



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## FY 2018 – FY 2019

This Strategic Plan is a blueprint for ANRC as we continue to work to manage and protect Arkansas's abundant natural resources. The plan reflects ANRC's commitment to build upon past successes while advancing its mission. The Strategic Plan sets forth three primary goals:

Goal 1: Implement the Arkansas Water Plan

Goal 2: Improve the Effectiveness of the Conservation Districts

Goal 3: Improve Accountability and Transparency of ANRC Operations

Objectives and strategies are outlined for each of these goals. Given the broad range and complexity of ANRC's programs, the plan is not an inventory of all objectives ANRC will pursue or all actions that it will undertake. Instead, the plan presents priority objectives reflecting important changes and outcomes that ANRC hopes to achieve, and key strategies that indicate the main approaches ANRC intends to take to meet these objectives.

This strategic plan will inform program- and operational-level planning and resource allocation decisions over the next two years. The plan is a dynamic document. Because of this, there may be changes as ANRC adjusts to new circumstances, while keeping its focus on meeting the needs of the communities and individuals it serves and ensuring effective use of taxpayer dollars.

### **MISSION**

To efficiently and responsibly manage and protect our water and land resources for the sustainability, health, safety and economic benefit of the State of Arkansas.

### **VISION**

To manage the State's natural resources in a sustainable manner by applying appropriate policies and best management practices (BMPs) with limited regulation and preservation of private property rights.

### **CORE VALUES**

Leadership, Efficiency, Accountability, Integrity, Results, and Transparency

## GOALS 1 IMPLEMENT THE ARKANSAS WATER PLAN

### ***ANRC Goal 1 Aligns with Strategy of Arkansas Goals: Safe, Quality of Life, and Healthy***

The Arkansas Water Plan is the State's comprehensive planning process for the conservation, development, and protection of the State's water resources, with a goal of long-term sustainable use for the health, wellbeing, environmental, and economic benefit of the State of Arkansas. The State Water Plan detailed long term issues and recommendations for the management of Arkansas's water resources. The following measurable objectives have been established to implement the Arkansas Water Plan over the next two years.

#### **Measurable Objective 1: Promoting Conjunctive water management and addressing groundwater decline**

Arkansas must reduce groundwater withdrawals and move toward sustainable groundwater use, provide sustainable yield protection for the Sparta aquifer, and ensure water is available to satisfy irrigation uses through conjunctive water management.

##### Strategy 1: Enhance opportunities to reduce groundwater withdrawals and move toward sustainable groundwater use

*ANRC will seek opportunities to purchase, install, and read meters on selected alluvial wells and develop and implement conjunctive water management strategies based on storing surface water during months when excess water is available, for use during the summer irrigation months when excess surface water is not available. ANRC will encourage and increase irrigation water use efficiency through integrated irrigation water management and conservation practices. ANRC will support and work to provide a viable path forward for the completion of the Grand Prairie Area Demonstration Project and the Bayou Meto Water Management Project. ANRC will measure water use and report Groundwater use and aquifer levels through the annual Groundwater Report.*

#### **Measurable Objective 2: Available tax incentives and credits are needed to encourage the implementation and management of integrated irrigation water conservation practices**

##### Strategy 1: Increase Public Knowledge of benefits and availability of state tax credits

*ANRC will increase public knowledge of the Water Resource Conservation and Development Incentive Act through targeted public outreach. In addition ANRC will evaluate the existing tax credit and incentive programs to determine how incentives may be improved to encourage further reduced water use.*

##### Strategy 2: Assess and report the success in saving water resources from conservation practices

*ANRC, in conjunction with conservation districts, academic and extension institutions, stakeholder groups, and nonprofit organizations, will develop and expand efforts to increase water conservation awareness, provide technical assistance, share data and information, and provide incentives. ANRC will develop a method to record water conservation management practices, associated acreages, and water savings during annual water use reporting.*

### **Measurable Objective 3: Promote and support sustainable public water and wastewater through planning and increased funding opportunities**

In many areas of Arkansas, Public water and wastewater infrastructure is failing and in need of repair and replacement. State financial assistance is vital to finance and refinance the development of water; waste disposal; pollution control, abatement, and prevention; drainage, irrigation, flood control, wetlands, and aquatic resources projects to serve the citizens of the State of Arkansas.

