

NRCS State Technical Committee

9:30am Thursday, June 8, 2023

UACES, Little Rock, AR

Agenda (attached)

Meeting called to order by Amanda Mathis, Assistant State Conservationist, at 9:30am.

Members present: (Sign in sheets attached)

Welcome and Introductions

- Amanda Mathis welcomed the group and gave an overview of the agenda for today's meeting.
- Mike Sullivan, AR NRCS State Conservationist, gave an overview of some of the current activities as well as some of the new programs and initiatives.
 - He encouraged members to communicate any concerns regarding the NRCS programs.
 - An RCPP Improvement team has been installed, Mike and Amanda are serving on that team looking to improve the program, reduce administrative burden.
 - Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding is available in FY23 and will ramp up in out years. NRCS has a set list of approved core practices. AR NRCS is working with HQ to discuss additional practices to meet the needs of producers and still address greenhouse gas emissions.
 - 5-Year Plan – what actions need to be taken to get us where we want to be in 5 years.
 - Draft plan will be developed and submitted to national office to be merged with all states for a national plan.

Subcommittee Reports

- **Grazing Lands Subcommittee** – Jeremy Huff (Slide attached)
 - Funds obligated for prescribed grazing in EQIP 2022 increased by 60% compared to the last 4 years.
 - Technical Trainings: Pasture Ecology I, Pasture Ecology II and Train the Trainer Course and AR Grazing School
 - Over 40 new/updated grazing lands FOTG document published.

- o Proposed a new payment scenario and interim standard to seek input and proceed with recommendations to STC.
 - Hay Distribution to Improve Nutrient Management (Payment scenario under Nutrient Management 590)
 - Amending Soil Properties with Lime
- o No formal recommendations made by the grazing lands subcommittee.
- **Water Quality Subcommittee** – Canton Ford (Slides attached)
 - o NRCS FY23 Spring Water Quality and Source Water Quality
 - o Maps
 - NWQI Projects and their status
 - Writing watershed assessments currently to be submitted to HQ.
 - o Water Quality – no recommendations
 - o Source Water Protection
 - Add Upper Cypress Creek to priority list.
 - o FY24 High Priority Practice Recommendations
 - Practice 390
 - Practice 391
 - Practice 638
 - o Two State Ditch Workgroup
 - Goals
 - Locate gaps.
 - Conduct training.
 - Increase awareness.
 - Determine best sites by HUC-8
 - o Streambank Restoration Workgroup
 - Goals
 - Locate gaps.
 - Conduct training for professionals.
 - Research and promote small scale, low costs projects in upper reaches of watersheds.
 - Identify stakeholders with HUC-8
 - Coordinate projects
 - o Nutrient Management Workgroup
 - Goals
 - Revisit P-Index
 - Development guidance document for NRCS

- Discuss waste (poultry litter) transfer market possibilities for private sector.
- **Soil Health** – Keith Scoggins
 - o Met in March 2023 to adjust to farmers' schedule.
 - o 20 participants attended the subcommittee meeting.
 - o Several research projects discussed.
 - Increased cover crop acreage due to Cover Crop Initiative
 - Practice caps continue to be an area of concern.
 - **Recommendation - Increase in payment caps of management practices.**
 - Decrease in number of farms but increase in size of farms needing higher payment caps.
 - Sunn Hemp Study has completed for one year. Some seeds were developed by not viable seed.
 - Poultry study in Jackson County continues.
 - o Walmart has requested a joint training program with NRCS to educate their vendors and staff on the importance of soil health. It will be July 26, 2023 in Bentonville.
- **Water Quantity** – Rodney Wright (Slides attached)
 - o Partnership Reports by conservation partners
 - o **Recommendation to add Code 462 to the list of practices.**
 - Precision Land Forming and Smoothing, Scenario 1
 - o Interim Aquifer Recharge Practices (815 & 817)
 - Being studied in CA
 - o IWM Equipment
 - **Recommendation to adjust the lifespan of pumping plant automation equipment in Arkansas.**
 - o **Recommendation to support a Furrow Irrigated Rice Scenario**
 - o Soil Moisture by Feel Method, retain as an option for producers.
 - o Pitless Tailwater Recovery System –
 - Need to determine if this needs a specific scenarios, currently can be constructed using multiple scenarios and practices.
 - Additional cost data from Dr. Henry is being collected.
 - o AGWI Rankings Adjustments
 - **Recommended adjusting ranking to make reduced groundwater use a priority**
 - Review Tiers system to make sure the most critical needs are addressed

- o Also, would it be possible to give credit to applicants for irrigation education qualifications (Master Irrigator Designation?)
- o Potential High Priority Practices
 - 449
 - 464
 - 447
 - 436
 - 430
- o Can individual scenario within a practice code be high priority?

Energy Subcommittee – Britt Hill

- Discussion with TSPs and what new programs or practices might be needed.
- Most of the focus has been poultry operations.
- No recommendations

Wildlife Subcommittee – James Baker

- No recommendations but did echo some of the priorities that were mention in the water quality subcommittee
- Two working groups
 - o Water Quality Subcommittee
 - o Scenarios under 643
 - Taking advantage of current technology with drones, etc.
- High Priority Practices to remain the same.
- Feral Swine Update
 - o No update on future funding- set to expire at end of FY.
 - o 6,000 pigs eradication by Feral Hog Pilot Project
 - o 16,500 pigs eradicated with partners
 - o More flexibility in counties impacted is the goal

Forestry – Doug Akin

- Good turnout with hybrid meeting
- Provided the latest contracting data
- Prescribed burn law takes effect on July 1, 2023
- **Recommendation – riparian forest buffer as a high priority practice.**
- **Recommendation- Conservation Reserve Practices where trees are planted or have been planted have voluntary management**

activities and practices where grass is planted or has been planted have required management activities. Required management activities for grass practices will be disking, prescribed burning or an herbicide application and will be chosen based on practice objectives and the practicality of producer implementation.

Urban and Small-Scale Farms – Katy Brantley (Slides attached)

- 24 members at meeting
- **Recommendation -Update the Conservation Practice Catalog**
 - Develop a resource manual that describes the conservation practices available for small scale and urban farmers.
 - Add a section in the catalog
- **Recommendation -Develop Myth Busters fact sheet for producers about working with NRCS**
 - Include information about eligibility
- **Recommendation -Explore resource concerns and potential practices/scenarios that support beekeeping and backyard flocks**
- Continued Planning and Partnership
 - Build conservation support for innovative agriculture such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and vertical farming
 - Form Innovative Agriculture Working Group
 - Visit innovative ag operations
 - Discuss needs
- **Recommendation -Develop statewide urban ag toolkit**
 - Similar to the USDA urban Ag at a Glance but for Arkansas
 - Include information about state agencies, organizations and other resources
 - Potentially electronic for easy updating
- Develop training strategy for grant writing and management
 - Navigating grants.gov
 - Tips for completing forms and application components
 - Management of budget
 - Reporting
- Continue to work address HU and Socially disadvantaged producer's concerns
 - Form Urban Engagement Working Group

- Develop strategy for activities, field days and training

Alternative Crops – Troyce Barnett

- **Recommendation to look at Code 575 (trails and walkways)**
 - **To remove barriers to working around high tunnels**
 - **Improve access for individuals who might have limited abilities**
- *Financial concerns due to the increase in costs to implement or install high tunnels – HU producers asked that this be considered.*

Outreach, Equity and Inclusion – Alvin Peer

- **Recommendation that deep tillage be added back as an allowable practice with specific requirements of how it will be planned.**
- **Recommendation to work on policy on how access roads can be used.**
 - Requesting a cap and State Engineer will approve.
- **Recommendation to create a bulletin to address well concerns.**
 - 533 – combustion units are at odds. Vendors want approval for 40 HP but NRCS approve smaller units
 - Engineering staff continues to review this for recommendations.

Question – has storm water drainage been considered? Canton Ford said that practices have been developed.

RCPP Open Pine Human Dimensions – Bill Bartush

- *Initial Delivery and Landowner Perceptions*
- Dr. Elena Rubino, U of A at Monticello (Slides attached)
 - Integrating social science to improve delivery.
 - Expand program participation
 - Increase footprint (# of applications, never applied before)
 - How to increase diversity of participants
 - Explore how human attitudes and behaviors toward NR affect and how those are managed.
 - Ongoing meetings with social science working group team (delivery team and social scientists)
 - Delivery team experiences
 - Forest landowner experiences with/perception

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA Strategy) – Clyde Williams (Handout and slides attached)

- IRA directs NRCS to use the additional funds specifically for climate change *mitigation*.
- Mitigation activities reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon storage.
- FY23 list of NRCS climate-smart mitigation (see handout)
- Evaluated against two primary criteria
- IRA funding can also be used for practices needed to facilitate a mitigation practice but can only be planned in conjunction with a core practice.
- FY23 Arkansas IRA Strategy
 - Map of location and practices for Soil Health focus
 - Map of location for CSP focus
- FY24 Arkansas Strategy
 - EQIP- Currently working to expand into several other Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories including:
 - Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife
 - Rice
 - Nitrogen Management
 - Grazing and Pasture
 - Soil Health
 - Energy, Combustion, and Electricity Efficiency
 - CSP- Overall goal is to align with CSP-Classic, which encompasses entire state, while placing emphasis on the climate mitigation enhancements
 - Next Steps
 - Some of the potential AR recommendations to date include: Conservation Practices supporting energy and water savings
 - CPS 436-Irrigation Reservoir
 - CPS 447-Irrigation and Drainage Tailwater Recovery
 - CPS 464-Irrigation Land Leveling
 - CPS 443-Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface
 - CPS 808/336-Soil Carbon Amendment
 - ICPS 810-Annual Forage Planting
 - Wetland conservation practices to support IRA-ACEP
- Other Climate Efforts

- o Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry
- o NRCS Climate Change Adaptation Plan
- o USDA Climate Hub
- o Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities
- o SMART Nutrient Management
- Dialog
 - o Capacity for fast tracking applications
 - With a heavy workload increased staffing and partnerships are being utilized
 - 26 soil conservationist positions opened
 - 80 notices have been posted
 - o Mitigation practices – one mitigation practice must be included in the contract. Then facilitating practices may be contracted. There are no limits or splits between funding for mitigation vs facilitating, so long as the facilitating practices support the implementation of the mitigating practice.
 - o RCPP allows for both adaptation practices as well as mitigation practices.

Programs Update

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)– Corey Cornelious (Slides attached)

- FY23 EQIP High Tunnel State Initiative
 - o Announced in Feb 2023, goal to fund 150 high tunnels- on track to met that goal.
- Migratory Bird Resurgence Initiative (MBRI)
 - o CPS 646 is available to anyone statewide, \$4M in funding
- High priority practices for FY 23 EQIP were shared
 - Final recommendations for new high priority practices due to Corey by August 18, 2023.

Conservation Stewardship Program – Sherry DeGraphenreed (Slides attached)

- **Top Ten Enhancements Planned CSP – FY2022**
- **CSP New Enhancements**
 - o Climate Smart Advanced Soil health
 - o Forest Bundle
 - o Low Nitrogen

- o Install VFD
- o Switch fuel source
- **CSP Opportunities Organics**
 - o Used by certified and transitioning to an organic system
- **CSP Opportunities – CSP Urban**
 - o IWM
 - o Cover Crop
 - o Reduce Till
 - o Pollinator
 - o Conservation Crop rotation
 - o Rain catchment system
 - o Raised beds
 - o Low tunnel
 - o Mulching
 - o One acre or less fencing
 - o \$1,500 minimum land payment
 - o Available statewide
 - o Sign-up deadline June 16, 2023
 - o All general CSP rules including stewardship threshold being met.

Conservation Innovation Grants – Lori Barker (Slides attached)

- **2023 Local Led Work Summary**
 - o 21 Questions across different program, policies and resource issues in Arkansas
 - o Great response across Arkansas LLWG providing input to each question with ideas on what programs, practices are needed.
 - o Local Input Topics
 - Impaired watersheds
 - MRBI/NWQI
 - Recommendation for new/revised practices needed including adjustment for payment caps
 - And many others as shown on slides

2024 Conservation Innovation Grant: Areas of Concern

- Deadline to apply for FY23 is June 22, 2023
 - o Slides shown with current FY23 Emphasis Areas
 - o Requesting feedback if other topics/emphasis areas are needed

Partnership Programs (RCPP/MRBI) – Dianne Schlenker (Slides attached)

- **Priority Watersheds**
 - o MRBI Focus Area FY23
- **Readiness Phase MRBI**
 - o Items to consider (see slides)
- **Watershed Assessments being developed for FY23**
 - o Honey Cypress Buffalo Creek
 - o Lower Strawberry River
- **Proposed MRBI Assessment Phase Project for FY24**
 - o Cagens White River
 - o Sugarloaf
 - o Upper Strawberry-Strawberry River
- **MRBI Implementation Phase projects for FY 23- see slides**
 - o Arkansas received \$15M in MRBI EQIP funds to support these projects
- **RCPP**
 - o Stand alone program - \$500 million.
 - o 5-year budget
 - o Financial assistance options
 - o Encourage system approach.
 - o \$6,428, 000 project funding for AR for FY23
 - o Deadline for current RCPP NFO for new projects is August 18, 2023

Agriculture Conservation Easements Program (ACEP) – Alexis Cook (Handout and slides attached)

- **Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)**
 - o 272,092 acres of conservation easements over 720 easements
 - o 267,750 acres restored
 - o FY 23 Anticipate purchase of 21 easements and enrollment of 5460 acres
 - o Reviewed WREP funding
 - o Achievements in HU parcels enrolled
- **Agricultural Conservation Easements (ALE)**
 - o Working with Land Trusts in hopes of having ALE parcels in FY24

Watershed Programs – Randy Childress (Slides attached)

- Phases of PL-566 Projects
 - o Preliminary Investigation and Finding
 - o Watershed Plan Development
 - o Design and Construction
- 16 Projects in Preliminary Investigation
- 5 projects in Planning, Design and Construction
- 9 projects – Planning
- Funding – Excess of \$212 million presently in AR NRCS Accounts
- Additional Request - \$58 million presently for BM and GP projects
- PL566 – BIL Projects
 - o 19 projects in 2022 approved.
 - o Projects were funded in various stages
 - 5 projects fully funded – PIFR, Planning, Design and Construction
 - 9 projects funded for PIFR, Planning
 - 5 projects funded for PIFR Only
 - o NRCS entered into agreement with Arkansas Black Mayors Association for these projects.

Closing Comments

All presentations and meeting notes will be provided to the State Technical Committee via email and will be posted on the Arkansas NRCS website, available to general public.

Mike Sullivan thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35pm.

State Technical Committee Meeting Agenda

State Extension Office Building Auditorium
2301 South University, Little Rock, AR 72204

Registration for *in-person* attendance: <https://forms.office.com/r/CRxbZ1d28S>

Registration for ZOOM: <https://uada.zoom.us/join/91234567890>

June 8, 2023

9:30 am – 1:30 pm

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Mike Sullivan

Subcommittee Reports (*max 10 mins each*)

Grassland
Water Quality
Soil Health
Water Quantity
Energy
Wildlife
Forestry
Urban Conservation
Alternative Crops
Outreach, Equity, and Inclusion

Jeremy Huff
Canton Ford
Keith Scoggins
Rodney Wright
Britt Hill
James Baker
Doug Akin
Katy Brantley
Troyce Barnett
Alvin Peer

RCPP Open Pine Human Dimensions –
Initial Delivery & Landowner Perceptions

A. Priest, U of A Monticello
Bill Bartush, LMVJV

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Strategy

Clyde Williams

Lunch

Program Updates-

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)
Partnership Programs (RCPP/MRBI)
Agriculture Conservation Easements Program (ACEP)
Watershed Programs

Corey Cornelious
Sherri DeGraphenreed
Lori Barker
Dianne Schlenker
Alexis Cook
Randy Childress

Open Discussion

All Attendees

Closing Remarks & Adjourn

Mike Sullivan

Grazing Lands Subcommittee Meeting Key Discussion Points:

- ➔ Funds obligated for Prescribed Grazing in EQIP 2022 increased by 60% compared to the average from the past four years.
- ➔ Technical Trainings: Pasture Ecology I, Pasture Ecology II, NRCS/UADA “Train the Trainer” course, AR Grazing School
- ➔ Over 40 new/updated grazing lands FOTG document published.
- ➔ Proposed a new payment scenario and interim standard to seek input and proceed with recommendations to STC and Mr. Sullivan.
- ➔ Hay Distribution to Improve Nutrient Management (Payment Scenario under Nutrient Management 590)
- ➔ Amending Soil Properties with Lime (Interim Standard)
- ➔ No formal recommendations made from the grazing lands subcommittee.



United States Department of Agriculture

May 10, 2023

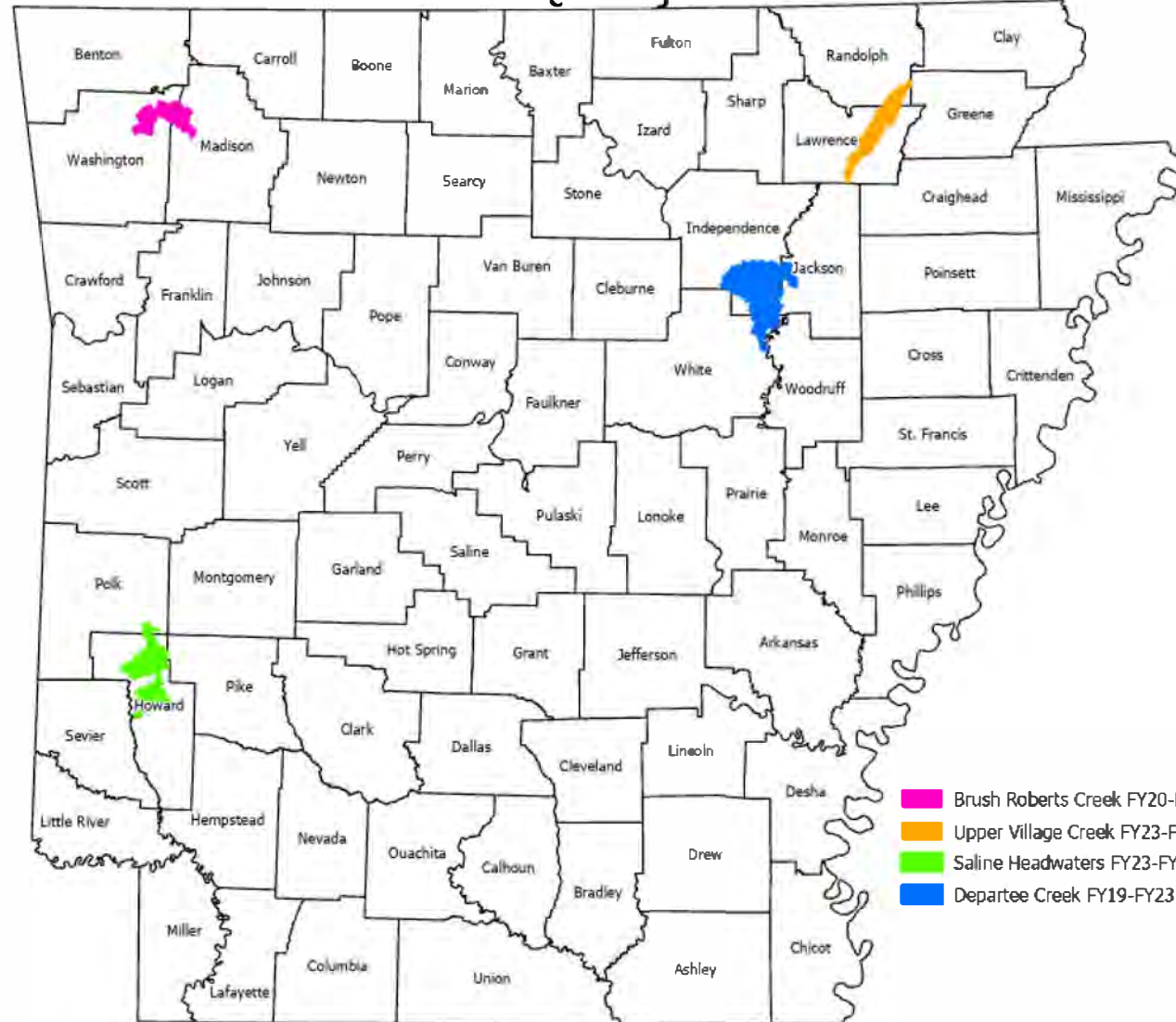


NRCS FY23 Spring Water Quality and Source Water Protection Subcommittee Update

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

FY23 NWQI Projects



- Brush Roberts Creek FY20-FY23
- Upper Village Creek FY23-FY26
- Saline Headwaters FY23-FY26
- Departee Creek FY19-FY23

