

Arkansas Water Plan Update: Completion of First Phase Announced



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The Arkansas Governor's Office issued a news release titled:

Arkansas Water Plan Update Moves Forward After First Phase Completion ("AWP").

The news release states that the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have completed the first phase of the AWP update.

The Arkansas General Assembly had previously delegated responsibility for state water sources planning to the predecessor organization for the Arkansas Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Division – The Arkansas Solid Waste Conservation Commission in 1969. Further, the Arkansas General Assembly provided that Soil and Water Conservation Commission the statutory authority to develop the first 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 Natural Resources Division 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.

Governor Sanders previously issued an Executive Order requesting that the Arkansas Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Division undertake:

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

See Executive Order 23-27.

A number of public meetings with stakeholders and the public have been held to discuss the AWP update.

The news release characterizes phase one of the AWP update as a comprehensive review of the existing AWP to determine areas of significant change to be reevaluated or updated.

Completion of phase one is stated to have identified the following six goals for the AWP update:

1. Provide drinking water that supports public health and well-being.
2. Provide water that supports environmental and economic benefits to the state and supports interstate agreements.
3. Use the best available science, data, tools, practices, and technologies to support water resource planning and management for current and future needs.

4. Maintain and improve water supply, wastewater, stormwater, and flood control infrastructure and plan for future infrastructure needs.
5. Maintain, protect, and improve water quality to support designated uses of waterbodies.
6. Reduce the impacts of future flooding events on people, property, infrastructure, industry, agriculture, and the environment.

Phase two of the AWP update scheduled to be initiated before the end of the 2024 calendar year.

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