#### Strategy 1: Increase awareness of ANRC funding programs

*ANRC will increase public knowledge of the available ANRC funding programs through development of a targeted marketing strategy with a goal of increasing use of ANRC loan programs. This strategy will include increased targeted outreach to potential customers through conferences, trade shows, local meetings and direct marketing. In addition ANRC will evaluate each funding program to determine what barriers and inefficiencies may exist that prevent greater use of these programs.*

#### Strategy 2: Improve viability of distressed water and wastewater systems through sustainability planning and regionalization

*ANRC will convene an advisory team to assist in identifying elements of sustainable infrastructure plans. ANRC will develop and implement an awareness campaign to promote the development of sustainable infrastructure plans for water and wastewater utilities and all other operators of water-related infrastructure, including watershed, levee, drainage, irrigation, and other improvement districts statewide and will track the number of utilities that request assistance in developing sustainable infrastructure plans, the number of plans prepared, and the number of plans being implemented by these utilities. ANRC will promote and assist in the regionalization of distressed water and wastewater systems where needed and appropriate.*

#### Strategy 3: Leverage state and federal resources to increase financial assistance

*ANRC will encourage the continued federal support of the Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Loan Funds by EPA and encourage the continued investment in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Community Program and Water -Wastewater Program to assist small communities and rural water systems in the state. ANRC will seek to increase the state support of the Water Development Fund and Water, Sewer, and Solid Water Fund and will continue the use of the Water-Wastewater Advisory Committee to coordinate financing of water and wastewater projects.*

#### Strategy 4: Promote the financing of new infrastructure projects including flood control projects

*ANRC will perform targeted outreach to Drainage and Flood control districts to help inventory and assess the State's flood control infrastructure and to promote the ANRC's funding programs for use by Levee and Drainage district with a goal of increasing funding over the next two years.*

### **Measurable Objective 4: Improve Drought Planning**

A water shortage has never been declared in Arkansas. Droughts, however, have occurred in the past and will occur in the future. Arkansas does not have coordinated drought plan and should develop a plan.

Strategy 1: Build a coordinated drought contingency response network among state, regional and local agencies

*ANRC will form a Drought Response Team to coordinate and collaboratively disseminate information on emerging drought conditions across the state. This team will include state and federal agencies, including emergency response agencies, conservation districts, the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture and other academic institutions, as well as drinking water and wastewater utilities, agricultural organizations, nonprofit organizations, and private sector professional organizations with stakeholder networks.*

Strategy 2: Support the stream gauging network and the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (CoCo RaHS)

*ANRC will support and continuously review the stream monitoring network in each of the planning regions and assess its adequacy to provide suitable information for decision-making during drought. The stream network review will include collaborative meetings among agencies, utilities, and organizations that fund stream gages to evaluate the potential for leveraging or apportioning costs among entities to increase the information per unit cost among all entities ANRC will promote through greater public outreach the CoCoRaHS Network.*

**Measurable Objective 5: Improving water quality through nonpoint source management**

The authority for protecting, managing, and restoring water quality in streams, rivers, reservoirs, and lakes in Arkansas resides primarily in three agencies—ADEQ, ADH, and ANRC. ANRC has primary authority for nonpoint source (NPS) pollution management, while ADEQ has primary authority over point sources, surface water quality criteria, enforcement, and assessment. The ADH has primary authority over drinking water quality.

Strategy 1: ANRC will collaborate with State and Federal Entities with responsibility for water quality management

*ANRC will collaborate with the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, the Arkansas Department of Health, United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Geological Survey, and other state, regional, and local agencies and organizations that engage in or have water quality management interest. ANRC will participate in the biennial assessment of water quality and provide data for evaluation and comments on the Arkansas's Impaired Waterbodies List, required under the CWA Section 303(d), focusing on NPS pollution, and NPS management practices to restore streams to their designated uses and protecting streams currently attaining those uses. ANRC will participate in the Triennial Review of water quality standards, including the stakeholder workgroup proceedings, to ensure that proposals to change water quality criteria support the goal of protecting the quality of Arkansas's waters and those waters' designated uses.*

Strategy 2: Promote existing and prepare new watershed based plans for watersheds around the State

