

Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative

Scope: State

Location: Arkansas

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SCOPE:

- There are 686 utilities serving 2,895,000 Arkansans with drinking water.
- Sixty-one percent (61%) of all Arkansans drink water that originates in forested watersheds. Maintaining healthy forests is the best protection that we can provide for our water.
- The Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative members will work together to facilitate and implement conservation activities to improve management of forested watersheds within Arkansas to protect sources of public water supply.

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- In May of 2015, 45 stakeholders from Arkansas's forestry and drinking water sectors convened on Petit Jean Mountain at the first-ever Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Forum. This forum was held to explore the common interests of the two sectors, to learn about the issues faced by each of the sectors, to build networks of professionals, and to initiate communication and cooperation.
- The outcome was a commitment to continued dialogue and future collaboration. In 2016, the Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Steering Committee was formed to steer the improvement of communication and cooperation between the sectors and to initiate collaborative projects.

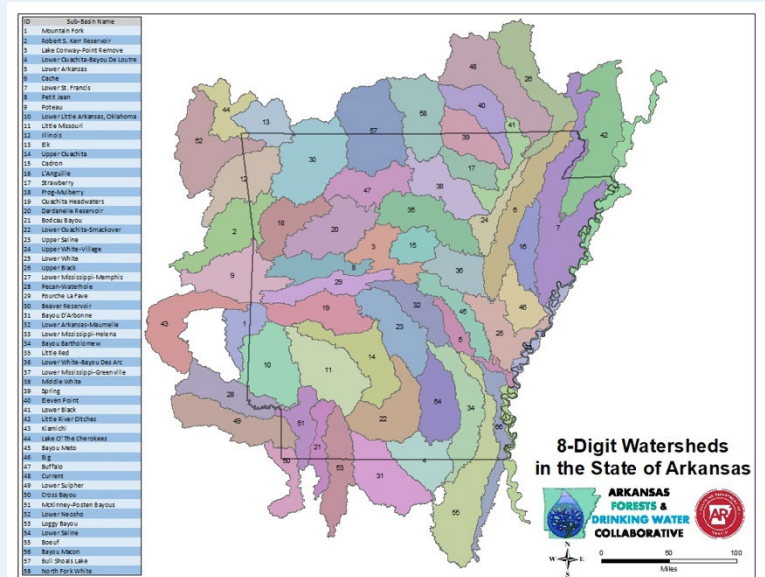
STRUCTURE/FUNDING:

- The Collaborative is a component of the [Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water](#), a cooperative effort of the Southeast Region of the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities. These organizations are committed to providing safe, reliable drinking water through partnerships, collaboration, funding, and action.
- Current funding for the Arkansas Collaborative is through a Landscape Scale Restoration Grant in the amount of \$123,930 from the U.S. Forest Service. This grant is part of a five-state effort including Arkansas, Texas, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina to provide landowner assistance in forest management, stewardship and forest management planning, and water quality/wildlife enhancement.

MEMBERS:

Members of the AFDWC are listed in full @ <https://www.arforestsandwater.com/partners>.

The Steering Committee consists of representatives from water utilities, forestry landowners, associations and



companies, conservation organizations, as well as state and federal agencies.

- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Arkansas Department of Health
- Arkansas Department of Agriculture:
 - Forestry Division
 - Natural Resources Division
 - Cooperative Extension Service
- Arkansas Timber Producers Association
- Arkansas Forestry Association
- Molpus Properties
- Central Arkansas Water
- The Nature Conservancy
- Arkansas Water Resources Center
- University of Arkansas, Monticello
- Beaver Water District
- Green Bay Packaging
- Ozark St. Francis National Forest
- Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
- Weyerhaeuser
- Watershed Conservation and Recreation Service
- Beaver Watershed Alliance
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment, Division of Environmental Quality
- Ozarks Water Watch

WATER CONCERNS:

- Threats to water quality and drinking water include:
 - high amounts of sediment from sources like eroding unpaved roads and streambank erosion from removal of floodplain/streamside vegetation and forested landscapes.
 - wildfire and/or insect and disease outbreaks as a result of unmanaged forest property/high tree density.
 - high water demand during drought conditions as urbanization increases.
 - contaminants, both chemical and microbial, making treatment difficult and expensive. These come from a variety of different sources including aging water distribution infrastructure and runoff and erosion across the landscape picking up these contaminants.

STRATEGIES:

- Improve communication between the forest and water sectors,
- Increase cooperation between the forest and water sectors
- Facilitate development of local projects/programs

RESULTS:

- Produced vision, mission, and statement of purpose that reflects diverse [membership](#).
- Established operating structure, including a steering committee, to direct group objectives and goals.
- Created an autonomous website for the Collaborative and held 3 biannual forums.
- [Watershed Prioritization project and mapping](#) complete for priority areas intersecting drinking water needs and forested areas.
- [The West Fork White River RCPP project](#).
- [Greers Ferry Lake Watershed RCPP project](#).

Information current as of November 2021. Please check with the Collaborative contacts (or website if available) for the most up to date information. To find other source water collaboratives across the U.S. or to add yours to the list, visit the Source Water Collaborative's [How To Collaborate Toolkit](#)