



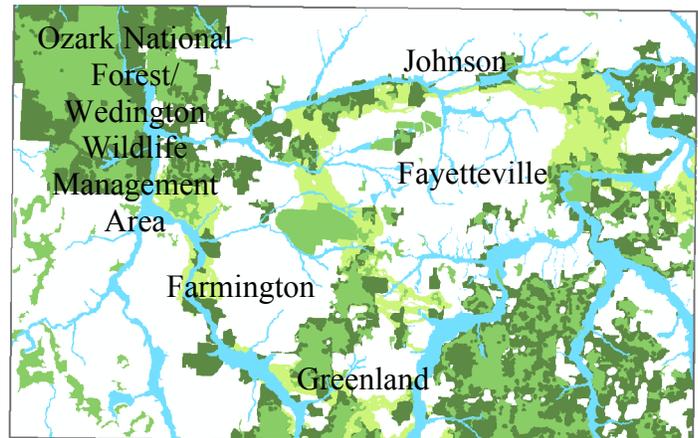
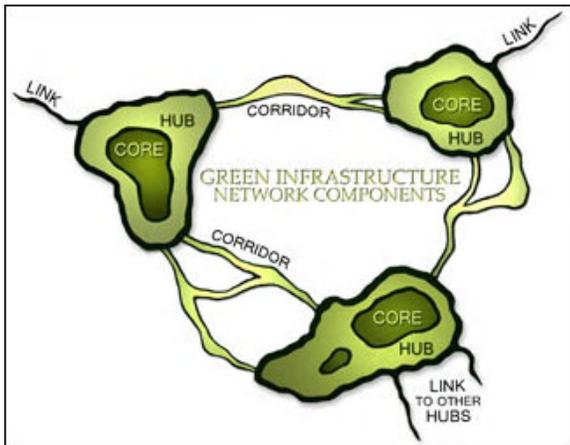
# The League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

www.lwvarwc.org

August-September, 2011 VOL. 58, ISSUE 5

## Calendar

**AUGUST 15 (Monday) - 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM, Fayetteville Community Wildlife Habitat Project Summer 2011 Speaker Series in Fayetteville Public Library/Walker Community Room**



Green infrastructure is strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations.

**FNHA GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK MAP** graphic of study area showing Hubs in dark green, terrestrial Cores in medium green, aquatic Cores in blue, and Corridors in lime green.

**"Critical Links: Wildlife Corridor Strategies for Northwest Arkansas"** - Representatives of the Fayetteville Community Wildlife Habitat Project partnership, including the Environmental Action Committee and the Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association, will discuss the regional green infrastructure map and the importance of individual properties in wildlife corridor preservation. For information on the Fayetteville Community Wildlife Habitat Project contact Terri Lane at [treehuggerlane@cox.net](mailto:treehuggerlane@cox.net).

**SEPTEMBER 7 (Wednesday) - 5:00 PM, League of Women Voters of Washington County Meeting in Fayetteville Public Library/Walker Community Room**

**"It's not US vs. THEM... We're all in this together!"** - Join League of Women Voters of Washington County Members and guests for intelligent, nonpartisan conversation about policy issues...

**SEPTEMBER 12 (Monday) - 5:30 PM, League of Women Voters of Washington County BOARD Meeting** Joyce Hale's residence, 285 W. Cleburn St., Fayetteville. All LWVWC Members welcomed to attend.

**From the LWVWC President**

In talking with our Membership Event Co-Chairs, Susan Rausch and Laura Kellams, we all agree that the League offers a venue for all of us to talk about important public policy, have intelligent conversations and practice non-partisan listening on all sides of an issue.

With that in mind, you are asked to find your friends and acquaintances, who are thirsty for an intelligent conversation, and bring them to our Membership Gathering on Wednesday, September 7 at 5 p.m. in the Fayetteville Public Library Walker Community Room.

Not only is your presence important as we set the scene for the next League year but your ideas for new members are really, really important.

In case you haven't figured it out yet, I am carrying on the efforts of past President Joyce Hale who boosted our membership and ignited our energy through her leadership and interests. Joyce focused on not only increasing our membership but attending to our members and including everyone in important discussions, public forums and wonderful social hours. She set the bar high and I know the present board of directors will continue to strive to meet Joyce's high standards. One of Joyce's greatest gifts to us is her efforts to make sure we share leadership, responsibilities and accomplishments. Let's continue to use this model to accomplish another great League year.

And, of course, thank you to the members of the Board of Directors who are stepping down to give others the opportunity to serve and thank you to those who are stepping up to serve. For many of us, the Board Meetings are a space in time when ideas and innovations as well as public policy are discussed. All members are welcome to participate and join in the discussions.

I look forward to sharing the League initiatives, studies, programs and processes with all of you.

