



Arkansas Natural Resources Commission



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Summary of McCrory Public Meeting held on December 8th, 2015, regarding the Lower Cache River Watershed-based Management Plan Project

The Arkansas Natural Resources Commission (ANRC) recently sponsored a public informational meeting about the watershed-based management plan project and process in the Lower Cache River watershed (meaning the Cache River and Bayou DeView watersheds downstream of Highways 18/214). The meeting was in McCrory on December 8, and there were 14 attendees, including farmers, landowners, political representatives, and employees from state and federal agencies. The meeting was facilitated by FTN Associates, Ltd. (FTN) an engineering and environmental consulting firm headquartered in Little Rock. FTN is the consulting firm that is developing the draft watershed-based management plan for the ANRC.

Based on the information gathered at the McCrory meeting the draft plan will be revised. Another meeting will be held in February to discuss the final draft plan.

Information on watershed water quality issues, the method used to rank 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC12) subwatersheds in terms of pollutant load, the potential load reduction of recommended management practices, and potential cost of implementing the practices needed to achieve the target load reduction was discussed. Attendees were asked to provide feedback and input on the highly recommended HUC12 subwatersheds, the recommended management practices, and other concerns or activities in the watershed.

The following items were discussed during the feedback period:

- A representative of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) noted that to know if it is really possible to achieve the target sediment reductions in the recommended HUC12 subwatersheds, it is necessary to know the number of acres in production, and how much of the watershed is already under management practices. K. Thornton of FTN responded that the watershed-based plan addresses a rather coarse scale, and we don't have the detailed information suggested.
- Jason Milks noted that The Nature Conservancy can fund management practices.
- The question was asked about monitoring to determine if management practices are having an effect. One stakeholder noted that the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality has permanent water quality monitoring sites in the watershed that record and transmit daily data. [We did not identify any permanent continuous water quality monitoring stations in the lower Cache River watershed, although there are continuous flow monitoring stations.]
- A stakeholder stated that over 20,000 acres of land in the lower Cache River watershed has been reforested since 2010. Another individual said that a couple landowners in the Cache Bayou watershed have been reforesting a lot of land.
- It was noted that we need to make sure that activities in the upper and lower Cache River watersheds complement each other. This is possible because the watershed-based plan addresses the entire Cache River watershed.
- One stakeholder said that it is important to keep the water flowing down the Cache. A USFWS

representative explained that meanders move sediment more effectively than ditches, and erode less than ditches. He also stated that vegetation along ditch banks helps to stabilize the ditches and reduces erosion.

The Next Phase of Watershed Planning

A meeting is planned for February to go over the final draft plan watershed-based management plan with stakeholders. Participants were encouraged to contact Allen Brown of the ANRC or Terry Horton of FTN with any further questions or information.

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