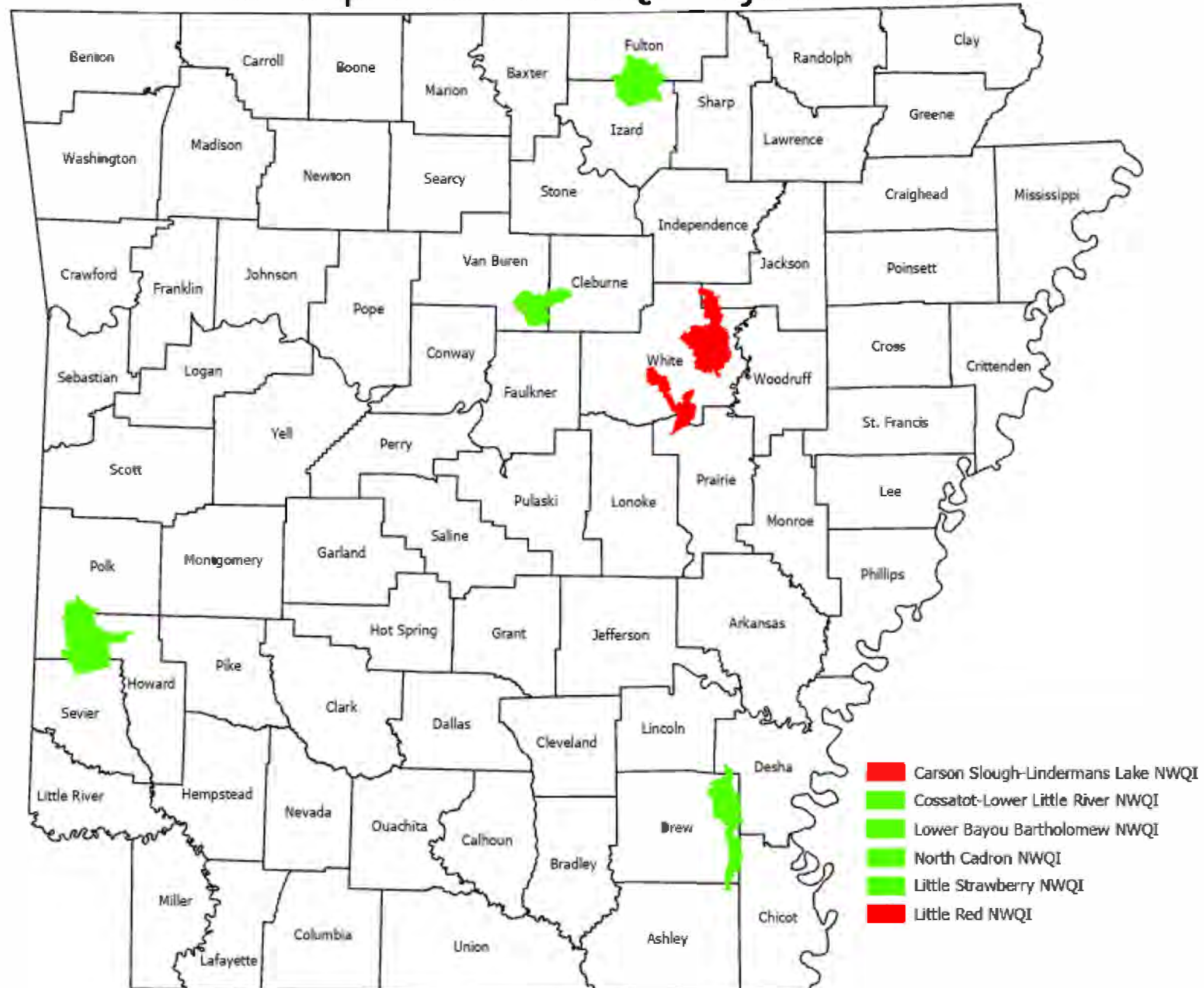
NWQI Project	Project Lifespan	Allocation	# Apps Ranked	Application \$	Preapproved
Brush Creek Roberts Creek	FY2020-FY2023	\$ 150,000.00	6	\$ 131,940.00	6
Departee Creek	FY2019-FY2023	\$ 313,689.60	13	\$ 1,314,900.00	2
Upper Village Creek	FY2023-FY2026	\$ 558,180.70	13	\$ 1,322,334.00	5
Saline Headwater	FY2023-FY2026	\$ 374,310.70	19	\$ 535,800.00	11
Total	Total projected for FY23	\$ 1,396,181.00	51	\$ 3,304,974.00	24

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



Non-Implemented NWQI Projects



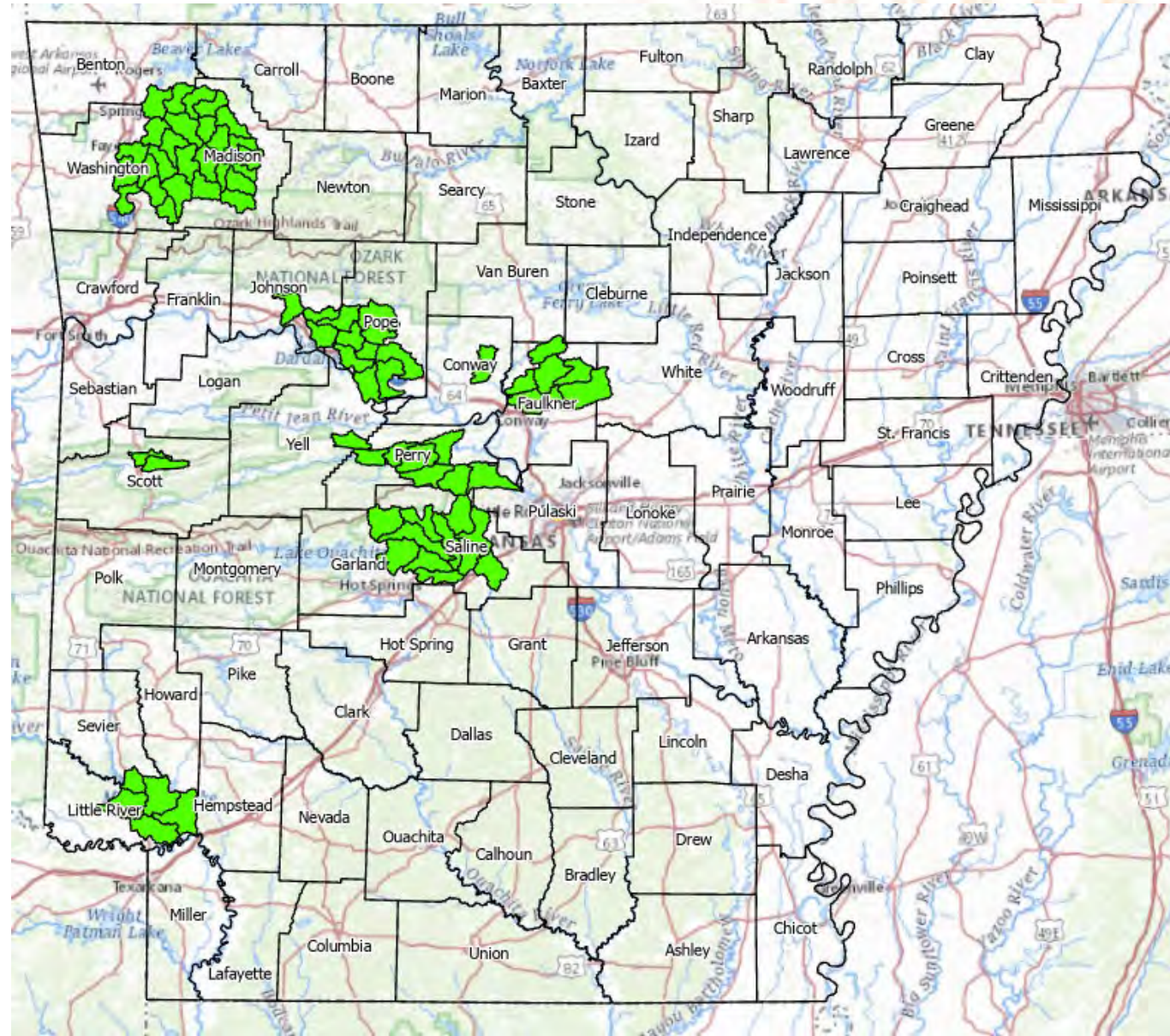
Recommendations

- **Water Quality Recommendations:**

1. No official recommendations from Water Quality Subcommittee

- **Source Water Protection Recommendations:**

1. Add Upper Cypress Creek Watershed to Priority Watershed list



High Priority Practice Recommendations

FY24 High Priority Practice Recommendations

- Practice 390 - Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- Practice 391 – Riparian Forest Buffer
- Practice 638 – Sediment Control Basin
- Practice 340 – Cover Crops
- Practice 570 – Stormwater Drainage (not offered in Arkansas)
- Practice 590 – Nutrient Management



Workgroups



- **Two-Stage Ditch Workgroup**
 - Goals for workgroup:
 1. Discuss and compare restoration methods across agencies and private groups
 - a) Locate gaps
 - b) Conduct trainings among professionals
 2. Increase awareness by developing consistent/clear communication
 3. Determine best sites by HUC-8 (headwaters)
- **Streambank Restoration Workgroup**
 - Goals for workgroup:
 1. Discuss and compare restoration methods across agencies and private groups
 - a) Locate gaps
 - b) Conduct trainings among professionals
 2. Research and promote small-scale, low-cost projects in upper reaches of watersheds
 3. Identify high impact projects within 8-digit HUC's
 4. Identify stakeholders and concerned parties within 8-digit HUC's
 5. Coordinate projects
- **Nutrient Management Workgroup**
 - Goals for workgroup
 1. Revisit Phosphorus Index (if necessary)
 2. Develop guidance documents for NRCS and other concerned parties
 3. Discuss waste transfer market possibilities for private sector





United States Department of Agriculture



Canton Ford
Water Quality Specialist
Work Phone: 501-388-2963
canton.ford@usda.gov



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Non-Discrimination Statement



In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



SPRING 2023 STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING (WATER QUANTITY REPORT)



- Partnership Reports
- Old Business
- New Business
- High Priority Practices



Lead:

Rodney Wright, Ph.D. State Water Management Engineer

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Spring 2023 Water Quantity Subcommittee

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Rural Water Association Facility

Lonoke, AR

Stephen Smedley, SCE



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

IWM Technicians and Managing Irrigation Water Resources

– Mike Hamilton



ARS/USGS AGWI Report

– Dr. Michele Reba

UA-Most Crop Per Drop, Training, Pitless Tailwater, etc.

– Dr. Chris Henry





PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

Discovery Farms – Dr. Mike Daniels



Grand Prairie Irrigation Project – Dennis Carman





United States Department of Agriculture

PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

Bayou Meto Irrigation Project

— Ed Swaim



NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION

Groundwater Conservation **TAX CREDITS**

Arkansas Landowners, you may be eligible for credits on the following:

Reservoirs

- 50% of the project cost incurred in construction, installation, or restoration of an impoundment of at least 20 acre-feet is available.
- Claim up to \$18,000 in one taxable year.
- Unused credit may be carried over for a maximum of 15 years.
- Maximum amount one can claim for this project is \$120,000.

Land Leveling

- 25% of the project cost incurred for a land leveling project is available.
- Claim up to \$18,000 in one taxable year.
- Unused credit may be carried over for a maximum of 15 years.
- Maximum amount one can claim for this project is \$35,000.

Conversion to Surface Water

- A. Inside a Critical Groundwater Area
- 50% of the project cost incurred converting from ground water use to surface water use is available.
 - Claim up to \$18,000 in one taxable year.
 - Unused credit may be carried over for a maximum of 15 years.
 - Maximum amount one can claim for this project is \$35,000.
- B. Outside a Critical Groundwater Area
- 25% of the project cost incurred converting from ground water use to surface water use is available.
 - Claim up to \$18,000 in one taxable year.
 - Unused credit may be carried over for a maximum of 15 years.
 - Maximum amount one can claim for this project is \$35,000.

Water Meters

- Receive 10% or 50% off cost of water meters installed on wells. *10% outside a critical groundwater area and 50% inside a critical groundwater area.
- No pre-approval required.

Contact your local conservation district office to start the application process.

Groundwater Conservation Tax Credit Program Update

Christy Steward

Environmental Program Coordinator

ANRD

464 - Irrigation Land Leveling

From NRCS Arkansas EQIP Guide:

...volume of earth to be moved per acre is **>100 cyl/ac.**

Committee supports a formal recommendation to add 462 to the list of Arkansas practices.

462 - Precision Land Forming and Smoothing, Scenario 1, Low Shaping, ...typically, is between **60 - 124 cyl/ac.**

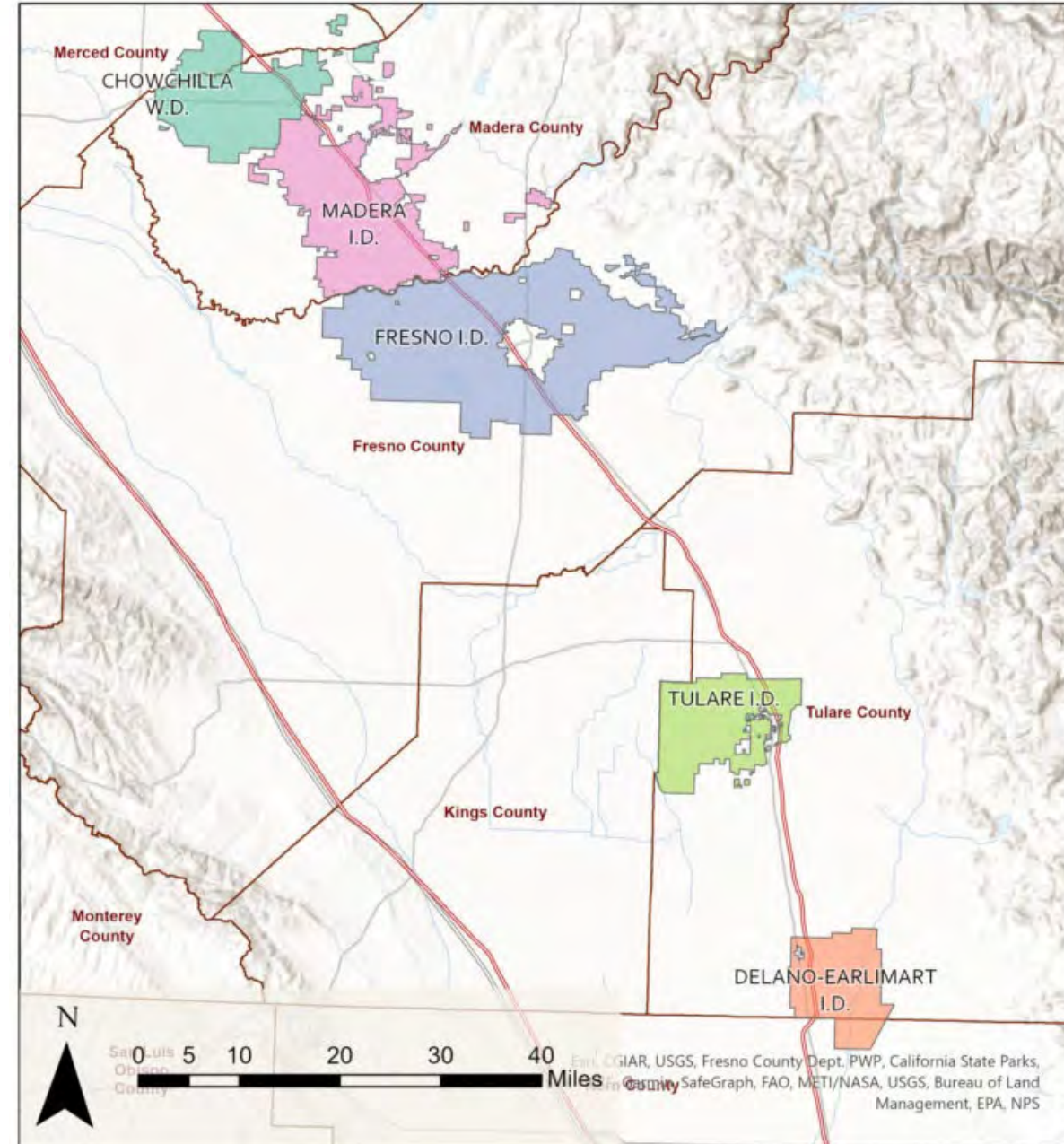


Interim Aquifer Recharge Practices (815 & 817)

ONLY projects located in the counties shown on the map are eligible for this pilot project.

California NRCS
2023 - 2nd yr of pilot

These interim practices must be field tested...



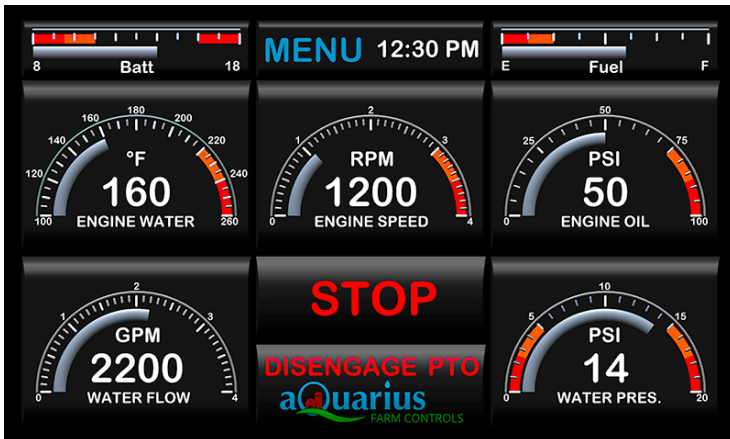


Devices
become
obsolete!



Timeframe related to IWM Equipment

Committee supports a formal recommendation to adjust the lifespan of pumping plant automation equipment in Arkansas



533, Pumping Plant Lifespan = 15 years
 449, IWM Device = 1 year
 443, Surge Valve = 15 years

Committee Supports Furrow Irrigated Rice Scenario in EQIP

Investigating rewriting 449 IWM,
Scenario 10 to clearly include FIR.



CSP - E449E
Convert from Cascade to
Furrow Irrigated Rice (FIR)
Production – reduce irrigation
water consumption



Soil Moisture by Feel Method

Sample in 1-foot increments to the root depth of the crop (3 feet during irrigation season)

Sample 3 or more sites per field

Vary sites according to crop, field size, soil texture, and soil stratification

Use a probe, auger, or shovel

Observe sample by proper methods in your hand

Compare feel and properties to photos and charts



Conclusion: Retain the Feel Method as an option for Basic IWM, make sure growers are educated on how to use the method.

Pitless Tailwater Recovery System

Dr. Chris Henry

Standalone Scenario?



Line Item?



Pitless Tailwater Recovery System

Itemized Funding – EQIP, 60%

Practice Code	Practice Name/Scenario Name	Payment Unit	Payment Rate	Contract Item Cap	Quantity	Contract Item Payment
533	Pumping Plant					\$10,854.00
	Electric-Powered Pump Less than or Equal to 5 HP , no pressure tank	Brake Horse Powe	\$1,068.81	\$ 66,000.00	5	\$5,344.05
	Advanced Pump Automation	Each	\$5,129.74	\$ 66,000.00	1	\$5,129.74
	Variable Frequency Drive	Brake Horse Powe	\$75.92	\$ 66,000.00	5	\$379.60
430	Irrigation Pipeline					\$2,202.00
	Intake or Res Discharge, Steel, IPS	Feet	\$25.12	\$ 75,900.00	9	\$226.08
	Stand Pipe, Steel, IPS	Feet	\$246.92	\$ 75,900.00	8	\$1,975.36
449	Irrigation Water Management					\$1,062.00
	Rice Intermittent Flood All Season	Acres	\$26.53	No Caps	40	\$1,061.20

Next Action:

Additional cost data from Dr. Henry, analyze options.

