the heavy ice loads of the storm. Heritage properties, with their mature parklands, suffered perhaps the greatest losses; but they are also probably best able to make conscious campaigns for replacement, repair, and recovery, as Fayetteville did after the destructive windstorm of May, 1989, which was concentrated on the University of Arkansas campus, in the central historic districts, and at and near Mount Sequoyah Retreat Center.

University of Arkansas. The University is a major Green Infrastructure resource in the study area. The 'farm' properties of the University of Arkansas are owned by the UA Division of Agriculture that are not a part of the Main Campus but are a separate part of the UA system, with its own vice president. The elements of the University of Arkansas Main Campus are grouped around Old Main, extending in four cardinal directions. On our heritage map we have located both the Main Campus and the Division of Agriculture properties.

The University was founded in 1871 under the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862. Under this act, Federal land sales provided funds for education in agriculture and other college studies.

The 'farm' properties include the Arkansas Research and Development Center known as the 'Ag Farm', the Savoy Farm, and the Vet Physiology Farm. The Ag Farm has experimental plots and structures used by various departments and programs of the Division of Agriculture plus a new study area for watersheds. In the center of the Ag Farm is a Post oak grove, part of which is designated as the 'Ag Park'. Due to the current roadway access on Garland Ave. through the grove that links Highway 540 to the Central Campus, traffic has increased and plans are being made for a wider road. This will result in a major impact on the Ag Farm and the Ag Park. In a more positive vein, the City of Fayetteville has completed the Scull Creek trail across the east side of the Farm, giving the bicyclists and joggers a view of this major urban open space. (information from Paul Noland)

The Main Campus has been undergoing a study for the purpose of historic preservation. The list of 9 historic landscape resources includes 21 acre Old Main Lawn, the largest Green Infrastructure space on the campus. It has been designated 'Icon', the study's highest ranking. The University has proposed that the historic part of the Main Campus be designated a National Register of Historical Places District. (Information from Karen Van Horn, Facilities Coordinator, Facilities Management Planning Group, U of A)

One other site of approximately 60 acres on the northwest end of Markham Hill near Highway 540 belongs to the University. It is a gift of property from Joy Pratt Markham. According to the will, the site is to remain in a natural condition. This property has potential for use by professors

and students from the Central Campus and is an important Green Infrastructure site. However, it is yet to be used for educational purposes, and its future is uncertain.

Working family farms.

A number of farm families were interviewed in Farmington, Johnson, Greenland, and the Fayetteville planning area. The Working Group was looking for heritage farms that had been in use for at least a generation. Individuals in each community helped to identify such farms, some of which had been in family ownership since the middle of the 1800's.

In Greenland, at least 4 farms were noted with acreage from 200 to 400 acres. Some farms have been sold for development, but much of the area is the way it was historically, and pressure for development doesn't seem excessively high.
(Interview with Manuel Bradshaw by Karen Rollet-Crocker, 2009)

In Farmington, one remaining heritage farm along highway 170 is composed of 140 acres owned by several members of the Hamblen family. Other farms previously owned by the Giles family, the Morton family, and the Carnes family are now housing developments. As a result, the traditional farming community, grouped around Walnut Grove Church and 'Cemetery Hill', is now nonexistent. The area has been quickly developed, and is poised for more development due to a new high school that will be built on highway 170 near the new large Methodist Church.
(Interview with Dorothy Hamblen by Karen Rollet-Crocker, 2008)

In Johnson, members of the original Johnson family still hold remnants of the B.F. Johnson farm in what is called 'Johnson Holler'. The land is below a steep bank with gushing springs. The water was used for trout hatcheries and a trout farm which shipped fish to St. Louis and Topeka. University professors often bring their classes to look at the springs. Additionally, the west side of Johnson holds several more heritage farms. The 300 acre 'Late Place' is now owned by the City of Springdale for use as a sewer lift station, although the land is still primarily grazed by cattle. Other heritage farms lie across Highway 540 in Reed Valley near Greathouse Springs. Development has begun to encroach on this historic area because it serves as the major access point from highway 540 to the town of Johnson.
(Interview with Mary Ellen and Leroy Johnson by Karen Rollet-Crocker, 2008)

South of Fayetteville, on the rich soils of the flood plain of the West Fork of the White River, lie a number of heritage farms. Herman Jones, who has lived and farmed in the area with his family for two generations, listed five heritage farms in the area. He also made some general comments on the problems of working farms in the Green Infrastructure study area and Northwest Arkansas.