*ANRC will assist in the implementation of the existing Watershed Management Plans developed for the State's priority watersheds. ANRC will seek the necessary resources to develop additional Watershed Management Plans. ANRC will evaluate and assess the fiscal needs of the NPS management program,*

*including existing federal money, priority watershed needs, both for restoration and protection; and monitoring requirements for documenting water quality changes over time and will continue to leverage funds among programs that reduce NPS pollution.*

Strategy 3: Update the State Nutrient Reduction Strategy

*ANRC will establish a stakeholder committee to review the State's Nutrient Reduction Strategy and will prepare a final revised Nutrient Reduction Strategy for the State of Arkansas.*

Strategy 4: Provide for online Nutrient Management Planner Certification

*ANRC will complete an online Nutrient Management Planner Certification Course and then begin developing an online certified nutrient applicator training course.*

**Measurable Objective 6: Increase public awareness and education of Natural Resource issues**

Strategy 1: Continue to involve public in water plan implementation and needed updates

*Public awareness and education are critical for water planning in Arkansas. ANRC will collaborate with stakeholders to develop and disseminate public information on water use planning. This information should focus on water conservation practices being implemented in Arkansas, advances in water conservation technology, and trends in groundwater and surface water use. The Arkansas Water Plan will be altered, amended, or repealed to the extent necessary for the proper administration of the state's water resources.*

Strategy 2: Prepare annual reports documenting groundwater use and non-point source pollution management program

*The annual non-point pollution management program report will focus on the accomplishments that were made in meeting the milestones of the program. It will detail projects, efforts, and activities initiated, implemented, or completed by partners and stakeholders during the previous year and will contain calculated load reductions of sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus; Best Management Practices (BMPs) that were installed; and how federal dollars were allocated categorically within the NPS Program.*

*The annual groundwater report will provide the State of Arkansas with a comprehensive water-quantity and water-quality document to be utilized as a guide for water resources conservation and protection programs. It will include data, analysis, and recommendations for the groundwater protection and management program, as well as data from the Arkansas Water Well Construction Commission.*

## GOAL 2 IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

### ***ANRC Goal 2 Aligns with Strategy of Arkansas Goals: Safe, Quality of Life, Educate and Healthy***

ANRC is tasked with providing leadership and support for the State's 75 Conservation Districts. The State's Conservation Districts were established to serve the soil and water conservation needs of the citizens of Arkansas.

#### **Measurable Objective 7: Improved district director education**

##### Strategy 1: Provide improved training to district directors at local, regional and State meetings

*ANRC will train Conservation District Directors on statutory and regulatory responsibilities of the District Directors including specific emphasis on appointed directors. In addition this training will include training on the financial responsibilities of the District Directors. ANRC will provide the training at local, area and State meetings*

#### **Measurable Objective 8: Increase Conservation District Involvement in Water Plan Implementation**

##### Strategy 1: Assist districts in completion of a revised district resource assessment and completion of a long range plan of work

*ANRC will work with the 75 conservation districts to get updated resource assessments for each District and in the completion of a long range plan of work for each District.*

##### Strategy 2: Improved water use reporting

*ANRC should improve awareness and education programs, in conjunction with conservation districts, to explain and promote the water use reporting program currently in place and any future improvements. ANRC will update the current database management system to increase reliability and usability. ANRC will prepare and distribute for District use outreach materials and additional items to promote education on and improvement of the water use reporting system.*

##### Strategy 3: Provide tools necessary to support the districts assistance in improving water conservation

*ANRC will provide additional equipment, education, and technical assistance, through additional Irrigation Water Management Technicians, to improve the conservation districts abilities to promote water conservation.*

#### **Measurable Objective 9: Explore Regional based approach to resource challenges**

##### Strategy 1: Evaluate district activities to determine appropriate funding needs and performance

*ANRC will develop metrics and will evaluate district needs and performance. ANRC will work with the Districts to identify methods to address resource challenges currently facing many Conservation Districts.*

## GOAL 3 IMPROVE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF ANRC OPERATIONS

### ***ANRC Goal 3 Aligns with Strategy of Arkansas Goals: Efficient and Responsive***

ANRC continually looks to improve accountability of programs and to provide greater transparency to stakeholders and the general public. In addition ANRC is seeking to improve the public's access to documents and programs.

