

**Notice of Hearing to Accept Comments on Proposed Revisions to the
Arkansas Natural Resource Commission's Title 2**

Pursuant to the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, ANRC proposes to revise its Rules Governing Conservation Districts to mirror statutory requirements for elected directors, delete an unachievable director meeting requirement, and remove language requiring ANRC to pay state and national association membership fees on behalf of districts. A public hearing on proposed revisions to Title 2 will be held April 10, 2018, at 2:00 p.m. at the address below. Oral and written comments will be accepted at the hearing. In the interest of accuracy, written statements are preferred and will be considered if received by April 25, 2018, at 4:30 p.m. These rules are posted on ANRC's website at <http://www.anrc.arkansas.gov/rules/proposed-rules/> or may be requested at the number below.

Given this 22nd day of March, 2018.

Bruce Holland, Executive Director
Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
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Summary of Proposed Revisions to Title 2

ANRC's Title 2, "Rules Governing Conservation Districts," provides general operating requirements for districts created under the Conservation District Law, Ark. Code Ann. §14-125-101, et seq. ANRC assists the districts with carrying out conservation programs and provides funding to the districts. There are three purposes for these revisions.

First, ANRC proposes adding language from Ark. Code Ann. § 14-125-301(a)(1) to Section 211.5 to affirm the current statutory requirement that a candidate for an elected position must reside within the conservation district that he seeks to represent.

Second, ANRC is deleting a requirement in Section 214.1 mandating that district directors must attend two, successive, regular quarterly meetings. ANRC is unaware of any quarterly meetings ever being held that would have enabled a director to fulfill this requirement, has never scheduled such meetings, and does not see a need for such meetings.

Third, deletion of language in Section 218.1 removes any duty imposed by the existing rules that require ANRC to make payment upon behalf of conservation districts to a conservation support organization. Instead, ANRC will provide each district with funds that were previously withheld for state and national association memberships.

In the past, ANRC reserved membership fees from the funds allotted to all conservation districts and paid state and national association membership fees on behalf of all districts. However, some district boards asserted that the decision to join these associations should be up to each individual district. To address these concerns, ANRC agreed to release funds equivalent to membership dues to any district requesting that such funds not be withheld on its behalf.

This process was complicated, and ANRC prefers that a district desiring to join an association provide payment directly to the conservation support organization. Currently only one state conservation support organization, the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, exists but some district boards have indicated that they prefer to choose whether to join this organization. As to national membership fees, ANRC also believes each conservation district should determine whether it wants to join a national conservation association, and ANRC should not be involved in the district's decision to pay a national membership fee.