

**Arkansas Water Plan Update Kickoff Meeting  
Jonesboro, AR  
November 15, 2012**

**Brief Summary for Planning Purposes  
November 20, 2012**

Please note that the summary provided here is a general overview and is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of the meeting. This document is intended to inform the Planning Team about themes of discussion and meeting format to better serve the remaining kickoff meetings. A full summary reflecting the discussion of all four locations, participant information, meeting survey results and future meeting and outreach recommendations will follow the completion of all four meetings.

**Participants**

There were 40 participants that signed in at the meeting not including the Planning Team. As anticipated, there was a significant agricultural presence at this meeting. There were no municipalities or public water supply utilities in attendance. Only one not-for-profit participated that evening. Below are the statistics of attendees.

<b>Industry (8%)</b>	<b>Gov't/University (43%)</b>	<b>Agriculture (33%)</b>	<b>Non Profits (&lt;1%)</b>	<b>Citizens/Students (15%)</b>
Nucor-Yamato Steel	ASU (4)	WGIM	MAREH	No affiliation (4)
FutureFuels Chemical Co. (2)	UofA (2)	Quant Ag		Student (2)
	USDA/NRCS (6)	Farmers (2)		
	USGS	Eagle Seed (2)		
	AGFC (3)	Farm Bureau (3)		
	Greene Co Cons District	Farmers Nat'l		
		Glaub Farm Mgt		
		Paul Teague		
		TEEOAN LLC		

Nearly 75% of those attending were related to the agricultural sector. Several attended representing the steel and chemical industries.

**Major Discussion Themes**

The atmosphere of the meeting was characterized as “guarded.” Generally speaking farmers were familiar with the critical water resource issues and collectively well versed in water law and policy. The Farm Bureau and USDA/NRCS were well represented at the meeting.

As expected there were a lot of questions around the future of agriculture and how agricultural use would be modeled. There was some concern expressed about the quality of data supporting the modeling. It was asked how future ag uses would be quantified given most farmers are uncertain of the future and the respective crops they will be growing. Likewise, how will different irrigation practices and shorter crop cycles be taken into account. It was also noted that cost of irrigating from surface water reservoirs versus

groundwater deep wells would need to be reconciled in future alternatives analysis. A participant stated that they didn't believe there is a supply problem but an issue of how water is managed.

There was quite a bit of discussion centered on demands noting the importance of looking at demands first to see if there is adequate supply to meet those demands and what limitations on future demands there may be. It was noted that human use should be prioritized before agricultural uses. It was suggested that price be looked at in projecting future demands noting that we will use lots of water if it is cheap.

A few other topics are important to note. It was asked how ADEQ and EPA were being coordinated with for data and input into the process. There was concern expressed about interstate transfers of water particularly in times of shortage. It was asked if current water rights would continue to be protected?

### **Meeting Format and Venue**

The majority found the Convocation Center to be a good location. Overall, of the 14 survey respondents, most liked the venue. Apparently, there was also a basketball game that evening and some confusion on where to find the meeting. It was noted by several that the May/June 2013 meeting needed to have a location in northeast Arkansas because Stuttgart would be too far away.

The group was split, half finding the meeting Extremely Useful and the other Somewhat Useful. Similarly, the respondents were split (Extremely or Somewhat Useful) on how much the meeting improved their understanding of the Water Plan.

Of the nine, responding to the **"Best portion of the meeting"**, six found the question and answer (Q&A) portion to be most useful whereas three found the overview to be where they found most value. Below are a few comments and suggestions offered by participants and ANRC staff.

Other items included:

- "Be careful with examples that turn the audience off."
- A few were seeking a bit more detail/background in the areas of groundwater, surface water, water quality and water infrastructure.
- A note was made about avoiding statements that would suggest "us" versus "them."
- CDM Smith utilized a bit of "story telling" to lighten the atmosphere. ANRC preference would be to stick to the facts.

It was overall a good meeting, turnout and participation by the ag community. Three quarters of the audience stayed an additional 30 minutes after the meeting to visit with the Planning Team.