\$14,118



AGWI Ranking Adjustments

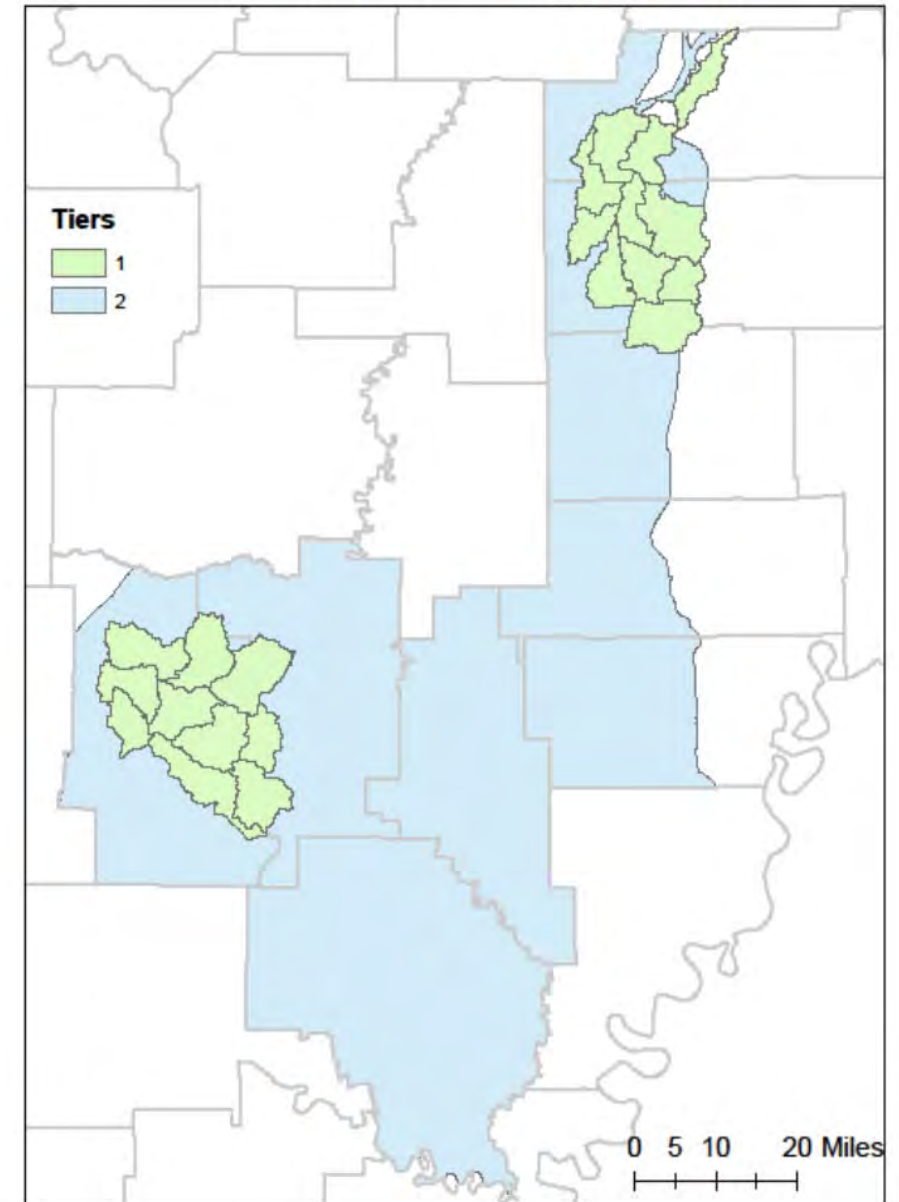
Committee was in favor of:

- Adjusting ranking to make reduced groundwater use a priority.
- Review Tiers system to make sure the most critical needs are addressed.

Also, would it be possible to give credit to applicants for irrigation education qualifications. (Master Irrigator Designation?)



2023 AGWI - Only 2 Tiers



Potential High Priority Practices

449 - Irrigation Water Management

464 - Leveling

447 - Delta Tailwater Pit

436 - Reservoir

430 - Pipeline



Can individual scenarios within a practice code be selected?
Committee recommends a re-vote if this is possible.



SPRING 2023 STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING (WATER QUANTITY REPORT)



- ✓ Partnership Reports
- ✓ Old Business
- ✓ New Business
- ✓ High Priority Practices



Helping People Help the Land



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



United States Department of Agriculture



Arkansas

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service



Small Farm and Urban Agriculture Subcommittee

Recommendations for the State Technical Committee - June 8, 2023

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



- **Based on discussions at the small farm and urban agriculture subcommittee meeting**
- **May 18, 2023**
- **24 members in attendance in-person and virtually**





United States Department of Agriculture

Recommendations



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Recommendations

- **Update the Conservation Practice Catalog**
- **Develop a resource manual that describes the conservation practices available for small-scale and urban farmers**
 - Potentially as a section of the updated Conservation Practice Catalog



Recommendations

- **Develop Myth Busters fact sheet for producers about working with NRCS**
 - Include information about eligibility (including how to be a customer when working on public lands and as a non-profit, public entity, or other non-traditional producer)
 - Particularly relevant for community gardens, school gardens, libraries, etc.



Recommendations

- Explore resource concerns and potential practices/scenarios that support:
 - Beekeeping
 - Backyard flocks





United States Department of Agriculture

Continued Planning and Partnership Engagement



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Planning and Partnership

- **Build conservation support for innovative agriculture such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and vertical farming**
 - Form Innovative Agriculture Working Group
 - Visit innovative ag operations
 - Discuss needs and how NRCS and partners can support
 - Develop recommendations



Planning and Partnership

- **Develop statewide urban ag toolkit**
 - Similar to the USDA Urban Ag at a Glance but for Arkansas
 - Include information about state agencies, organizations, and other resources
 - Potentially electronic for easy updating



Planning and Partnership

- **Develop training strategy for grant writing and management**
 - Navigating grants.gov
 - Tips for completing forms and application components
 - Managing budgets
 - Reporting



Planning and Partnership

- Continue to work to address historically underserved and socially disadvantaged producers' concerns
- Form Urban Engagement Working Group
 - Develop strategy for activities, field days, and trainings
 - Host field days
 - Include series for women interested in small-scale and urban farming





United States
Department of
Agriculture

A photograph of a community garden. In the foreground, there are several tall sunflowers with large green leaves and bright yellow heads. Below them, there are rows of zinnias in various colors, including pink, purple, and orange. The garden is set in a grassy area with trees and a fence in the background. A blue sign with a sunflower icon and the word "Corn" is visible in the middle ground.

Thank you!

Acting State Urban Conservationist
Katy Brantley Katy.Brantley@usda.gov

AR-LA Open Pine RCPP Progress Update

Elena Rubino, PhD & A. Priest

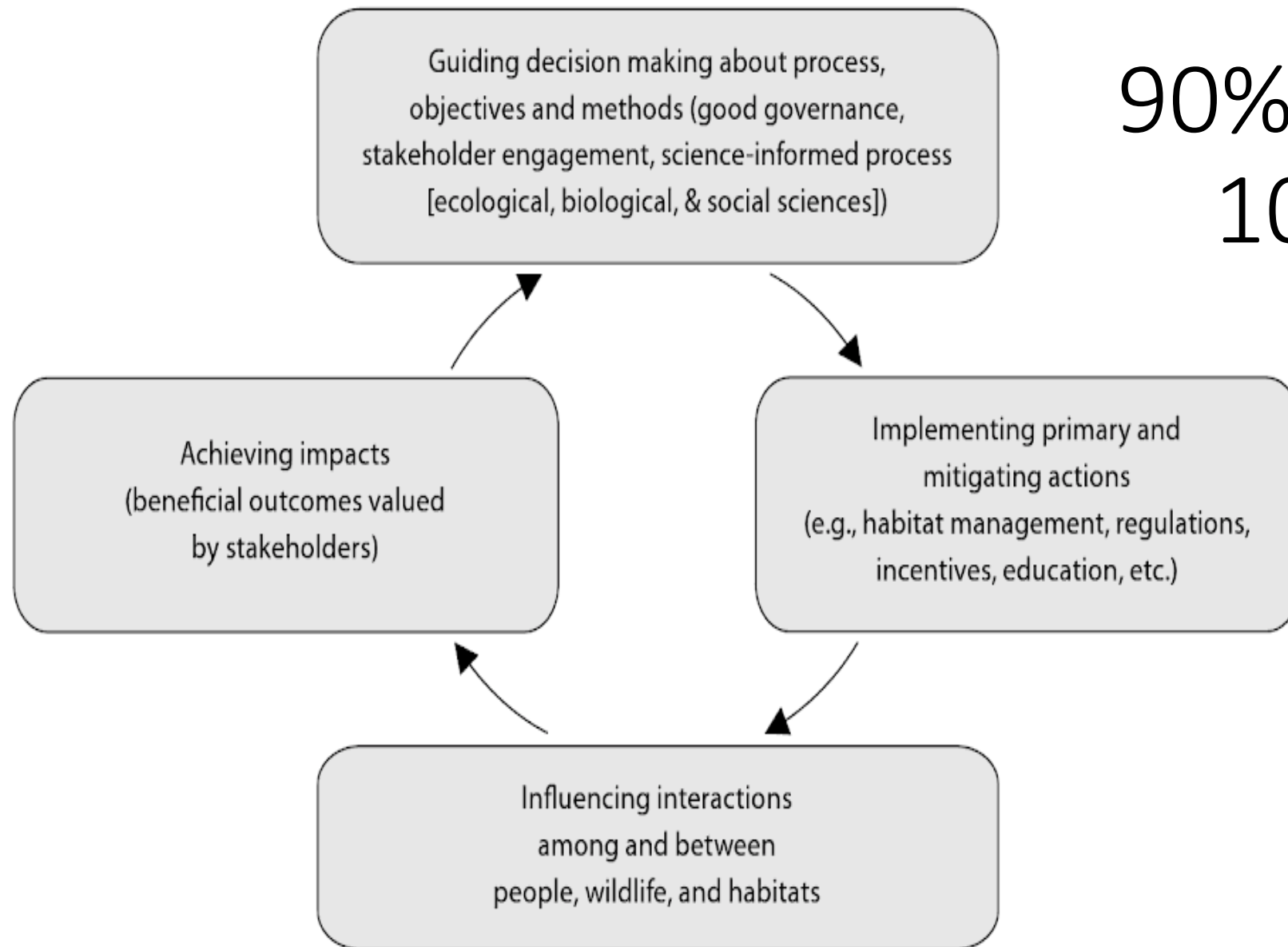


Integrating social science

“American Bird Conservancy and 19 partners plan to use several innovative tools and approaches” → social science to improve delivery!

- Expand program participation after years 1 and 2
 - Increase participation footprint (# of applications; particularly never applied)
 - Increase diversity of participation: Increase Historically Underserved landowners
 - First-time landowners (i.e., filing ownership taxes for <10 consecutive years)
 - Socially disadvantaged
 - Military veterans





90% PEOPLE
10% NR

Figure 1.2. Wildlife management process demonstrating elements of definition used in this book (after Riley et al. 2002)

Importance of the “human dimensions”

Dimension of NR management that focuses on:

- the interactions between people and NR or
- between people regarding NR

Explores how human attitudes and **behaviors** towards NR affect how NR are managed

Seeks to understand and forecast how human thoughts/decisions about NR can influence **individual behavior** and the shaping of policy and regulations



Integrating social science...how?

1. Delivery team experiences
with / perceptions of
landowners

2. Forest landowner
experiences with /
perceptions of programs

Ongoing meetings with social science working group team
(delivery team + social scientists)





Phase I: Delivery team

- Semi-structured interviews
 - Communicating with forest LOs
 - Enrolling forest LOs in programs
- 19 delivery team members (private lands biologists, foresters, NRCS DCs, etc.)
 - First/main point of contact with forest landowners
 - Provide programmatic and technical assistance

Barriers

Program
administration

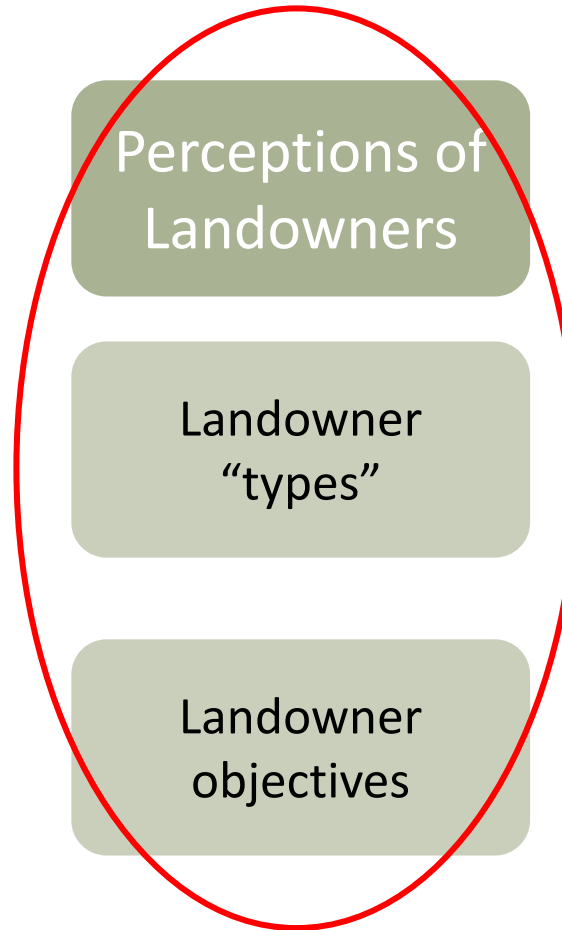
Outreach
complications

Distrust of govt

Facilitators

Organizational
partnerships

Management
practice changes

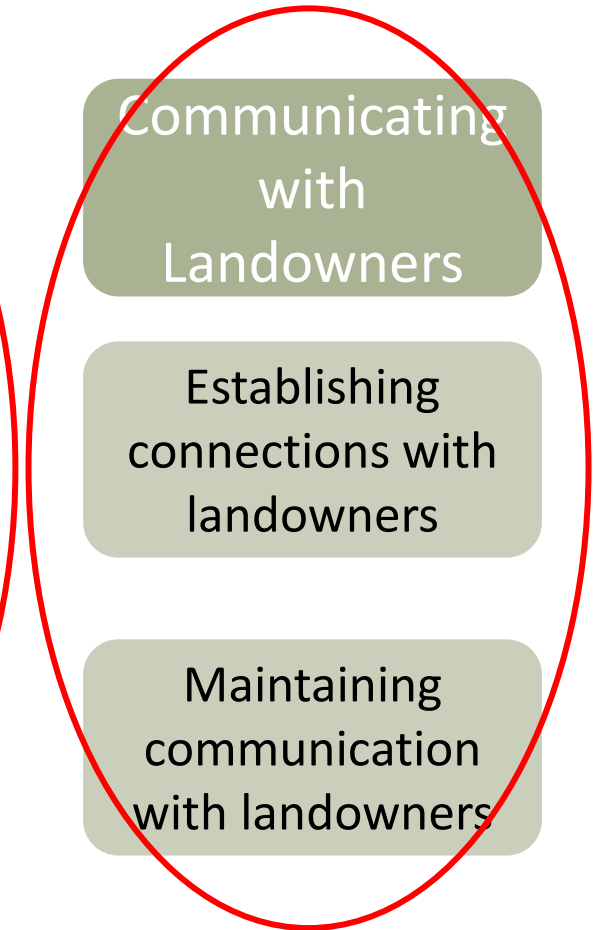


Perceptions of
Landowners

Landowner
"types"

Landowner
objectives

(farming → forestry)



Communicating
with
Landowners

Establishing
connections with
landowners

Maintaining
communication
with landowners

(bridge between phase I and
II: what delivery has been
doing → what LOs want)

Phase II: Forest Landowners (ongoing)

- In-person/online focus groups (n=8) with forest landowners (n=21); lunch + \$75 Amazon gift card
 - Familiarity/experience with programs
 - Preferred communications
 - 6 additional dates in June (2 AR, 2 LA, 2 Zoom)
- “Traditional” recruitment:
 - Snowballing from delivery team organizations
 - Connecting with related groups (e.g., Keeping It In the Family)



Phase II: Forest Landowners (ongoing)

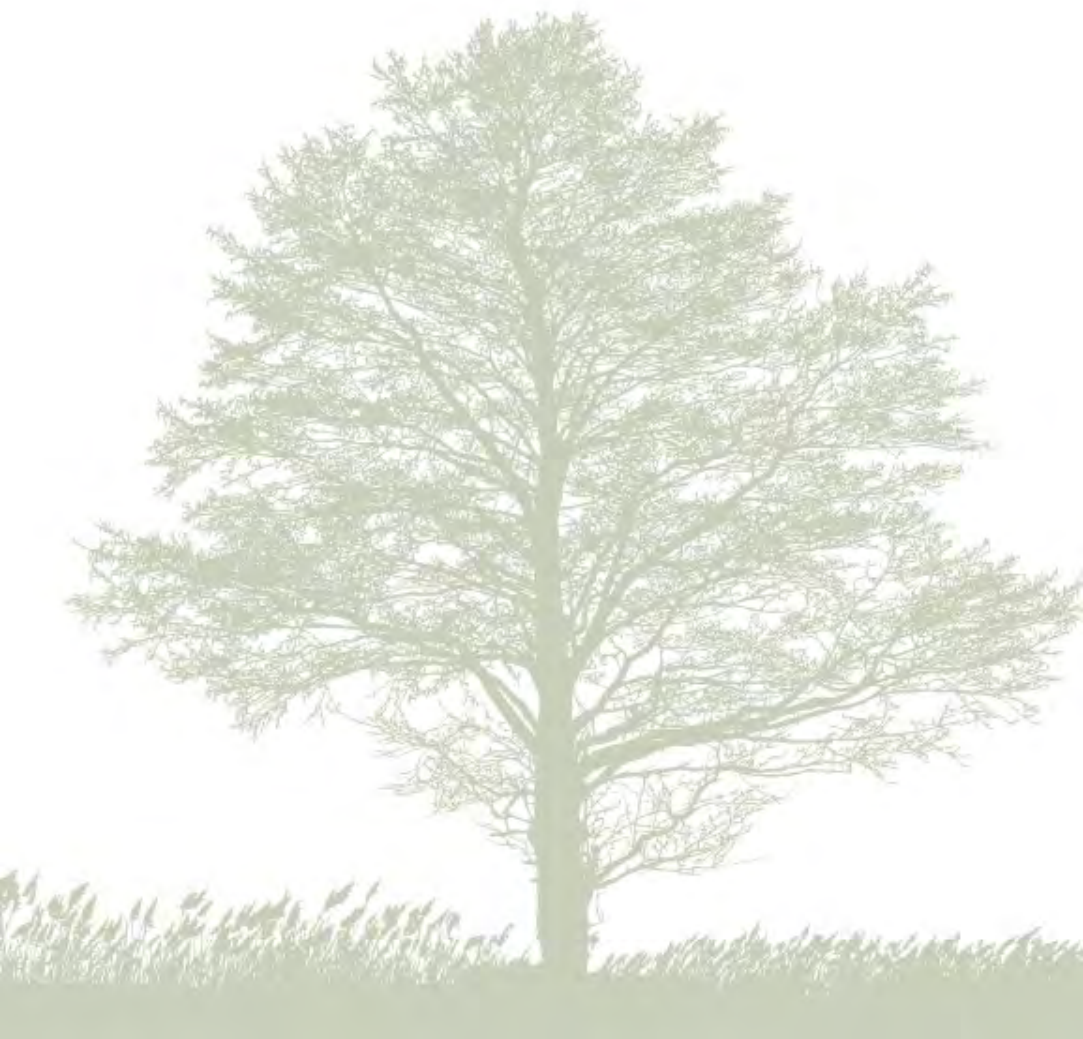
- “Innovative” recruitment (reaching NEW forest landowners—expanding footprint in terms of number AND diversity; gateway program?):
 - College/school emails (to parents)
 - Flyers in sporting goods stores
 - Faith-based communities
 - Advertising through loggers/foresters
 - Social media through energy companies? [leveraging partnerships]



Next Steps

- Continue Phase II forest landowner focus group data collection
- 7/31 Phase I report (delivery team results)

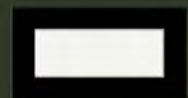




Elena Rubino, PhD
rubino@uamont.edu



Study Area



Project boundary



High Priority Area



The Arkansas-Louisiana Conservation Delivery Network Open Pine Landscape Restoration Partnership Regional Conservation Partnership Program



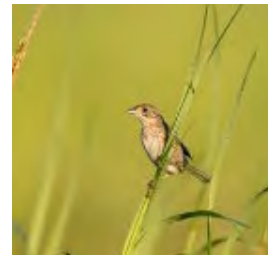
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) RCPPs → leveraging public-private partnerships for agriculture and conservation
- Fund on-the-ground conservation activities implemented by farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners [private lands]
 - Land management, land improvement, restoration practices
 - Land rentals
 - Entity-held easements

The Arkansas-Louisiana Conservation Delivery Network Open Pine Landscape Restoration Partnership Regional Conservation Partnership Program



