

Arkansas Water Plan/Where things stand and what's ahead: Tate Wentz - Arkansas Environmental Federation Presentation



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Tate Wentz undertook a presentation at the April 15th Arkansas Environmental Federation Water Seminar titled:

Arkansas Water Plan: Where things stand and what's ahead? ("Presentation").

Tate serves as the Agriculture Division Administrator at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Division ("NRD").

The Arkansas General Assembly has previously delegated responsibility for state water sources planning to the predecessor organization for the Arkansas Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Division – the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission in 1969. Further, the Arkansas General Assembly provided the Soil and Water Conservation Committee statutory authority to develop the first Arkansas Water Plan ("AWP") in 1975.

The AWP has been described as the State's policy for long-term management of water. 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.

Tate's Presentation addressed the current (ongoing) AWP update, noting:

- Governor Sander's Executive Order 23-27 (which recognizes the role of both the NRD and the AWP in the state of Arkansas' water resources/noting that the AWP had not been updated for almost ten years and that there was an urgent need to update the plan in order to meet the changing needs of communities, large and small, across the state).
- Phase I - Scoping Process (Completed 2024)
- Data Collection
- Vision, Goals, and Objectives / Need / Scope of Work
- Gaps/Changes from 2014
- 7 Stakeholder Meetings (March and May 2024)
- Phase II – Updates to the Plan - (3rd Qtr. 2024 - 2026)
- Updates to Water Supply / Demands / Forecasts

- Project and Program Assessments
- Water Management Policy
- Focus Group Meetings (March 2025)
- Surveys
- Stakeholder Engagement Feb – May 2026
- Plan Completion – Aug/Sept 2026

The Presentation then listed the Water Plan components:

- Water Quality
- Infrastructure Assessment
- Water Supply
- Water Demand
- Gap Analysis
- Mitigation Strategies
- Flooding
- Report Writing
- Not inclusive of all studies or actions (e.g., Levee Inventory, NWA Water Reclamation, etc.)

The Executive Summary of the AWP Water Quality Report was discussed, which included information regarding surface water, groundwater, and the Statewide Water Quality Index.

Comparison of 2008 and 2022 Impaired Waters were discussed along with percentages of assessed stream miles impaired. Further, surface water quality trend analyses were reviewed, listing three categories:

- Sufficient
- Marginal
- Insufficient

Additional information addressed included:

- Temperature Trend Analysis
- Surface Water Quality
- Groundwater Quality
- Chloride Exceeding EPA Standard (250 mg/L)
- Water Infrastructure Assessment
- Data Collection and Quality Assurance
- Water & Wastewater Infrastructure Assessment
- General Information
- Water System Condition
- Water System Operational Performance
- Water System Resilience & Sustainability
- Financial Needs Assessment
- Health and Public Safety
- Regulatory Requirements
- Funding Mechanisms
- Recommendations
- Water & Wastewater Infrastructure Needs
- Population Change FROM 2010 Census to 2020 Census
- Draft Non-Ag Water Demands
- Municipal (Utilities, Private Domestic Wells, Self-supplied Commercial)
- Thermoelectric Generation
- Industrial

- Manufacturing
- Mining (oil and gas)
- Emerging Industries (data centers and lithium)
- Thermoelectric 2026 Update
- Industrial Demands 2026 Update
- Manufacturing trends/projections
- Lithium Mining/Lithium Water Use Projections
- Data Centers
- Data center trends
- Data center planned projects
- Baseline parameters
- Projections

Draft issues and recommendations included:

- Water Conservation and Shortages
- Water Quality
- Groundwater Quantity
- Next Steps and Stakeholder Engagement
- The Presentation includes a link to the various presentations, reports, and recordings

A copy of Tate's Presentation can be found [here](#).