

2011 Arkansas Annual Report



NRCS Natural Resources
Conservation Service

www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov

Dear Arkansan,

On behalf of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Arkansas, I am delighted to present this 2011 agency report to you. It was a great year! We have much to celebrate and many opportunities ahead as we continue to pursue our mission of helping people help the land.

Working with our partners, we accelerated conservation assistance with additional resources to support initiatives such as the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI), Illinois River Sub-Basin/Eucha-Spavinaw Watershed Initiative (IRWI), Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI), StrikeForce Initiative, energy, and organic. We obligated \$16.3 million in financial assistance funds through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) for these initiatives, including \$14.7 million of funding in addition to our regular state allocated funding.

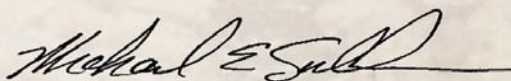
In addition to accelerating outreach work through StrikeForce, we provided outreach and assistance to Native American and Hmong producers. We increased contracts with historically underserved producers by 120 percent (from 134 to 297) including funding beginning farmer and rancher contracts for the first time in several years. We helped producers market their alternative crops with retail establishments, including Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. We also increased participation in our State Technical Committee through various sub-committees and helped re-invigorate local work groups.

We reduced our Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) backlog. We were the first state certified 100 percent complete in the National Easements Staging Tool (NEST) and we established agreements with partners for closing, restoration, and monitoring.

We responded effectively after record floods on 12 streams hit Arkansas in the spring with our Emergency Watershed Protection Program. Twenty-eight sites were funded for a total of \$878,076 in financial assistance.

We leveraged more than \$1 million in conservation technical assistance funds with \$500,000 in non-federal funds to establish 17 Strategic Watershed Action Team (SWAT) positions for the next 2 to 3 years through our partners. We utilized Technical Service Providers (TSP), the Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services (ACES) program, and conservation technical assistance (CTA) agreements to help support additional field positions through our partners with approximately 35-40 more "boots on the ground".

Thanks to Arkansas producers, our conservation partners and NRCS employees, we were able to effectively utilize the \$97 million allocated to Arkansas NRCS in FY11 to get conservation on the ground better and faster than ever. As we move into another year, I expect we will continue on our path of improvement and excellence in conservation delivery, even during these times of tight budgets. Our best is yet to come!



Mike Sullivan
Arkansas State Conservationist

On the cover: The Illinois River Sub-Basin and Eucha-Spavinaw Lake Watershed Initiative began in 2011 to improve water quality while maintaining the food and fiber production in northwestern Arkansas and northeastern Oklahoma.

Arkansas producers received more than \$4 million in financial assistance to implement conservation practices on 13,964 acres.

Inset photos (left to right):

Charles Moreton, Rhonda Foster, Washington County district conservationist, and Greg Watkins, conservation agronomist, discuss the location of conservation practices on Morton's farm.

Rhonda Foster, Washington County district conservationist, meets with Diem and Bruce Norindr on their poultry farm to discuss the operation's nutrient management plan.

Bill Haak and Mike Whitis, Benton County district conservationist, discuss the operation of his tire tank for livestock watering.

To learn more about the initiative, see Pages 17-18.

2011 Arkansas Annual Report

WOW! What a Year

Through Farm Bill programs, special initiatives and technical assistance, Natural Resources Conservation Service employees, volunteers, landowners and agricultural producers in every region of Arkansas addressed the state's primary resource concerns of water quality, water quantity, soil erosion, soil condition, plant condition and air quality.

Arkansas Conservation Partnership

More than 230 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees serve Arkansas's 75 counties from 61 field service centers throughout the state.

These employees work with private landowners and the Arkansas Conservation Partnership to conserve and enhance the natural resources of Arkansas.

The Arkansas Conservation Partnership is a unique force, combining the strengths of federal, state and local organizations along with educational institutions to help preserve and protect the Natural State. Formed in 1992, the partnership consists of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Arkansas Association of Conservation District Employees, Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Councils Inc., University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and the Arkansas Forestry Commission. The various agencies diverse missions complement each other.



Grazing Lands

Technical assistance for owners and managers of grasslands in Arkansas is an important component of the NRCS program. The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) was founded to provide high quality technical assistance on privately owned grazing lands

on a voluntary basis and to increase the awareness of the importance of grazing land resources.

This year's successes included collaboration with the Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council on hosting the spring grazing tour; and working closely with the Cooperative Extension Service on a two-day grazing school, eight one-day sessions (in IZard, Stone, Carroll, Searcy, Sharp, Randolph, Conway and Benton counties) and a Controlled Grazing Field Day (in Boone County). Specialists also cooperated with the Grassroots Grazing Group on four pasture walks and their annual winter conference.

