

COMMUNITY GARDENS IN THE PARKS MANUAL FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! We are pleased that you would like to work together with us and your neighbors or organization to start a community garden in your local park. The City of Fayetteville is helping promote and expand greening efforts in our community by providing valuable outdoor space for citizens in Fayetteville to garden together.

Designing, planting, and caring for a garden can yield very rewarding results. Gardening gives us opportunities to be active, creative and social, as well as to establish a direct connection with nature. Gardening promotes good overall fitness and health. Maintaining a successful community garden is also a long-term responsibility which requires community support and dedicated, ongoing commitment by all participants.

In order to form a community garden in a Fayetteville park, the following process must be completed by your group. Use this detailed manual as your guide along with the Community Gardens in the Parks Checklist which outlines the steps.

DEFINITION

A Park Community Garden is defined as an assigned space within a park that is reserved solely for the use of an organized group of community members for the purpose of growing fruits, vegetables and flowers. The community gardening group is solely responsible for all necessary maintenance of this space.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Parks Volunteer and Community Programs Coordinator and the Maintenance Superintendent are your main contacts within the Parks and Recreation Department. Just as it will be your responsibility to maintain your garden in an appealing manner, the Parks and Recreation Volunteer and Community Programs Coordinator (479-444-3467) and Maintenance Superintendent (479-575-8368) will work with you by sharing information about any activities in the park which may impact your garden space.

Parks and Recreation maintenance crews will be made aware of your garden space to assure that the boundaries are respected and to see where their maintenance responsibilities adjoin yours.

THE FIVE STEPS TO CREATING A COMMUNITY GARDEN IN THE PARK

The process for community garden creation in Fayetteville Parks is outlined in the following steps:

STEP ONE: *FORMING A GARDEN GROUP*

Creating a Community Garden is a grass-roots operation; it is a long-term responsibility which will require community support and dedicated, on-going commitment by all members of the community gardening group.

We recommend that individuals, businesses and/or non-profit organizations in Fayetteville who would like to develop a Community Garden in their neighborhood park organize themselves as an official Garden Group. As a public agency, the City of Fayetteville policy requires inclusiveness; anyone interested in joining the Group is to be fairly considered.

The Group will appoint a liaison, or Group Leader, who will serve as the Group's representative to the Parks and Recreation Department and to the public. The liaison will be responsible for monitoring all garden activities and assisting with organization of all garden programs such as registration and events. Once established, it is important that your Group develop working relationships with the Parks Volunteer Coordinator and any Neighborhood Association leaders in the surrounding community. Support from all of these parties is crucial to the long-term success of a Community Garden.

STEP TWO: *SELECTING THE LOCATION*

Check the community garden sites on the attached Community Gardens in the Parks map or call the Volunteer and Community Programs Coordinator at (479) 444-3467 to get more information. Once selected, confirm the proposed site with the Volunteer Coordinator.

STEP THREE: *APPLICATION & PRE-APPROVAL*

Upon completion of Steps One and Two, submit an Application Form to:

Fayetteville Parks and Recreation Department
Community Garden Request
113 W. Mountain Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701

- All application forms received will be responded to within 30 days.
- The Group's liaison will then receive an Application Pre-approval Letter from the Parks and Recreation Department directing you to proceed to Step 4 **OR** requesting more information.

STEP FOUR: *WRITTEN PROPOSAL*

Once the application has been pre-approved, the applicant must also provide the following:

1) **PROPOSAL PACKAGE**

A written proposal consists of the following documentation:

- **Group Membership roster.** Name of Group, park, contact information of the primary Group Leader, secondary Group Leader, and a complete listing of current Group members.
- **Funding plan.** All costs for the proposed Community Garden are the sole responsibility of the Group.
- **Garden design.** Include a sketch which can be basic and hand-drawn. Show the garden layout including dimensions, location of the water source, and nearby buildings and trees. Describe which direction the site faces, how many hours of direct sunlight per day, and the soil type.
- **Installation, Labor and Supply.** Answer the following:
 How will your garden be installed?
 Who will your laborers be?
 What is the source for materials such as lumber, fencing and soil?