LMVJV- short leaf pine

- AR-LA Open Pine RCPP
 - Improve forest health for wildlife in West Gulf Coastal Plain
 - Open pine forest management practices
 - 20+ partners
- Financial assistance:
 - Prescribed burns
 - Firebreaks
 - Restoration of woodlands and prairies
 - Wildlife habitat management
 - Forest stand improvement





NRCS, Climate and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

Clyde Williams, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)



- Signed into law by President Biden in August 2022
- The IRA provides NRCS with \$19.5 billion in **additional** funds for its **existing** conservation programs:
 - \$8.45 billion Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - \$4.95 billion Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
 - \$3.25 billion Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - \$1.4 billion Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
 - \$1 billion Conservation Technical Assistance
- **The IRA does not create any new programs** – it gives NRCS additional funds to **expand its existing climate efforts** and satisfy unmet demand
- IRA funds begin in **fiscal year 2023**; all IRA funds must be spent by **September 30, 2031**

NRCS, Producers and the IRA



- Agricultural producers can play a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, sequestering carbon, and deliver lasting solutions to the climate crisis
- NRCS supports farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners in meeting their conservation goals, ***regardless of the size, location, and type of operation***
- **IRA provides an opportunity to expand this support, with a focus on climate change mitigation**

The IRA Focuses on Mitigation

 United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List⁽¹⁾ FY2023				
Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ⁽²⁾ (acres)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Soil Health	327	Conservation Cover (acres)	(B000BFI1)	Buffer Bundles*
			(B000CPL24)	Cropland soil health management system*
			(B000CPL25)	Climate smart enhanced soil health*
	328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)	E327A	Conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects
			E327B	Establish Monarch butterfly habitat
			E328A	Resource conserving crop rotation
			E328B	Improved resource conserving crop rotation
			E328C	Soil health crop rotation
	329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)	E328P	Modifications to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E328Q	Crop rotation on recently converted CRP grass/legume cover for soil organic matter improvement
			E328R	Intertillage to improve soil health
			E328S	Perennial grain crop conservation rotation
			E329A	No till to reduce soil erosion
	332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)	E329B	No till to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
			E329C	No till to increase plant-available moisture
			E329D	No till system to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E329E	No till to reduce energy
				None Available
	340	Cover Crop (acres)	E340A	Cover crop to reduce soil erosion
			E340B	Intensive cover cropping to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E340C	Use of multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E340D	Intensive arched/vinyl floor cover cropping to increase soil health
			E340E	Cover crop to minimize soil compaction
			E340F	Cover crop to reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excess soil nutrients
			E340G	Cover crop to suppress excessive weed pressures and break pest cycles
			E340H	Using cover crops for biological strip till
			E345A	Reduced tillage to reduce soil erosion
			E345B	Reduced tillage to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
	345	Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (acres)	E345C	Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture
			E345D	Reduced tillage to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E345E	Reduced tillage to reduce energy use
			E386A	Enhanced field borders to reduce soil erosion along the edge(s) of a field
			E386B	Enhanced field borders to increase carbon storage along the edge(s) of the field
	386C	Field Borders (acres)	E386C	Enhanced field borders to decrease particulate emissions along the edge(s) of the field
			E386D	Enhanced field borders to increase food for pollinators along the edge(s) of a field
			E386E	Enhanced field borders to increase wildlife food and habitat along the edge(s) of a field
			E386F	Enhanced field borders to increase water quality impacts
			E386G	Enhanced field borders to increase water quality impacts
	399	Filter Strips (acres)	E399A	Extend existing filter strips to reduce water quality impacts
			E399B	Enhance a proposed waterway
	404	Mulching (acres)	E404A	Mulching to improve soil health
			E404B	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch
			E404C	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch
	505	Strategic Grazing (acres)		None Available
	601	Vegetative Barriers (feet)		
	603	Herbaceous Wind Barriers (feet)		

- The IRA directs NRCS to use the additional funds specifically for **climate change mitigation**.
- Mitigation activities **reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon storage**.
- FY23 list of **NRCS climate-smart mitigation activities**: nrcs.usda.gov/mitigation-activities.pdf
- NRCS is continually evaluating mitigation activities and IRA implementation approach and will update them as appropriate.
 - [Federal Register notice](#) (Nov. 21, 2022)



Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ⁽²⁾ (units)
Soil Health		
	327	Conservation Cover (acres)
	328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)
	329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)
	332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)
	340	Cover Crop (acres)
	345	Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (acres)
	386	Field Border (acres)
	393	Filter Strips (acres)
	412	Grassed Waterways (acres)
	484	Mulching (acres)
	585	Stripcropping (acres)
	601	Vegetative Barriers (feet)
	603	Herbaceous Wind Barriers (feet)

Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ⁽²⁾ (units)
Nitrogen Management	590	Nutrient Management (acres)
Livestock Partnership	366	Anaerobic Digester (number)
	632	Waste Separation Facility (number)*
Grazing and Pasture	512	Pasture and Hay Planting (acres)
	528	Prescribed Grazing (acres)
	550	Range Planting (acres)

Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ⁽²⁾ (units)
Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife Habitat	311	Alley Cropping (acres)
	342	Critical Area Planting (acres)
	379	Forest Farming (acres)
	380	Windbreaks/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (feet)
	381	Silvopasture (acres)
	390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover (acres)
	391	Riparian Forest Buffer (acres)
	420	Wildlife Habitat Planting (acres)*
	422	Hedgerow Planting (feet)
	612	Tree/Shrub Establishment (acres)
Restoration of Disturbed Lands	645	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (acres)
	666	Forest Stand Improvement (acres)*
Energy, Combustion, and Electricity Efficiency	453	Land Reclamation, Landslide Treatment (acres)
	543	Land Reclamation, Abandoned Mined Land (acres) ⁽²⁾
Wetlands	372	Combustion System Improvement (number)
	374	Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation (number)*
	672	Energy Efficient Building Envelope (number)*
Rice	670	Energy Efficient Lighting System (number)*
	657	Wetland Restoration (acres)*
	449	Irrigation Water Management (acres) ⁽⁴⁾

Facilitating Practices Enable Mitigation

Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

Tree Shrub Site Preparation (490)
Access Control (472)

Conservation Crop Rotation (328)

Cover Crops (340)
Irrigation Water Management (449)
Pest Management Conservation System (595)

Waste Separation Facility (632)

Waste Transfer (634)
Roofs and Covers (367)

Prescribed Grazing (528)

Watering Facility (614)
Stream Crossing (578)
Fence (382)
Livestock Shelter Structure (576)

Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)

Brush Management (314)
Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)
Prescribed Grazing (528)

- IRA funding can also be used for practices needed to *facilitate a mitigation practice*.
- Here are some examples of conservation systems that include mitigation practices and the practices that may be needed to facilitate them.



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov

Conservation Systems' Multiple Benefits



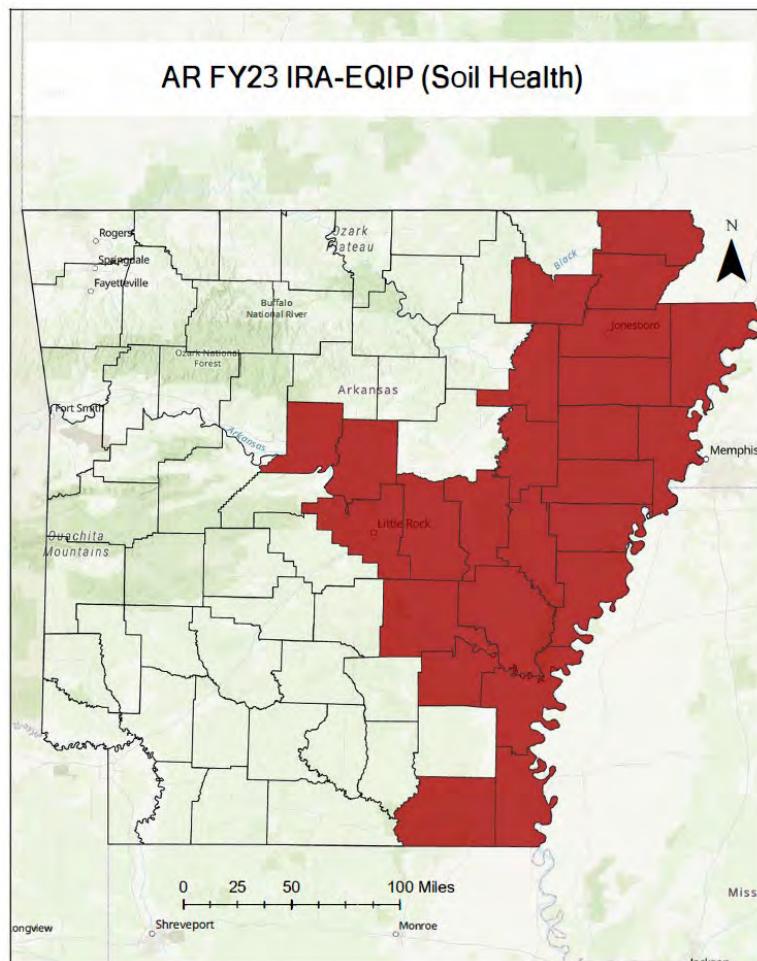
- Conservation systems may also provide other benefits besides climate change mitigation:
 - Reducing risks and vulnerabilities and building resilience to climate change impacts (***climate change adaptation***)
 - Addressing other resource concerns like soil health, water quality, pollinator and wildlife habitat, and air quality
- Although many conservation practices can provide other benefits, **practices without mitigation benefits are not eligible for IRA funding unless they are needed to facilitate a mitigation practice.**

NRCS Arkansas IRA-EQIP Strategy for FY23

Implementing Soil Health Management System via the planning and implementation of the following:

- CPS 340-Cover Crop
- CPS 328-Conservation Crop Rotation
- CPS 329-No Till
- CPS 345- Reduced Till
- CPS 590- Nutrient Management

Applications
processed via ACT
NOW.



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS Arkansas IRA-CSP Strategy for FY23

Focus is within counties that historically have had high participation with CSAF activities.



For Interested Producers



- Everyone has a part to play when it comes to delivering climate solutions, regardless of the size, location, or type of your operation
- If you've never applied, NRCS can help
- If you've applied before, and were not approved due to limited funding, try again in upcoming years!
- NRCS is also working hard to improve producer access to its programs and provide financial and technical assistance to improve your farm, ranch, urban operation or forest land
- Contact NRCS at your [local service center](#)

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov

Applying for Programs in FY23 and beyond



- NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round.
- Producers interested in **EQIP** or **CSP** should apply by their [state's ranking dates](#) to be considered for funding in the current cycle. Funding is provided through a competitive process.

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov

Looking Ahead at IRA for FY24 and Beyond: IRA-EQIP

- Currently working to expand into several other Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories including:
 - Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife
 - Rice
 - Nitrogen Management
 - Grazing and Pasture
 - Soil Health
 - Energy, Combustion, and Electricity Efficiency

Looking Ahead at IRA for FY24 and Beyond: IRA-CSP

- Overall goal is to align with CSP-Classic, which encompasses entire state, while placing emphasis on the climate mitigation enhancements.
- This approach would include opportunities for agricultural land (cropland and pastureland) as well as non-industrial private forestland throughout the state.

Looking Ahead at IRA for FY24 and Beyond: IRA-RCPP

- For IRA RCPP, NRCS will prioritize project proposals that target delivery of project assistance to directly improve soil carbon, reduce nitrogen losses, or reduce, capture, avoid, or sequester carbon dioxide, methane, or nitrous oxide emissions associated with agriculture production.
- After proposal selection and programmatic partnership agreement (PPA) negotiations, NRCS may use IRA funds to obligate LMR producer contracts consistent with a negotiated PPA

Next Steps for FY24 IRA Planning

- Working through steps for additional practices to be considered/added to the mitigation practice list
- The current listed practices have quantifiable carbon sequestration and/or GHG reduction methodologies described in COMET-Planner.
- The suggested approach is to ensure that state, local, university, etc. input is considered.
- Practices will be evaluated against two primary criteria including Mitigation Benefit and Benefit Estimation Methodology

Next Steps for FY24 IRA Planning

- Some of the potential AR recommendations to date include:
 - Conservation Practices supporting energy and water savings
 - CPS 436- Irrigation Reservoir
 - CPS 447- Irrigation and Drainage Tailwater Recovery
 - CPS 464- Irrigation Land Leveling
 - CPS 443- Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface
 - CPS 808/336- Soil Carbon Amendment
 - ICPS 810- Annual Forage Planting
 - Wetland conservation practices to support IRA-ACEP

IRA and Other Climate Efforts

- Supporting [Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry \(CSAF\)](#) is a priority, including recent efforts to [improve nutrient management](#), [support soil carbon monitoring](#) and [streamline cover crop enrollment](#). Visit farmers.gov/climate-smart to learn more.
- [NRCS's Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#) identifies climate vulnerabilities and actions to integrate climate change into NRCS programs, operations and decision-making.
- [USDA Climate Hubs](#) develop and deliver science-based information and technologies
- The [Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities](#) opportunity invests \$3.1 billion for 141 projects designed to expand markets for American producers who produce climate-smart commodities



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

[**nrcs.usda.gov**](https://nrcs.usda.gov)

IRA and Other Conservation Efforts

- [SMART Nutrient Management](#) – NRCS is streamlining, using existing tools, and standing up new initiatives to expand the availability of nutrient management assistance for producers. Funding from the IRA will support producers implementing nutrient management climate-mitigation strategies.



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List^[1] FY2023



Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ^[2] (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Soil Health			B000BFF1	Buffer Bundle#1*
			B000CPL24	Cropland soil health management system*
			B000CPL25	Climate smart advanced soil health*
	327	Conservation Cover (acres)	E327A	Conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects
			E327B	Establish Monarch butterfly habitat
	328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)	E328A	Resource conserving crop rotation
			E328B	Improved resource conserving crop rotation
			E328E	Soil health crop rotation
			E328F	Modifications to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E328G	Crop rotation on recently converted CRP grass/legume cover for soil organic matter improvement
			E328N	Intercropping to improve soil health
			E328O	Perennial grain crop conservation rotation
	329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)	E329A	No till to reduce soil erosion
			E329B	No till to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
			E329C	No till to increase plant-available moisture
			E329D	No till system to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E329E	No till to reduce energy
	332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)	None Available	
	340	Cover Crop (acres)	E340A	Cover crop to reduce soil erosion
			E340B	Intensive cover cropping to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E340C	Use of multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E340D	Intensive orchard/vineyard floor cover cropping to increase soil health
			E340F	Cover crop to minimize soil compaction
			E340G	Cover crop to reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excess soil nutrients
			E340H	Cover crop to suppress excessive weed pressures and break pest cycles
			E340I	Using cover crops for biological strip till
	345	Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (acres)	E345A	Reduced tillage to reduce soil erosion
			E345B	Reduced tillage to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
			E345C	Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture
			E345D	Reduced tillage to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E345E	Reduced tillage to reduce energy use
	386	Field Border (acres)	E386A	Enhanced field borders to reduce soil erosion along the edge(s) of a field
			E386B	Enhanced field borders to increase carbon storage along the edge(s) of the field
			E386C	Enhanced field borders to decrease particulate emissions along the edge(s) of the field
			E386D	Enhanced field borders to increase food for pollinators along the edge(s) of a field
			E386E	Enhanced field borders to increase wildlife food and habitat along the edge(s) of a field
	393	Filter Strips (acres)	E393A	Extend existing filter strip to reduce water quality impacts
	412	Grassed Waterways (acres)	E412A	Enhance a grassed waterway
	484	Mulching (acres)	E484A	Mulching to improve soil health
			E484B	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch
			E484C	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch
	585	Stripcropping (acres)	None Available	
	601	Vegetative Barriers (feet)		
	603	Herbaceous Wind Barriers (feet)		

Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ⁽²⁾ (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Nitrogen Management	590	Nutrient Management (acres)	E590A	Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses
			E590B	Reduce risks of nutrient loss to surface water by utilizing precision agriculture technologies
			E590C	Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses on pasture
			E590D	Reduce risks of nutrient losses to surface and groundwater by increasing setback awareness via precision technology
Livestock Partnership	366	Anaerobic Digester (number)	None Available	
	632	Waste Separation Facility (number)*		
Grazing and Pasture	512	Pasture and Hay Planting (acres)	E512A	Cropland conversion to grass-based agriculture to reduce soil erosion
			E512B	Forage plantings that help increase organic matter in depleted soils
			E512C	Cropland conversion to grass for soil organic matter improvement
			E512D	Forage plantings that help increase organic matter in depleted soils
			E512E	Forage and biomass planting that produces feedstock for biofuels or energy production
			E512I	Establish pollinator and/or beneficial insect and/or monarch habitat
			E512J	Establish wildlife corridors to provide habitat continuity or access to water
			E512L	Diversifying forage base with interseeding forbs and legumes to increase pasture quality
			E512M	Forage plantings that improve wildlife habitat cover and shelter or structure and composition
	528	Prescribed Grazing (acres)	E528A	Maintaining quantity and quality of forage for animal health and productivity
			E528D	Grazing management for improving quantity and quality of food or cover and shelter for wildlife
			E528E	Improved grazing management for enhanced plant structure and composition for wildlife
			E528F	Stockpiling cool season forage to improve structure and composition or plant productivity and health
			E528G	Improved grazing management on pasture for plant productivity and health with monitoring activities
			E528H	Prescribed grazing to improve/maintain riparian and watershed function-elevated water temperature
			E528I	Grazing management that protects sensitive areas -surface or ground water from nutrients
			E528J	Prescribed grazing on pastureland that improves riparian and watershed function
			E528L	Prescribed grazing that improves or maintains riparian and watershed function-erosion
			E528M	Grazing management that protects sensitive areas from gully erosion
			E528O	Clipping mature forages to set back vegetative growth for improved forage quality
			E528P	Implementing Bale or Swath Grazing to increase organic matter and reduce nutrients in surface water
			E528R	Management intensive rotational grazing
			E528S	Soil Health Improvements on Pasture
			E528T	Grazing to Reduce Wildfire Risks on Forests
	550	Range Planting (acres)	E550A	Range planting for increasing/maintaining organic matter
			E550B	Range planting for improving forage, browse, or cover for wildlife

Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ^[2] (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife Habitat	311	Alley Cropping (acres)	None Available	
	342	Critical Area Planting (acres)		
	379	Forest Farming (acres)		
	380	Windbreaks/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (feet)		
	381	Silvopasture (acres)	E381A	Silvopasture to improve wildlife habitat
	390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover (acres)	E390A	Increase riparian herbaceous cover width for sediment and nutrient reduction
			E390B	Increase riparian herbaceous cover width to enhance wildlife habitat
	391	Riparian Forest Buffer (acres)	E391A	Increase riparian forest buffer width for sediment and nutrient reduction
			E391B	Increase stream shading for stream temperature reduction
			E391C	Increase riparian forest buffer width to enhance wildlife habitat
	420	Wildlife Habitat Planting (acres)*	E420A	Establish pollinator habitat*
			E420B	Establish monarch butterfly habitat*
	422	Hedgerow Planting (feet)	None Available	
	612	Tree/Shrub Establishment (acres)	E612B	Planting for high carbon sequestration rate
			E612C	Establishing tree/shrub species to restore native plant communities
			E612G	Tree/shrub planting for wildlife food
	645	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (acres)	E645B	Manage existing shrub thickets to provide adequate shelter for wildlife
			E645C	Edge feathering for wildlife cover
	666	Forest Stand Improvement (acres)*	E666A	Maintaining and improving forest soil quality*
			E666D	Forest management to enhance understory vegetation*
			E666E	Reduce height of the forest understory to limit wildfire risk*
			E666F	Reduce forest stand density to create open stand structure*
			E666H	Increase on-site carbon storage*
			E666I	Crop tree management for mast production*
			E666J	Facilitating oak forest regeneration*
			E666K	Creating structural diversity with patch openings*
			E666L	Forest Stand Improvement to rehabilitate degraded hardwood stands*
			E666P	Summer roosting habitat for native forest-dwelling bat species*
			E666R	Forest songbird habitat maintenance*
			E666S	Facilitating longleaf pine regeneration and establishment*
Restoration of Disturbed Lands	453	Land Reclamation, Landslide Treatment (acres)	None Available	
	543	Land Reclamation, Abandoned Mined Land (acres) ^[3]		
Energy, Combustion, and Electricity Efficiency	372	Combustion System Improvement (number)	None Available	
	374	Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation (number)*		
			E533C	Install VFDs on pumps ^[4] *
			E533D	Switch fuel source for pumps ^[4] *
	672	Energy Efficient Building Envelope (number)*	None Available	
	670	Energy Efficient Lighting System (number)*		
Wetlands	657	Wetland Restoration (acres)*	None Available	
Rice	449	Irrigation Water Management (acres) ^[4]	E449B	Alternated Wetting and Drying (AWD) of rice fields

NOTES:

In addition to the designated CSAF mitigation activities listed, conservation practices that facilitate the management or the function of a CSAF mitigation activity but may not achieve the desired effects on their own (and may not have a quantifiable benefit) may be planned as applicable. Examples: Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) may need facilitating practices such as Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490) or Access Control (472). Conservation Crop Rotation (328) may need facilitating practices such as Pest Management Conservation System (595), Cover Crops (340), or Irrigation Water Management (449). Waste Separation Facility may need facilitating practices such as Waste Transfer (634) or Roofs and Covers (367). Prescribed Grazing (528) may need facilitating practices such as Watering Facility (614), Stream Crossing (578), Fence (382), or Livestock Shelter Structure (576). Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) may need facilitating practices such as Brush Management (314), Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315), or Prescribed Grazing (528).