Thirty-seven grazing lands presentations were conducted, reaching approximately 1,340 people.



Plant Materials Center

The Booneville Plant Materials Centers (PMC) serves 54 million acres in Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma as part of a national network of PMCs that provide vegetative solutions to conservation problems.

The Booneville Center has released 'Bumpers' eastern gamagrass, Hampton big bluestem, and OH-370 big bluestem for use in conservation systems in the Southern Ozarks, Boston Mountains, Arkansas River Valley, Ouachita Mountains, and Southern Blackland Prairie. Ernst Conservation Seeds, Inc., is commercially producing 'Bumpers' eastern gamagrass for sale to the public. They will be producing Hampton big bluestem within two years.

The center is currently working on a cultivar release of Virginia Wild rye, and a drought tolerant cultivar of indiangrass. To provide information on production and management of native warm-season grasses, the staff conducted 30 evaluations on 19 center studies and 12 field plantings and made 12 oral presentations.

The center has developed partnerships with Arkansas

Highway and Transportation Department, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and at Pine Bluff, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, and the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. The PMC provides assistance to the East Arkansas Enterprise Community and the National Black Growers Council.



PL-566 Small Watershed Program

Through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, NRCS provides assistance to local organizations in planning and implementing watershed projects for flood control, rural drinking water supply, agricultural irrigation, etc.

In fiscal year 2011, design and land rights acquisition were in process for the Departee Creek Watershed for

dam construction and channel selective clearing and snagging.

One flood water retarding structure assessment related to dam safety for the PL-566 Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program was completed on the Muddy Fork of the Illinois River Watershed in Washington County.

Earth Team

Arkansas has 732 Earth Team volunteers who provided 10,640 hours of service in fiscal year 2011. Volunteers throughout the state helped at forestry clinics, field days, fairs, outreach meetings, Earth Day, Farm Safety Day Camp, Great Outdoors Day, fishing derbies, Progressive Agricultural Safety Day Camp and land judging, tractor driving, and Arkansas and International Envirothon contests.

Volunteers also assisted with the 2011 Environmental Quality Incentives Program sign-up, reviewed folders to determine if applications were eligible for current sign-up, updated cost estimates, and reviewed ranking criteria. Volunteers also used ArcGIS to transfer information from the Arkansas Forestry Commission's Forestry Plan to the NRCS Conservation Plan in Toolkit, helped get program participant's signatures on payment applications, assembled payment packets, and contacted participants to come in and sign appropriate paperwork. Using GPS and digital cameras, volunteers completed construction checkouts on conservation practices.

An international volunteer assisted with laying out CRP buffers, pond site determinations, laying out a pond, pond checkout, wetland determinations, and organizing office and storage space.



NRCS Chief Dave White came to Little Rock in October 2010 to announce the Illinois River Sub-Basin/Eucha-Spavinaw Lake Watershed Initiative, as Arkansas State Conservationist Mike Sullivan looks on. To learn more about the initiative see Pages 17-18.

Soil Surveys and National Resource Inventory

The Arkansas Soil Survey staff modernized soils data on 264,818 acres in FY11. Interactive soil surveys are available online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov> for all counties in Arkansas.

Arkansas NRCS and the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies (CAST) at the University of Arkansas began a State Resource Assessment (SRA) of Arkansas.

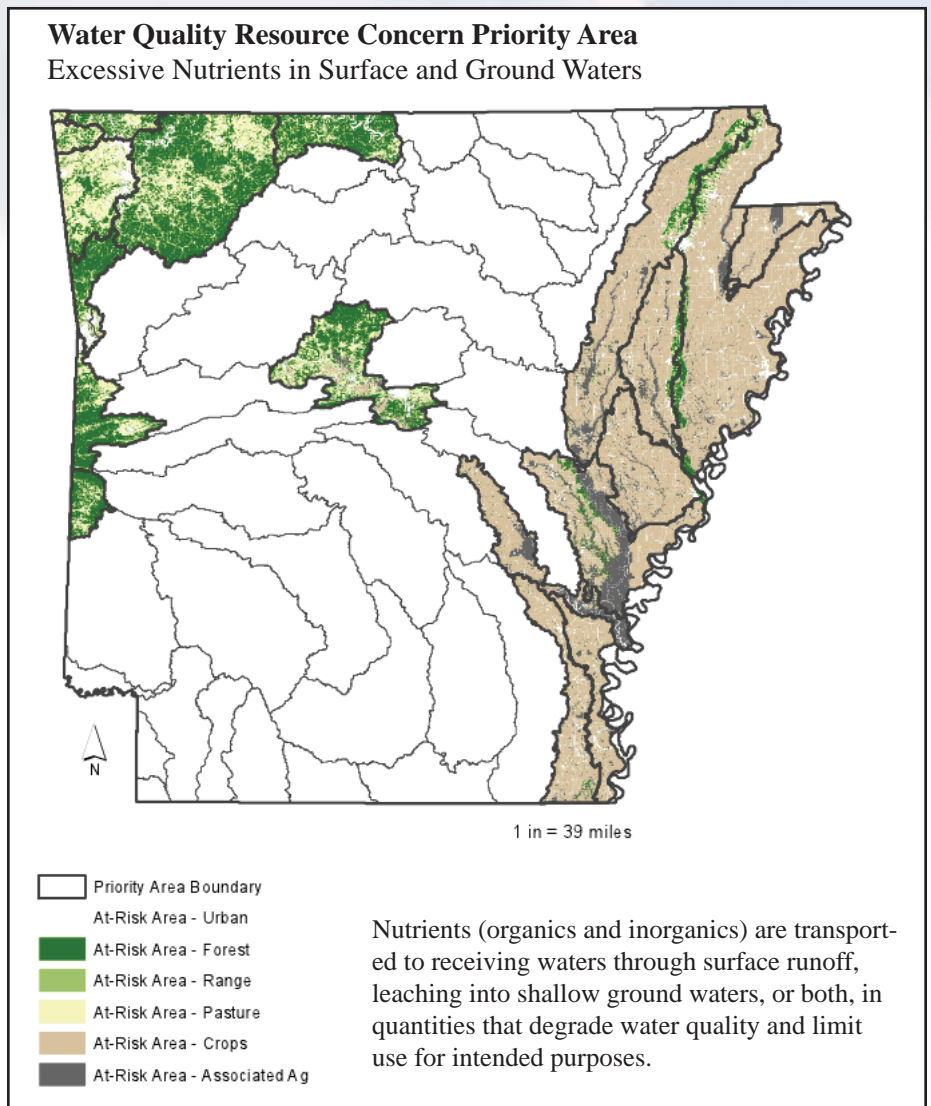
The goal of the SRA was to use the best available statewide datasets in conjunction with input from resource experts from NRCS and conservation partners to quantify the extent and distribution of 29 NRCS recognized natural resource concerns.

Based on the data, maps were created showing the resource concern areas. These maps represent the distribution of potential at-risk areas for each natural resource concern.

The individual input layer maps for all resource concern models can be viewed online at <http://raar.cast.uark.edu>.

The compilation of this statewide inventory will be used to help guide NRCS Arkansas efforts over the next five years.

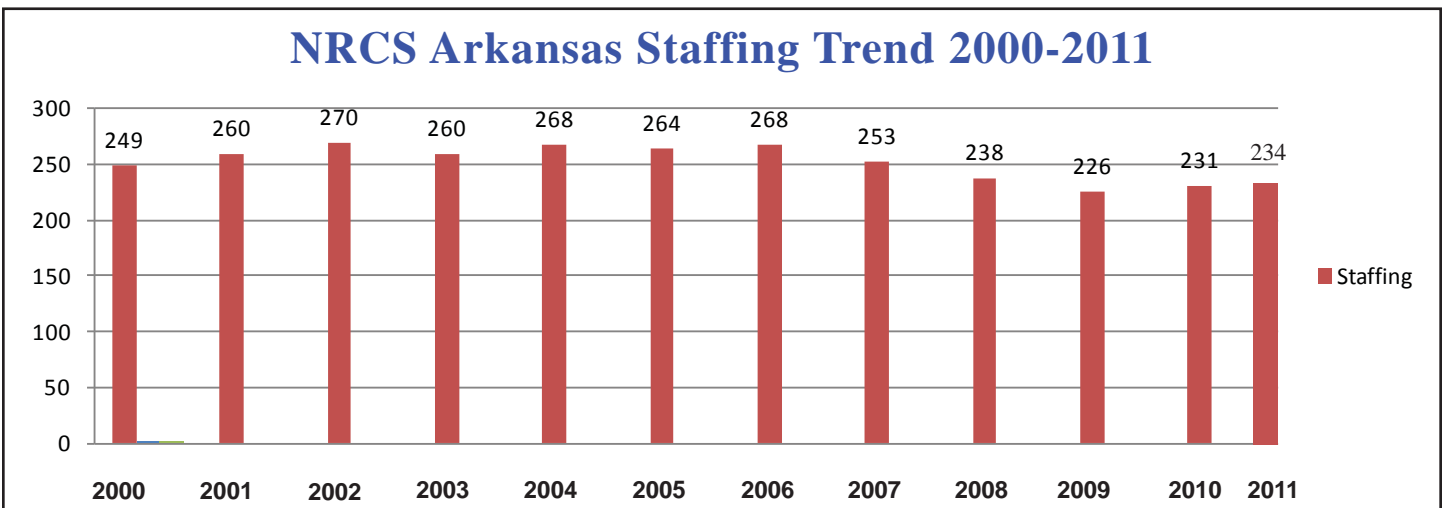
The soil survey staff also completed an inventory of soil carbon stocks in selected soils of the state. The results of this study will assist



NRCS in developing and encouraging conservation practices that will increase soil organic matter. Information gained will be used to adjust

conservation programs and evaluate the effects of conservation practices encouraged by NRCS and soil and water conservation districts.

