



# Lake Fayetteville

caring for our watershed

**U of A** DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION  
University of Arkansas System

April 2014

## Why am I getting this?

You are receiving this newsletter because you live, work, or own property in the Lake Fayetteville Watershed. This means that you are a watershed stakeholder!

Tú estás recibiendo esta carta porque tú vives, trabajas, o tienes una propiedad en la cuenca del Lago Fayetteville. Por favor contácteme Colin Massey (cmassey@uaex.edu) para una copia de esta carta en español. Nosotros también proveemos consulta GRATIS en la casa con respeto a la calidad del agua, muestreo de suelos de su jardín y del césped, inundaciones, o cualquier otro problema de agricultura.

**The Lake Fayetteville Watershed** is ten square miles of Fayetteville, Springdale, and rural areas of Washington County that drain into Lake Fayetteville. Bacteria, excess nutrients, and sediment limit Lake Fayetteville's recreational uses. Stormwater draining from urban areas, carrying automotive fluids, pet waste and other pollutants, is not treated and goes directly into creeks and streams. Our goal is to work with all stakeholders to protect this water resource.

# Lake Fayetteville Spring Cleanup



Join us **Saturday, May 10**, to clean up Lake Fayetteville and *protect water quality*



The Lake Fayetteville Watershed Partnership (LFWP) will be hosting the bi-annual cleanup of Lake Fayetteville and the surrounding park areas on May 10. **Volunteers are needed!** This is a great opportunity to help beautify your lake, park, and trail areas, protect water quality of the Lake Fayetteville watershed, and enjoy the outdoors with fellow watershed stakeholders. As you may recall, last fall's cleanup resulted in the removal of over 1,200 pounds of trash. This event has many sponsors and is part of the Great American Cleanup campaign of the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission. The cleanup will be from 9 AM until 12 PM at which time lunch will be provided and there will be drawings for door prizes. Volunteers can sign in at the Lake Fayetteville Environmental Study Center, Veteran's Park Pavilion, or the Lake Fayetteville Marina and softball complex. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

**Do you plan on attending the Spring Lake Fayetteville Cleanup? Let us know!** Send an email to [cmassey@uaex.edu](mailto:cmassey@uaex.edu) or call Colin Massey 479-444-1755 for additional details or directions.



Above, local waterways experience spring algal blooms. Algae deplete water of oxygen essential for fish and other beneficial aquatic organisms. Read about the cause of excessive algae growth on p.2.

**Help us conserve resources! If you've enjoyed this newsletter and would like to continue to receiving it, or you are willing to receive an electronic version, please send an email with the subject title "newsletter" to [cmassey@uaex.edu](mailto:cmassey@uaex.edu), or call the extension office at 479-444-1755. If you no longer wish to receive this publication, please let us know and we will gladly remove your address.**

## Spring **greening** has begun.

Many residents like to have a green lawn, but did you know over-fertilization of lawns can impair water quality? Excess nutrients in streams and lakes can lead to unsightly algal blooms that deplete oxygen and can kill fish and other organisms. A best management practice we encourage is to make sure to have your soil tested for **free** before applying any amendments to your yard. People often find they have been unnecessarily paying for nutrients that are already adequately present in the soil. So take the guesswork out of it! If you manage your own lawn, consider the **best management practices** listed below for spring lawn maintenance. If you use a lawn care service, do they perform a soil test?

- Don't guess, soil test.
- Measure your yard.
- Buy the *correct* fertilizer.
- Calibrate your spreader.
- Only apply when weather is favorable.
- Plant native, avoid invasive.
- Consider a low-input lawn that uses **grasscycling**, composting, and mulching.



**Not sure how to do it? The Extension Service can help. Check out [www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu) for fact sheets regarding Yard and Garden, Farm and Ranch, and Environment and Nature. You can also request a free home assessment and I will come to you.**

***Grasscycling*** is the natural recycling of grass clippings by leaving them on the lawn after mowing. Grasscycling saves time, money, effort and, when done properly, is good for the environment and health of the grass.

