



Pulaski Conservation District

Annual Report FY 2021

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Pulaski Conservation District

Mission Statement:

The Pulaski Conservation District was organized to serve Pulaski County by recognizing the needs and objectives of each community and assisting them to meet those objectives. The District provides valuable assistance in this process by coordinating the services and efforts of various state and federal agencies. The District develops and carries out programs for the conservation of our soil, water, and other natural resources within the county. Pulaski County is shared by all of its people, urban and rural alike; therefore we share the responsibility of keeping it productive.

Board of Directors:

Debbie Moreland, Chairman, Roland
Fred Nickerson, Vice-Chairman, Sweet Home
Alice Weeks, Secretary/Treasurer, Sherwood
John Crabtree, Member, Little Rock
Trey Rosenbaum, Member, Little Rock

Office Personnel:

Katrina King, District Manager
Holly Anderson, Urban Conservationist
Kennard Williams, USDA-NRCS District Conservationist
Jeff Robinson, USDA-NRCS Soil Conservationist

District Hours:

Monday through Friday 8:15 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Board Meetings:

Fourth Tuesday of each month at 4:30 PM
(Unless otherwise posted – see website or Facebook)

Who We Are



The purpose of the District is to plan and carry out programs for the conservation and efficient use of land, water and related natural resources in Pulaski County. In so doing, it serves as the medium through which all individuals, agencies, organizations and institutions with conservation interests can effectively work together to solve local problems in natural resources conservation and help forecast future needs. Pulaski Conservation District is proud to have served landowners for over 60 years.

Technical assistance is provided to the District through an agreement between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the State of Arkansas and the Pulaski Conservation District. The Pulaski County Field Service Center of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is partnered with the District office to provide conservation related services. The District also works closely with the Pulaski County Extension Service, Pulaski County Judge and Quorum Court, Arkansas Forestry Commission, Farm Service Agency (FSA), city mayors and county land users.

The District is governed by five local landowners known as the Board of Directors, three of whom are elected by the landowners in the District, and two that are appointed by the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission. Directors serve three-year terms and meet once a month.

The District's missions are met with many thanks to the financial support from and coordination with the Pulaski County Quorum Court and Arkansas Natural Resources Commission.

General Information:

Pulaski Conservation District administers several ongoing programs as part of agreements with other entities including its annual water-use registration, annual poultry feeding operations registration, and beaver control program. PCD recently raised its beaver bounty to \$15/tail for FY2022 in an effort to increase the number of beavers trapped in Pulaski County. The District also continues to raise funds through its annual pecan sales, along with offering plat books and float valves for sale at a reasonable cost. PCD also receives annual support from the Pulaski County Quorum Court as well as revenue from specialty conservation license plates sold in the county.

Activity Highlights:

Urban Conservationist: Since September 2015, Pulaski Conservation District has employed an Urban Conservationist dedicated to working with urban and suburban groups and landowners by providing conservation-related outreach and technical assistance. Projects include school and community gardens, conservation presentations, preparation of outreach materials, and residential erosion & drainage consultations. Initially the position was funded through a cooperative agreement with the NRCS, allowing the district to employ a conservation technician and be reimbursed for the work completed. The District's agreement ended in September 2020, however, the District has continued to fund the position as needed using other sources of revenue such as sales and grants. Holly Anderson worked with several people to develop a plan for native plants in North Little Rock's Rockwater development, however, the homeowners' association decided not to pursue the project in late 2020. Holly continues to work with various groups to develop and find funding for a diverse array of conservation-related projects that cover pollinators, native plants, food sustainability, and more.

School & Community Gardens: As part of its urban conservation program, the District has the goal of working with schools and community entities to establish new gardens as well as consult on existing ones.

- The Urban Conservationist continued the relationship developed in 2015 with the NLR Fit2Live community garden network. Fit2Live is a city-sponsored program that works with community gardens throughout North Little Rock. The program provides grant funding and technical assistance. The Mayor of North Little Rock includes approximately \$30,000 in the city budget annually to support the grant program. The District Urban Conservationist attends the Fit2Live monthly meetings and provides technical assistance as needed on conservation issues and continues to serve on the Garden Advisory Council as the "at-large" member. The council assists the Fit2Live manager with review of the garden grant applications and with resolution of garden compliance and project funds reporting issues.
- University District Community Garden Consortium: UALR, UAMS and the University District Development Corporation are working to pull together a community garden consortium. This is similar to a previous USDA grant proposal. The consortium is working with the City of Little Rock to acquire several plots of land and would like to install about 7 high tunnels for community garden production. They have been in communication with the outreach folks at the NRCS State Office. PCD has been asked to be a part of the consortium and specifically to help prepare a summary and other items for NRCS.
- The District continued to work with community gardens and landowners on identifying appropriate conservation practices and possible funding sources. This includes assisting

NRCS North Little Rock Field Office staff to identify appropriate NRCS practices for community gardens such as high tunnels houses and micro-irrigation. This District has helped community garden leaders and other conservation organizations identify grant opportunities and provided assistance with program applications and forms.

Arkansas Monarch Conservation Partnership: The Urban Conservationist continues to be very active on the state-wide Monarch Conservation Partnership, serving as Co-Chair of the Outreach and Education Subcommittee of the Partnership's Steering Committee.

