

Arkansas Water Plan Update: Arkansas Department of Agriculture Schedules Additional Public Meetings



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The Arkansas Department of Agriculture (“ADA”) announced additional public meetings as part of its process for updating the Arkansas Water Plan (“AWP”).

The additional scheduled meetings include:

- May 6
Fowler Center 201 Olympic Drive, Jonesboro, AR (Afternoon session topic: Water Infrastructure)
- May 7
Fort Smith Convention Center, 55 S. 7th St., Fort Smith, AR (Afternoon session topic: Drinking Water Supply)
- May 8
Donald W. Reynolds Campus & Community Center, 100 E. University St., Magnolia, AR (Afternoon session topic: Industrial Water Supply and Mineral Extraction)
- May 9
Rice Research and Extension Center, 2900 AR-130, Stuttgart, AR (Afternoon session topic: Agricultural Water Supply)
- May 10
Arkansas Cooperative Extension State Office, 2301 S. University, Little Rock, AR (Afternoon session topic: Environmental Quality and Recreation). A virtual option will be provided on the agency website at agriculture.arkansas.gov.

The Arkansas General Assembly previously delegated responsibility for state water resources planning to the predecessor organization for the ADA Natural Resources Division (“NRD”) – the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission in 1969. Further, the Arkansas General Assembly provided the Soil and Water Conservation Commission the statutory authority to develop the first AWP in 1975.

The AWP has been described as the state’s policy for long-term management. It was updated in 1990 and 2014.

The NRD has described the purpose of the AWP as bringing:

... data, science, and public input together to define water demands, water supplies, and potential solutions to our future needs.

Governor Sanders had previously issued an Executive Order requesting that the ADA NRD undertake:

- A comprehensive analysis/report of the state’s water needs

- Update the AWP

See Executive Order 23-27.

Tasks to be undertaken in updating the AWP include:

- Model and assess water availability (including sufficient changes from the 2014 AWP)
- Evaluate, develop, and recommend water management strategies for all water-use sectors and develop innovative funding mechanisms to support the implementation
- Undertake statewide engagement to identify the most pressing current issues and develop practical solutions in collaboration with all representatives from all water-use sectors

The ADA previously noted in a news release that the update of the AWP and the development of the statewide flood plan is being conducted in collaboration with the United States Corps of Engineers.

A link to the announcement with information regarding participation can be found [here](#).