NRCS Arkansas Staffing Trend 2000-2011



Conservation Technical Assistance



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Program provides technical assistance supported by science-based technology and tools to help people conserve, maintain, and improve natural resources on their land.

The CTA program provides the technical capability, including conservation planning, design, and implementation assistance, that helps people plan and apply conservation on the land.

This assistance is provided to individuals, groups, and communities who make natural resource management decisions on private, tribal, and other non-federal lands. NRCS, through the CTA Program, provides conservation technical assistance to address state and national natural resource conservation issues.

Conservation Practice	Practices Installed	Amount Installed
Access Control	158	12,589 acres
Access Road	3	8,557 feet
Brush Management	178	4,878 acres
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Applied	104	112
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Written	157	157
Conservation Cover	101	3,193 acres
Conservation Crop Rotation	990	68,041 acres
Cover Crop	20	2,592 acres
Fence	22	34,882 feet
Firebreak	22	128,986 feet
Forage and Biomass Planting	23	318 acres
Forage Harvest Management	395	10,505 acres
Forest Stand Improvement	65	4,671 acres
Forest Trails and Landings	5	7,795 feet
Integrated Pest Management	2,019	81,082 acres
Irrigation Land Leveling	211	13,959 acres
Irrigation System, Tailwater	17	20
Irrigation Water Conveyance, Pipeline, High-Pressure, Underground, Plastic	23	24,760

Irrigation Water Management	681	45,987 acres
Nutrient Management	2,413	92,381 acres
Pipeline	6	10,697 feet
Prescribed Burning	25	1,636 acres
Prescribed Grazing	924	25,588 acres
Pumping Plant	7	7
Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till	7	234 acres
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed	40	5,007 acres
Residue Management, Mulch Till	1	2,049 acres
Residue Management, Seasonal	666	41,457 acres
Riparian Forest Buffer	15	78 acres
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	26	1,763 acres
Shallow Water Development and Management	37	2,375 acres
Structure for Water Control	28	512
Tree/Shrub Establishment	21	454 acres
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	42	1,257 acres
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	692	32,138 acres
Waste Recycling	663	17,029 acres
Waste Storage Facility	2	2
Waste Transfer	4	4
Water Well	3	3
Watering Facility	11	18
Wetland Enhancement	2	114 acres
Wetland Restoration	13	986 acres
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	219	14,211 acres
Woody Residue Treatment	1	40 acres

Data Source: PRS FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals.

EQIP priorities in Arkansas are to reduce erosion; reduce pollution from animal wastes, nutrients and sediments; improve irrigation and reduce dependence on ground water for irrigation; forest improvements; improve grazing lands; and improve wildlife habitat.

Conservation Practice	Practices Installed	Amount Installed
Agriculture Energy Management Plan, Headquarters - Applied	4	4
Agriculture Energy Management Plan, Headquarters - Written	61	61
Amendments for Treatment of Agricultural Waste	120	166,181 animal units
Animal Mortality Facility	55	63
Brush Management	131	2,098 acres
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Applied	99	1153
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Written	88	89
Dike	13	50,331 feet
Farmstead Energy Improvement	13	24
Fence	698	1,121,279 feet
Firebreak	120	583,830 feet
Forage and Biomass Planting	393	7,048 acres
Forage Harvest Management	84	2,771 acres
Forest Management Plan - Written	12	359
Forest Stand Improvement	48	1,797 acres
Heavy Use Area Protection	342	1,599 acres
Integrated Pest Management	258	8,029 acres
Irrigation Land Leveling	199	41,698 acres
Irrigation Pipeline	41	58,107 feet

Irrigation Regulating Reservoir	36	185
Irrigation Reservoir	21	2,521 acre-ft
Irrigation Water Conveyance, Pipeline, High-Pressure, Underground, Plastic	160	202,241 feet
Irrigation Water Management	180	13,248 acres
Nutrient Management	513	15,584 acres
Pipeline	293	261,118 feet
Pond	150	151
Prescribed Burning	152	5,524 acres
Prescribed Grazing	960	20,098 acres
Pumping Plant (533) (no)	109	111
Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till	34	1,345 acres
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed	27	1,295 acres
Residue Management, No-Till/Strip Till	22	1,191 acres
Residue Management, Seasonal	42	2,688 acres
Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops	3	6,516 sq feet
Shallow Water Development and Management	214	11,541 acres
Structure for Water Control	235	433
Surface Drain, Field Ditch	16	30,886 feet
Surface Drain, Main or Lateral	11	27,511 feet
Tree/Shrub Establishment	164	5,070 acres
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	224	7,120 acres
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	195	5,472 acres
Waste Recycling	151	5,808 acres
Waste Storage Facility	68	68
Water Well	42	4,247
Watering Facility	336	1,167

Data Source: PRS FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Total Funding includes General EQIP, Ag Energy, Organic, MRBI, Illinois River and StrikeForce

County	Contracts	FY11 Financial Assistance
Arkansas	13	\$924,554
Ashley	1	\$7,232
Baxter	3	\$24,522
Benton	103	\$2,687,108
Boone	20	\$235,656
Bradley	18	\$132,089
Calhoun	1	\$2,809
Carroll	31	\$307,901
Chicot	18	\$1,307,666
Clark	6	\$87,109
Clay	20	\$238,017
Cleburne	13	\$218,496
Cleveland	31	\$378,164
Columbia	4	\$111,437
Conway	40	\$1,438,744
Craighead	48	\$813,585
Crawford	7	\$101,197
Crittenden	43	\$636,264
Cross	24	\$334,954
Dallas	5	\$72,610
Desha	37	\$1,161,048
Drew	24	\$282,868
Faulkner	11	\$300,732
Franklin	8	\$159,018
Fulton	36	\$719,259
Garland	1	\$13,057
Grant	1	\$4,153
Greene	7	\$165,189
Hempstead	8	\$86,866
Hot Spring	3	\$11,697
Howard	15	\$198,488
Independence	28	\$377,533
Izard	1	\$27,540
Jackson	2	\$57,893
Jefferson	29	\$1,349,222
Johnson	9	\$55,661
Lafayette	22	\$355,549
Lawrence	21	\$221,779

County	Contracts	FY11 Financial Assistance
Lee	25	\$426,581
Lincoln	28	\$393,321
Little River	13	\$236,299
Logan	9	\$127,815
Lonoke	6	\$243,723
Madison	23	\$558,565
Marion	5	\$16,634
Miller	1	\$17,696
Mississippi	14	\$77,580
Monroe	5	\$279,848
Montgomery	6	\$69,801
Nevada	5	\$96,933
Newton	4	\$35,021
Ouachita	3	\$18,524
Perry	15	\$63,778
Phillips	24	\$246,866
Pike	7	\$215,652
Poinsett	34	\$908,569
Polk	18	\$328,736
Pope	29	\$862,730
Prairie	16	\$1,312,120
Pulaski	9	\$38,026
Randolph	23	\$416,805
Saline	16	\$641,915
Scott	1	\$6,573
Searcy	4	\$22,231
Sebastian	13	\$271,732
Sevier	6	\$90,087
Sharp	18	\$245,305
St. Francis	14	\$261,853
Stone	3	\$40,836
Union	1	\$15,208
Van Buren	11	\$199,511
Washington	72	\$1,669,796
White	11	\$219,156
Woodruff	2	\$146,434
Yell	33	\$443,520
Total	1,239	\$26,873,448

Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

Wetlands Reserve Program



The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical and financial support to help landowners with wetland restoration. The NRCS goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat.

This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection. Arkansas ranks second in the nation in number of acres enrolled with more than 200,000.



Wetland Acres Created, Restored or Enhanced with WRP Funds in FY11

County	Acres
Arkansas	51
Chicot	270
Jackson	70
Lee	1,417
Little River	207
Miller	1,587
Monroe	304
Phillips	823
Prairie	786
Pulaski	376
White	152
Yell	213
Total	6,256

Data Source: PRS FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

County	Acres Enrolled	Number of Easements	FY11 Dollars Obligated
Chicot	72	1	\$97,200
Conway	80	1	\$92,840
Crawford/Sebastian	350.4	1	\$407,690
Franklin	98	1	\$112,700
Hempstead	205	2	\$245,400
Independence	529.06	2	\$595,013
Lee	923.8	2	\$1,036,205
Lincoln	319	1	\$427,350
Monroe	331	2	\$401,970
Prairie	160	1	\$181,350
St. Francis	206	1	\$230,250
White	548.7	1	\$710,330
Woodruff	2,306.09	10	\$2,780,620
Yell	314	1	\$361,100
Total	6,443.05	27	\$7,680,018.00
Dollars obligated for Restoration and Maintenance			\$2,806,454
Dollars obligated for surveys, title searches and closings			\$457,388
Grand Total			\$10,943,860

Data Source: NEST/FFIS FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

Wetland Project Protects Archeological Site

A project designed to alleviate crop losses from flooding and restore wetlands along the Arkansas and Petit Jean rivers is also protecting the most significant archeological site in Yell County, Ark.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service staff, archeologists and Native Americans came together to investigate and protect the site while at the same time enhancing wildlife habitat and protecting the environment.

“This project is a perfect example of people with a wide variety of interests and objectives working together for the good of the environment,” said Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist Mike Sullivan.

This work was made possible when the landowner enrolled 606.88 acres into a permanent easement to restore approximately 200 acres of cropland to wetlands and associated uplands and permanently protect the property.

The purpose of the project is to permanently protect the land from development, provide wildlife habitat and restore ecological functions. The restoration work includes establishment of native bottomland hardwood trees, native grass and de-leveling of precision-leveled fields in the 200



Excavation crew removing compacted, dark sediment layer to expose house floor.

acres currently in the Conservation Reserve Program. Also, 107.7 acres of moist-soil (herbaceous wetlands dominated by mass seed producing annuals) habitat was created, and 148.3 acres were reforested to bottomland hardwoods.

“Periodic flooding inundates 500 acres of the project area. After the site is restored, the project will improve water quality, reduce flood damage to crops, filter runoff water returning to the Arkansas and Petit Jean rivers, and protect and preserve endangered species and migratory birds. We excavated shallow water areas for moist-soil management, water control structures were installed to

manage water levels within these impoundments, and trees were planted,” said Rich Johnson, NRCS program specialist for easements.

Through remote sensing, many critical features were identified on this major archeological site and the data was used to select “low risk” locations for tree planting. In this field, 300 potted trees were planted in 16 acres to ensure survival and avoid impacting the site which in turn will provide a savanna type habitat, according to NRCS Archeologist John Riggs.

“Partners also worked together to identify the significance of the cultural resources and avoid impacting the site. So far, the floors of two houses are fully excavated and a modest array of pottery shards, animal bone and stone tools were found.

In addition, a tremendous amount of information was gathered about the physical and cultural arrangement of these 500-year-old communities. In cooperation with our Native American partners, a concerted effort was made to avoid all graves,” said Riggs.

The Arkansas Archeological Survey, Arkansas Archeological Society, Oklahoma Archeological Survey, Osage Nation, Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma, Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma, and NRCS worked on the archeological investigations.



Extensive use of remote sensing equipment was used to locate areas needing further archeological investigation.

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land.

Emphasis is on declining species: bobwhite quail, elk, neo-tropical migratory songbirds and threatened or endangered species. Good habitats are also being developed and managed for numerous game and non-game species.



County	Contracts	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
Arkansas	2	848.1	\$18,981
Carroll	1	21	\$24,953
Chicot	1	80	\$14,486
Cleburne	4	474	\$71,002
Columbia	1	138.9	\$3,781
Conway	1	313.1	\$6,462
Cross	2	113.4	\$23,586
Faulkner	1	244	\$18,383
Franklin	2	360	\$25,469
Fulton	11	2,295.7	\$135,441
Madison	4	915	\$41,675
Newton	2	160.75	\$21,162
Polk	1	801	\$15,136
Pope	1	65	\$3,774
Prairie	2	525	\$21,450
Randolph	2	245	\$14,878
Searcy	10	2,041.7	\$143,255
Sharp	4	1,155.2	\$49,510
Stone	4	1,538	\$44,750
Washington	1	100	\$21,859
Yell	1	200	\$10,878
Total	58	12,634.85	\$730,871

Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

Conservation Practice	Practices Installed	Amount Installed
Critical Area Planting	4	29 acres
Dike	1	3,271 feet
Early Successional Habitat Development/Management	54	252 acres
Fence	1	1,884 feet
Field Border	1	13 acres
Firebreak	73	377,714 feet
Forest Stand Improvement	56	1,362 acres
Land Clearing	35	137 acres
Prescribed Burning	154	5,837 acres
Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats	19	101 acres
Sediment Basin	1	1 basin
Shallow Water Development and Management	719	34,858 acres
Structure for Water Control	1	1 structure
Tree/Shrub Establishment	28	3,745 acres
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	5	10 acres
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	118	1,161 acres
Watering Facility	11	16 facilities
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	25	434 acres
Wildlife Watering Facility	1	1 facility

Data Source: PRS FY11, Oct. 1, 2011
Page 11

Conservation Stewardship Program



The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary program providing financial and technical assistance promoting the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands.

