



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **EPA ANNOUNCES \$100 MILLION TO BE GRANTED TO ARKANSAS TRI-REGION COALITION**

Monday July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced today that the Tri-Region Arkansas CPRG Coalition has been selected for a \$99,999,999 Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) award for its “Energy and Environment Innovation for the Natural State” proposal. This transformative grant will fund projects throughout Central Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas, and the Arkansas River Valley, representing half the Natural State’s population. Metroplan served as the lead agency on the grant submittal, one of only 25 funded nationally.

Metroplan Board President, Pulaski County Judge Barry Hyde, stated “I am thrilled the efforts of Metroplan, Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, and the City of Fort Smith have been recognized with the prestigious EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. This monumental award is not just a testament to our commitment to environmental stewardship but also a call to action. We stand at the forefront of an ambitious journey to foster a sustainable future for our community. Together, with the EPA, we will implement innovative solutions that will significantly improve our environment and quality of life. We are honored to be among the select few to spearhead these transformative programs.”

The award will fund projects to sequester and reduce emissions by protecting and restoring natural areas, increasing efficiency, and improving access to active transportation and transit. Projects such as LED streetlights and EV charging will reduce emissions from the transportation sector, and building efficiency funding will support net-zero technologies for public and commercial buildings. Projects will be designed to ensure equitable access to the environmental benefits funded by the grant.

Metroplan Executive Director, Casey Covington, said “By preserving critical outdoor spaces, enhancing active transportation, and demonstrating innovative energy solutions, the CPRG Implementation funding will be transformative for the Natural State and our state’s growing economy and tourism. Our coalition’s selection for an award speaks to the benefits of partnerships among and within regions to achieve common energy and environment innovation goals.”

The coalition partnered with over 50 communities, agencies, and organizations across three regions to develop projects and programs that are both effective and aligned with public and stakeholder priorities. The partnerships built through this process, along with the support and enthusiasm for this work, are expected to catalyze future innovation in the Natural State.

“This CPRG grant is great news for Northwest Arkansas, and we truly appreciate the partnership with Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, Metroplan, and Fort Smith. As Fayetteville begins implementation of our recently adopted Climate Action Plan this grant brings us one step closer to achieving nature-based solutions at the city and regional level,” said Fayetteville Mayor Lioneld Jordan.

The support of the State of Arkansas and Arkansas’ federal Congressional delegation was essential to securing this historic investment. The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment’s statewide



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Energy and Environment Innovation planning activities made organizations like Metroplan eligible to apply for implementation funding.

Mayor George B. McGill of Fort Smith stated, "We are honored to be selected to receive a portion of this vital grant from the EPA. This recognition underscores our commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. The funds from this award will be instrumental in advancing key projects within our Energy & Environment Innovation Plan. These initiatives will not only improve the quality of life for our residents but also have a positive impact on our environment, ensuring a healthier and more sustainable future for the City of Fort Smith and the Natural State."

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**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION ANNOUNCES \$36.25 MILLION, PART OF EPA'S \$100 MILLION CPRG IMPLEMENTATION GRANT AWARD TO ARKANSAS TRI-REGION COALITION**

**SPRINGDALE, AR** July 22, 2024 – Northwest Arkansas is expected to receive \$36.25 million of the [\\$99,999,999 million Climate Pollution Reduction Grant \(CPRG\)](#) awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency to the Arkansas Tri-Region Coalition to implement each region's Energy and Environment Innovation Priority Action Plan. The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission (NWARPC) coordinated regional partners to identify and develop 18 "Green Network" projects across ten (10) cities, and two (2) regional-serving programs, listed in the table below, to protect and restore natural cores and corridors and increase access to connected active transportation networks.

NWARPC partnered with Metroplan (Little Rock) and the City of Fort Smith on the grant with the goal of creating the most far-reaching and competitive proposal to secure this transformative award for the state of Arkansas. The selection is a result of the partnerships forged to develop this groundbreaking proposal, with over 50 communities, agencies, and organizations across Arkansas' three largest metro areas.

"NWARPC continues to pursue grant funding opportunities to implement our region's vision of creating a world-class bicycle and pedestrian network and protecting our most vulnerable natural areas, as identified in the NWARPC Open Space Plan and the NWARPC Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan."

- Tim Conklin, Executive Director, Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission

"This award is a game changer. The projects identified in the grant will be a huge leap forward toward keeping the Natural State "natural" and the "green" in the Razorback Greenway. This grant will allow Springdale to continue the transformation and preservation of the Spring Creek corridor located in the heart of the city to ensure our residents and visitors can enjoy the benefits of connected outdoor spaces well into future."

