



Zoom Meeting Apr 28, 2020

Meeting Participants: Joe Fox, Chandler Barton, John Beasley & Ty Dillon, Arkansas Forestry Division; Max Braswell, Arkansas Forestry Association; Darcia Routh & Kyle Johnson, Arkansas Dept. of Health; Debbie Moreland, Arkansas Assoc. of Conservation Districts; Doug Akin, NRCS; Brad Dreyer; Raven Lawson, Central Arkansas Water; James McCarty, Beaver Water District; Rick Monk, US Forest Service; Kitty Weisman, Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water; John Pennington & Kyle Cunningham, Univ. of Arkansas Extension; Ben Gilley, Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative; Breegan Anderson, Arkansas Dept. of Agriculture

Key Action Items and Deadlines

1. Ben Gilley will reach out to Green Bay Packaging, Conway Corporation and other Lake Brewer watershed partners to facilitate a meeting to share information about the source water protection plan update and discuss possible actions including consideration of payment for ecosystem services.
2. Kitty and Doug will provide Chandler (and Ben) with handouts to help educate forest landowners about the forests-water connection
3. Kitty will provide Chandler, Max and Ben a copy of the fundraising handout she is working on for the SE Partnership so they can provide feedback and start to strategize about how to use it as a template for a similar Arkansas Forests & Drinking Water Collaborative handout.
4. Kitty will provide information about Keeping Forests utility and elected official workshops in the southeast focused on providing information and guidance on how to create payment for ecosystem services mechanisms (will be later this year and next year).
5. Kitty will share other messaging tools such as recent videos, infographic, US Forest Service state and private forests website/report, EPA's DWMaps tool and her payment for ecosystem services paper.

6. NRCS Resource Conservation Partnership Program grant opportunity has an upcoming deadline this September. There is also a RCPP May 29th alternative funding arrangement application deadline. Applications may be submitted here: <https://nrcs-sites.secure.force.com/> Information on the request for proposals can be found here: [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
7. Max Braswell asked the team to contact him with any insights related to forestry, drinking water and watershed stewardship that he can share with the state committee working on re-opening the state economy post COVID-19
8. Doug will share a handout about the new \$2 million Joint Chiefs grant

Updates and Progress Since 2019 Forum

- Covid-19 has reduced onsite staffing with many working from home. The format for summer outreach activities are as of yet undetermined.
- Darcia has been working with NRCS to help prioritize watersheds for source water protection funding
- Russ and Kitty met with Conway Corporation after the fall Forum to help them develop a strategy for updating their source water protection plan. They are interested in exploring the possibility of developing a source water protection fund.
- Chandler is the primary contact for the Forestry Division's Forest Action Plan update that is happening now. He is integrating the forests-water connection into their water resources chapter and also following guidance provided by the National Association of State Foresters on how to address source water protection in the plan update. Their deadline to complete the plan has been extended to December 1st, and it will be out for comment this summer.
- Doug Akin said NRCS received \$2 million of Joint Chiefs funding from USDA Forest Service and he has a handout about this project he will share.
- Raven noted that Central Arkansas Water received a Healthy Watersheds Consortium grant and are developing a model of for source water protection through land acquisition.
- Kitty is working with the Keeping Forests initiative that is focused on retaining forests throughout the southeast. She sits on their Ecosystem Services Committee, which is working on planning some Georgia forest landowner workshops to gauge interest in economic incentives, as well as a regional set of workshops for utilities and elected officials to learn about how to create payment for ecosystem services mechanisms for source water protection.

- Ty Dillion with Division of Forestry has been doing monthly water quality updates on Cypress Creek in the Lake Brewer watershed.
- John Pennington with UA Extension Service has been working with Conway Corporation's Natalie Arnold to address water quality concerns in Lake Brewer.

Productive Forests, Protecting Water Presentation

Kyle Cunningham with UA Cooperative Extension presented about three critical watersheds. Location for meetings in each area have been determined but meetings are on hold until the pandemic subsides or protective measures are in place.