- **Maintenance plan.** Provide a detailed maintenance plan, indicating how the garden will be cared for on a weekly and seasonal basis, including watering, weeding, mulching, spring prepping and winterizing.
- **Soil analysis.** A soil analysis report must be obtained for the garden and results provided to Fayetteville Parks and Recreation. See Memorandum of Understanding document for more details.

2) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING & KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The most important aspect of successful community gardening in a park is ongoing communication between the community garden and the Parks and Recreation Department. The Group must sign a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to the responsibilities and guidelines contained within before the garden is approved. See Memorandum of Understanding for guidelines.

Mail to the proposal and MOU to:

Fayetteville Parks and Recreation Department
Community Garden Request
113 W. Mountain Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Your proposal package will be reviewed and responded to within 30 days. You will be notified if your proposal has been approved, or if further information is needed.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING (IF APPLICABLE)

In many cases, neighborhood support will need to be gathered for implementation of the garden. Community consent and support is important in obtaining the Parks and Recreation Department's approval for a successful Community Garden. Once paperwork is submitted and reviewed, if it is determined that neighborhood support is needed, Park staff will contact residents within a quarter mile radius of the proposed community garden via mail, conduct a neighborhood meeting, and solicit community input before making a final decision for approval.

STEP FIVE: *SIGN LEASE AGREEMENT*

The Lease Agreement must be signed by the garden group. This is an annual agreement that will be renewed each spring.

FINISH: *INSTALLATION OF THE GARDEN*

Once the lease agreement has been signed, you are ready to begin construction!

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have raised all the community support and commitment needed for a successful Community Garden. This is a big responsibility and we are pleased to be in this venture together and wish your Group great success.

APPENDIX A: FUNDING IDEAS, RESOURCES and CLASSES

- American Community Garden Association: <http://www.communitygarden.org>
- National Gardening Association: <http://www.garden.org>
- Fayetteville Parks and Recreation – Community Gardens, Adopt-A-Park Program:
Phone: 479-444-3467; e-mail: parksvolunteer@fayetteville-ar.gov
- University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Washington County Extension:
Phone: 479-444-1755; e-mail: bkurz@uark.edu
- International Ag Labs: <http://www.aglabs.com>
- Dave's Garden : <http://davesgarden.com/>



