

# Arkansas Water Plan Update: Arkansas Department of Agriculture Announces Upcoming Public Meetings



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The Arkansas Department of Agriculture (“ADA”) announced upcoming public hearings as part of its process for updating the Arkansas Water Plan (“AWP”).

The scheduled meetings include:

- March 26th  
University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension  
2301 S. University Avenue, Little Rock, Arkansas 72204
- March 27th  
Don Tyson Center for Agricultural Sciences  
1371 W. Altheimer Drive, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72204

Additional public meetings are to be scheduled.

The Arkansas General Assembly had previously delegated responsibility for state water resources planning to the predecessor organization for the ADA Natural Resources Division (“NRD”) – the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission in 1969. Further, the Arkansas General Assembly provided the Soil and Water Conservation the statutory authority to develop the first AWP in 1975.

The AWP has been described as the State’s policy for long-term management. It was updated in 1990 and 2014.

The NRD has described the purposed of the AWP as bringing:

...data, science, and public input together to define water demands, water supplies, and potential solutions to our future needs.

Governor Sanders had previously issued an Executive Order (“EO”) requesting that the ADA NRD undertake:

- A comprehensive analysis/report of the State’s water needs.
- Update the AWP.

See Executive Order 23-27.

The Executive Order recognizes the role of both the NRD and the AWP in the state of Arkansas’ water resources. It further noted that the AWP has not been updated for almost ten years and that there is:

...urgent need to update the plan in order to meet the changing needs of communities, large and small – across the State.

Tasks to be undertaken in updating AWP include:

- Model and assess water availability (including significant changes from the 2014 AWP).
- Evaluate, develop, and recommend water management strategies for all water-use sectors and develop innovative funding mechanisms to support the implementation.
- Undertake statewide engagement to identify the most pressing current issues and develop practical solutions in collaboration with all representatives from all water-use sectors.

The ADA notes in its news release that the update of the AWP in the development of a statewide flood plan is being conducted in collaboration with the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

A copy of the news release can be downloaded [here](#).