



Steering Committee Meeting Notes

November 16, 2020

Participating:

Doug Akin, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Breegan Anderson, Arkansas Dept. of Agriculture
Chandler Barton, Arkansas Division of Forestry
Ryan Benefield, Arkansas Dept. of Agriculture
Max Braswell, Arkansas Forestry Association
Randy Easley, Central Arkansas Water
Jeff Fore, The Nature Conservancy
Joe Fox, Arkansas Division of Forestry
Jennifer Lambert Johnson, Arkansas Forestry Association
Raven Lawson, Central Arkansas Water
Martha Manley, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
James McCarty, Beaver Water District
Scott Meek, Green Bay Packaging
Rick Monk, US Forest Service, Ozark-St. Francis National Forest
Debbie Moreland, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
Darcia Routh, Arkansas Dept. of Health, Source Water Protection Program
Becky Roark, Beaver Watershed Alliance
Kitty Weisman, Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water

Meeting Follow-Up Actions

- Kitty will let the Arkansas Collaborative know about upcoming ecosystem services financing webinars to be held by the Keeping Forests Initiative and the National Source Water Collaborative
- Doug will send NRCS EQIP funding announcement to Kitty, and Kitty will share this with the Collaborative
- Doug will send Joint Chiefs projects map to Kitty and Kitty will add to the Arkansas Collaborative website and share with the Steering Committee
- Chandler will reach out to Becky about how the new Northern Area Forest Resource Specialist can coordinate with Beaver Watershed
- Joe invited Becky to join the NRCS Forestry Working Group
- Kitty will send out notes from this meeting along with a Doodle Poll to schedule our next meeting

Updates & Announcements

- [Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative](#) website has meeting notes, strategic plan, Steering Committee member list, and other important information
- [Southeastern Partnership for Forest and Water](#) website has new infographic, story map, fact sheet, and forests-water videos
- Sebastian County Conservation District just hired a new forestry technician with National Association of Conservation District (NACD) funding. The position will serve the region near the Joint Chiefs project area.
- Ash Flat also hired a forestry technician
- Arkansas Forestry Division has hired a couple of positions to help write up forest management plans for the NRCS EQIP program, including a Northern Area Forest Resource Specialist – Chandler will reach out to Becky about how this person can assist in the Beaver Watershed
- There are two Joint Chiefs projects in Arkansas – one in Western Arkansas (\$1.5 million) and a newer project in Buffalo River watershed (\$2 million). The maps will be added to the Arkansas Collaborative website soon.
- Central Arkansas Water just completed certification for a new [Green Bond](#) for \$30.6 million to fund green and grey infrastructure projects supporting the city's drinking water supply, including forest land stewardship and conservation projects. They are hoping to receive US Forest Service Forest Legacy Program funding, and possibly State Revolving Loan funding to match the bond.

Coordinator Hiring Process Discussion

- Arkansas Division of Forestry received funding from US Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Grant to support a state Coordinator position – formerly held by Bob Morgan (and then for a short time, Ben Gilley)
- Kitty Weisman has been serving as the interim Coordinator since May
- There is about \$28,500 left through 2022 to support the Coordinator position
- We will likely get another LSR grant for 2022 through 2025 but will probably need to do some additional fundraising to have a sufficient amount to keep a part-time Coordinator through 2022
- We will set up a hiring subcommittee to review applicants for the Coordinator position – hiring subcommittee will include: Chandler, Kitty, Raven, Doug and Darcia.
- Kitty will prepare a job announcement including a link to the Coordinator scope of work
- Kitty will send the job announcement flyer later this week to the Steering Committee, the Collaborative and post on the Arkansas Collaborative and Southeastern Partnership websites
- Kitty will also reach out to those she knows are interested in the position including: Joy Wassen (formerly with TNC), Angela Danovi, Clell Ford, and Erin Scott (Ozarks Water Watch)
- The Hiring Subcommittee will meet sometime in December to review applications and select a new Coordinator (to hopefully start sometime in January)

Brainstorming Ideas for Future Meeting Topics/Presentations

- Forestry Industry Updates on How The Forestry Sector is Working on Sustainability – including Scott Meek/Green Bay and Weyerhaeuser/Jami Nettles (Late January/Early February 2021)
- Central Arkansas Water Green Bond and Watershed Projects Update (Raven Lawson); Conway Corporation – Brewer Lake source water protection plan and watershed fund update (Natalie Arnold); Hot Springs Headwaters Acquisition Project Update (April 2021)
- Ozark – St. Francis National Forest *Forest-wide Vegetation Management Project* Update; NRCS RCPP & EQIP (including Timber Stand Improvement) assistance programs and deadlines (Chandler Barton, Doug Akin, and others – July 2021)
- Brainstorm Fundraising for the Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative (October 2021)