

# **Minutes of the ARKANSAS NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**June 12, 2014**

A special meeting of the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission was held Thursday, June 12, 2014, at 1:00 p.m., at the office of the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, 101 East Capitol, Suite 350, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Commissioners present were Vice-Chairman David Feilke; Fred Fowlkes; Mike Carter; Don Richardson; Sloan Hampton; Neal Anderson, and Ann Cash. Chairman Corbet Lamkin and Jerry Hunton participated via telephone.

Staff members participating included: Randy Young, Executive Director; Jon Sweeney, Deputy Director/Chief Engineer; Adrian Baber, Chief, Conservation Division; Crystal Phelps, General Counsel; Edward Swaim, Chief, Water Resources Management Division; Mark Bennett, Chief, Water Development Division; Deanna Ray, Associate General Counsel; Todd Fugitt, Senior Geologist; Lori Scott-Nakai, Public Information Specialist; Cynthia Bearden, Agency Controller; Carla Hill, Administrative Assistant; Dave Fenter, Grants Manager; Shawn Jackson; Program Coordinator; and Pat Smith, Executive Assistant.

Chairman Lamkin called the meeting of the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission to order and requested Vice-Chairman Feilke to conduct the remainder of the meeting.

A list of guests is attached to the minutes.

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Review of Preliminary Draft Executive Summary of the Arkansas Water Plan –** Mr. Edward Swaim advised that the Preliminary Draft Executive Summary would be presented to the Commission for review, specifically the Issues and Recommendations contained within the draft. Plans are to have the draft ready for the general public's review by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Swaim introduced Ms. Sue Morea, from CDM Smith's Denver office, Dr. Kent Thornton, with FTN, who has been directing the Issues and Recommendations portion of the Executive Summary. He also introduced Mr. Andrew Pownall, Engineer, with CDM, and Mr. Terry Horton, with FTN.

Ms. Morea briefly highlighted the contents of the 70-page Preliminary Draft Executive Summary, which is designed to be comprehensible to the general public. She said the Arkansas Water Plan would probably be a 200-page document and will mirror the Executive Summary. Approximately 1,200 pages of technical reports on state-wide demand projections, projections from various sectors, and ground and surface water supplies will be included in the final plan.

An abbreviated Executive Summary in the form of an 8-page brochure will also be made available that can be used for both public comment meetings and quick reference information for the legislature.

Ms. Morea stated that once the Commission's comments are received today, those comments will be incorporated into a Public Review Draft. That draft will be the subject of public meetings during the summer and fall to obtain comments. Those comments will be incorporated before issuing a final draft for the Commission to review on November 28th.

Dr. Kent Thornton stated that priority issues were addressed during the previous Issues and Recommendations subcommittee meetings over the state. The Water Plan Planning Team

met and suggested additional issues and recommendations. Today he focused on the specific language of nine recommendations which he said would be of particular interest to persons reading this Plan. The issues are:

- Conjunctive Water Management and Groundwater Decline
- Drought Contingency Response
- Excess Water for Non-Riparian Withdrawal and Use
- Funding Water Resources Development Projects
- Improving Water Quality Through Non-point Source Management
- Public Awareness, Outreach and Education
- Public Water and Wastewater Infrastructure
- Reallocation of Water Storage in Federal Reservoirs
- Tax Incentives and Credits for Integrated Irrigation Water Conservation
- Supporting Issue & Recommendation: Water Use Reporting

*Each Issue had an exhaustive review of the recommendations.*

*The commissioners had many comments and suggestions which will be incorporated into the draft.*

Mr. Todd Fugitt commented on the Water Use Reporting Program. He believed that the current reporting system is scientifically based.

Mr. Carter stated that questions had arisen because most wells and relifts are not metered. Mr. Fugitt stated that he was not recommending metering because there are good data and models available.

Mr. Feilke agreed that the program was probably one of the best in the nation, but the question has always been, 'do we need more transparency' or 'can we do it better'? This would be the window of opportunity to make it better through this Water Plan.

Mr. Young advised that nothing is preventing the farmers from using meters throughout east Arkansas to obtain actual metered water use data.

Mr. Hampton stated that the difference in numbers between metering and the current method would probably be minute. There are enough farmers metering now to do a pilot program and ANRC staff could document those numbers.

Mr. Anderson asked if there was anything in the Executive Summary concerning support and funding of irrigation projects that will actually conserve the ground water.

Mr. Young advised there was.

Dr. Thornton stated that he would modify the recommendations based upon the comments received today. The deadline for receiving additional comments is June 23, 2014. Mr. Young asked that he and Mr. Swaim be the clearinghouse for those comments. Once received, they will be forwarded to Dr. Thornton.

Dr. Thornton stated that the water use reporting fee modifications using certain criteria for increasing the fee were tabled after considerable discussion at the previous meetings. Mr. Feilke asked for a consensus of the Commission. Mr. Young suggested tabling the issue until comments were received from the Commissioners.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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J. Randy Young, P.E.  
Executive Director and Secretary

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Date