COMMUNITY GARDENS IN THE PARKS CHECKLIST

Welcome Prospective Community Gardeners,

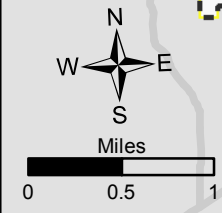
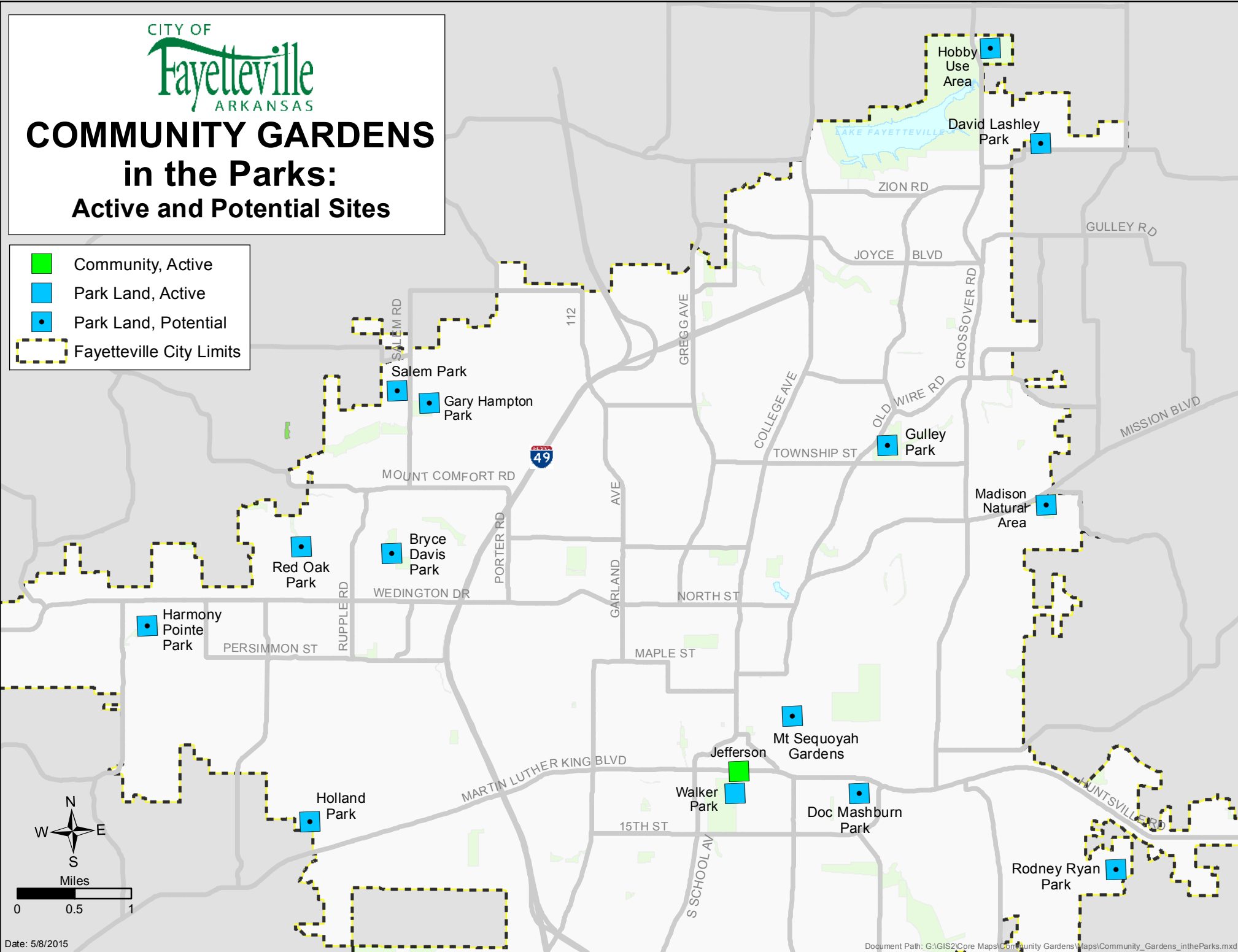
We are glad to hear that you're interested in starting a Community Garden in your local park. This is a long-term responsibility which will require community support and dedicated, ongoing commitment by all members of your Community Gardening Group.

Use this checklist to guide you through the Manual for Community Garden Development.

STEP 1	<input type="checkbox"/> READ THE MANUAL for Community Garden Development detailing the development process <input type="checkbox"/> FORM A GROUP of community gardeners and choose a group name
STEP 2	<input type="checkbox"/> SELECT A LOCATION: Contact Fayetteville Parks and Recreation at 479-444-3467 for more information
STEP 3	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE THE APPLICATION and submit
STEP 4	<input type="checkbox"/> RECEIVE PRE-APPROVAL LETTER to move forward <input type="checkbox"/> COMPILE WRITTEN PROPOSAL: Group Membership Roster, Funding Plan, Garden Design/Layout, Maintenance Plan, Soil Analysis <input type="checkbox"/> SUBMIT PROPOSAL PAPERWORK <input type="checkbox"/> READ, SIGN AND SUBMIT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING <input type="checkbox"/> HOLD A PUBLIC MEETING in the park neighborhood (if applicable)
STEP 5	<input type="checkbox"/> RECEIVE PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE LETTER <input type="checkbox"/> READ, SIGN AND SUBMIT ANNUAL LEASE AGREEMENT
FINISH!	<input type="checkbox"/> INSTALL THE GARDEN

COMMUNITY GARDENS in the Parks: Active and Potential Sites

- Community, Active
- Park Land, Active
- Park Land, Potential
- Fayetteville City Limits





COMMUNITY GARDENS IN THE PARKS APPLICATION FORM

PART 1:

Garden Group Name: _____ **Date:** _____

How many members does your Group currently have? _____

Which park would you like to consider for a community garden? _____

Park Address: _____

Liaison/Primary Organizer's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Alternate Contact's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail: _____

PART 2:

Describe in detail, the location where your Group would like to garden. Example: "Our location of interest is approximately 100 feet southeast of the walking trail and 50 feet north of the tennis courts":

AN EXISTING WATER SOURCE IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE. An area located within 100 feet of a functioning water source is preferred. The use of fire hydrants or drinking fountains is not an option.