Activities highlighted have been added to the list in FY23.

*Noted activities are added to the list as “provisional.” These practices, associated enhancements, and bundles are being added under the premise that they may provide benefits, and a quantification methodology will be evaluated during the fiscal year. Practices may be removed from the mitigation practice list in a subsequent fiscal year if quantification is not possible.

- [1] Unless otherwise noted, listed practices have quantifiable carbon sequestration and/or GHG reduction methodologies described in COMET-Planner (www.comet-planner.com). New practices will be added as science progresses and scientifically defensible quantification methodologies are identified to accompany existing and new NRCS conservation practice standards.
- [2] The included Conservation Practice Standard links provide national information. Please consult the NRCS office at your local USDA Service Center for any local and state level criteria. Visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find contact information for your local office.
- [3] Effective Oct 1, 2022, Land Reclamation, Currently Mined Land (544) was archived and has been removed from this mitigation list, the practice was combined into Land Reclamation, Abandoned Mined Land (543). See NHCP Notice 172 for more information.
- [4] Conservation Practice Standards Irrigation Water Management (449) and Pumping Plant (533) are not GHG mitigation practice standards. The only atmospheric-beneficial applications are with Enhancement Activities E533C, E533D, and E449B or when 449 is implemented as part of an alternated wetting and drying (AWD) system in rice fields.





United States Department of Agriculture

EQIP Updates

Corey Cornelious
EQIP Program Manager, Program Staff

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

FY23 EQIP High Tunnel State Initiative

- The High Tunnel signup announcement was released on 2/6/2023
- It was released as an ACT NOW signup which allowed us to fund applications immediately upon receipt if they met the ranking threshold of 100 points.
- We established an initial targeted goal of 150 EQIP contracts with high tunnels.
- So far, we have 120 contracts obligated with high tunnels and others that are being worked which will allow us to reach our goal by the end of the fiscal year

Migratory Bird Resurgence Initiative (MBRI)

- New Initiative getting ready to be released that focuses on helping and improving natural resources and habitat for migratory birds.
- Similar to the old Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI) program we had in the early 2010s.
- Primary practice will be CPS 646 Shallow Water Development and Management.
- Signup will be announced statewide and possibly by the end of this week or early next week that will run through early July.
- We may have up to \$4 Million dollars to spend in this initiative.

FY23 EQIP High Priority Practices

- NRCS, with input from the State technical committee, may designate up to 10 practices to be eligible for increased payments for conservation practices that
- Address specific causes of ground or surface water impairment relating to excessive nutrients.
- Address the conservation of water and declining aquifers, and mitigate drought
- Meet other environmental priorities and other priority resource concerns identified in habitat or other area restoration plans; or
- Are geographically targeted to address a natural resource concern in a specific watershed
- Practices identified as a priority through assessments completed at the area or State level
- Practices that have high potential for conservation benefit but are underutilized
- Specific geographic areas where a practice is historically underutilized, or
- Practices with an underutilized practice purpose (e.g., cover crop purpose is to improve water quality by planting crops that take up excess soil nutrients)

FY23 EQIP High Priority Practices

- Practice: 391 - Riparian Forest Buffer
- Practice: 646 - Shallow Water Development and Management
- Practice: 420 - Wildlife Habitat Planting
- Practice: 590 - Nutrient Management
- Practice: 643 - Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities
- Practice: 325 - High Tunnel
- Practice: 810 - Annual Forages for Grazing Systems
- Practice: 329 - Residue & Tillage Management, No Till
- Practice: 441 - Irrigation System, Micro-irrigation (Applicable only in the Urban funding categories)

Decisions needed for FY24 EQIP

- Final HPP recommendations with justifications from subcommittees
- Final recommendations on proposed conservation practices changes related to:
 - Practice caps
 - Payment rates (i.e changes need due increased costs of material)
- Please submit final recommendations to me by August 18, 2023



United States Department of Agriculture

CSP Updates

Sherri DeGraphenreed
CSP Program Manager, Program Staff

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center



Top 10 Enhancements Planned-CSP FY2022

E595B	Reduce risk of pesticides in water and air by utilizing IPM PAMS techniques	451			
E590A	Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses	316			
E646A	Close structures to capture and retain rainfall for waterfowl and wading bird winter habitat	288			
E595A	Reduce risk of pesticides in surface water by utilizing precision pesticide application techniques	263			
E345A	Reduced tillage to reduce soil erosion	248			
E328D	Leave standing grain crops unharvested to benefit wildlife	237			
E590B	Reduce risks of nutrient loss to surface water by utilizing precision agriculture technologies	162			
E340A	Cover crop to reduce soil erosion	156			
E647A	Manipulate vegetation on fields with captured rainfall for waterfowl & wading bird winter habitat	130			
595	Pest Management Conservation System	123			

CSP New Enhancements

- B000CPL25 Climate Smart Advanced Soil Health
- B000FST3 Forest Bundle #3
- E328P Low Nitrogen Requirement Annual Crop Rotation
- E533C Install VFDs on pumping plants
- E533D Switch fuel source for pumps
- E595G Reduced resistance risk by utilizing PAMS techniques

CSP OPPORTUNITIES-CSP ORGANICS

- This is funding pool can be used by certified and transitioning too an organic system producers.
- Land uses- cropland, pasture, forestry, AAL
- Comprehensive Conservation Plan (requires use of TSP) equivalent to CAP PLAN in EQIP
- B000CPL22 Crop Bundle #22
- Enhancements available if within organic production guidelines

CSP OPPORTUNITIES - CSP URBAN

- IRRIGATION WATER MANGEMENT
- COVER CROP
- REDUCE TILL/NO TILL
- POLLINATOR HABITAT
- CONSERVATION CROP ROTATION
- RAIN CATCHMENT SYSTEM
- RAISED BEDS
- LOW TUNNEL
- MULCHING (NATRUAL & PLASTIC
- ONE ACRE OR LESS FENCING
- CRITICAL AREA PLANTING

CSP OPPORTUNITIES - CSP URBAN

- \$ 1500 Minimum land payment
- Available Statewide
- Sign-up deadline June 16, 2023
- All general CSP rules including stewardship threshold being met.



United States Department of Agriculture

2023 Local Led Work Group Summary

Lori Barker
Resource Conservationist, Program Staff

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

2023 LLWG Summary

- ✓ 21 Questions across different program, policies and resource issues in Arkansas
- ✓ Great response across Arkansas LLWG providing input to each question with ideas on what programs , practices or outreach resources needed
- ✓ This information is summarized and will be provided to the subcommittees to address the LLWG concerns for FY 2023

Local Input

1. Are there any impaired watersheds or water bodies in the county?
2. What type project(s) would provide benefit and how? (i.e. MRBI, NWQI)
3. Provide any recommendations for new/revised practices needed, including adjustments to payment rates and caps.
4. Are current cultural resource review processes impacting conservation implementation in the county?
5. Does your county receive adequate funding for CSP and/or EQIP?



Agreements and Conservation Innovation Grants

Each year, Arkansas NRCS announces competitive funding opportunities for partners and groups to assist with conservation technical/outreach assistance projects and identifying innovative approaches, through agreements and/or Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). CIG is a component of the EQIP Program. It is a grant program used to apply or demonstrate previously proven technology. It does not fund research projects. CIG is an effort to address some of the state's most pressing natural resource conservation needs and in hopes to utilize these successful projects for new technology or innovative solutions for EQIP

6. Are there any areas of interest where we should focus to achieve higher levels of conservation?
7. Is your local work group interested in seeking funding for a special project or initiative under any of the covered programs?
8. Describe ideas for special technical assistance or outreach projects that would benefit the county.

Conservation Stewardship Program

9. Rate local customer interest in participating in CSP.

10. Does CSP offer enough activities beneficial to customers' agricultural operations? Does this vary whether the application is for a Renewal CSP vs CSP Classic?

11. What improvements are recommended to deliver the program more efficiently?

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

12. What improvements are recommended to deliver the program more efficiently?

Source Water Protection

2018 Farm Bill included specific provisions to protect sources of drinking water by identifying practices that have a significant water quality or water quantity benefit and implementing those practices where source waters can be protected or improved.

13. Identify priority areas for the protection of source waters for drinking water.

14. Is there local support for implementation of the voluntary adoption of conservation to protect source water when selecting priority areas?

Customer Service

15. What is the most significant barrier to providing high quality customer service in the county?

16. Are there opportunities to increase the outreach for underserved customers within the county?

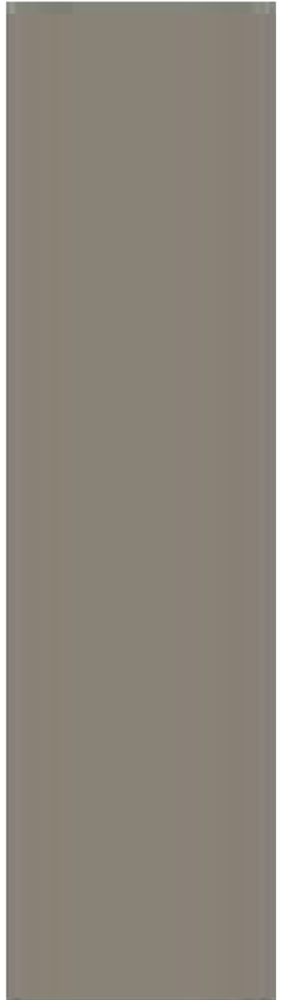


Climate Smart Ag

17. Is there additional interest in the county to address any of the following climate mitigation categories through Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry: *Soil Health, Nitrogen Management, Livestock Partnership, Grazing and Pasture, Agroforestry/Forestry/Upland Wildlife Habitat, or Rice?*

Equity and Social Justice

18. Does the program participation data reflect participation by women, minorities, and persons with disabilities?



Urban Agriculture

19. With Urban Ag demand increasing across Arkansas, can your county utilize the Urban Agriculture Programs?



IRA EQIP and CSP Program

20. Does the LLWG have any recommendations for additional practices, systems, and/or approaches to be considered for the FY24 implementation of IRA-EQIP?

21. Does the LLWG have any recommendations for additional enhancements, systems, and/or approaches to be considered for the FY24 implementation of IRA-CSP?



United States Department of Agriculture

2024 Conservation Innovation Grant: Areas of Concerns **DRAFTS**

2024 CIG Areas of Concern : Nutrient and Sediment Reduction in Impaired Watersheds **DRAFT**

- Demonstrate effectiveness of “high potential” conservation practices (such as drainage management, wetlands designed for nutrient reduction, conservation buffers, cropping systems including cover crops, manure management with bioremediation application, in-field nutrient management) in reducing nutrient leaching and runoff and document benefits in small watersheds



2024 CIG Areas of Concern: Irrigation **DRAFT**

- Demonstrate innovative irrigation water management techniques documenting water quality improvements associated with irrigation systems in Arkansas;
- Demonstrate drone use with Irrigation Water Management uniformity and crop monitoring
- Micro irrigation including underground Micro in High Tunnels



2024 CIG Areas of Concern: Irrigation **DRAFT**

- Energy savings on pumping and other farm operations related to irrigation.
- Demonstrate irrigation water use efficiency in hydroponic crop production and detail the cost (installation and inputs) vs production of multiple alternative crops relative to irrigation(6 options under topic)



2024 CIG Areas of Concern: Soil Health **DRAFT**

- Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of cover crops, crop rotations, tillage and/or soil amendments on soil chemical, physical, and/or biological properties and their relationships with nutrient cycling, soil water availability, and plant growth in areas that have been land leveled in Arkansas;
- Transfer and demonstration of row rice technology can improve soil health, reduce irrigation, and allow rice production to use no-till methods. Demonstration of the use of soil health practices (i.e. cover crop, nutrient management, irrigation water management) in a row rice cropping system, including cost-benefit information and yields.



2024 CIG Areas of Concern: Soil Health **DRAFT**

- Promote practice that further develops soil carbon amendments to increase organic matter and improve aggregate stability that will increase irrigation water efficiency and support microbial communities
- Soil Preparation addressing soil health in high tunnels.



2024 CIG Areas of Concern: Soil Health ***DRAFT***

- Soil Armor (residue) and Proper Soil Temperature while Planting Cover Crops and Improving Plant Health
- Seasonal planting dates for high tunnel
- Forage gaps in a season forage system.
- Reassessing rates of nutrients, sources, and effectiveness





United States Department of Agriculture



Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) & Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Updates

Dianne Schlenker
Initiatives Coordinator

RCPP POC
Telework: 501-412-9852
dianne.schlenker@usda.gov

Roger Cousins
Partnership Program Specialist
Telework: 870-805-8073
roger.cousins@usda.gov

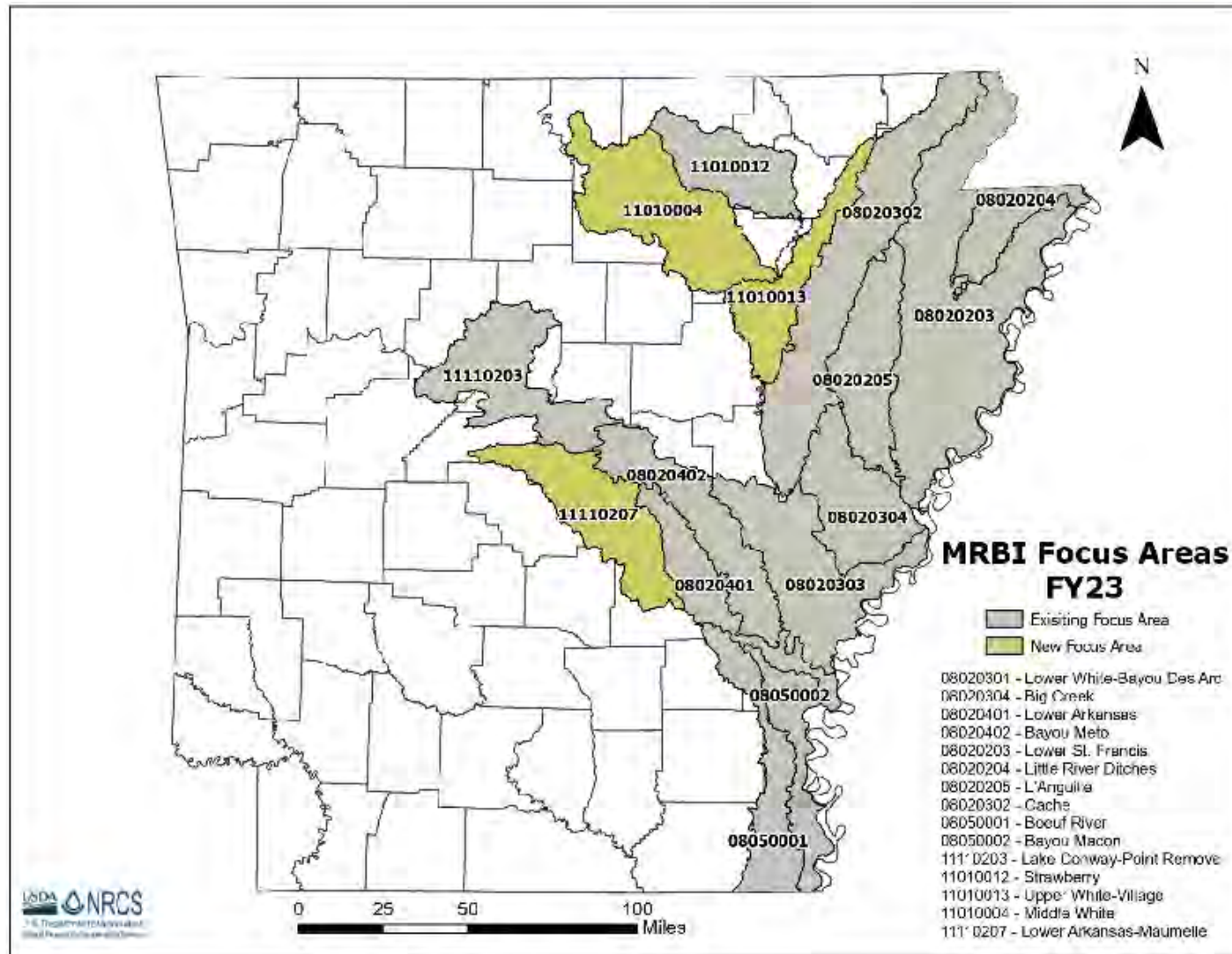


Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



Priority Watersheds



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

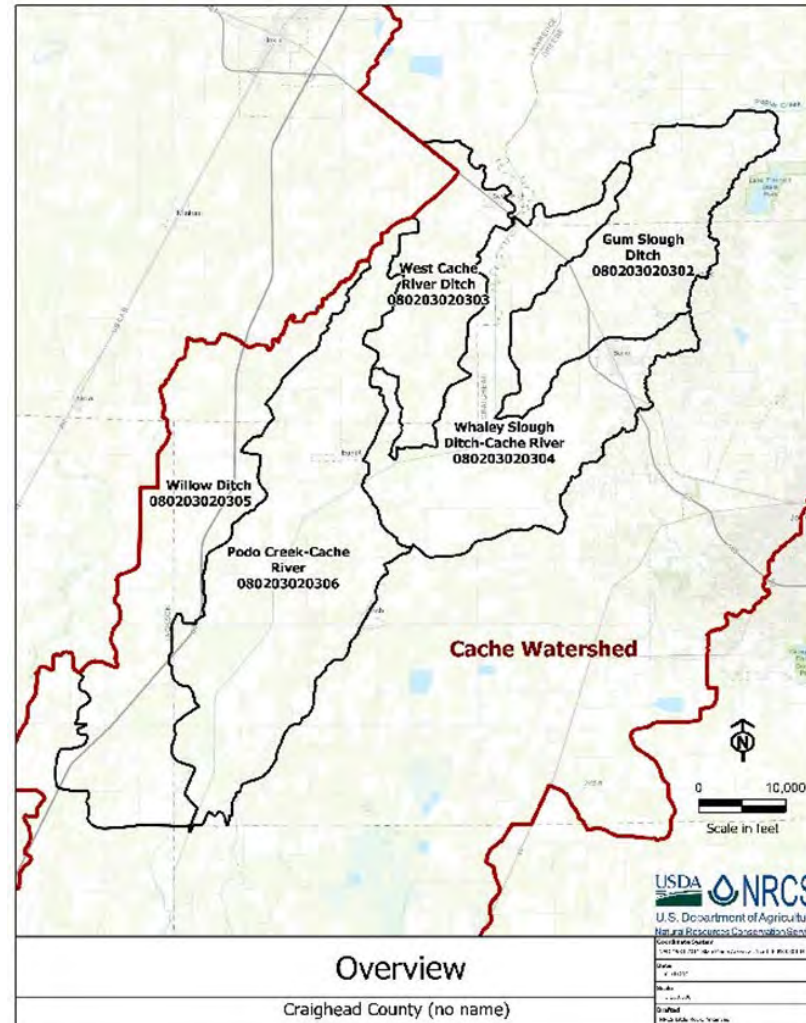
nrcs.usda.gov/



Readiness Phase MRBI

Items to consider:

