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Unpaved Roads Program/Proposed Rule: Arkansas Department of Agriculture Schedules January 11th Public Hearing

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The Arkansas Department of Agriculture announced that a public comment hearing will be held on January 11th to receive comments on an Unpaved Roads Program Rule ("Rule").

The hearing will be held at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture but can also be attended via Zoom.

The 90th Arkansas General Assembly in 2015 established the Arkansas Unpaved Roads Grant Program. The Division of Natural Resources in the Arkansas Department of Agriculture administers the program.

The program's purpose has been to upgrade the unpaved county road system to reduce negative environmental impact on priority water resources in the State of Arkansas. As a result, it attempts to facilitate best management practices to reduce the impact of sediment and road runoff to affected water bodies along with drinking water supplies.

An ancillary goal has been to reduce long-term unpaved county road maintenance costs.

Program stakeholders include:

- Arkansas Association of Counties
- Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
- Arkansas Forestry Commission
- Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
- Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
- Arkansas County Judges
- U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Center for Transportation Professionals at the University of Arkansas
- U.S. Department of Interior Special Wildlife Service
- Arkansas Farm Bureau
- The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas

Entities that own and maintain the roads have been the entity eligible to apply for program funding. Funding has focused on projects that provide environmental benefit such as reduction of sediment/concentrated drainage to waterways.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture Hearing Notice states that the proposed rule is intended to provide:

. . . direction for applicants regarding eligibility and application requirements; funding and expenses; and project monitoring and reporting.

Information regarding the hearing and a copy of the proposed rule can be downloaded [here](#).