Describe type of water source and location: _____

PART 3:

Attach two to four pictures showing the proposed location, one of them showing its location within the park. If possible submit pictures taken during growing season.

PART 4:

Please make sure that the required pictures are attached and information is completely & accurately filled out to avoid a delay in processing. If necessary, we may require your application to be resubmitted. Please mail this completed form with pictures to:

Fayetteville Parks and Recreation
Community Garden Request
113 W. Mountain Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701



COMMUNITY GARDENS IN THE PARKS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

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Please read this document carefully, making sure that all members of your Group understand and agree to the terms listed below. Sign and include this M.O.U. with the other documents submitted as part of Step 4 of the approval process. Once your garden is approved, this document will serve as your formal agreement with the City of Fayetteville Parks and Recreation Department.

GARDEN/PLOT MAINTENANCE

The Group is entirely responsible for the maintenance of the Community Garden. Keep in mind that the space allocated is on public land and must always be actively maintained. The Group is to provide Parks and Recreation with a schedule detailing routine maintenance procedures including keeping the fence line trimmed, spring prepping, and fall winterizing.

Pathways and areas between Garden Beds must be mulched and maintained by the Group. The Parks and Recreation Department will not perform any maintenance within the Community Garden. If the space is deemed unsightly, weedy or unkempt by the Parks and Recreation Department's independent observation, the designated liaison will be given two separate warning notices both via two different communication means, (ie: phone call, e-mail or letter through the U.S. Postal Service each time.) If the problem continues thereafter, the agreement will be revoked and the Group will be responsible for proposing a plan to restore the garden to park land to the satisfaction of the Parks and Recreation Department.

SOIL TESTING and ORGANIC PRACTICES

As a part of the application process, you must obtain a garden soil test report and provide a copy of results to the Parks and Recreation Department. Soil testing is available through the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture. They can be contacted at: (479) 444-1755. (<http://www.uaex.edu/environment-nature/soil/soil-test.aspx>) The first test must be received prior to the addition of any soil amendments or fertilizers. Additional soil tests will be required every three years.

According to Rules Governing the Arkansas Soil Nutrient and Poultry Litter Application and Management Program Title 22 (effective January 1, 2010) a landowner or resident making a nutrient application is required to maintain documentation of each nutrient application for a minimum of five years sufficient to demonstrate compliance. It is strongly recommended that all cultivating practices be organic; to the extent possible only organic fertilizers should be applied.

WATER METER & BILLING

When a site is approved for a Community Garden, the Parks and Recreation Department will install a back-flow preventer and water meter. It will be the responsibility of the Garden Group to have the water turned on and to pay the monthly water bills. **It will be necessary to winterize the water system by the first of November; this will be the responsibility of the Garden Group.** Failure to winterize could result in permanent damage to the equipment; it would then be the responsibility of the Garden Group to replace any damaged equipment.

Please conserve water!!! Although the gardeners are responsible for paying water usage, any water usage inconsistent with normal watering will be determined by meter reads. The water supply is **ONLY** to be used by gardeners caring for their assigned areas. Washing of cars or other personal non-garden related activities is prohibited.

PEST and DISEASE CONTROL with CHEMICALS

Only organic means of disease and pest control may be used. No chemical pest control measures may be used.