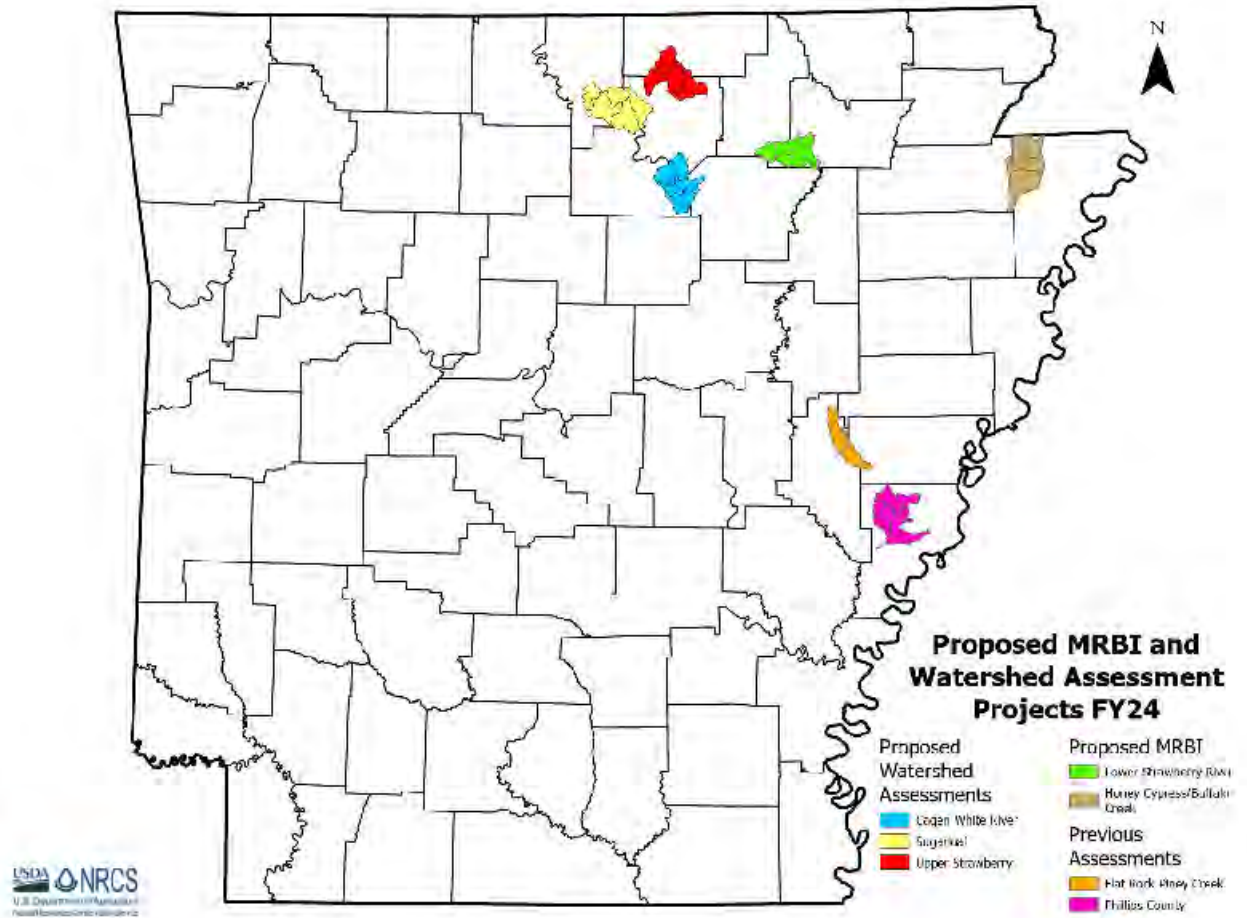
- Eligible due to Focus Area
- Identify Resource Concern
- TMDL for turbidity
- 3 or 4 12 digit HUCs
- Producer interest
- Partner Interest
- Critical Groundwater
- Source Water Protection



Watershed Assessments for FY23

Honey Cypress Buffalo Creek is part of the Little River Ditches from 2010

Lower Strawberry River will bridge several existing projects to help remove Strawberry River off 303d list.



Proposed Assessments for FY24

Cagens White River

Middle White new area of consideration

Nutrient Strategy Plan

303(d) list-no

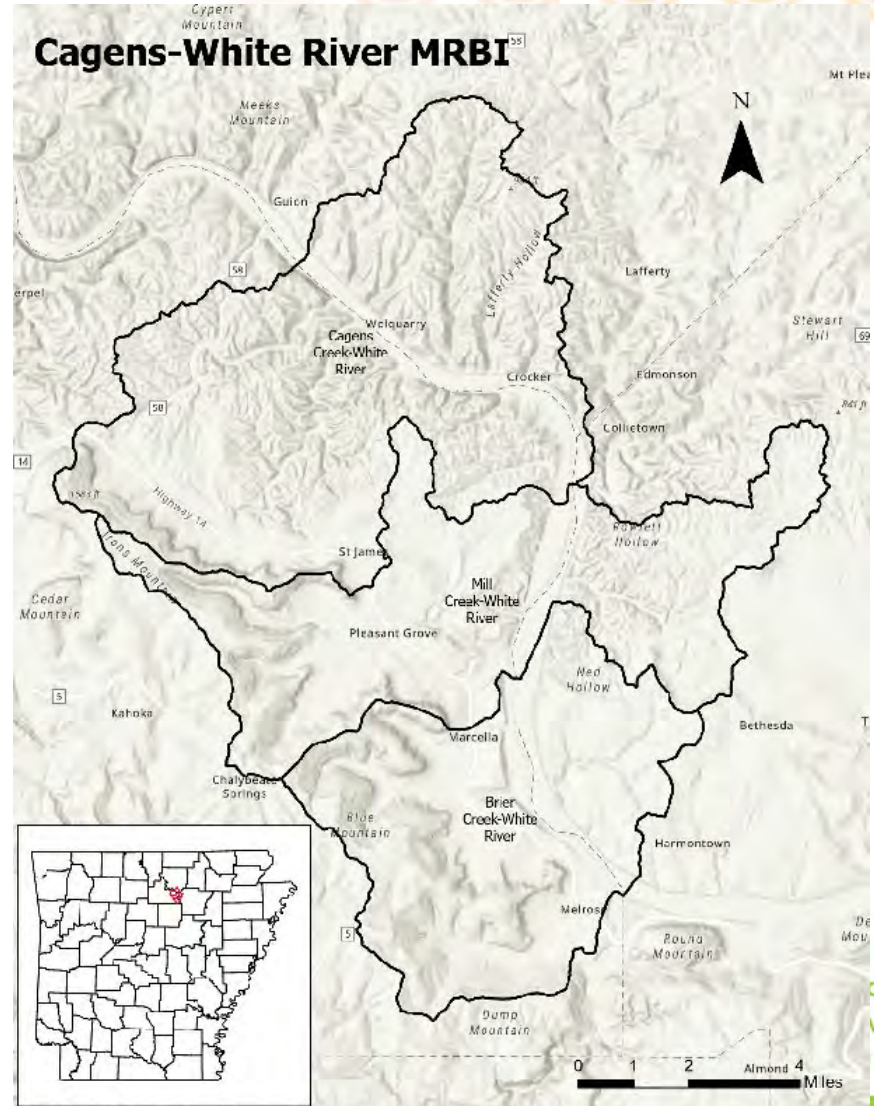
Source Water-52 wells

Threatened Endangered Species

Landuse-Cropland/Pasture

No previous targeted funding

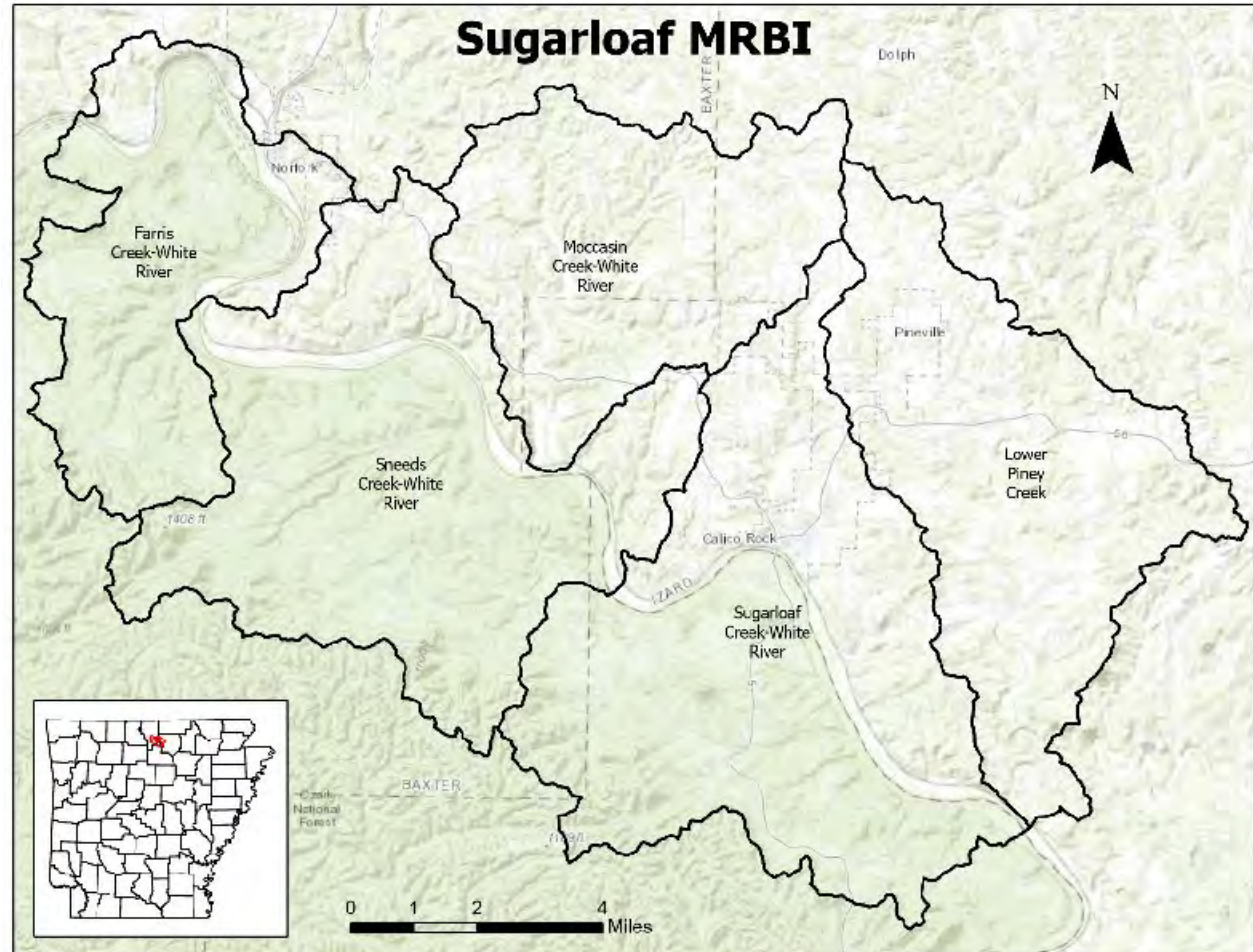
Current producer interest



Sugarloaf MRBI

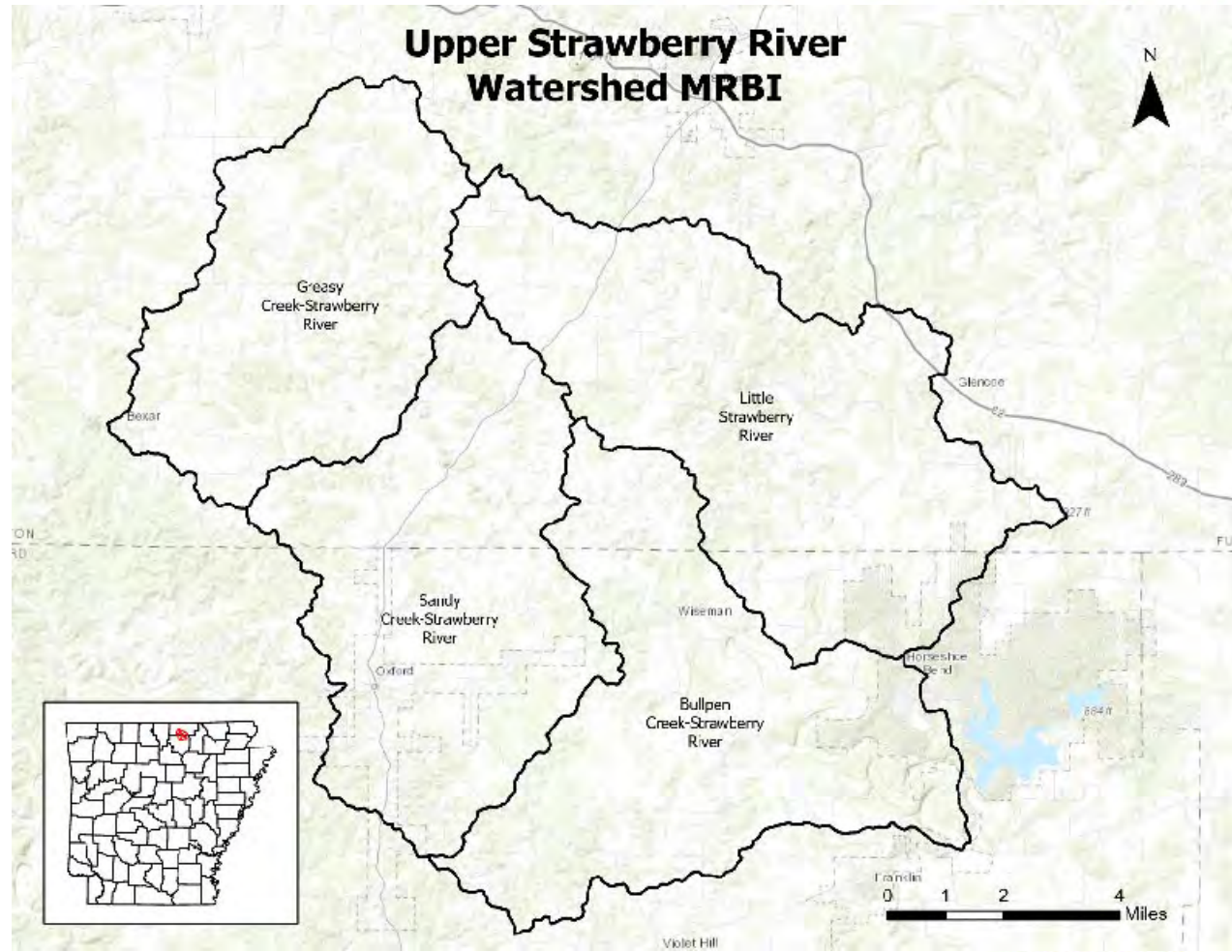
Sugarloaf

Middle White
Baxter, Stone, Izaard
Source Water-171
private wells
Existing monitoring by
USGS
303(d) list- no
Threatened and
Endangered Species
Landuse: Pasture
No previous targeted
funding
Current producer
interest

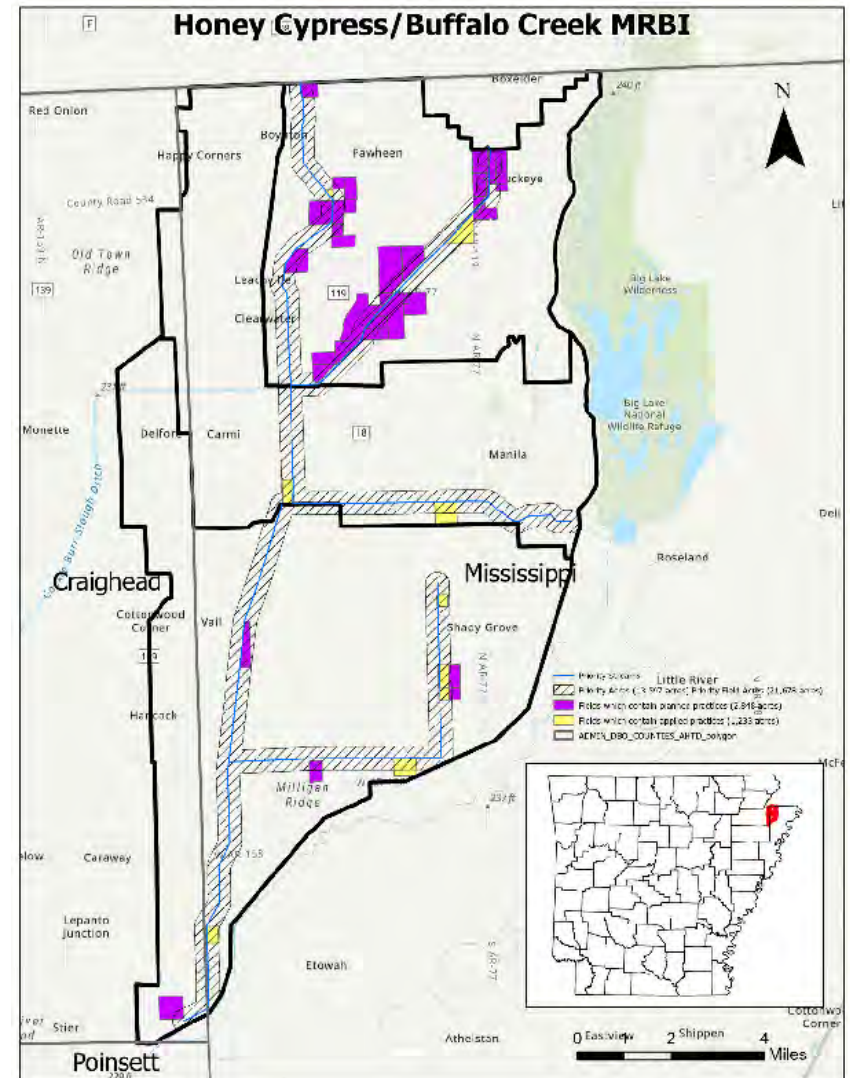
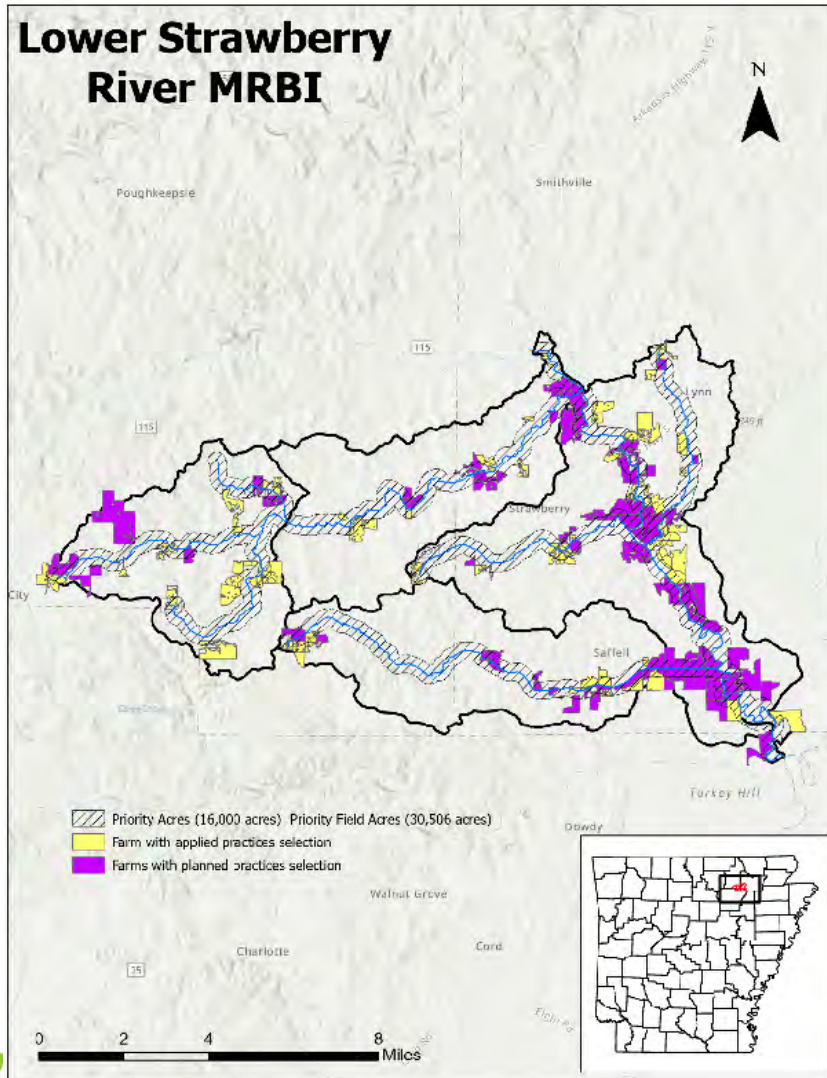