#### **Measurable Objective 10: Increase availability of state services through innovative technology solutions**

##### Strategy 1: Consolidate and improve GIS functions of ANRC to provide web based public access to data

*ANRC will consolidate all Geographic Information System functions and data into one consolidated system and will make all information available to public through the ANRC website.*

##### Strategy 2: Implement an ANRC wide electronic document management system

*ANRC will develop a document management system for the electronic storage of all ANRC documents. Once developed ANRC will begin storage all new documents electronically and begin the process of converting all historical documents into an electronic format. These documents will be made available for retrieval and review on the ANRC website.*

##### Strategy 3: Consolidation of ANRC records to onsite digital media storage

*ANRC currently utilizes several partner organizations for the storage of digital media. ANRC will consolidate all ANRC records for onsite digital storage.*

##### Strategy 4: Consolidation of all ANRC websites

*ANRC currently maintains several different websites specific to different programs administered by ANRC. ANRC will consolidate all websites onto the main ANRC site.*

#### **Measurable Objective 11: Increase the effectiveness and delivery of services by ANRC staff**

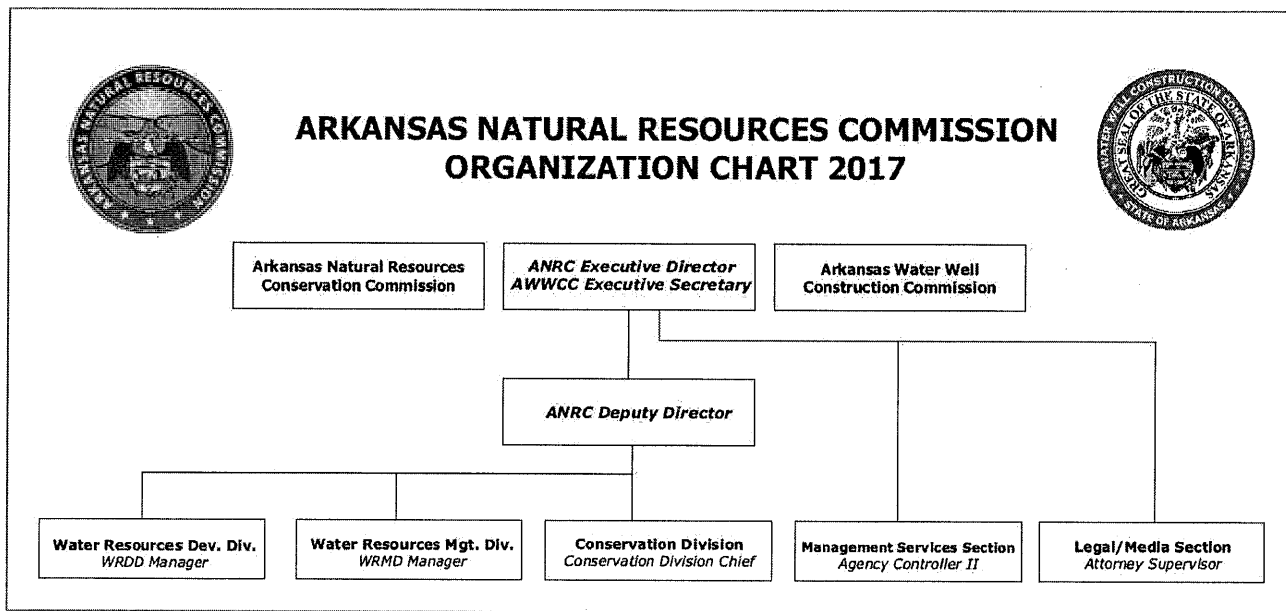
##### Strategy 1: Provide professional development training for all ANRC staff annually

*ANRC will provide professional development training annually for all staff of ANRC. This training will focus on professionalism in the workplace and teamwork. This training is in addition to technical training that will provide for ANRC staff based on needed technical expertise.*

##### Strategy 2: Hire and maintain highly qualified staff

*ANRC will review existing hiring procedures and staffing needs to insure a highly qualified staff is maintained as needed to support the goals of ANRC and will provide for the efficient execution of programs.*

APPENDIX A: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



CONTACT INFORMATION:

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