The 2008 Farm Bill replaced the Conservation Security Program with the new Conservation Stewardship Program for fiscal years 2009 through 2017. The program may enroll more than 12.7 million acres each fiscal year. Acreage will be allocated based primarily on each state's or area's proportion of eligible acres to the total number of all eligible acres.



County	Contracts	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
Arkansas	37	34,235.5	\$1,195,233
Ashley	2	1,692.5	\$44,237
Baxter	2	1,191	\$11,043
Carroll	1	401.5	\$5,572
Chicot	4	9,624.4	\$215,431
Clay	8	8,201.9	\$139,022
Columbia	2	1,061.7	\$9,334
Craighead	28	26,468.6	\$689,215
Crittenden	14	11,283.7	\$276,523
Cross	7	4,953.8	\$94,872
Desha	1	9.2	\$1,000
Fulton	4	890.1	\$10,519
Greene	13	12,451.9	\$245,951
Howard	1	694	\$4,269
Independence	7	3,764.9	\$198,041
Izard	2	1,549	\$29,775
Jackson	25	22,182.5	\$584,991
Jefferson	50	64,449.1	\$2,312,402
Johnson	7	1,052	\$20,474
Lafayette	4	2,899.6	\$14,349
Lawrence	46	43,783.8	\$1,085,212
Lee	4	1,271	\$55,632

County	Contracts	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
Lincoln	6	5,395.5	\$195,113
Logan	2	2,249.4	\$57,605
Lonoke	5	7,483.1	\$148,584
Marion	5	1,921	\$30,868
Mississippi	7	5,053.3	\$138,449
Monroe	8	6,340	\$128,163
Newton	2	172.5	\$1,359
Ouachita	1	489	\$5,203
Phillips	14	25,622.2	\$719,064
Poinsett	32	39,003.6	\$825,221
Polk	1	356	\$6,056
Prairie	31	27,407.8	\$602,054
Randolph	10	9,173.3	\$272,885
St. Francis	5	5,693.5	\$118,745
Searcy	13	6,414.4	\$95,147
Sharp	22	8,476.1	\$57,795
Stone	7	1,914.7	\$21,564
Union	6	3,023.5	\$42,689
White	6	2,579.2	\$48,634
Yell	1	257.6	\$4,942
Total	453	413,137.4	\$10,763,237

Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program



Two Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) projects received funding in 2011 in Arkansas.

The White River Irrigation District AWEP project is designed to conserve surface and ground water and improve pumping efficiency.

The project, managed by NRCS and the White River Irrigation District, allows producers to install fuel and water monitoring equipment on an estimated 300 wells or re-lifts. The project boundary includes all or portions of Arkansas, Clay, Conway, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Faulkner, Greene, Jackson, Jefferson, Lee, Lonoke, Mississippi, Monroe, Perry, Poinsett, Pope, Prairie, Pulaski, St. Francis, Van Buren, Woodruff and Yell counties.

The Little Red River Irrigation District AWEP project addresses water quantity and quality concerns in the Little Red River Watershed in White County.

The project area encompasses approximately 83,838 acres southeast of Searcy containing approximately 34,000 acres of irrigated cropland. The area has been designated as a critical ground water use area by the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission. The project area is approximately 14 miles in length and averages about 10 miles in width.



County	Contracts	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
Arkansas	6	2,303.8	\$113,037
Clay	1	587.7	\$10,820
Craighead	9	1,558.06	\$65,962
Cross	4	906.5	\$45,117
Greene	15	5,055	\$300,972
Jefferson	1	490.4	\$61,952
Lonoke	3	520.8	\$42,180
Mississippi	1	322.8	\$30,219
Prairie	1	200	\$12,332
White*	23	2,470.3	\$1,172,140
Total	64	14,415.36	\$1,854,731

* Little Red River Irrigation AWEP project

Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

Little Red River Irrigation District AWEP



A tailwater recovery system catches runoff water from fields to be pumped into an irrigation reservoir for storage.

Having enough water to sustain his crops has been a battle for Bob White since he came back from World War II and took over the family farm more than 60 years ago.

In the 1920s, Bob's father traded a Southwest Missouri hardware store for 800 acres in White County, Ark., and began farming. Bob was born and raised on the farm. And now, 88-years later, he still drives the tractor and lends a hand and his knowledge where needed.

After a stint in the Army, Bob returned to White County and took over the farming operation in 1950. After 30 years of dryland farming, Bob started purchasing water pumped from the Little Red River from a neighboring farmer.