Proposed Assessments for FY24

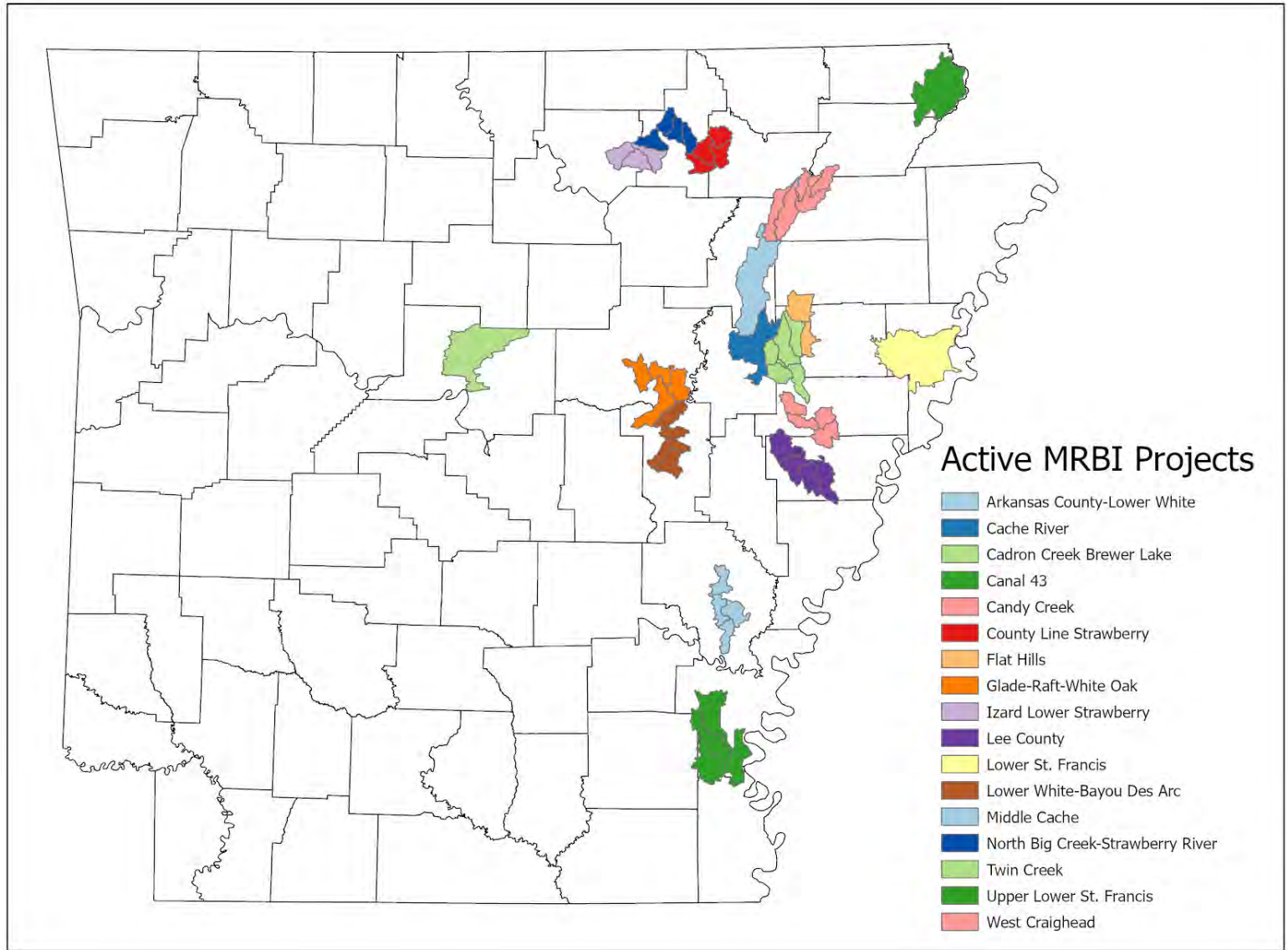
**Upper Strawberry
Strawberry River**
Fulton Source Water-90
private wells
Has had funding in past
Landuse: Pasture
37,186 acres



Targeting in the Watershed



MRBI projects for FY23



MRBI Implementation Phase Funding

MRBI Project	Project Life	EQIP for FY23
Cache	FY2020-FY2023	\$909,441
Cadron Creek-Brewer Lake	FY2020-FY2023	\$1,499,617
Lower St. Francis	FY2020-FY2023	\$1,009,047
Middle Cache	FY2020-FY2023	\$1,000,000
Upper Lower St. Francis	FY2020-FY2023	\$950,000
Candy Creek	FY2021-FY2024	\$1,000,546
Canal 43	FY2021-FY2024	\$1,500,000
Twin Creek	FY2021-FY2024	\$1,270,516
Izard Lower Strawberry	FY2021-FY2024	\$300,000
County Line Strawberry	FY2022-FY2025	\$364,408
Flat Hills	FY2022-FY2025	\$666,428
Glade-Raft-White Oak Creek	FY2022-FY2025	\$1,323,400
Lee County	FY2022-FY2025	\$1,500,000
Lower White-Bayou Des Arc	FY2022-FY2025	\$1,846,417
West Craighead	FY2023-FY2026	\$1,504,825
Big North Creek-Strawberry	FY2023-FY2026	\$421,725
Arkansas County Lower White	FY2023-FY2026	\$1,416,826
Total projected for FY23		\$22,790,310





United States Department of Agriculture

Regional Conservation Partnership (RCPP) Update



Dianne Schlenker
Initiatives Coordinator
RCPP POC

Telework: 501-412-9852
dianne.schlenker@usda.gov

Roger Cousins
Partnership Program Specialist
Telework: 870-805-8073
roger.cousins@usda.gov



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Stand Alone program-\$500 million

- Partner contacts NRCS to discuss project – identify resource concerns-
- Partner obtains support from other partners to meet contribution criteria
- Partner designates project area and targeted area
- Partner decides with input from NRCS the practices to be offered
- Partner develops proposal to address 4 major areas:
- Impact, Partner Contribution, Innovation and Partnership Management.
- Partner develops goals and outcomes.
- Proposal is submitted through RCPP portal.
- Proposal is evaluated in state by evaluation team
- Recommendation is submitted from State Con
- Chief of NRCS has final award authority of project.
- Once project is awarded funding-negotiations start between Lead state and Partner to develop agreement.

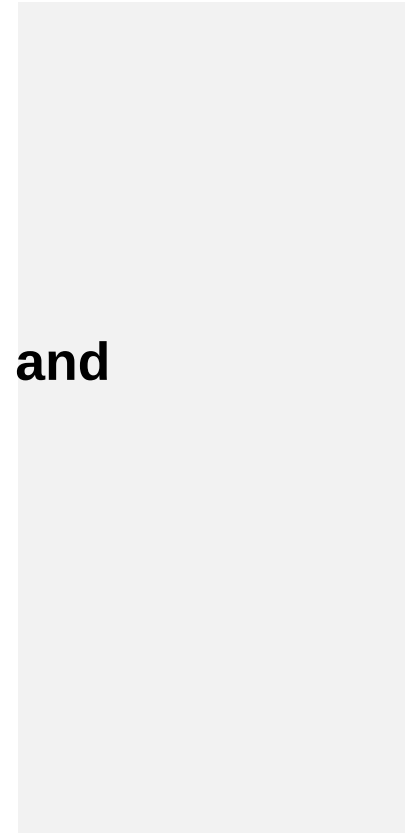


RCPP

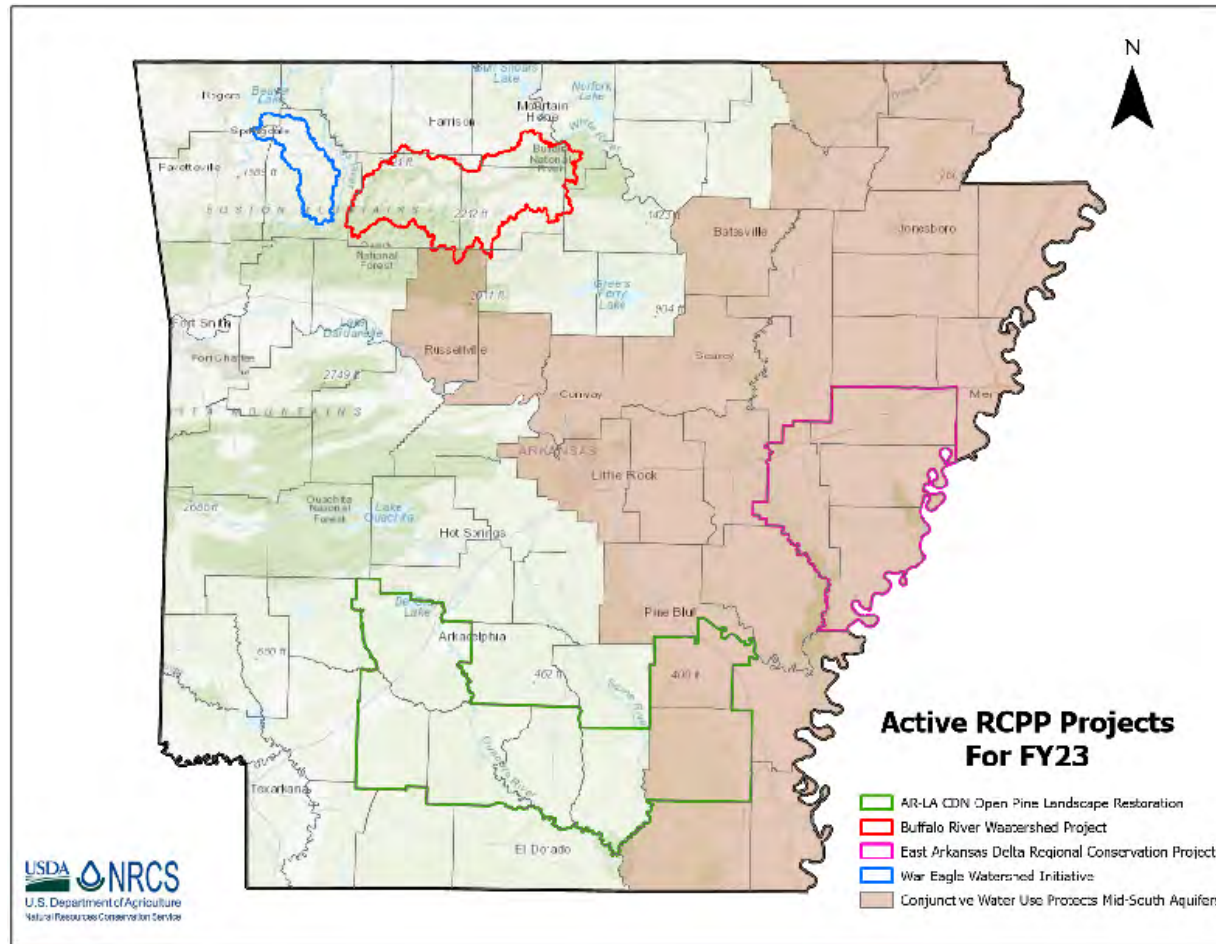


Partner Program Agreement (PPA)

- 5 year budget
- Stand alone program
- Financial Assistance options
- Encourage system approach using core and supporting practices that meet NRCS standards and specs.
- Adaptive management
- Targets producers in the watershed
- Outreach is on going
- Goals are developed with obtainable outcomes
- Partner support through in-kind or cash
- Ranking is through CART



FY23 RCPP Projects Receiving FA



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



AR RCPP Project Funding



Project Name	Project Type	FY23 Funding	Payment Rate
Buffalo River Watershed Enhancement Project	Land Management	\$400,000	75/25
East Arkansas Delta Regional Conservation	Land Management	\$2,800,000	75/25
Mid South Graduated Water Stewardship Program	Land Management	Completed in FY22	60/40
AR LA CDN Open Pine Landscape Restoration *	Land Management	\$413,000	60/40
KKAC AR MS Conservation & Social Consortium *	Easement	\$1,750,000	
Restore the Earth – Pilot Private Sector Investment *	Easement	In Negotiation	N/A
War Eagle Watershed Initiative	Land Management	600,000	75/25
Conjunctive Water Use Protects Mid-South Aquifers	Land Management	2,215,000	75/25
Totals		\$6,428,000	



United States Department of Agriculture



National Funding Opportunity (NFO) for Classic RCPP was announced on May 19th and can be accessed through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Deadline for submitting proposals is August 18th



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



Arkansas Natural Resources Conservation Service – Easement Program

Conservation Easements in Arkansas – 272,092.91 Acres on 720

Easements Easements Restored – 267,749.97 Acres on 702

Easements Easement Restoration Remaining – 4,342.94 Acres on 18 Easements

FY 2022 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Wetland Reserve Easements

- Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced – 7 Easements – 2,196.45 Acres
- Tree Planting -Hardwoods – 15 Easements – 2,217.15 Acres
- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 8 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition –3,062.65 Acres

2022 Wetland Reserve Easements – Activities

Item	Amount
Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition	8
Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition	3,062.65
2022 Funding to be Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration	\$9,950,250

2023 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Wetland Reserve Easements

- Number of Easements Tentatively Selected for Acquisition* - 21 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Tentatively Selected for Acquisition* –5,460.07 Acres
- 2023 Funding to be Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration* - \$17,349,005
- Tri- state WREPs* - 2022 - 5 easements, 453 acres, \$1,536,098; 2021 - 4 easements, 492 acres, \$1,516,407
- Batture WREPs*- 2 easements, 1116.09 acres, \$2,760,014
- HU enrollments* - 8 easements, 592 acres, \$1,679,266

*these are anticipated figures pending final APCE's and Obligations

2022 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Tri-State WREP

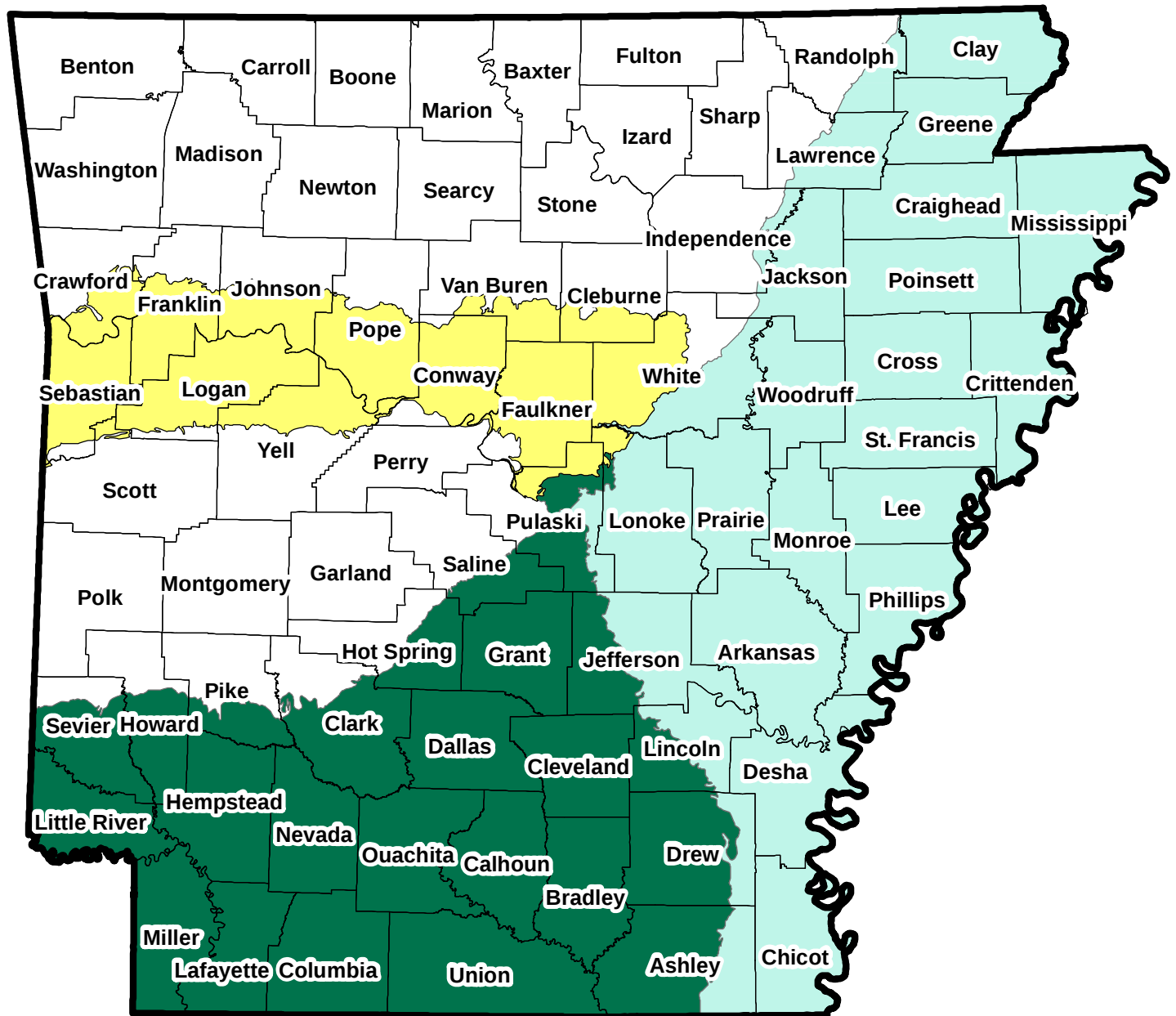
- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 4 Easement
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition –1,089.65 Acres
- 2021 Funding Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration -\$3,035,768

2022 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities - Historically Under-served

- Number of easements for Acquisition -1
- Number of Easement Acres selected for Acquisition - 129
- 2022 Easement Funding Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - \$404,657



Arkansas WRE and FPE - FY 2023 Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC)



ACEP-WRE and FPE Market Areas

Arkansas River Valley

Irrigated Cropland	\$ 2,896
Non-Irrigated Cropland	\$ 2,186
Wooded Non-CRP and Incidental Land	\$ 1,563
Wooded-CRP Planted Lands	\$ 1412
Pasture Land	\$ 2,373

Mississippi River Valley

Irrigated Cropland	\$ 3,809
Non-Irrigated Cropland	\$ 2,602
Wooded Non-CRP and Incidental Land	\$ 1,628
Wooded-CRP Planted Lands	\$1,576
Pasture Land	\$ 2,326

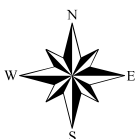
Gulf Coastal Plain

Irrigated Cropland	\$ 2,823
Non-Irrigated Cropland	\$ 2,042
Wooded Non-CRP and Incidental Land	\$ 1,309
Wooded-CRP Planted Lands	\$ 1,422
Pasture Land	\$ 2,242

Remainder Of State

80% of Appraisal, not to exceed \$3,000/ac.

Values shown are per acre units





United States Department of Agriculture



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service



ACEP

Alexis Cook

Arkansas USDA-NRCS

Assistant State Conservationist for
Easements

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

About Me : Alexis Cook



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Alexis Cook

Assistant State Conservationist
Easements
USDA-NRCS

700 W Capitol Ave
Room 3416
Little Rock, AR 72201

Office: 501-301-3166
Cell: 501-398-6937
Fax: 855-681-7042
alexis.cook@usda.gov
www.usda.gov

- Part of easement team since 2012
- Grew up on dairy farm in central Missouri
- American FFA degree
- 4-H member
- BS in Animal Science from University of Missouri
- JD and MBA from University of Arkansas in Little Rock

ACEP-WRE –an overview



- 272,092 acres of conservation easements spread over 720 easements
- 267,750 acres restored across 702 easements
- With 4,343 acres of restoration remaining on 18 easements



Restoration and reforestation activities

- Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced – 7 Easements – 2,196.45 Acres
- Tree Planting -Hardwoods – 15 Easements – 2,217.15 Acres



2022 Wetland Reserve Easements – Activities

- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 8 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition –3,062.65 Acres
- 2022 Funding to be obligated for Acquisition and restoration - \$9,950,250



FY23 ACEP-WRE tentative numbers

Number of Easements Tentatively Selected for Acquisition* - 21 Easements

- Number of Easement Acres Tentatively Selected for Acquisition* – 5,460.07 Acres
- 2023 Funding to be Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration* - \$17,349,005
- Tri- state WREPs* - 2022 - 5 easements, 453 acres, \$1,536,098; 2021 - 4 easements, 492 acres, \$1,516,407
- Batture WREPs*- 2 easements, 1116.09 acres, \$2,760,014
- HU enrollments* - 8 easements, 592 acres, \$1,679,266

*these are anticipated figures pending final APCE's and Obligations

2022 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Tri-State WREP

- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 4 Easement
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition –1,089.65 Acres
- 2021 Funding to be Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - \$3,035,768



2022 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities - Historically, Under-served

- Number of easements Selected for Acquisition -1
- Number of Easement Acres selected for Acquisition - 129
- 2022 Easement Funding Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - \$404,657

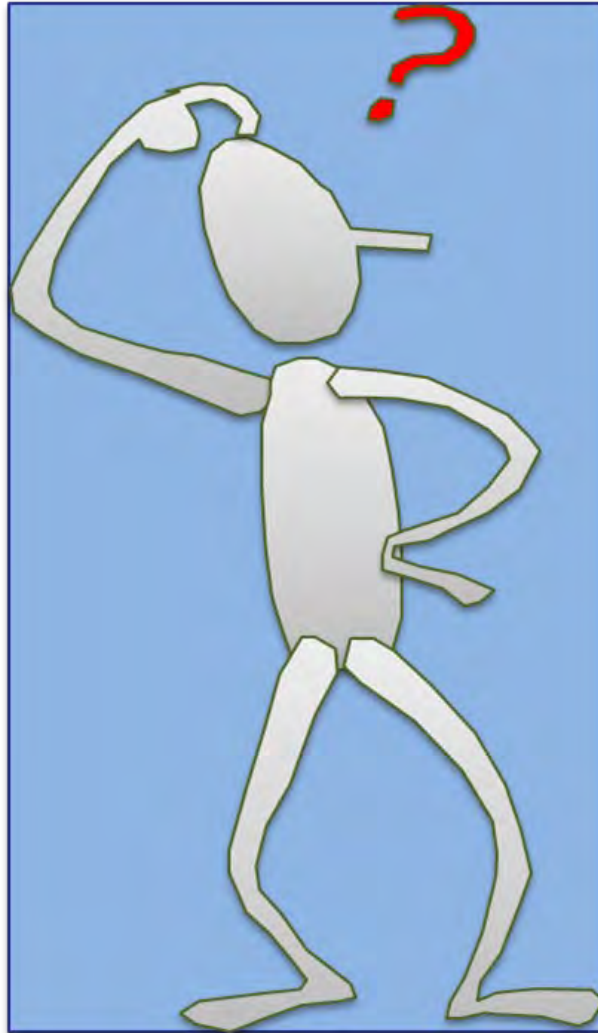


Agricultural Conservation Easements (ALE)

We are working with a couple of land trusts and hope to have some ALE Easements in process in the next FY.



QUESTIONS



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/





In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
 - (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
 - (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.
- USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender





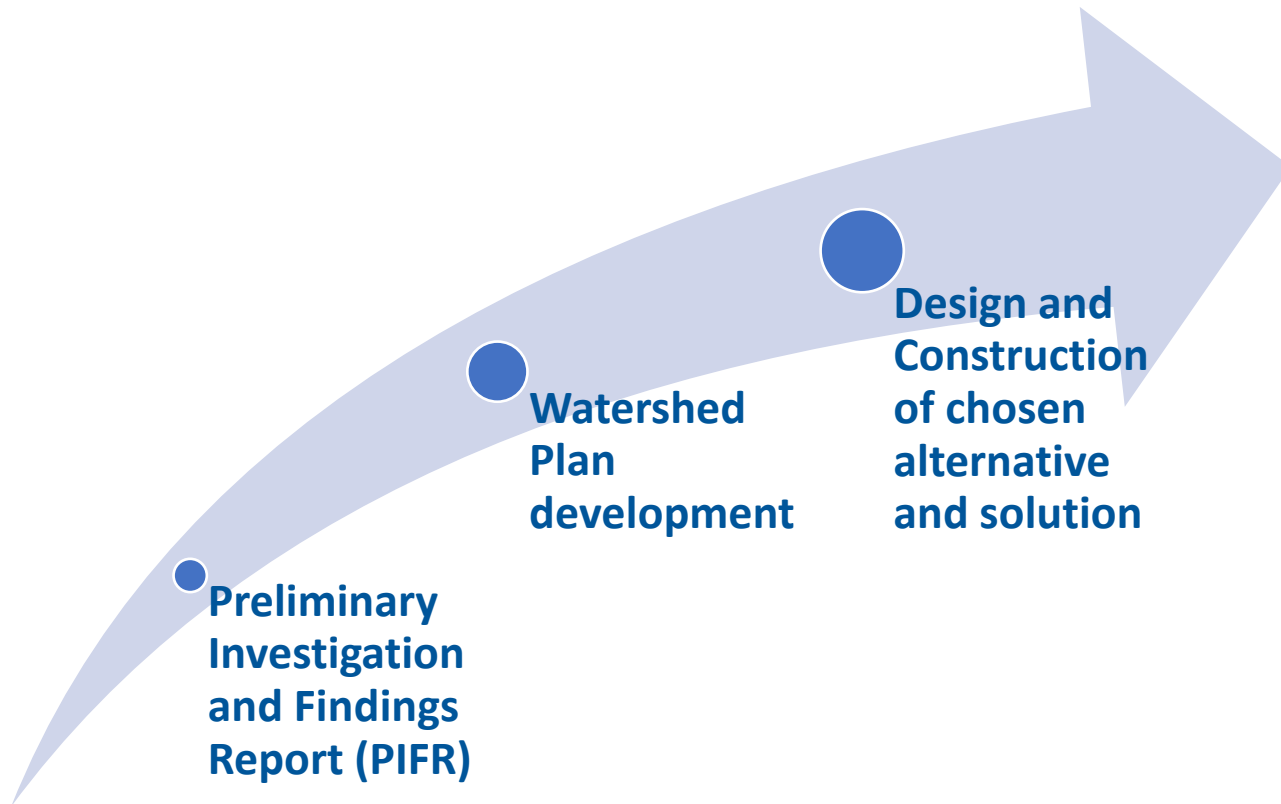
PL 83-566 Watershed Projects - Update
State Tech Meeting 6/8/2023

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov



Phases of PL-566 Projects



Arkansas Active Watershed PL-566 Program Projects

- Grand Prairie Irrigation Project - Construction
- Bayou Meto Irrigation Project - Construction
- Lake Bennett – Watershed Plan Development
- West Fork White River – Design
- Departee Creek – Construction
- Muddy Fork of Illinois River – Design
- 16 Projects - Preliminary Investigation Reports Developed
- 5 Projects – Planning, Design, Construction
- 9 Projects – Planning



Funding – Excess of \$212 million presently in AR NRCS Accounts
 Additional Request - \$58 million presently for BM and GP projects





United States Department of Agriculture



Resources
Natural
Conservation
Service
Conservation
nrcs.usda.gov



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov



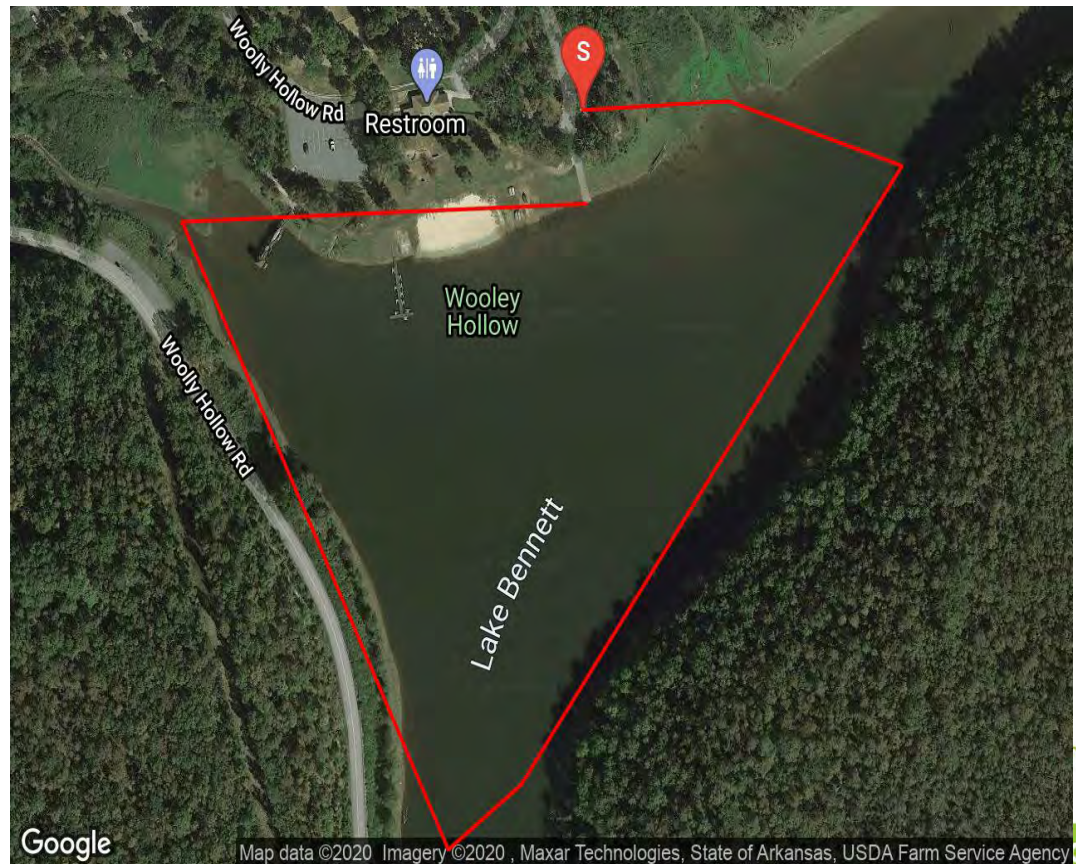
United States Department of Agriculture



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service
nrcs.usda.gov

Small Watershed Program

- Lake Bennett Watershed Plan
Draft WS Plan is under Programmatic Review





United States Department of Agriculture



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service
nrcs.usda.gov



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov



United States Department of Agriculture

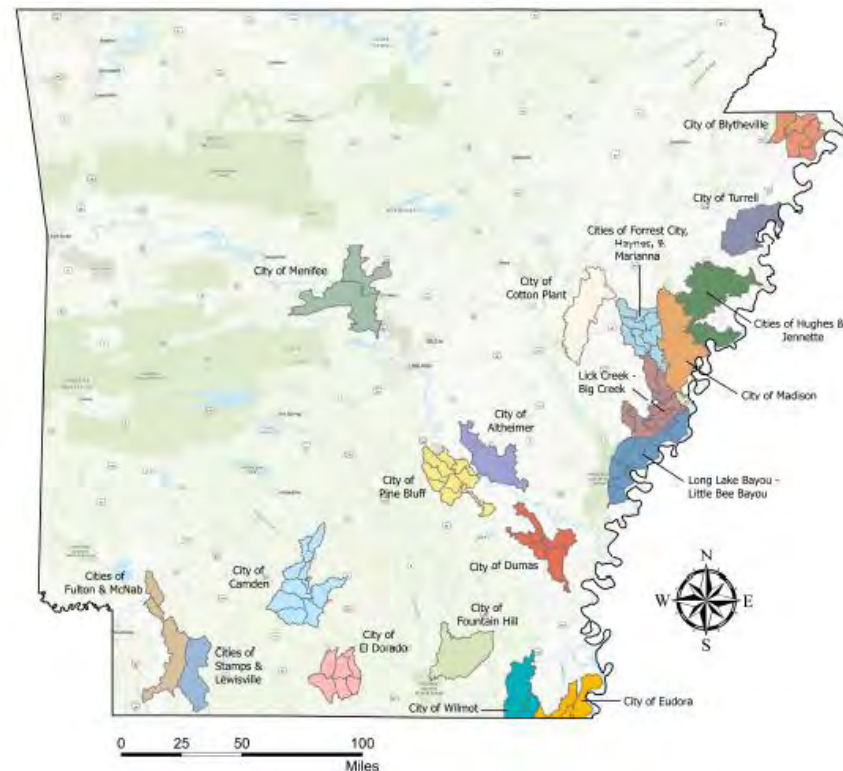
PL566 Watershed Projects Funded Through the INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT

**\$96 MILLION DOLLAR Investment
in Arkansas**

**To relieve flooding issues in
Historically Underserved and
Socially Disadvantaged**



BIL Watershed Projects Funded in Arkansas

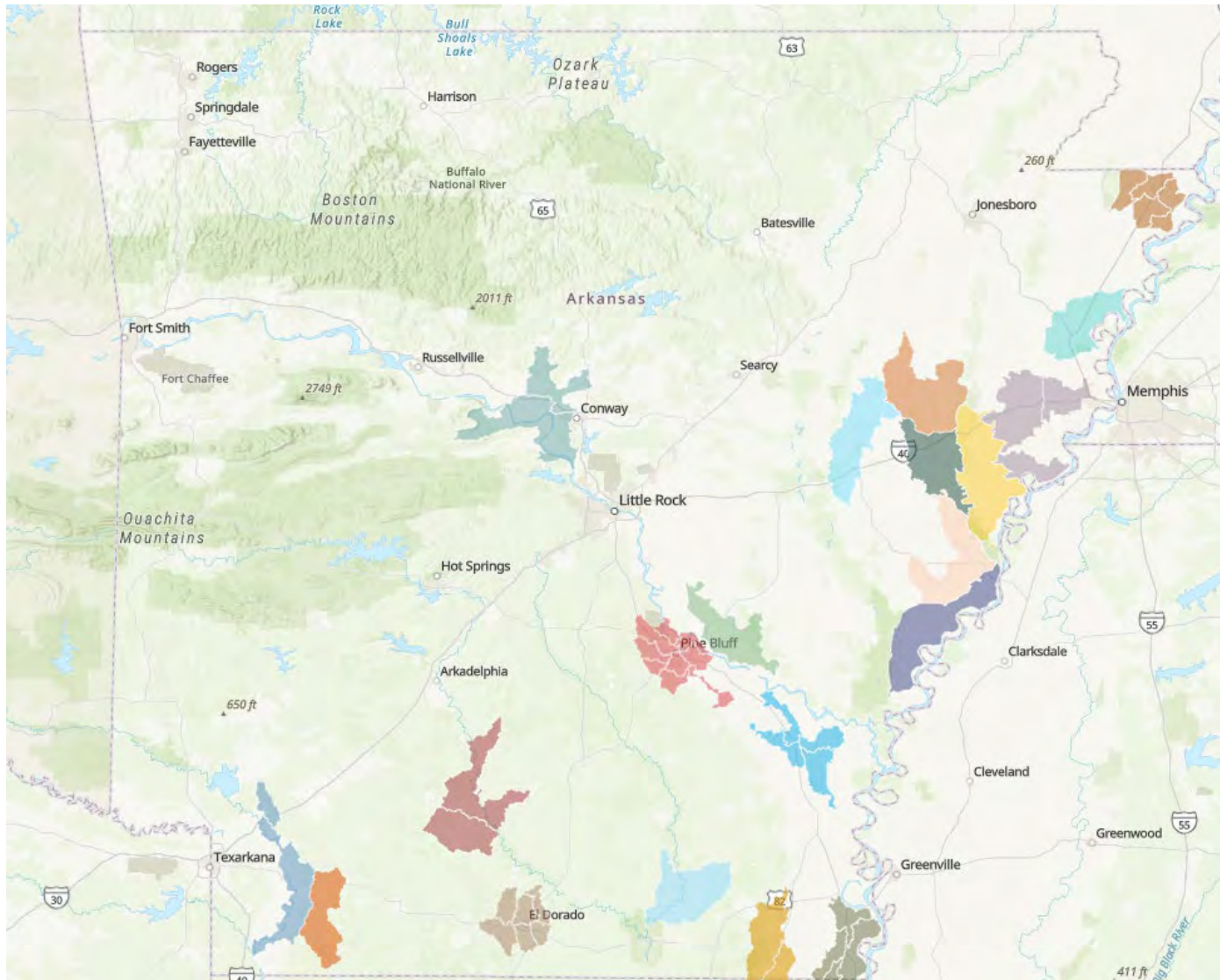


NRCS in cooperation with the ABMA requested funds for 19 projects in 2022 under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law / Infrastructure and Jobs Act (BIL/IJJA)

- Projects were funded in various stages
 - 5 projects fully funded – PIFR, Planning, Design and Construction
 - 9 projects funded for PIFR, Planning
 - 5 projects funded for PIFR Only



Watershed Projects Funded by ABMA in Arkansas



AR-NRCS entered into two Cooperative Agreements with the ABMA in September of 2022

- All Phases Agreement (planning, design, & construction) covering 5 projects for \$83,619,750.
- Planning Only Agreement covering 9 projects for \$3,890,000

- **The ABMA is the responsible fiscal agent and will implement these projects with the assistance of other local sponsors in each watershed project**
- **Through these Agreements AR-NRCS will provide Federal Oversight and quality assurance at pre-determined milestones**



United States Department of Agriculture

Questions?

CONTACT INFORMATION

Randy Childress

501-301-3131

Randy.Childress@usda.gov



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service
nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING- JUNE 08. 2023

NAME	COMPANY	EMAIL
Alice Weeks	AACD	paeweeks@att.net
Randall Rush	EPA Pallas office	rush.randall@epa.gov
Shanon Griffin	NRCS	—
James Webb	NRCS	jeremy.huff@usda.gov
Roger Cousins	NRCS	roger.cousins@usda.gov
Rodney Wright	NRCS	rodney.wright@usda.gov
Morgan Morrisett	NRCS	morgan.morrisett@usda.gov
Corey Farmer	NRCS	corey.farmer@usda.gov
Dianne Schlenker	NRCS	dianne.schlenker@usda.gov
Nesha Cobb	NWIA-BWA	heshad Cobb@gmail.com
Dayne VanCamp	NRCS	dvancamp98@gmail.com
Stephen C. Smedley	NRCS	stephen.smedley@usda.gov
Clyde Will	NRCS	Clyde.williams@usda.gov
Susan Koehler	NWIA Land Trust	SKoehler@nwalandtrust.org

NRCS STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING- JUNE 08. 2023

NAME	COMPANY	EMAIL
Darcia Routh	ADH-Engineering	darcia.routh@arkansas.gov
Katy Brantley	NRCS	katy.brantley@usda.gov
CANTON FORD	NRCS	cantonford@usda.gov
Talisha Dokes	ALCDE	Dr.TJDokes@gmail.com
Harvey Groves	AGFC	harvey.groves@agfc.us.gov
Jessica Hawkins	USFS	jessica.m.hawkins@usda.gov
William Wintz	Water Hog Inc	waterhoginc@outlook.com
Josh Hankins	USA Rice	j.hankins@usaric.com
James Mcarty	Denver Water Dist.	jmcarty@bwdh2o.org
Reginald Jackson	NRCS	reginald-jackson@usda.gov
Kennard Williams	NRCS	kennardw.williams@usda.gov
JOE FOX	FORESTRY DIV.	JOE.FOX@AGRICULTURE.ARKANSAS.GOV
Priest	WMA UAM	
Amanda Mathis	NRCS	amanda.mathis@usda.gov

NRCS STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING- JUNE 08. 2023

NAME	COMPANY	EMAIL
Rita Watson	UADACES	Rwatson@uada.edu
Elena Rubino	UAM	rubino@camont.edu
Bill Bantush	LMV JV	bbantush@sbcbirds.org
Ernest LARRY	Conservation District	pccoroner05@yahoo.com
Ciera Rhodes	Quail Forever	crhodes@quailforever.org
Cory Cornelious	NRCS	cory.cornelious@usda.gov
Randy Easley	ATG	paulreasley1@outlook.com
Sherri DeGraffenreid	NRCS	Sherri.DeGraffenreid@usda.gov
Kelly Robbins	AR Rice	kelly@arkansasrice.org
Mike Sullivan	NRCS	michael.sullivan2@usda.gov
Alvin P	NRCS	Alvin.Pee@USDA.GOV
Lori Barker	NRCS	loribarker@usda.gov
Corey Nelson	NRCS	corey.nelson@yahoo.com
Alexis Cook	NRCS	

NRCS STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING- JUNE 08. 2023

NAME	COMPANY	EMAIL
Paul Casey	FSA	paul.casey@usda.gov
Paul Casey	Jen	
Keith Stokes	SENATOR Cotton office	Keith-Stokes@COTTON.SENATE.GOV
Britt Hill	NRCS	joe.hill@usda.gov
Keith Scoggins	NRCS	Keith.Scoggins@usda.gov
ERIC MYERS	ARK DEPT AG.	eric.myers@arkansas.gov
Spencer Knight	Arkansas Ag Council	spencerknight00@gmail.com
Rebecca Fox	NRCS	rebecca.fox@usda.gov
Patrick Dill	Dill	Pdill@cluckus.org
Debbie Poulard	AACD	
Martha Menley	AACD	
Vicki Fark	USFA	
Kevin Cochran	USDA/NRCS	Kevin.cochran@usda.gov
Karen Thompson	NRCS	Karen.Thompson2@USDA.GOV

NRCS STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING- JUNE 08. 2023

[illegible]