BEAVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

beaverwatershedalliance.org

No-Mow Zones

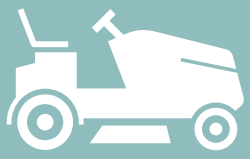
Low Impact Development

FACT SHEET

Source water protection is essential as Northwest Arkansas experiences exponential growth. Best management practices (BMPs) like no-mow zones are an easy way for any resident, developer, or city to help make a positive impact on the water quality of Beaver Lake, the drinking source for 1 in 6 Arkansans.

No-mow zones, or low-mow zones, are designated areas that are left un-mowed, or only mowed a few times per year. These zones are best suited for areas along creeks and streams, drainage ways, and adjacent areas between sub-divisions and waterways. These areas allow space for water collection, infiltration, and reduce sediment and nutrients in water runoff. They are also great places for pollinator-friendly landscaping and create habitat for birds, butterflies, and Ozark native plants.

DID YOU KNOW...



One gas mower running for an hour emits the same amount of pollutants as driving 100 miles.

No-mow zones save you money and time on maintenance

No-mow zones are beneficial to pollinators because they increase biodiversity and provide food and habitat.

BENEFITS:

- ***Improved stream health and riverbank stability***. Native plants have deep root systems that hold soil in place and filter pollutants before they reach waterways.
- ***Saves money long term***
  Save money on hours of labor needed for maintenance, the expense of fuel, less watering, no fertilizer needed.
- ***Reduce impact from flooding***
  Deep root systems and buffer areas of native plants help absorb and slow sheet runoff from storm events, and can significantly decrease negative impacts that occur from flooding.

Where can no-mow zones be established?

Riparian areas, or the areas around streams, creeks, or rivers, can significantly benefit from no-mow zones. These areas are especially susceptible to erosion, which contributes to the number one pollutant to Beaver Lake, sediment. These areas can also be difficult to mow, and no-mow zones can prevent headaches from mowing moist, soggy areas.

Large open spaces can be great opportunities for no-mow areas. Save time and money by decreasing mowing to only areas that are being used, like the path shown in the photo above. Open space no-mow areas can be great habitat for beneficial wildlife like pollinators, and can also be visually appealing with the addition of native wildflowers and grasses.

The areas between subdivisions and drainage ways/ creeks/ streams are an ideal place for no-mow zones. Runoff from neighborhoods goes directly to waterways and can increase flooding. No-mow zones are a solution, and are easy to establish, low maintenance, and can be aesthetically pleasing for residents to enjoy.

Other Options:

Features like English-style gardens (gardens that are densely planted with a natural, informal design), can also provide very similar benefits as now-mow zones. When native plants are used, these gardens don't need to be watered or mowed and provide deep root systems and wildlife habitat.

Agricultural practices like cover crops (plants that are planted to cover the soil rather than for the purpose of being harvested) also have very similar effects as no-mow zones. Cover crops protect agricultural land by slowing the velocity of runoff from rainfall, which prevents soil loss from erosion. This practice can in turn increase soil organic matter, improving structure and nutrient holding capacity for plant growth.

Things to know

An important factor to establishing a successful no-mow zone is being aware of potential challenges and hurdles and proactively working to set up your no-mow zone for success.

Education

When establishing a no-mow zone, you may get questions about "lack of mowing". Installing educational signage can alleviate this concern and help people understand why this is a positive landscape feature. No-mow signage can also inform maintenance workers where to stop mowing, which helps to increase the success rate. The Alliance can help provide educational signage for no-mow zones!

Weeds & Invasives

During the early transitional stages of establishing a no-mow zone, weeds and invasive plants can take advantage of the disturbed site. Maintenance plans should include removal methods such as hand pulling and cutting to provide the required control. Eventually, the transition will lead to a more diverse and stable collection of plants and weeds will be reduced.

Litter

If your no-mow zone is in or adjacent to a heavily used area, litter can become trapped in the taller grass. This can be a great barrier to keeping trash out of our waterways, which often leads to Beaver Lake, the source of Northwest Arkansas' drinking water. In some areas, maintenance may include the removal of litter from time to time.

Overall, the benefits to the well-being and health of the environment outweigh potential problems. The Alliance can help you plan a successful no-mow zone on your property!

Plants for no-mow zones

Seed Mixes
Native plant seed mixes are a cost-effective way to establish native plants in a no-mow zone.

Bare root seedlings:
Native bare-root seedlings can be purchased and planted in the Fall, Winter, and early Spring.

Potted Plants
Potted native plants can be purchased and planted along the edges of the no-mow zone to give some color and interest to the edges.

