



## NORTHWEST ARKANSAS LAND TRUST



The West Fork White River Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a voluntary program designed to help landowners implement conservation and land management practices on their property to protect water quality in our region. These practices also help protect property value. The project is funded in part by the National Resource Conservation Service, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**Northwest Arkansas Land Trust** is a key partner in the program working with landowners in this project area to permanently conserve their land through conservation easements and fee-simple acquisitions. Your property falls within the boundary of the West Fork White River RCPP. This voluntary program is available to landowners in approximately one-third of the West Fork White River Watershed. This section of the river was identified as the highest priority for conservation action after a comprehensive river assessment conducted by the Watershed Conservation Resource Center.

### Protecting Your Land

Land conservation provides many co-benefits to the property owner and the community. Protecting this river corridor safeguards wildlife habitat, protects water quality, and preserves scenic views and the rural character of our communities for generations to come. To initiate the land conservation process, Northwest Arkansas Land Trust staff can visit your property and provide a site assessment detailing the conservation values of your land. Together, we can protect this important landscape and our regions drinking water supply for future generations.

### Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are the most common method for permanently protecting land. Through a voluntary legal agreement, landowners work with the land trust to preserve a single feature, or all of their land while retaining full use and ownership of the property. Landowners with river or stream frontage on their property often choose to conserve the riparian area or floodplain bordering the waterway. Preserving your property, or a buffer strip on the water's edge, is a critical practice for conserving the river, reducing erosion, and protecting water quality. Conservation easements can yield significant tax benefits, including federal income tax deduction and state tax credits. Contact the land trust and your tax professional.

### Program Partners

The West Fork of the White River Regional Conservation Partnership Program was proposed and made possible by the Watershed Conservation Resource Center and regional partners, including the Beaver Watershed Alliance, Beaver Water District, Walton Family Foundation, and many other coordinating agencies.





## About the Land Trust

The Northwest Arkansas Land Trust is a local, private non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization dedicated to preserving quality of life in Northwest Arkansas through the permanent protection of land.

We are the only Accredited land trust in the state and in the region. Accreditation is a mark of distinction earned by meeting standards for excellence, including sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance and lasting stewardship.

## How does the Land Trust ensure that the land is protected forever?

When the land trust accepts a conservation easement or a land donation, it takes on the responsibility of ensuring that the terms of the easement and intent of the land donor are upheld. We value our partnerships with landowners and maintain good relations by answering questions and requests, and serving as a resource for land management issues. It is the responsibility of the land trust to monitor, steward, and when necessary, legally defend the places we protect in perpetuity. Maintaining adequate financial reserves for long-term land stewardship and defense is a top priority for the land trust, now and always.

## Land Conservation and Water Quality

Preserving undeveloped land is crucial to maintaining water quality standards in our region. Undeveloped landscapes slow down storm water, control erosion and filter pollutants before they enter the local waterways during rain events. The West Fork of the White River ultimately flows into Beaver Lake, the source of drinking water for over 420,000 people in our growing region. The river currently does not meet state water quality standards and is categorized as impaired by the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). The Beaver Lake Watershed Protection Strategy, prepared by Beaver Watershed Alliance cites land conservation as a core best management practice for protecting water quality. When we protect water quality, we reduce water treatment costs, safeguard aquatic habitat and ensure recreational activities continue on the West Fork of the White River. As population growth continues in our region protecting our water supply is imperative for human, ecological and economic health.

**For more information, visit our website**

**[www.nwalandtrust.org](http://www.nwalandtrust.org), or contact**

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- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship