

# **Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative Coordinator Contract Scope of Work**

11/19/20

## **Background**

Forests play an integral role in maintaining a stable supply of clean drinking water for millions of people, as well as supporting fish and wildlife and recreational opportunities. Population growth throughout the South is forecast to increase 30 percent over the next 50 years, leading to significant changes in land use and adverse impacts to water resources. According to the U.S. Forest Service's 2013 Southern Forests Futures Report, increasing urbanization will result in increased forest losses, carbon emissions and stress to other forest resources. This will likely have a direct and long-term impact on drinking water supplies in particular. These impacts can be mitigated by strategic and well-targeted forest conservation, management, and restoration supported by sustainable local funding and resources, as well as other watershed protection grant and loan funding sources.

This contract supports and implements the Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water (Southeastern Partnership) in Arkansas. The Partnership is a regional collaborative effort between the drinking water sector, forestry sector, and conservation sector to enhance forested watershed protection to benefit drinking water and local economies throughout the Southeastern United States. The goals of the Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water are to:

- Help maintain or expand healthy forests in drinking water watersheds
- Initiate and develop collaborative working relationships between the forestry, drinking water, and conservation sectors
- Identify watersheds and initiatives that have high potential for cooperative forest conservation, sound management and restoration
- Explore pilot projects to implement creative and non-traditional watershed protection strategies such as Payment for Watershed Services and forestry best management practices, demonstrating the interdependence of healthy forests and drinking water.

## **Project Scope of Work**

This project will further advance the Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative (Arkansas Collaborative) by funding its Coordinator. The Coordinator position requires someone who is comfortable working with a variety of people and partners and who has demonstrated skills and abilities in: relationship/partnership building, grant-writing and fundraising, meeting facilitation; writing and speaking. The Coordinator will get direction and guidance from the Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative Steering Committee, Arkansas Forestry

Commission, and the Southeastern Partnership's Coordinator and Leadership Team. The goal of this project is to facilitate stewardship, protection, conservation, and management of Arkansas forests, drinking water and watersheds through improved and enhanced multi-stakeholder collaboration and development and implementation of targeted watershed projects. This collaborative partnership will also provide a basis for sustained public outreach/education programs and public policy advocacy.

To accomplish the above goal, this project will continue to support the Arkansas Collaborative to facilitate relationships at a state-wide and local level between federal, state, regional and local agencies and organizations with a stake in forests management, drinking water, and watershed stewardship/protection. Collaboration among these sectors is paramount to ensuring healthy forests, future water supplies, and intact, functioning watersheds. The project's key objective is identifying watersheds and/or future collaboratives and initiatives with high potential for cooperative forest stewardship, sound management and restoration, and developing/implementing pilot projects in those watersheds that demonstrate the multiple values of forest cover and improved forest management to drinking water supply and quality.

To do this, the project will implement priority recommendations and follow-up actions from the 2019 Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Forum (and previous forums as appropriate), and organize follow up meetings/calls of the Steering Committee and the Collaborative.

Recommendations and follow-up actions include: continued coordination between sectors; identifying priority watersheds; holding targeted watershed protection workshops; communicating unified messages; targeting education and technical assistance; exploring and creating sustainable local funding sources; leveraging other funding sources; developing successful collaborative watershed demonstration projects that utilize payment for watershed services and other non-traditional financing approaches; and protecting/restoring landscapes in priority watersheds.

