

Woolsey Wet Prairie Wetlands Receives Prestigious Governor's Award for 2009

For the first time since the Arkansas Wildlife Federation was formed in 1936, a municipality has been named the Governor's 2009 Corporate Conservationist of the Year. The City of Fayetteville received the award through the Arkansas Wildlife Federation (AWF) for the Woolsey Wet Prairie wetlands mitigation site, located on the West Side Wastewater Treatment Facility site. The award is granted for excellence in protecting and managing the wildlife and natural resources in Arkansas.

The Woolsey Wet Prairie, developed as a wetland mitigation site as part of the City of Fayetteville's Wastewater System Improvement Project, was designed by Environmental Consulting Operations, Inc. (ECO) and McGoodwin, Williams & Yates Consulting Engineers. The site has become known as the Woolsey Wet Prairie Sanctuary due to the incredible amount of growth of native plant species and diverse wildlife that now resides there. Woolsey Wet Prairie has been featured on six Government Channel television and two KUAF NPR "Ozarks At Large" radio programs, hosted by Bruce Shackleford, president of ECO, Inc. Bruce has studied the natural and cultural heritage of the site, naming it after the Woolsey Family who settled the property in 1830.

Woolsey Wet Prairie has proven to be a living outdoor laboratory and is a microcosm of what once was some 100,000 acres of natural prairie in Northwest Arkansas. The flora and fauna that regained a foothold at the site are in many cases rare, endangered, and can only be found on this property. The tract has become a model "classroom" for students, teachers and others interested in natural restoration and conservation in Northwest Arkansas.

The project was recently selected as one of five finalists for the ADEQ Environmental Stewardship (ENVY Award) and has received special recognition by EPA Headquarters in Washington, DC. When visiting the site, Randy Kelly, EPA's Deputy Associate Administrator for Intergovernmental Relations said in an interview, "It's a nice, unique example of what can be done next to a sewer plant." "It's not being copied by any city in the nation — yet." "It's clear Fayetteville and that region truly does want to create a green valley," he said.

This innovative project involved creating and restoring over 40 acres of very rare prairie wetland habitat, our most endangered ecosystem. Although the original 2005 cost estimate for the wetland construction was \$412,040, it was completed for \$131,578, creating a savings of \$289,462.

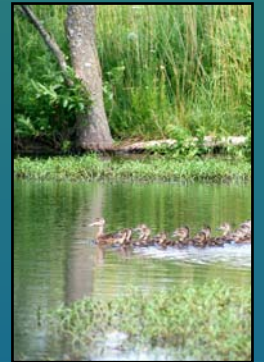
What's more exciting than being well under budget is the fact that the site has generated a surplus of 91 wetland credits that has received Corps approval for sale to outside parties, potentially including the Arkansas Highway Department that will be building new highways in Northwest Arkansas with stimulus funding. This sale of credits is anticipated to generate revenues to fund the expansion of the prairie/savannah complex by an additional 100 acres as the first Wetland Mitigation Bank of its kind in this part of the State.

The City of Fayetteville was presented with the award at the 72nd annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards Banquet sponsored by the Arkansas Wildlife Federation, on Saturday, August 8, 2009. The City of Fayetteville project will also be featured in a feature article in the upcoming Arkansas Wildlife Federation publication Arkansas Out-Of-Doors.

The Woolsey Wet Prairie Website has more details including photos and more than 20 news articles at <http://ecoarkansas.com/WoolseyMain.html>



(left to right) Lane Crider - McGoodwin, Williams & Yates, Bruce Shackleford - President, ECO, Inc., Mayor Lioneld Jordan - City of Fayetteville, Wayne Shew-make - Arkansas Wildlife Federation, Brad Hammond - President, McGoodwin, Williams & Yates, and David Jurgens - Utilities Director, City of Fayetteville



For information about Woolsey Wet Prairie, or to schedule a group tour, contact Operations Management International at (479) 443-1815.