

# Emergency Watershed Protection Program



## An EWP Success Story

Two ice storms during a two-week period in December 2000 resulted in the most expensive natural disaster in the history of the state of Arkansas.

Tree tops and branches knocked down by the ice created fuel loads on the ground over large parts of southern Arkansas that were five to 20 times the norm.

Higher fuel loads mean significantly higher risks of wildfire and much greater difficulty in controlling fires that might start.

Firebreaks cleared of debris from the ice storms.



## Clark County, Arkansas

Every year the Arkansas Forestry Commission responds to a wildfire problem in an area of Clark County. This area lies along a railroad track in the southern portion of the county west of Gurdon.

By early summer of 2001, 15 responses were made to this area. The first fire occurred just days after the Ross Foundation established a firebreak along the railroad tracks. This fire was contained because of the firebreak.

Without the firebreak in place, the potential size for a wildfire could have been more than 200 acres in this one location. As well as saving more than 200 acres of timber worth \$800,000, the conservation measure also saved the homes of two red cockaded woodpecker colonies. The bird is a federally protected endangered species.

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program project was administered locally.

The joint efforts of the Clark County Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Arkansas Forestry Commission, provided land users in Arkansas with technical and financial assistance to establish or refurbish firebreaks damaged by the ice storms in December 2000.

More than 800 miles of firebreaks were established on private lands using the EQP program.

These firebreaks protect more than 30,000 acres of timber, as well as wildlife, homes, and lives.

### State Contact

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December 2000 ice storm damage