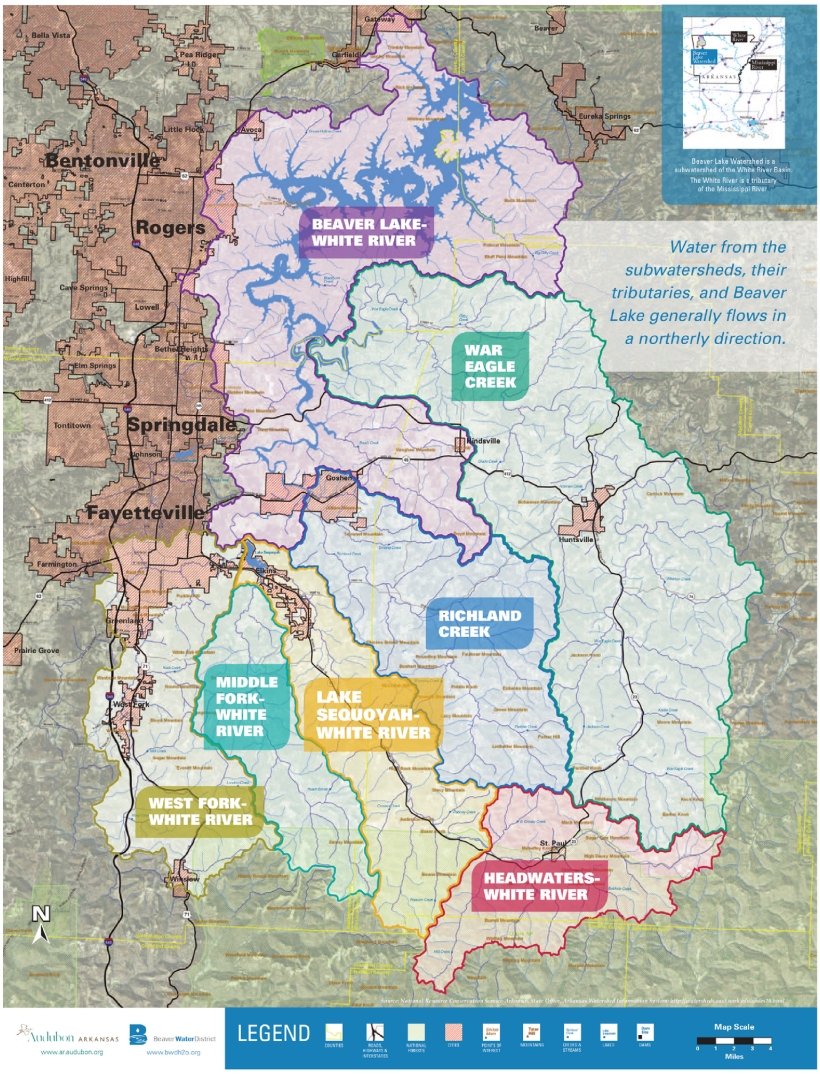
Contact the Alliance for a full list of Ozark native plants

WATERSHEDS

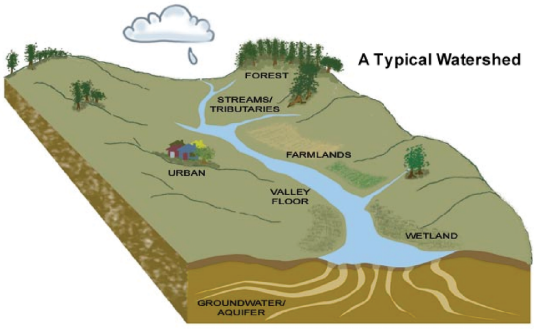
Northwest Arkansas'
Beaver Lake Watershed

Beaver Lake Watershed **is a subwatershed of the White River basin, which is a subwatershed of the Mississippi River basin.**

Beaver Lake is the drinking water source for **one in seven Arkansans.**



The Beaver Lake watershed covers 1,192 square miles and is nestled in the Ozark Highlands of NWA. It covers portions of Benton, Carroll, Crawford, Franklin, Madison and Washington Counties.



A watershed is an area of land that receives rainfall which drains to a river, lake or wetland. You are in a watershed right now!

Land use activities can impacted watershed water quality by altering the hydrologic cycle *(how the water moves through the landscape)*.

Reducing sediment, nutrients and runoff will help to protect and preserve the Beaver Lake Watershed. Contact Beaver Watershed Alliance to learn how you can have a positive impact and protect the watershed.

BEAVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

Beaver Watershed Alliance is formed of a diverse stakeholder group representing agricultural, recreation, conservation, water utility, business, and private landowner perspectives who all work together for the benefit of Beaver Lake and its watershed.

To learn more about the Alliance, best management practices for water quality, or how you can become involved in voluntary watershed protection go to www.beaverwatershedalliance.org or contact us by calling 479-750-8007 or emailing info@beaverwatershedalliance.org.