- The area "is losing identity as an area for farming".

- The Oklahoma lawsuit against the chicken industry's effect on the Illinois River has become an issue.
- People want to move into the countryside, but complain about odors, dust, and noise, all of which are a natural part of farming.
- Larger farms are being broken up. Use of land for production of food is increasingly limited.
- Housing and industrial/commercial development occurs on good farmland because it is level and has good quality soil.
- Floodplains may limit development; however they can be filled for construction.
- The river channels near farms are eroding.

(Interview with Herman Jones by Karen Rollet-Crocker, 2009)

Urban Farm Remnants.

From Mount Sequoyah Woods, an urban forest now city-owned on the east side of Fayetteville's most famous hill, around the south side and west toward town are a number of farm properties which today are remnants of the area's rural past. Happy Hollow Farm was only one of them; the house of the Lighton family remains at the base of Mount Sequoyah Woods. The more open of these properties were farmed as pasture for livestock as late as 1980. The rest of the south slope is steeply dissected by drainage among high bluffs that, as Ghost Hollow, served as a recreational retreat site for UA students and others until the middle of the 20th century. Since much of this land has slopes of 15% or greater, much of it remains forested and undeveloped, though it is less than a mile from the downtown square. The forest extends down toward the west through still very lightly settled land to Fayetteville's Big Spring, a main water source for the town in its infancy and to a small farm remnant that is still managed as pasturage.

(from Harriet Jansma)

Of special interest is the Happy Hollow Farm owned by the Lighton family. In 1908, writer William Rheem (Will) Lighton used 'scientific agriculture' ideas to turn his property into a successful farm. Even more successful was an article, 'The Story of an Arkansas Farm,' which was published in the Saturday Evening Post on January 22, 1910. The article resulted in a stream of curious visitors. By the time it was expanded into a book, Happy Hollow Farm (1914), it had attracted more than 200 'back-to-the-land' settlers to Fayetteville.

(from research by Harriet Jansma)

Another farm remnant that has recently become a city park is located near the center of Fayetteville across the ridge near Highway 71. Known as the Brooks-Hummel property, it was used by the Doyle and Forrest Brooks family for a small farm with 6 cows and a few horses. Originally 73 acres, it now has been reduced to 13 acres that include Sublett Creek, wooded hillsides, and an open meadow.

(Interview with Betty Brooks Hummel by Karen Rollet-Crocker, 2008)

Conservation Sites

These sites are planned for conservation. Some of the acreage is under the management of the Ozark Regional Land Trust. Other acreage is in private ownership.

Historic Parks

Walker and Wilson Parks are two of the oldest parks in the City of Fayetteville.

Wilson Park is the first and oldest park located in the center of the city with Louise, Wilson, Prospect and Park Streets bordering its 21.5 acres. As early as 1929, Wilson Park was known as Trent Pond and considered the city's swimming hole. The first portion of Wilson Park was purchased in 1944 from Dr. N.F. Drake. The remaining 16 acres were purchased from and donated by Charles Marrow Wilson in 1946. A unique feature includes Scull Creek flowing through the castle area, underneath the swimming pool, and to the west boundary of the park.

Wilson Park continues to be one of the most heavily used parks in Fayetteville. Home to the castle, the only city owned swimming pool, tennis, volleyball and basketball courts, playgrounds, open space and pavilions, the park is often buzzing with activity.

The north end of the current Walker Park was home to Archibald Yell, the second governor of Arkansas. The estate was named Waxhaws, and a monument stands today at S. College and 7th street.

The Waxhaws estate was built 1836 and 1837. The original home was located just south of the Fayetteville square, bounded by Seventh Street on the north, South College Avenue on the east, Thirteenth Street on the south, and Block Street on the west. The original Yell house was razed in 1970. Bryan Walker purchased the land in 1944. Subsequently, the Walkers gave the southern portion of the tract to the City of Fayetteville, and it was developed into Walker Park.

Walker park now totals 64 acres and contains soccer fields, baseball fields, tennis and basketball courts, skate park, bmx track, playgrounds and pavilions. Additionally, the Senior Center was constructed within Walker park in 2003.

(from Alison Jumper, Fayetteville Park Planner)

Camps and Recreation Areas.

Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center on the crest of Mount Sequoyah was originally planned as the first religious gathering grounds west of the Mississippi called the Western Methodist Assembly. In the 1920's Fayetteville individuals offered 400 acres on the highest

mountain top in the city, and it was chosen as the regional location for worship, prayer and fellowship. The mountaintop was developed into a 30 acre campus. In 1939 the South Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church acquired the property.

Today, the rest of the property surrounding the 30 acre campus has been sold off, most recently 70 acres for the city owned Mt. Sequoyah Woods on the west side of Mount Sequoyah. The campus is listed as a training and retreat setting for non-profit organizations and multiple denominations of faith.

The Pratt Place on Markham Hill. Settled by the Pratts in 1900, this hilltop site of approximately 150 acres was once home to 4 boys, 2 girls, and their parents in a Victorian farmhouse. The two girls were owners through much of the 19th century. One, Joy Pratt Markham, ran a hilltop camp for boys and girls in the 1920's and 30's and supported a horseback riding operation. Markham Hill and its access road were named for her deceased son. Joy Pratt Markham left her share of the property to the University. Evangeline Pratt Waterman Archer's son Julian and his wife negotiated the division with the University of Arkansas. In the past few years, the Archers have redeveloped the farmhouse into an inn, restaurant, and barn used for gatherings and weddings. The existing trails on the Archer property are currently used by the University and high school long distance running teams as well as hotel guests.
(Interview with Ken Smith by Karen Rollet-Crocker, 2009)

There are other home sites toward the top of Markham Hill that preserve the woodlands and open areas. This hill is one of the 7 hills of the City of Fayetteville and is a major piece of green infrastructure on the west side of town.

The Wedington Unit, Boston Mountain Ranger District, Ozark National Forest is partially in the Green Infrastructure study area. It is a complete 10,467 acre forest hub on the western side of Washington and Benton Counties that was developed for recreational use in the 1930's. The property was part of the original acreage held by the Federal government for homesteading and was bought back from the original families. It was built using Works Progress Administration workers under the Soil Conservation Service starting in 1935. Many trained employees came from Devil's Den State Park which was built by the CCC. Staff from the University of Arkansas provided leadership. In the last few years, Friends of Lake Wedington, a volunteer organization, has restored many of the buildings.

In the 1950's, the University purchased of part of the Wedington site near the town of Savoy for livestock research. At the same time, the rest of the property became part of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests. An additional University connection was forged in the early 2000's, when the Recreation Department of the U of A contracted to manage the 'recreational area' around Lake Wedington. This special use permit is no longer in effect.
(Information from Paul and Eunice Noland and Ann Sugg)

Today Lake Wedington is managed as an urban forest with a recreational emphasis, and is also open for consideration of timber production. Priorities for the site are to provide more urban recreation opportunities such as campgrounds, picnic sites, boat ramps, swimming beaches, interpretive sites, and trailheads for walkers, horseback riders, and bicycle riders. No motorized trails are located in the forest. Beyond the designated recreation area, several additional picnic and camping areas once used by youth groups, campers, and picnickers from as far away as Tulsa have now fallen into disuse. A major public trail still leads from Lake Wedington to the banks of the Illinois River. The Forest Service is working to locate and preserve many of the pre-historic and historic sites.

The Forest Service describes the Wedington character as a natural appearing landscape emphasizing open forest settings, highlighting large diameter trees, and featuring special attractions like rock outcroppings. Management activities maintain a healthy mid-successional forest of mixed hardwoods and pines managed under an oak or pine woodland vegetative prescription. The forest is dominated by grass and herbaceous understories with widely spaced large oaks and pines. The open park like woodlands results in open forest conditions suitable for trails use, and watchable wildlife viewing.

The Wedington unit has also been established as a Cooperative Wildlife Management Area through partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. The partnership will improve area wildlife habitat by assisting with management practices such as prescribe burning, habit restoration, fescue eradication and the planting of cool season and warm season grasses. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will assist in land use and give wildlife special designation, restricting some hunting and motorized vehicle use until wildlife species can gain a better foothold in the area.

The Forest Service has given special use permits to competent organizations such as the Arkansas State Park System in the interest of financial sustainability and the opportunity to encourage public use through marketing (the USDA Forest Service is legally barred from advertising). If a two county regional park system, the state forestry system, or a public/private partnership can plan for new management, they might increase public use of Lake Wedington as a major hub of the Green Infrastructure system.

