



# **Pulaski Conservation District**

## **Annual Report FY 2024**

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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  
Trey Rosenbaum, Secretary/Treasurer, Little Rock  
John Crabtree, Member, Little Rock  
Libbie Dougan, Member, North Little Rock

### **Office Personnel:**

Katrina King, District Manager  
Holly Anderson, Urban Conservationist  
Travis Caudle, USDA-NRCS District Conservationist  
Jeff Robinson, USDA-NRCS Soil Conservationist

### **District Hours:**

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

### **Board Meetings:**

Third Thursday 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 and beaver control program. The District 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.

Since September 2015, Pulaski Conservation District has employed an Urban Conservationist dedicated to working with urban and suburban groups and landowners to provide outreach and assistance, often to develop and find funding for a diverse array of conservation-related projects that cover pollinators, native plants, food sustainability, and more. Projects include school and community gardens, conservation presentations, preparation of outreach materials, and more.

### **Activity Highlights:**

- **Urban Agriculture Partnership Project – National Association of Conservation Districts Funding**

In FY 2024, The District received funding in the amount of \$48,950 from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The grant requires a match of \$11,200.00 and supports an Urban Agriculture Partnership Project with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR). Activities conducted under this grant include the following:

- The District partnered with UALR to offer adult workshops in urban agriculture topics through the University's Office of Extended Education. Three workshops were offered in Fall 2023 followed by an additional three workshops in Spring 2024. The workshops were open to the general public at a nominal cost and covered topics such as beekeeping, backyard chickens, food preservation, and more.
- As part of the grant, PCD sponsored a summer 2024 gardening youth camp held at Oak Forest Community Garden in Little Rock, June 24-26. Children's International provided 48 students over three days from their summer program. Apple Seeds, a non-profit based in NW Arkansas, provided the programming. Students toured the garden to see growth habits of various vegetables. Vegetables and herbs were harvested, and students made salsa and salads.
- Four community gardens in Little Rock hosted UALR student interns starting with two interns in Fall 2023 and expanding to seven interns for Summer 2024. The intern program was designed to "jump start" urban agriculture education efforts within the university, and to provide worker support to community gardens in areas of the city deemed food deserts. This aspect of the project has been very successful, with the community gardens praising the effort and the interns' work ethics. Unused funds from other areas of the grant have been diverted to keep the garden interns working through the middle of October. Everyone involved would like to see the garden intern program continued next year if possible.
- The final piece of the grant is the development of an urban agriculture/community garden resource manual. Pieces of the manual were



drafted by students in a summer sustainability class at UALR which finished up at the end of June. A topic outline has been established, and an artist has been retained for illustrations. The resource manual will give a brief introduction of each topic, followed by links with more information on the topic. The goal of the manual is to point people in the right direction in regard to urban resources in central Arkansas. The manual will reside primarily online with a small number of printed copies.



(Two community garden interns funded by PCD's grant from NACD)

- NRCS Funding - High Tunnel Construction Training Project

The District applied for grants under the 2024 USDA/NRCS funding opportunity and received funding to support a high tunnel construction training project. Work on the project started in Fall 2023 with work set to finish at the end of 2024. With the proliferation of high tunnels, NRCS found that a concerning number of them were collapsing during weather events due to improper construction. The goal of the project was to film the proper construction of a high tunnel and produce a training video that could be used at workshops as well as given to individuals looking to install a high tunnel. Using the subaward process, PCD has partnered with the St. Joseph Center of Arkansas (SJCA) in North Little Rock for this project. Over the past year, SJCA has worked with NRCS, PCD, and project contractors to install a new high tunnel on SJCA grounds while filming the entire process. This included developing a video script with NRCS input for technical accuracy plus getting NRCS approval during the editing process.

As the final piece of the project, SJCA will be hosting a high tunnel construction training workshop this fall for both landowners and NRCS personnel. Participants will view the completed training video, be able to ask questions about the construction process, and tour completed high tunnels with associated practices.

- **“Friends of NACD” Grant Opportunity**

Pulaski CD applied for the annual “Friends of NACD” grant opportunity in November 2023. This is a grant funded by donations from individuals interested in supporting conservation districts, with individual awards capped at \$2,500. The announcement stressed that the projects should be something “creative”, so the District decided to use the opportunity to see if it could help fund the mushroom lab at Urban Patchworks. The mushroom lab would be a hands-on teaching lab to show people how to grow shiitake mushrooms, which are highly nutritious, can be grown in a small space and are popular items at farmers’ markets. Ultimately, PCD’s project was turned down for this funding opportunity.

**Regular District Programs & Activities:**

Pulaski Conservation District participates in several ongoing programs and activities as part of regular district operations. Many of these activities are part of larger programs implemented by the Arkansas Natural Resources Division (ANRD) such as the Beaver Control Program, Water Use Registration Program, or the Technical Service Provider (TSP) Program. Others, such as selling pecans or float valves, serve as a fundraiser for the District. A brief numbers breakdown for these programs follows:

Beaver Bounties Paid:	\$2,700 (180 tails @ \$15/tail)
Water Use Registrations:	124 Measurement Points
TSP Hours Claimed:	623 Hours
Float Valves Sold:	1 Valve
Pecans Sold:	195 lbs (\$390 Profit)