



# Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission 2009 – 2020 Strategic Plan Executive Summary



The Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC) began a strategic planning process by taking an inside look at the agency and the agency's history. We also looked at how well or to what extent we worked with others. As we concentrated on different aspects of the ANHC and the immediate "family" within, we began to explore the bigger picture. We looked at what things we should expect to see in the next 10-15 years and who would be playing a role in the sustainability and conservation of our state's native landscapes, ecosystems, and biodiversity.

The Department of Arkansas Heritage and the ANHC welcomed thirty colleagues and conservation partners to take part in the strategic thinking process by participating in a Visioning Forum. Participants generated key insights and recommendations that have been assembled into trends and larger forces that will contribute to ANHC's future success, such as:

- 1. Level of public support and engagement in/around conservation**
- 2. Trajectory of the economy**
- 3. Level of cooperation among the conservation community**
- 4. Responses to pressures on natural resources**
- 5. Responses to habitat fragmentation and sprawl**
- 6. Responses to invasive species**
- 7. Levels of scientific and ecological literacy of the populace**
- 8. Approaches to environmental issues and solutions**
- 9. Responses to land management and ownership shifts**
- 10. Policy and legislative responses to conservation**
- 11. Adaptation to technology**
- 12. Responses to climate change**
- 13. Responses to demographic changes**

Using a technique developed by Ken Hubbell Associates, we worked collectively and in small groups, exploring how these forces react together. We also identified the two forces highlighted above as being simultaneously the most critical and most uncertain for the future. Scenario stories were composed from the conversations and group discussions.

The ANHC used these initial observations to develop a set of strategies. In the immediate future, the strategies will be integrated within the context of state budgets and operating plans.



# Targeted Strategic Actions

## 5-year Priority Strategies

As a guide for future planning, this strategic planning process serves as a map between basic survival and the possibilities of maximum advantage. The following strategic actions will accelerate progress to our “preferred future.”

### Increase Protection of Rare Species

- Increase capacity to conduct and maintain inventory records of Arkansas’s biodiversity
- Expand and enhance ANHC’s presence within the Environmental Review Process
- Expand Natural Area Management Plans to enhance stewardship and conservation action at critical sites
- Continue to add areas of significant biodiversity to the System of Natural Areas

### Create an aligned conservation community

- Continue to explore opportunities for collaboration to facilitate protection of Arkansas’s rare species, natural communities, and ecosystems
- Initiate conservation working groups to develop large landscape scale protection efforts
- Explore new opportunities for collaboration – within the System of Natural Areas and beyond – to facilitate protection of Arkansas’s rare species, natural communities, and ecosystems

### Deepen the ecological literacy of Arkansans

- Continue public outreach efforts, including citizen science campaigns
- Expand teacher workshops and curriculum materials that focus on Arkansas’s rare species, natural communities, and ecosystems
- Develop a greater presence on the worldwide web