(Information is from Gary Williams, District Ranger),
(www.fs.fed.us/oonf/ozark/recreation/lake_wedington/lake_wedington.html),
(www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/regions/southern/LakeWedington/index.shtml), (www.agfc.com/data-facts-maps/maps/wildlife-mgt-areas/wedington.aspx),

Historic Building Sites

These are listed on the National Register of Historical Places and include the Johnson Switch Building, Son's Chapel, Walnut Grove Presbyterian Church, Other building sites listed on the National Register are found in various heritage categories, i.e. the Johnson House and Mill in Johnson (mapped as Mill), the Waterman-Archer House on Markham Hill and Pratt Place-Markham Camp (mapped as Camps and Recreation Areas), the Johnson Barn on Cato Springs

Road (mapped as part of Conservation Sites), Old U.S. 71 Greenland Segment (mapped as Heritage Routes), Lake Wedington Historic District (mapped as Camps and Recreation Areas), Mack Morton Barn in Farmington, and Evergreen Cemetery, Fayetteville Confederate Cemetery, Fayetteville National Cemetery (mapped as Cemeteries) and 10 buildings on the University of Arkansas Campus (mapped as University of Arkansas).

(See www.arkansaspreservation.org/historic-properties/national-register/)

Heritage Routes

Three heritage routes were listed by the Heritage Working Group, including Highway 170 in Farmington, Highway 265 in Greenland, and Reed Valley Road as a western extension of Greathouse Springs Road near Johnson. These routes still have integrity and give a sense of what was there in the early part of the 20th century, linking farms, springs, churches and settlements. Two of these routes, Reed Valley Road and Highway 170, are endangered due to nearby development.

A recent “Northwest Arkansas Heritage Trail Plan” has been completed and adopted by local communities. It is outlined on the Heritage Green Infrastructure map. The goal of this plan is to create a regional network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connects NW Arkansas citizens and visitors to our rich heritage, our recreational and cultural assets, a healthier lifestyle, and to each other. By implementing a region-wide network of bike and pedestrian facilities, the public will have access to healthy and safe alternatives to automotive travel. This system will also provide opportunities to experience the historic and natural environments of the area. As a result, the overall quality of life, economy, and health of the region will be enhanced.

(see MWARPC.com/heritage_trail_plan.htm)

Historic railroads

The old rail lines are mapped because their use as walking and bicycling trails is a concept that has been followed in many communities across the country. Also, they have been an important part of the development of the Fayetteville community.

Gardens

The Botanical Garden of the Ozarks has themed gardens and a timber-framed Horticulture Center. Phase 1 of the Garden development consists of nine gardens. In the near future, a trail with interactive exhibits will follow the creek that runs through the Garden. Short-term plans include greenhouses for demonstration and production. Phase 2 construction will include a large visitor center, office space, interactive exhibits, a research library, and parking space. The Garden is supported by the Botanical Garden Society of the Ozarks, a non-profit membership organization that promotes the Garden.

Historic settlement sites

These are places that served as heritage community and gathering spots such as springs (mapped as Spring), mills (mapped as Mill), bridges (mapped as Bridge), churches (mapped as Church), cemeteries (mapped as Cemetery), and historic communities (mapped by Name).

Many of these sites still have evidence of integrity due to remaining buildings and green infrastructure, bolstered by photos and articles about the history of Washington County in publications such as Flashback (see reference bibliography). Additional research into mapped sites can fill out the heritage picture in more detail. Below are two descriptive examples of these sites.

One example of a heritage settlement site is an important spring is the one along Greathouse Spring Road and Clear Creek where Robert Greathouse built a home in 1867 on 700 acres and raised 11 children. The Greathouse Spring was considered a healthy resource. In 1961 Mrs. Greathouse, then 93 years old, said that 75 to 100 people stopped for water on summer days along highway 112 in front of her home. (from research by Judy and Duane Woltjen, 2008)

A second example is of a church and historic community is Mount Comfort, the name now applied to the Presbyterian Church and cemetery located north of the intersection of Ruppel Road and Mount Comfort Road. The community began as early as 1828, at the same time as Fayetteville was established. The church that was built at that time burned during the Civil War, and the one that is there now was rebuilt in 1874. The cemetery holds many of the original settlers of the area. The site provided land for schools such as Far West Seminary (1844) and the Ozark Institute (1845-57 and 1868-1872) that closed when the Arkansas Industrial University (1872) was founded in Fayetteville. (from research by A.D. Poole, 2008)