### ***Outcomes and Means for Achieving***

*(Note: it may not be possible to do all of the work below in the contract time frame – the work below is listed to provide guidance, and priorities will be developed by the Steering Committee)*

#### **1. Regular Communication and Relationship Building**

- Initiate, develop, and maintain working relationships and collaboration at the state and local level between forestry, drinking water, conservation, fisheries and wildlife, land use planning, and other related agency and group leaders and representatives
- Continue holding quarterly meetings and/or conference calls of the Arkansas Collaborative to continue progress on priority actions identified at the 2019 Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Forum.
- Expand Arkansas Collaborative to include local planning authorities, natural resource stakeholders, Sentinel Landscape efforts, & other non-traditional partners/stakeholders.
- Support priority watersheds and partners as needed

- Participate in source water, watershed protection, and forestry sector events as time allows and as appropriate to conduct priority work (events might include AWWA/WEA District meetings, ARWA source water forum and annual meeting, AWW/WEA, ANRC Non-Point Source Stakeholders annual meetings, Arkansas Forestry Commission and Arkansas Forestry Association state and local meetings and events).
2. Collaborative Partnerships and Projects
- Identify watersheds and/or future collaboratives and initiatives with high potential for cooperative forest conservation, sound management and restoration to benefit drinking water supplies
  - Work with the Arkansas Collaborative to plan and conduct targeted watershed workshops to highlight case studies and watershed protection success factors, and further explore watershed protection projects and sustained local funding
  - Assist priority watersheds with making the case for and engaging the public on forest land conservation, source water protection and developing local source water protection financing approaches
  - Provide technical assistance as needed to drinking water utilities, forest landowners, and others to ensure they have best available watershed protection information and are implementing best management practices where appropriate
  - Facilitate identifying, exploring and implementing pilot watershed protection projects to demonstrate the multiple values of forest cover and improved forest management to water supply and quality, utilizing creative financing approaches such as payment for watershed services where possible
3. Increased Funding Opportunities
- Seek additional funding and support for the Arkansas Collaborative and priority watersheds/projects.
  - Identify appropriate watershed protection project funding sources (including local sustained funding), and work with the Steering Committee and others to secure funding for targeted projects
4. Public Outreach and Communications
- Develop and/or research existing key messages about the connection between forests and water and how to achieve watershed protection
  - Share messages and project information through presentations, articles, social media, and email outreach
  - Maintain contact lists
  - Work with Steering Committee to agree on an effective methods to keep the Collaborative's stakeholders involved and engaged
  - Establish and maintain an internet website for the Arkansas Collaborative
5. Meetings, Reporting and Follow Through
- Set up regular meetings/conference calls of the Steering Committee, the Arkansas Collaborative, and others as needed through Doodle polls, scheduling conference

calls, Zoom meetings, and in-person meetings; email communications/reminders, and Outlook calendar appointments

- Keep and share detailed, clear and concise meeting and conference call notes within 24 hours if possible, stating key topics discussed, key information/take-aways, list of specific actions along with who will do them and when
- Produce Forum/Workshop draft and final reports summarizing key information and take-aways, lessons learned, and follow up actions
- Ensure follow up with all commitments made – check in with group at appropriate intervals to ensure follow through and re-evaluate if necessary

### **Deliverables**

*(Note: it may not be possible to complete all deliverables below in the contract time frame, but these are allowable deliverables for this contract)*

- Contact lists
- Internet website
- Presentations, articles
- Meeting/call notes
- Forum Report (draft, final)
- Project grant idea summaries, scopes of work (as approved by Arkansas Forestry Commission and Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Committee)
- Maintaining an updated list for Arkansas of potential funding sources, funding that is secured and allocated, and the results of grant applications
- Grant applications and funding proposals for priority Partnership projects in key watersheds.

### **Measurable Results**

- Number of Forums, meetings, and workshops
- Number of watersheds with enhanced collaboration, planning, and forest-drinking water stewardship
- Number of pilot projects
- Amount of funding leveraged for the Collaborative Coordinator, watershed protection efforts and projects
- Number of Corporate partners participating in partnership, donation amounts
- Number of small grant contracts to provide seed money for sustained watershed funding and grants
- Successful implementation of at least one demonstration/pilot project
- Number of watersheds with increased sustained local funding for watershed protection
- Improve Voluntary Best Management Practices implementation rates for forest landowners
- Increased number of watershed acres engaged in active management and enrolled programs such as Forest Stewardship and Tree Farm
- Number of participants in state forum and watershed workshops
- Number of presentations, articles, and emails to target audiences