

Bayou Meto

Construction, Design, Land Rights Report

Target Delivery: April 2028

We are executing a focused construction and land acquisition plan to deliver water in spring 2028. This report outlines what is happening now into 2027.

Secondary Distribution System

Bayou Meto is building this with NRCS technical and financial help. This will move water from the canal to farms. This includes pumps, pipelines, weirs, offtakes, and bayou improvements.

Pipelines & Offtakes

Chaney East pipeline is finished to Highway 15.

Central West will be finished in 2026.

Central East is designed, land rights are being acquired, and construction can start after harvest once land is acquired.

Small extensions on Redwine and Chicken Jeans roads will have offtakes installed in 2026.

Tar Bottom pipelines (east and west) are in pump site acquisition and may proceed in 2027.

Redwine West, Chicken Jeans West, Honeybee Lane, and State Farm Road all have pump site acquisition challenges, so they are not likely to proceed until 2027.

A subproject to link the bayou to “Main Ditch” south of Tucker is waiting on the last landowner to grant an easement.

Bayou & Channel Improvements

Bayou Meto’s contractor has removed obstructions to allow irrigation water and runoff to move through 35+ miles of Indian Bayou and related channels. Flow has been restored to 14 miles of Indian Bayou that had been bypassed for decades. Work continues on Wabaseka Bayou south of Tucker toward Highway 79.

Corps of Engineers Canal 3.2

The Corps is building the final 3-mile canal reach to connect Arkansas River water to Indian Bayou. This is the critical path. Completion in 2028 triggers first water delivery.

Cole Deading Road Bridge

Cole Deading Road Bridge over Phase 3.2 is Bayou Meto’s responsibility to construct. Robertson Contractors is doing a great job and expects to open the bridge to traffic in June.

Condemnation Lawsuit

One condemnation suit was necessary to acquire canal easements. The court granted access, so construction started. We are narrowing legal issues and pursuing negotiated settlement if possible. Otherwise, we will go to trial.

Canal Extension Across Highway 15

Senator Boozman's office secured financing for the Corps to build a control structure at Highway 15 and to build canal out about as far as Bakers Bayou. Additional earmark requests pending for further extension.

Road Crossings

Two crossings are planned: Highway 15 and Cole Road, both supporting future canal construction. Garver is in preliminary design. Both crossings are expected to proceed smoothly. Following the White River Irrigation District's success with box culverts, we may construct both cheaper than traditional bridges.

Irrigation Operations & Control

Construction progress requires parallel work on how the system will operate. The Corps is coordinating across Memphis and Little Rock Districts to finalize an operational plan covering Arkansas River pumping, flow measurement, gate operation, and water movement control. This will result in an integrated SCADA system. Garver, working for Bayou Meto, will complete the final SCADA design and implement the unified system.

Regulatory & Permitting

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is preparing our permit for non-riparian water transfer.

We are coordinating with state and federal agencies on required mitigation. Recently completed a mitigation site at Marion Berry Pump Station.

Water Sales & Contracts

Years ago, the board drafted water sales contracts and policies. Staff will compile these and assist the board to update them for a workable billing and sales framework. This work must produce a functional system before first water delivery in 2028.