COMPOSTING

Composting is encouraged, but only that which is organic and will decompose (e.g. plant material, fruit peels/cores). **Do not use** rodent-attracting foods such as rice, bread, meat, or grease. Inorganic or non-plant materials such as plastic, metal, kitty litter, feces, or any large or thorny branches are not suitable for compost. The compost must be contained in a manner approved by the Parks and Recreation Department such as a tumbler or open cage. Periodically the Parks and Recreation Department can provide grass clippings that can be incorporated into a compost pile. Please notify the Volunteer Coordinator if your Group is interested.

STRUCTURES AND SIZABLE LANDSCAPE MATERIAL

A garden fence is typically necessary and must be constructed to meet the City of Fayetteville Community Garden Fence Specifications. Structures such as garden storage shed and trellises must be approved by the Parks and Recreation Department. Walls and sizable plant material such as trees and shrubs are not allowed, unless approved by the Parks and Recreation Department.

GARDEN BOUNDARIES

The garden boundaries must remain as submitted on the original design plans. Any proposed expansion must be reviewed and approved by the Parks and Recreation Department.

MONITORING THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

The community, especially Group members, shall continually monitor the Community Garden for quality control and good management practices.

MANAGEMENT

Frequent communication with the Parks and Recreation Department regarding management of the Community Garden is required. If problems occur with the operation or patrons of the Community Garden, the Parks and Recreation Department should be informed and involved in the resolution of any problems.

NEW MEMBERS

The Group shall inform new gardeners and Group members of the Community Garden Rules and the Memorandum of Understanding, stressing the importance of ongoing maintenance. The Group must follow a transparent membership process open to all. As a public agency, the Parks and Recreation Department requires inclusiveness; anyone interested in joining the Group is to be fairly considered.

LIABILITY and CODE OF CONDUCT

The Parks and Recreation Department is not responsible for the garden itself; or to anything in or pertaining to the garden. Each participating Garden Group must sign an Annual Lease Agreement. Each participating gardener must sign a Code of Conduct form provided by the Garden Group leader.

FUNDRAISING

The Group may organize fundraising events to finance needs of the Community Garden such as a compost bin, water hoses, plants, etc. Prior approval from the Parks and Recreation Department must be obtained if the meetings are to be held in the park.

CLEAN-UP ACTIVITIES

The Group will be expected to help clean up litter in the park, especially in the area of the garden, and are encouraged to participate in the Adopt-A-Park or Adopt-A-Trail program.

SIGNAGE

Each Community Garden will have a sign indicating the name of the Community Garden Group and other information as

required by the Parks and Recreation Department. Signage will be provided and installed by the Parks and Recreation Department.

VEHICLES

Parking or driving motorized vehicles by any park patron on walkways, restricted-access drives, lawn areas, under trees, or within landscaped areas is strictly forbidden. Park patrons are permitted to use motorized vehicles within a park only on designated roadways, driveways and parking facilities, according to City Codes

PETS

Are not allowed in the garden. Pets are allowed in the park only if on a leash and the owner picks up their pet’s waste according to City Code.

GARDEN TERMINATION

If the Group decides to no longer maintain their space, they must immediately notify the Parks and Recreation Department. The Group will be responsible for proposing a plan to restore the garden to parkland to the satisfaction of the Parks and Recreation Department.

YEAR-END REPORT

An annual report must be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Department summarizing the successes and challenges experienced by the Community Gardeners. If needed, the Department will take appropriate action based on these assessments. The report should also contain current membership details, and a budget plan for the next year upon renewal.

SIGNATURE

The Group Liaison must sign the form on the following page and mail to:

**Fayetteville Parks & Recreation Department
Community Garden Request
113 W. Mountain Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701**

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

I _____ (*please print name*) am the Official Liaison of the Garden Group named _____. Each current member of our Garden Group has read the Memorandum of Understanding terms and agrees to abide by them and upon approval, enters into a commitment to maintain our Community Garden in _____ Park. Additionally each new member of the Garden Group will read the Memorandum of Understanding terms and will agree to abide by them.

Liaison’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

NOTE: If the Official Liaison changes for any reason, please contact the Fayetteville Parks and Recreation Department at parksvolunteer@fayetteville-ar.gov or call (479) 444-3467.