See you at the Membership Meeting in September!

**Mary Alice Serafini**

**Update on Natural Gas Development in Arkansas  
By Joyce Hale**

Representatives from thirty-five organizations have been invited to a meeting hosted by Trout Unlimited to hear Sheffield Nelson on Saturday, August 13th. The event will kick off the petition drive to increase Arkansas' natural gas severance tax through passage of an initiated act. Members from LWVWC and LWVPC will gather with others in Heber Springs for the petition's discussion and to prepare for the upcoming House Agriculture Interim Legislative Committee on September 13 at the Capitol.

The committee will review the gas drilling legislation that was not considered during the last legislative session. Since that time, natural gas issues have resulted in the sale of Chesapeake Energy's Fayetteville Shale holdings to Australia's massive mining company, BHP Billiton. This change, along with everything from earthquakes and injection well moratoriums to operator violations and penalties, baseline water sampling, seismic testing under Greers Ferry Lake, expanded drilling operations in the Ozark National Forest, a landowner class action suit against extraction companies, and revelations of shortfalls in anticipated tax revenues and royalties), has created a very different set of circumstances for legislators to consider.

**LWVWC to Begin a Study on the Federal Government's Role in Education**  
**By Joyce Hale**

Last summer the national convention of the LWVUS voted to support not one, but two national studies. Both issues were considered too important for either to be postponed until a future time. The first study, *The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education*, has now been developed with reference materials.

Leagues across the country are now preparing their local participation. A committee to guide LWVWC participation is forming and will welcome any and all members who wish to participate. Those having an interest in a specific area of the study are encouraged to take part.

Topic areas within the study that may create particular interest include:

1. **Common Core Standards and Assessments** – Standards, accountability, state initiatives, and evaluation all enter into this discussion. Link to Article in PDF Format : [http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/PES\\_VR\\_1\\_CommonStandards.pdf](http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/PES_VR_1_CommonStandards.pdf)
2. **Early Childhood Education, Equity, and Funding** – Current conditions, gaps created by poverty, social impacts on preschool, and state and federal support make up this section. Link to Article in PDF Format : [http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/VoterReady\\_3\\_FedGovinPubEdEarlyChildhood.pdf](http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/VoterReady_3_FedGovinPubEdEarlyChildhood.pdf)
3. **Funding and Equity Issues** – Sources of funding, impact of No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, vouchers and charter schools, and Federal recommendations influence this subject. Link to Article in PDF Format : [http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/VoterReady\\_4\\_EquityFunding.pdf](http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/VoterReady_4_EquityFunding.pdf)
4. **Legislation and Funding for the Education of Children Who are Disadvantaged** – This subject is challenged by the needs of native populations, non-English speaking students, rural students, neglected or delinquent students, homeless, migrants, and the disabled. Link to Article in PDF Format : [http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/VoterReady\\_5\\_SpecialNeeds.pdf](http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/VoterReady_5_SpecialNeeds.pdf)
5. **Role of the Federal Government in Public Education: Historical Perspectives** – The past and current situation will be reviewed along with government actions and court cases that have influenced conditions and circumstances. Link to Article in PDF Format : [http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/VoterReady\\_2\\_FedGovinPubEd.pdf](http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Membership/NEWWEBSITE/ProjectsandStudies/PublicEducation/VoterReady_2_FedGovinPubEd.pdf)

Additional *Role of the Federal Government in Public Education* study references may be accessed on LWVWC website Educational Resources link: <http://www.lwvarwc.org/educationresources.htm>

LWVWC CONTACT for *Role of the Federal Government in Public Education* Issue:  
Berta Seitz/(479)442-6256/[berta.seitz@cox.net](mailto:berta.seitz@cox.net)

**Public Forums Held To Gather Input for Creating Arkansas' Health Benefits Exchange  
By J.P. Peters**

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly known as the ACA, signed into law in March of 2010, mandated the creation of the Arkansas' Health Benefits Exchange. The Arkansas Insurance Department through the Partners for Inclusive Communities and the University of Arkansas for Medical Science's College of Public Health held community forums in Fayetteville and Springdale in May and July 2011.

The forums are part of a series of meetings staged statewide for purposes of educating citizens regarding health care insurance coverage options and gathering public input pertaining to the creation of a health benefits exchange.

Forum attendees were provided with information on how to:

- Shop for health insurance coverage
- Receive tax credits or coverage through Medicaid or AR Kids First
- Get the same quality coverage that large businesses offer their employees

Contact J.P. Peters if you have questions or wish to contribute input:

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**LWWWC BUDGET REPORT  
By Susan Rausch**

A note from the Treasurer...The League of Women Voters of Washington County is starting the new fiscal year on solid ground financially! We have a budget of \$4,770 and are carrying over \$1,762 that was unspent from last year's budget.