- Mayor Doug Sprouse, City of Springdale

"As chair of the Northwest Arkansas Open Space Coalition and Director-Northwest Arkansas Land Trust, it's all about coalition building and partnerships to achieve our shared vision to permanently protect and preserve NWA's most valuable landscapes, the cores and corridors of the "green network " as adopted in the NWA Open Space Plan. The CPRG grant moves us one



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step closer to advancing our collective vision to preserve what we all love and value most about Arkansas and NWA, our natural areas and open spaces.”

- Grady Span, Director, Northwest Arkansas Land Trust

“This CPRG grant allows the regional planning partners to collaborate on implementation of nature-based solutions that improve Illinois River water quality. This grant compliments and advances the region’s shared vision of restoring and protecting the Illinois River watershed today and for future generations.”

- Leif Kindberg, Executive Director, Illinois River Watershed Partnership

**Northwest Arkansas Green Network Projects and Programs**

<b>Site/Project Name</b>	<b>Project Location</b>	<b>Partnering Agencies</b>
Razorback Greenway Corridor Stream and Riparian Restoration*	Bella Vista, AR	City of Bella Vista, Watershed Conservation Resource Center
Razorback Greenway and Town Branch Corridor Forest and Riparian Restoration*	Bentonville, AR	City of Bentonville, Watershed Conservation Resource Center
River Commons Floodplain, Prairie, and Riparian Restoration and Trail Construction *	Fayetteville, AR	City of Fayetteville, Beaver Water District, Watershed Conservation Resource Center
Town Branch Corridor Stream and Riparian Restoration	Fayetteville, AR	City of Fayetteville, Watershed Conservation Resource Center
University of Arkansas Oak Knoll Wetland, Prairie, Forest, Stream, and Riparian Restoration*	Fayetteville, AR	University of Arkansas, Watershed Conservation Resource Center
University of Arkansas Oak Ridge Hillside Prairie and Forest Restoration and Trail Construction*	Fayetteville, AR	University of Arkansas, Watershed Conservation Resource Center
University of Arkansas AR Research & Tech Park Floodplain, Prairie, and Forest Restoration*	Fayetteville, AR	University of Arkansas, Watershed Conservation Resource Center
Clear Creek-Johnson Park Riparian, Prairie, & Forest Restoration	Johnson, AR	City of Johnson, Watershed Conservation Resource Center
Puppy Creek Stream and Wetland Restoration and Preservation*	Lowell, AR	City of Lowell
Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park Wetland, Prairie, and Riparian Restoration	Prairie Grove, AR	Arkansas State Park, Illinois River Watershed Partnership
Osage/Blossom Way Creeks Stream and Wetland Restoration, Preservation, and Trail Construction*	Rogers, AR	City of Rogers
Lower Clear Creek Stream Restoration and Preservation*	Springdale, AR	City of Springdale
Spring Creek at the Greenway Forest, Stream and Riparian Restoration and Preservation*	Springdale, AR	City of Springdale
Spring Creek at Downtown Preservation	Springdale, AR	City of Springdale, Illinois River Watershed Partnership
Spring Creek at Thunder Chicken Wetland, Stream and Riparian Restoration and Preservation	Springdale, AR	City of Springdale
Willie George Park Wetland Restoration*	Springdale, AR	City of Springdale
Springtown Reforestation Projects	Springtown, AR	NWA Land Trust
West Fork White River Wetland, Prairie, Stream, Riparian Restoration	West Fork, AR	City of West Fork, Watershed Conservation Resource Center
Electric Bike (E-Bike) Incentive Program*	Northwest AR	NWA Trailblazers
Workforce Training Programs	Northwest AR	Watershed Conservation Resource Center, Illinois River Watershed Partnership, Beaver Watershed Alliance

\*Projects with active transportation connectivity and improved trail corridor focus.



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Link to EPA press release: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-43-billion-grants-community-driven-solutions-cut>

More information about CPRG can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>.

The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment's planning effort is outlined on its website at <https://ee.arkansas.gov/environment/office-of-air-quality/eei/>.

Information about each region's EEI work can be found at:  
<https://metroplan.org/eei/>  
<https://www.nwarpc.org/energy-environment-innovation-plan/>  
<https://www.fortsmithar.gov/government/city-plans-projects/sustainability>

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