- Saves time by eliminating bagging
  - The “Don’t Bag It Lawn Care Plan” found that after six months of grasscycling, homeowners reduced time spent doing yard work by an average of seven hours (*Texas A&M, 1990*).
- Returns nutrients to the soil
  - Clippings left on the lawn saved about 25% of annual fertilizer costs. “One ton of fresh clippings contains approximately 15 pounds of nitrogen, 2 pounds of phosphorous and 10 pounds of potassium (*Cornell University Cooperative Extension, 2012*).
- Promotes water conservation
  - Grass clippings are 75% to 85% water. When you mow regularly, clippings quickly decompose and release moisture and nutrients (*North Carolina Cooperative Extension, 2006*).
- Grass clippings **do not** increase thatch
  - Numerous research studies on zoysiagrass and bermudagrass concluded thatch does not result from clippings but from excessive fertilization or incorrect watering (*University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension, 2009*).

## Callie's Prairie: Restoring Arkansas' Natural Heritage



Above, Callie's Prairie after a prescribed burn

The Washington County Extension Office provides **FREE** educational programs to you and your neighbors that promote water quality and sustainable living. We offer workshops such as creating your own rain barrel, composting, calibrating your fertilizer spreader, and restoring riparian areas. **What kind of activity would you like us to host?**

All meetings and activities in this newsletter are offered to all interested persons without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (large print, audiotapes, etc.) should notify the Washington County Extension Service as soon as possible prior to the program at 479-444-1755.

Picture, if you will, an expansive prairie with towering grasses, sometimes over six feet tall, swaying back in forth in the wind. Imagine flowers of pink, blue and gold scattered throughout the grassland like an impressionist painting. Looming on the edges or encroaching into the fields are oak and persimmon trees basking in the sun. The picture painted in your mind may very closely resemble what portions of Northwest Arkansas looked like long before European settlement. Arkansas sits at an ecological transition zone between what was once the massive tallgrass prairie ecosystem and the oak-hickory forest ecosystem. Now all that remains of the tallgrass prairie in Arkansas are scattered patches making up approximately 1% of its historical extent. Just beyond the northeastern end of Lake Fayetteville is one such prairie patch called Callie's Prairie. The site contains representative tallgrass prairie plants such as big bluestem, little bluestem, and Indian grass. A wide variety of wild flowers such as Indian blanket, toadflax, baby blue-eyes, and black-eyed susan add color to the prairie at different times throughout the growing season. These flowers provide nectar for multiple species of bees and butterflies; beautiful insects that also add to the colors of the prairie landscape. In wetter areas of the prairie, dragonflies and damselflies can be seen zooming about on a sunny day. Birds that prefer open areas to forest, such as the scissor-tailed flycatcher, also benefit from the presence of the restored prairie by making a satisfying meal of the abundant prairie insects. The diversity of mammals profiting from the prairie range in size from the large white-tailed deer, which feeds on tender grass shoots, to the tiny fulvous harvest mouse, which lives in burrows beneath the grassland. Historically, tallgrass prairies were maintained by low precipitation, grazing by large herbivores, and fires started by Native Americans or lightning strikes. These factors prevented the establishment of trees and shrubs in the grasslands. Today, restoration sites like Callie's Prairie are created and maintained by disking, planting, and prescribed burns. Many volunteer and professional man hours go into modern tallgrass prairie management, but the benefits for humans, animals, and plants is arguably worth the effort. Callie's Prairie is just one of the many aspects of Lake Fayetteville that makes it such a popular a place to get out and enjoy nature. I encourage everyone to visit the prairie this summer and celebrate Arkansas' natural heritage.

***Karen Willard is a PhD candidate in Biological Sciences at the University of Arkansas and LFWP member. Photos below provided by Karen Willard.***



Flax is common in Callie's Prairie and can be observed blooming in May.



Above, a female double-striped bluet damselfly can be found in the wetter areas of Callie's Prairie.



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Colin Massey'.

Colin G. Massey  
County Extension Agent  
Agriculture/Water Quality

**[ We're on the Web! ]**  
**www.uaex.edu**

**Our Mission**

The mission of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service is to provide research-based information through nonformal education to help Arkansans improve their economic well-being and the quality of their lives