

Dear Governor Beebe,

March 21, 2014

Many concerned citizens attended the Big Creek Research & Extension Team's seminar led by Dr. Andrew Sharpley at the U of A on March 11, 2014. Like most Arkansans, it was our understanding that the state-funded study was initiated to ease fears of C&H polluting nearby waterways, including the Buffalo River. But statements by Dr. Sharpley and others on the Big Creek Study Team seem to contradict the true goal of this taxpayer-funded testing and leave many questions.

1. How was this study initiated and by whom?

AR Times, Sept. 5, 2013: "Gov. Mike Beebe's request for \$340,510 to implement pollution testing and monitoring at the C&H Hog Farm in Mt. Judea" "This will allow us to more thoroughly determine if unsafe levels of waste could reach Big Creek and the Buffalo River, and to take preventive action if that occurs."

However, Dr. Sharpley stated publically that this study was initiated by Jason Henson and his cousins who contacted the Newton County extension agent to ask for help and then the state asked U of A to develop a research plan. He stated, "The mission was to help landowners comply with state and federal law."

2. Is the purpose of this study to protect the watershed and Buffalo National River, or is it to sustain this poorly sited facility? While it may be the extension's job to help hog farmers figure out how to run their hog operation, should Arkansas taxpayers be asked to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for that?

Dr. Mark J. Cochran, Vice President for Agriculture at the U of A, testified that the plan was formulated to: 1) monitor the nutrients and bacteria resulting from the land application of liquid fertilizer (intensive monitoring to be conducted in three of the seventeen application fields), 2) test the impact of the farm undefined (sic) both the manure holding ponds and the application of liquid fertilizer undefined (sic) on water quality on and around the farm.

3. What is the benefit of performing "intensive monitoring" on a field where no waste will be applied?

Dr. Sharpley has stated, "I am there to do the science." Science calls for absolute accuracy and integrity including reports. So why would Dr. Sharpley choose to use maps he knew to be inaccurate and spend 1/3 of the time and resources on a field that will not be receiving manure application? If they are monitoring the nutrients and bacteria resulting from the land application of liquid fertilizer ("intensive monitoring will be conducted in three of the seventeen application fields"), shouldn't they be monitoring fields that WILL have waste applied? He stated that the field in question will not have waste applied to it, but they plan to go ahead and continue their work in it for baseline--that doesn't seem to be the best use of taxpayer money.

4. Why is the University not studying fields directly across from the Mt. Judea public school and/or fields which already have high phosphorous levels?

AR Times, Aug.15, 2013 Beebe: "State Funded Independent Monitoring of Hog Farm Doesn't Need Landowner Permission". The potential monitoring program would be led by Andrew Sharpley, a renowned soil and water quality expert at the University of Arkansas....The governor said that after

researching the question, his office has concluded that the state has the authority to do so "with or without landowners' permission" from either C&H or owners of the spray fields.

In fact, the written and signed agreement between the U of A and the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality states that ADEQ will, "Assist the University in obtaining access to conduct the study if access is denied by any landowner."

But at a public hearing March 11, 2014, Dr. Sharpley stated repeatedly (as he had previously) that he chose the three fields because he DID NOT have permission to access any of the other fields. Then it was revealed that due to inaccurate maps, one of the fields they'd chosen to study was not among those C&H had signed agreements to use within the Nutrient Management Plan submitted to ADEQ.

On the same day Governor Beebe, when you came out and spoke to the people at the rally at the Governor's Tourism Conference, you said that none of the spray-field owners had been denied permission for U of A to access them. This is not the case.

5. Why isn't dye-testing in the sewage lagoons a priority, if monitoring to detect or prevent pollution is the goal?

The plan states that they would be "testing the impact of the farm undefined (sic) both the manure holding ponds and the application of liquid fertilizer undefined (sic) on water quality on and around the farm." The sewage lagoons are permitted to leak up to five thousand gallons per day per acre of surface area and according to an ADEQ geologist; the ponds are leaking approximately 3400 gallons of raw untreated sewage per day. Dye tracing would likely reveal where the 3400+ gallons of raw manure are disappearing to every day.

6. Why is the University of Arkansas consulting with the Farm Bureau and Cargill? Isn't this a conflict of interest?

Cargill has repeatedly claimed they only own the pigs and have nothing to do with the ownership and operation of C & H Farms. But according to a recent Freedom of Information Act request (excerpts below), the U of A has been in contact with Cargill and Cargill has been providing input on the study. We find this alarming, unprofessional, and further calls into question the whether this study is biased and is scientifically compromised.

From: Andrew N. Sharpley
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2013 10:29 AM

...3. One concern centered on what Cargill felt was a large number of piezometers and lysimeters on the farm, which would themselves lead to the preferential flow of nutrients applied in slurry to Big Creek.

...4. Another concern was the export of any solids that might be produced by any solid-liquid manure treatment process would violate the permitted plan and require it to be reopened and re-permitted. An outcome Cargill did not want for obvious reasons.

Governor Beebe, we kindly ask for answers to the above questions by April 1, 2014 and we request the following actions be taken by May 1, 2014:

1. Please obtain access to ALL of the 17 fields for Dr. Sharpley's Big Creek Research Team.
2. Please add a registered professional geologist (PG) from the UA Geosciences Department and a member of one environmental group to the UA Big Creek Research Team. We ask that the environmental representative serve as a "citizen monitor" and has access to all data and analysis and accompanies all scientific fieldwork. We believe additional oversight by the citizen monitor is needed since this team appears to not be using their time, effort and tax payer money appropriately and has not provided accurate data. After all this is Arkansas taxpayer money being used for this study.
3. Please provide a clear mission statement detailing the parameters and scope of the UA work so that it is crystal clear what activities are authorized.
4. Please ensure the Big Creek Research Team provides a quarterly accounting of the funds spent and that it is publicly available within 30 days at the end of each quarter.

I know that this issue is important to you, Governor Beebe, and we appreciate your efforts. We know the degradation of our first national river is not something you want to be part of your legacy.

Respectfully,
The Ozark River Stewards
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The Ozark River Stewards are a group of concerned Arkansas taxpayers from Boone, Carroll, Madison, Marion, Newton, Searcy, and Washington Counties. Our focus is on maintaining a clean, healthy, robust, and sustainable environment for all Arkansans.