



## Arkansas Conservation District Directors Training Manual

# Summary: Arkansas Natural Resources Commission

### ANRC Responsibility

The Commission establishes policy and makes funding and regulatory decisions relative to soil conservation, water rights, dam safety, floodplain management and water resource planning and development.

### History

The Arkansas Natural Resources Commission (ANRC), as it presently exists, was created in 1963 by Act No. 14 of the General Assembly, replacing the Arkansas Water Conservation Commission and the Water Compact Commission and also transferring soil conservation and flood control functions of the Arkansas Geological and Conservation Commission to the ANRC.

The organization of state agencies involved with soil and water conservation has changed but the relationship between conservation districts and the state soil and water conservation committee (Commission) has existed since Act No. 197 enacted in 1937.

### Commission's Purpose

The original purpose of a soil and water conservation committee (Commission) as it relates to conservation districts has never changed:

- Guide state policy in soil and water conservation.
- Assist conservation districts in exercising their powers and carrying out their programs.
- Make director appointments and assist in conducting district elections.
- Coordinate district programs by advice and consultation.

- Secure assistance for districts from federal and state agencies.
- Prepare budget requests for state appropriations to support district programs.
- Disburse funds to districts and review district expenditures.
- Keep districts informed and facilitate the exchange of information and experiences among districts.
- Disseminate statewide information on programs and activities of districts.

### Commission Members

- The Commission's affairs are overseen by nine commissioners who are appointed by the governor to seven-year terms. Terms of office are staggered so that at least one term expires each year.
- Each of Arkansas' four Congressional Districts are represented by two commissioners with the ninth commissioner holding an at-large position.
- Members of the Commission are, like district directors, public officials responsible for administering soil and water conservation programs and policies. In fact, some commissioners are also district directors. Therefore, district directors should feel free to take advantage of the long-standing productive relationship between conservation districts, the Commission members and its staff for communicating directly with their nearby commissioners about their district's particular needs, desires or problems.

### ANRC Staff

- The Commission employs an office staff which is managed by an executive director.

- The executive director reports to the Governor in matters concerning budget, personnel and related management.
- The executive director reports to the Commission in matters related to policy and financial assistance commitments.
- The Commission staff is divided into five sections: Administration, Soil and Water Conservation, Water Resource Management, Dam Safety/ Flood-plain Management, and Water Resource Development.
- Field representatives are assigned to work directly with districts in carrying out effective programs.

### **State Committee and Commission Responsibilities**

Due to its technical expertise in soil and water resources matters, the Commission's executive director or his designee has been designated by law or by executive order to serve on various commissions and committees or to act as advisors to these commissions and committees.

**Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission.** (Act 472, 1949, as amended). The executive director of the ANRC serves as a member of this commission (designated by ANRC), which regulates and manages efforts to correct and prevent pollution of air and water.

**Arkansas Water Well Construction Commission..** (Act 641, 1969) The executive director of the ANRC is a member of this commission, whose purpose is regulation of and licensing of water well drilling contractors and pump installers to insure compliance with state laws on water well construction.

**Department of Finance and Administration Natural Resources Committee.** (Act 524, 1975) The executive director of the ANRC is designated (by Act 524) to serve on this committee which issues leases or permits for removal of sand and gravel, minerals or timber from state owned land.

**Arkansas Natural and Scenic Rivers Commission.** (Act 257, 1979) The executive director of the ANRC is designated (by Act 257) to the advisory council of this commission, which identifies high water-quality streams and develops and executes protective measures.

**Red River Commission.** (Act 264, 1973) This commission was created to develop improvement districts adjacent to the Red River to cooperate with federal authorities in the construction of the Red River Navigation System. The ANRC provides technical advice, funding and other support as necessary.

**Governor's Technical Review Committee on Natural Resources.** This committee is a group of fourteen state agencies whose purpose is to formulate a state position on various proposed projects, applications, environmental impact statements, permits and related proposals submitted to agencies of the State of Arkansas, The ANRC, as the chair-agency, will compile the member agency comments into a state position and forward this position to the Arkansas State Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse then sends the state position to the originating state/federal agency. The clearinghouse, under the project notification and review system, is designated as the single point of contact for the processing of these reviews.

**Soil Classifiers Registration Board.** (Act 460, 1975) This board tests and licenses applicants to "the profession of soil classifier." The ANRC is charged with providing administrative support for the board.

**State Land Reclamation Committee.** (Act 236, 1971) The ANRC is a member of this committee, which inspects reclaimed surface mines and determines if reclamation efforts are adequate.