

**AR Forestry and Drinking Water Collaborative
Steering Committee Meeting
August 23, 2018
Ozark National Forest Headquarters, Russellville, AR**

Minutes

Attendees

Brad Hufhines, Clell Ford, Brad Dreyer, Rick Monk, Edward Swaim, Kyle Cunningham, Randy Easley, Scott Meek, George Rheinhardt, David Quattlebaum, Hal Leichty, Jim Jolley, Ben Gilley, Darcia Routh, Bob Morgan, Joe Fox, Max Braswell, Seth Stephenson, Raven Lawson, Jami Nettles

Vision: Healthy Managed Forests and Clean Water

Mission: The mission of the Forest and Drinking Water Steering Committee is to facilitate conservation and better management of forested watersheds within Arkansas to protect sources of public water supply through improved understanding and communication between the forest and water sectors.

Meeting called to order 10:00 AM

Approval of Agenda:

Approved as submitted

Approval of Minutes

Approved as submitted

Reports of Significant Activities

All

Bob Morgan asked if the committee would approve settling on our name as the Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative. All agreed that it would be ok.

Members introduced themselves and provided a quick overview of new activities that they might be undertaking. Significant activities:

Ben Gilley: ADH is completing GIS models of water systems and updating the source water assessment reports. Utilities will be getting their new reports soon.

Jim Jolley: AFC Forest Legacy program is working to protect 1,000 acres of forest in the recharge zone for the 'hot springs' in Hot Springs National Park.

Joe Fox: The AFC is working to remove the voluntary BMPs from State rules. This change will not affect the effectiveness of the BMPs but it will provide the commission with more flexibility in making minor changes and to keep it up to date.

Randy Easley has a new website where data and plans for their Lake Maumelle management activities will be available.

Edward Swaim reminded the group that ANRC has wetland and riparian zone tax credits available and the program is under used.

Rick Monk: The ONF is implementing a project to remove a low water bridge on the Mulberry near the town of Oark plus implementing stream stabilization in the same area.

Clell Ford: Beaver Watershed Alliance is starting to implement a Healthy Watersheds Consortium project targeted at utilizing the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act State Revolving Funds to fund source water protection projects.

Brad Hufhines: Beaver Water District just completed another successful Secchi Day on Beaver Lake.

Max Braswell: Arkansas Forestry Association is currently working with their emerging leaders' group and Central Arkansas Water to help them understand the relationship between forestry and drinking water.

Arkansas Drought Preparedness Program

Edward Swaim, ANRC

Edward Swaim provided a handout and lead a discussion of the Arkansas Drought Emergency Program that is now being developed by a cooperative group of state agencies. Key components of the program are provided in the handout. Agencies working with ANRC are the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, Arkansas Department of Health, US Weather Service and United States Geological Survey.

The discussion lead to a potential funding program that is now available from the US Army Corps of Engineers in Little Rock (Planning Assistance to States). Jaysson Funkhauser is the program contact. They can provide a cooperative agreement with local agencies (utilities?) that assesses the condition of local watersheds. They are currently doing a pilot in the Poteau River watershed. Local coopertors provide 50% match but all of it may be in-kind services.

Action Item: Bob will get in contact with Jaysson and get more details.

NRCS Technical Assistance Grant

Bob Morgan, Doug Akin

Doug was not able to attend the meeting so Bob provided information of a grant that AFC has received from the NRCS regarding prioritizing source water watersheds for forestry technical assistance. The project has three parts. 1) A GIS exercise to provide information for prioritization, 2) education and outreach in the priority watersheds to be conducted by the U of A Cooperative Extension Service, and 3) technical assistance to land owners in the priority watersheds provided by the AFC.

The project is somewhat on hold because of other priorities at AFC. However, we need to be continuing with the GIS exercise and prioritizing of watersheds as soon as possible. The Forests and Drinking Water Steering Committee is requested to act as the project steering committee.

Action Item: Please provide ideas as to what layers should be used in GIS for identification and classification

Action Item: Bob will share a list of members and emails to the group

Hot Springs Demonstration Project (tentative)

Bob Morgan

Hal gave an overview of our proposed demonstration of prescribed burn in Hot Springs, Arkansas. The demonstration will be conducted by AFC, Hot Springs Utilities, and UA Monticello School of Agriculture and Forestry. Tasks will include the burn itself, public outreach and a survey of utility managers in forested watersheds.

Website and Facebook

Bob Morgan

Bob presented the new Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative website, <https://arforestsandwater.com>. Committee members were requested to submit comments, events and blog posts for the website. We also discussed the facebook page. Members were requested to make posts.

Action Item: All, please provide website feedback to Bob as you have a chance to go through the new site.

Action Item: Please provide blog posts to Bob for use on the website

Update of Strategic Plan

Bob Morgan

The strategic plan needs to be updated for 2019 – 2020.

Action Item: Bob will contact individuals to be an adhoc committee to update the plan.

Memorandum of Understanding

Bob Morgan

There was a short discussion of the value of our group developing a memorandum of understanding regarding support for the Collaborative.

Action Item: Bob will contact individuals to be an adhoc committee to prepare a strawman for the committee to review.

Action Item: Adhoc committee should look at the Feral Hog Eradication Task Force MOU as an example for use in the Forests and Drinking Water MOU.

Forests and Drinking Water Forum, 2019?

All

The committee agreed that we should plan on a third forum during the fall of 2019.

Action Item: Bob will contact individuals to form a forum planning committee.

Upcoming Events

January 22, 2019 is Forestry Day at the Capitol, Max invited displays.

Next Meeting:

The next steering committee meeting is to be in January. Bob will send a Doodle Poll around Thanksgiving.

Meeting adjourned at 12:14

Minutes submitted by Bob Morgan and Brad Hufhines, 9/3/18