



## Water Plan Public Comments Due Oct. 24th

There is still time to submit comments regarding the Arkansas Water Plan Draft Executive Summary. The Arkansas Natural Resources Commission (ANRC) has set Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> as the deadline. Comments can be emailed to [arkansaswater@cdmsmith.com](mailto:arkansaswater@cdmsmith.com) or mailed to the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, Attention Water Plan, 101 East Capitol Ave., Suite 350, Little Rock, AR 72201. If you have questions, call ANRC at (501) 682-1611. The Draft Executive Summary can be found on the website [www.arwaterplan.arkansas.gov](http://www.arwaterplan.arkansas.gov). A Final Executive Summary will be prepared and submitted to the ANRC commissioners in November. The commissioners will then consider rule-making for implementing the recommendations in the Plan. This process may take several months.

Seven Water Plan Update public meetings were conducted in September by the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission. These meetings were held in Stuttgart, Jonesboro, Russellville, Smackover, Texarkana, AR, Little Rock, and Fayetteville. The purposes of the meetings were to give an overview of the Update, answer questions, and receive comments regarding the Arkansas Water Plan Draft Executive Summary. More than 130 Arkansans attended.

*As a result of the two-plus years of work on the Water Plan Update, five critical initiatives that are essential to securing Arkansas's water future have been identified:*

**1. Groundwater Declines:** Critical groundwater areas in eastern Arkansas continue to experience declining groundwater levels and a groundwater gap as large as 7 million acre-feet per year is projected for 2050. Adopting on-farm application efficiency and other conservation measures can reduce the magnitude of this projected groundwater gap. It will be necessary to develop infrastructure-based solutions to convert irrigated acres currently supplied by groundwater to surface water.

**2. Insufficient Infrastructure:** Arkansas needs to construct and maintain water and sewer systems that furnish safe, clean, and reliable water supplies for its citizens and communities. Our future viability and growth depend on these basic services. Resolution of this problem will require the combined commitment and actions of citizens and elected officials who must identify creative financing solutions and take advantage of regional infrastructure opportunities.

**3. Proactive Management:** We have initiated proactive, systematic, and measured evaluation of existing water laws and procedures involving relevant agencies and appropriate stakeholders. The steps taken in this direction will help to maintain the stable and orderly use of water.

**4. Regional Planning:** Integral to the AWP was the recognition of regional issues and priorities identified by local citizens, water users, and stakeholders. Statewide water planning will continue to provide the direction for water management. Engaging local citizens who are in touch with their unique needs, challenges, and potential solutions is critical.

**5. Reliable Data:** Those responsible for managing and protecting our water must have quality information to justify extremely consequential and potentially costly decisions. Sound planning and decision-making regarding Arkansas's water resources requires data, information, and analysis of water uses and water availability. Acquiring this data means the expansion of the network of stream gages, monitoring wells, water quality monitoring sites, and improved information on water use as well as the tools necessary to quantify, manage, and allocate surface and groundwater resources.

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**Comments are welcome!**

Email comments or questions to: [arkansaswater@cdmsmith.com](mailto:arkansaswater@cdmsmith.com)

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