

Action Committee Report

League of Women Voters of Pulaski County

So much is happening with LWVoters PC Action issues that I write a summary and then have to immediately update it to reflect changes. We have been dealing with three issues over the past six weeks: removal of Exxon pipeline from the Maumelle Watershed, formation of JP Denton's task force to revisit the County's Zoning Ordinance for the Maumelle Watershed, and review of proposed regulations for implementation of Act 595 (Voter ID)

As part of Citizens Protecting the Maumelle Watershed Coalition, we have asked Exxon to remove their pipeline from the Watershed. A meeting with Governor Beebe and some of his staff assured us that when the federal pipeline commission recommendations regarding the pipeline rupture at Mayflower were available, the State would push to make sure those recommendations were carried out. What the State can do legally is limited since transportation of oil is an interstate activity. CAW staff shared with us their actions since the Mayflower pipeline rupture. They have asked Exxon to provide more supplies and quicker access to the pipeline in the Watershed and addition of shut off valves closer together than at present. Exxon responded by saying they plan to cooperate with CAW and will respond to their requests after Mayflower rupture issues are dealt with. The report on the Mayflower break has been received and is being studied by the federal oversight commission.

Lake Maumelle Watershed Taskforce: Created by the Quorum Court this Taskforce will be facilitated by Mr. Tom Riley of the Arkansas Agricultural Extension Service. Mr. Riley is well respected and has a background in conflict resolution. Applications for Taskforce positions were solicited from the general public and 67 were received. A Committee of three: Freeman McKendra, Christopher Oleson (no relative of our member Kathleen Oleson) Deborah Wilhite met and chose 31 members. Mr. Oleson is active in the Republican Party, and Ms. Wilhite in the Democratic Party. Mr. McKendra is retired from the Rockefeller Foundation. Nell Matthews, Kathleen Oleson, Ruth Bell applied as LWVoters PC members, and Kate Althoff as a Sierra Club representative. Kathleen, Ruth, and Kate were appointed. Nell did not receive appointment because she wished to serve as an alternate. The thirty one persons chosen represent a range of interests in Maumelle Watershed. They range from non profits such as Sierra Club, Citizens Protecting Maumelle Watershed and ourselves to Greater Little Rock and North Rock Chambers of Commerce, Maumelle Watershed landowners from Deltic Timber to much smaller landowners, CAW, and CAW ratepayers.

Proposed regulations for implementing Act 595 (Voter ID) were offered for public comment. LWVAR president Stephanie Johnson spoke at the public hearing and LWVPC submitted written comments. Our comment focused on asking that requirements placed on the voter by the Act be less expensive and time consuming, and requesting that conditions placed on the voter seeking a County issued photo ID did not differ from conditions placed on those voters with photo ID from other sources. The Arkansas Election Commissioners will consider the regulations at their August 21 meeting. We plan to attend.

Submitted by Ruth Bell, Action Committee Chair, July 14, 2013