While public engagements have taken a hit due to the pandemic, the partnership held its annual forum virtually on Nov 9-10, 2020. The first day was targeted to the general public and the second day was targeted to agricultural producers. The second day they had 57 folks attend the zoom session and 75 engagements on Facebook Live. The sessions were also recorded and will be available on Facebook soon for viewing at any time.

The partnership has been approached by the National Wildlife Federation to serve as a sponsor for their Monarch Stewards program. So far the program has only been implemented in Texas but NWF is interested in getting it into Arkansas. The program "certifies" volunteers through an extensive training course to serve as citizen scientists, being involved in monarch populations tracking, tagging butterflies, evaluating population disease, and developing habitat. The Outreach and Education Subcommittee met virtually with NWF representatives and has tentatively agreed to a "pilot" program in NW Arkansas. The subcommittee will be proposing the program at the next Steering Committee meeting for approval. Certified volunteers (most likely gleaned from the Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists programs, and the AR Native Plant Society) would be available to the rest of the partnership (primarily the Research Subcommittee and the Habitat Committee) to assist with projects. Holly Anderson anticipates being heavily involved with Leslie Fowler (Monarch Partnership Coordinator) on implementing this project.

The Urban Conservationist has attended events and made presentations on behalf of the Monarch Conservation Partnership as listed below:

- Staffed a table during a spring break pollinator event at the Little Rock Zoo the week of March 20 through 27th.
- Talked with a student from UALR preparing a proposal to the University to install several small pollinator gardens on campus, helping the student prepare a general budget and advising him about site prep and plant selection.

Outreach & Education: The District places a high priority in fostering conservation education, particularly those efforts that enhance Pulaski County youth's knowledge of and concern for conservation and environmental issues. However, the District also strives to conduct

conservation outreach in critical areas of the county to increase conservation knowledge and participation across all age groups. Some of the District's outreach efforts include the following.

- Lake Maumelle Watershed Small Acreage Outreach: The District signed a cooperative agreement with NRCS in 2017 to conduct outreach to small acreage landowners in the Lake Maumelle watershed. The District partnered with Central Arkansas Water to hold a landowner's conference in Spring 2018 to discuss best management practices as well as NRCS programs that small landowners can participate in. With money still left in the agreement, the District has received an extension from NRCS to continue to conduct landowner outreach through 2021 to help increase conservation participation in the watershed. A landowner expo has been in the works for the past year but has been delayed due to the pandemic.
- Holly Anderson participated in a native plant workshop for pollinator week at Quail Forever's request, giving a presentation suggesting plants and maintenance tips appropriate for home gardens on June 26th at the Wit Stephen Nature Center in downtown Little Rock. There were about 20 attendees.
- PCD Urban Conservationist Holly Anderson has continued her work with the Little Rock Sustainability Commission as a member of their environmental committee. This is a group of appointed commissioners working on a 5-year plan to submit to the mayor on priority projects to advance sustainability in Little Rock. Committees are made up of appointed commissioners and volunteers from associated organizations. Holly recently volunteered for a subcommittee that is addressing invasive species in Little Rock's landscaping community.
- The District continues to provide outreach via the following means: District website, Facebook page, newsletters, brochures/handouts, and other educational materials.

Community Grants and Sponsorships: The District applies for grants to help fund conservation work in addition to providing support for projects that might not have an outside funding source.

- The District managed a Grants-to-Districts grant from ANRC to install a native plant garden at Terry Mansion in Little Rock. Undesirable plants were removed from the area and the irrigation system was upgraded through the City of Little Rock. The new plants were installed mid-May with the help of the Little Rock Garden Club. Holly Anderson designed a garden maintenance guide to help with the care and upkeep of the new plants with professionally printed copies given as part of the grant.
- NRCS Conservation in Agriculture Outreach Project: The District has an agreement with NRCS for a public outreach project spanning the state. The project will consist of a book and an "entertainment" documentary highlighting approximately 12 Arkansas producers

who successfully implement NRCS practices. NRCS specifically requested outreach that would not only tell the story of conservation in agriculture but also highlight how conservation measures contribute to the productivity and sustainability of the farming operations. The District has several partners on board including a writer and photographer and AETN for the film production. By working with the Area and District Conservationists, a diverse group of producers across the state have been identified and interviews, photography, filming have begun.

FY 2021 Goals:

- Administer Grants-to-Districts award for the utilities, site prep, and some initial greenhouse equipment for the new greenhouse at the UALR community garden. The total project cost is \$22,000.00 and includes a District match of \$7,334.00.
- Host Lake Maumelle landowner expo as part of fulfilling the District’s agreement with NRCS (extended due to the current pandemic)
- Increase outreach by restarting our newsletter (ex. MailChimp) and relaunching our Facebook page.
- Work to bring delinquent water-users back into registration compliance.

By The Numbers:

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|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Beaver Bounties Paid: | \$970 (97 tails @ \$10/tail) |
| Water Use Registrations: | 44 Measurement Points |
| Poultry Registrations: | 3 Poultry Feeding Operations |
| TSP Hours Claimed: | 260.25 Hours |
| Plat Products Sold: | 1 Book |
| Float Valves Sold: | 1 Valve |
| Pecans Sold: | 249 lbs (\$530.70 Profit) |