

# Monroe County, Arkansas: Arkansas Natural Resources Commission Proposal to Designate as a Critical Groundwater Area



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The Arkansas Natural Resource Commission (“ANRC”) is considering designation of Monroe County, Arkansas, as a critical groundwater area (“CGWA”).

ANRC states that Monroe County would be added to the Cache Critical Groundwater area.

The State of Arkansas had in place limited statutory authority over water use until three decades or so ago. The authorities were expanded and the ANRC is the agency that administers the key water use authorities. The designation of CGWAs is authorized by one set of its regulations to implement such statutory authority.

A CGWA is an area determined by the ANRC to have significant groundwater depletion or degradation. The ANRC states that a designated area indicates that it may later determine that limiting groundwater withdrawals by users within the designated area may become necessary to maximize the area’s remaining groundwater sources.

The ANRC states that its consideration of Monroe County’s designation is based upon:

- Scientific investigation reporting groundwater problems within the area
- A petition requesting designation that originated from:
  - Monroe County Conservation District with the written support of:
    - Monroe County Farm Bureau
    - University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Services

ANRC states that the designation would not include institution of regulatory authority. It also notes that such a designation would enable persons who implement certain conservation practices within the area to claim a 50% tax credit for service water conversion rather than a 10% tax credit.

An area can only be designated as a CGWA if ANRC determines that the area meets the criteria of its Rule 403.1.

The ANRC will determine whether to make the designation at its next meeting on May 15th.

A link to the Notice, which includes the proposed ANRC staff recommendation, can be found [here](#).