

RESOLUTION

No. 2003-2

of the

ARKANSAS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE UNION COUNTY GROUND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD, UNION POWER STATION, UNION COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT, SPARTA AQUIFER GROUND WATER USERS, AND THE CITIZENS OF UNION COUNTY, FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF ARKANSAS' GROUND WATER AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE WATER SUPPLIES.

WHEREAS, the Sparta Aquifer is a major source of high quality ground water for human consumption and industrial use in much of Arkansas;

WHEREAS, the water levels of the Sparta Aquifer in Union County have suffered significant declines over time, including an average decline 22.14 feet between 1997 and 1998;

WHEREAS, the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, as the ground water protection agency for the State of Arkansas, designated a five-county area in south Arkansas, including Union County, a critical ground water area for the Sparta Aquifer in 1996;

WHEREAS, the Union County Conservation District, working with the Commission, began a water conservation education program to educate water users and citizens of Union County on the importance of the Sparta and to assist water users in water conservation activities;

WHEREAS, many of the industrial and municipal ground water users of the Sparta made changes to their plant, equipment and processes to implement water conservation, including the reuse of water by transfer of used water to another water user for reuse;

WHEREAS, the State of Arkansas, acting through the Commission and the Department of Finance and Administration, assisted in the implementation of these conservation activities by providing an income tax credit for the costs associated with changes to plant and equipment necessary to implement water conservation;

WHEREAS, the citizens of Union County, including members of the General Assembly, county and municipal officials, and representatives of local industry, were instrumental in the passage of the Sparta Aquifer Critical Groundwater Counties' Remediation Act by the Arkansas General Assembly in 1999;

WHEREAS, the Union County Ground Water Conservation Board is the only board currently formed under the act and has been collecting a water conservation levy on water removed from Sparta;

WHEREAS, the Board undertook to design, finance, construct and operate the Ouachita River pipeline project that will supply many of the county's industrial water users with excess surface water from the Ouachita River and further reduce ground water consumption;

WHEREAS, the citizens of Union County approved the levy of a countywide sales tax to finance much of the cost of the pipeline project, for which the Commission was willing to provide a portion of the financing at below market rates to allow the financing to be completed;

WHEREAS, the county, municipal and economic development officials continue to recruit new business and industries to the county that provide economic benefit to the county, while ensuring that the new undertakings do not further harm the Sparta;

WHEREAS, the Union Power Station is a good corporate citizen, willing to work with the Board to develop and utilize an alternative surface supply, and to provide interim financing for a portion of the Ouachita River pipeline; and,

WHEREAS, conversion to river water will save eight million (8,000,000) gallons of water a day and facilitate a fifty per cent (50%) reduction in Sparta ground water usage.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED IN UANANIMOUS ACCORD BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ARKANSAS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION, ASSEMBLED IN EUREKA SPRINGS, ARKANSAS, ON MAY 14, 2003, THAT: the Union County Ground Water Conservation Board, the Union County Conservation District, Union Power Station, other Sparta ground water users, the county and municipal officials, and the citizens of Union County, should be commended for their hard work and determination to protect the Sparta Aquifer for future generations, their farsightedness and willingness to work with the Commission to ensure the long term viability of the Sparta, and their untiring service to the citizens of the county and the rest of the State of Arkansas in protecting the ground water resources;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: the Commission pledges that it will continue to partner with persons within critical ground water areas to take the steps necessary to protect our ground water for future generations.

Adopted this 14th day of May, 2003.

(SEAL)

ARKANSAS SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION


Dewey Hatcher, Chair

ATTEST:


J. Randy Young, P. E.
Secretary and Executive Director