Pipelines were installed through the Farm Service Agency's Agricultural Conservation Program in the 1980s. However, in the past several years the demand for water has increased to the extent that Bob and his son-in-law, Danny Barnett, who took over the operation 7 years ago, couldn't count on

“Three years ago, we had to stop growing rice because we couldn't get enough water. Having water when I need it will increase the yield and allow me to grow rice again.”

-- Danny Barnett

receiving water when they needed it.

“Three years ago, we had to stop growing rice because we couldn't get enough water,” Barnett said. “We drew up plans for an irrigation system several years ago but, it wasn't economically feasible.”

But now, thanks to the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program Little Red River Irrigation Project in White County an end may be in sight for Barnett's water problems. In July, construction on a 30-acre irrigation reservoir and tailwater recovery pit began. The project, designed by NRCS with input from Barnett, will allow him to water his 170-acre soybean and rice operation.

“It was worth giving up the 35

acres of cropland the irrigation system required to have the peace of mind that I've gained not having to depend on the weather or others for water,” Barnett said. “Having water when I need it will increase the yield and allow me to grow rice again.”

The reservoir will store 240 acre feet of water and ties into the existing pipeline system. Ditches along the property will also catch additional water and funnel it to the tailwater pit. From the pit, it can be pumped to the reservoir, then to the fields when required.

The Red River Irrigation Project provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers for addressing water quantity and quality concerns in the Little Red River Watershed.

“Bob and I have been working on getting an irrigation project started in this area since the 1980s,” said Elvis Vaughn, Little Red River Irrigation District project director. “It is good to finally see some of our work come to benefit the producers in White County.”

Emergency Watershed Protection Program

The purpose of the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program is to undertake emergency measures, including the purchase of flood plain easements, for runoff retardation and soil erosion prevention to safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion on any watershed whenever fire, tornado, flood or any other natural occurrence is causing or has caused a sudden impairment of the watershed.

County	Number of Sites	FY11 Financial Assistance	Project Type
Benton	6	\$107,575	Debris Removal/Bank Stabilization
Dallas	2	\$6,223	Debris Removal
Faulkner	1	\$139,000	Debris Removal
Lawrence	5	\$91,964	Road/Bank Stabilization
Lincoln	2	\$31,545	Bank Stabilization
Newton	1	\$68,140	Bank Stabilization
Phillips	1	\$57,180	Road Stabilization
Pike	1	\$56,912	Bank Stabilization
Randolph	2	\$38,843	Bank Stabilization
Sebastian	4	\$54,761	Bank Stabilization
St. Francis	2	\$133,209	Lagoon Stabilization
Washington	1	\$45,252	Bank Stabilization
Total	28	\$878,076	

Unofficial Data Source: NRCS Arkansas Engineering Department, Nov. 30, 2011

Hughes Sewage Lagoon

This spring, when water from excessive rains damaged the Hughes, Ark., sewage treatment facility and the lagoon ponds began to breach, Mayor Larry Owens contacted the local Natural Resources Conservation Service office for a solution to the tiny delta town's problem. Charlie Williams, an Arkansas USDA Strike Force Leader and NRCS employee, encouraged the mayor to use the Emergency Watershed Protection Program to prevent total failure of the embankment.

NRCS field engineers identified it as an EWP situation requiring immediate action on May 4.

"Raw sewage was flowing into a creek," says Walt Delp, NRCS state engineer. "Without quick action, the contamination would have spread downstream, impacting the entire community. We mobilized a contractor, who arrived on site May 5 and began work immediately."

Sewage waste and wastewater contamination of groundwater resources could have caused serious health threats to the community as well as caused environmental problems to the lakes and streams due to the level of phosphate and other nutrients present.

The contractor stopped the sewage leak May 5 and stabilized the site May 7. Permanent repair work of the embankment began May 16 and was completed June 10 with



a federal cost share of \$134,710 for both projects.

The city of Hughes is located in St. Francis County. It has a population of 1,450.

"Once it was determined the site met EWP guidelines, we established that the community qualified for 90 percent federal and 10 percent local cost share because it was located in a StrikeForce county," Williams says.

Mayor Owens says that he and Hughes as a community appreciate the StrikeForce Initiative immensely.

"It's good to have programs like this to help take care of us in these types of emergency situations," Mayor Owens says.

Ponca Streambank Stabilization

Although raging waters had subsided at Deanna Young's home in Ponca, Ark., a flood of emotions hit her when she found out the Natural Resources Conservation Service would pay 100 percent of the cost of protecting her home from falling into Adds Creek.

"I couldn't hold back the tears," Young said. "My prayers had been answered."

The mother of three, who works full-time at a Christian book warehouse and two part-time jobs cleaning buildings and mowing a cemetery, applied for a loan to meet the 25 percent cost share required by the Emergency Watershed Program. But there was nothing the bank could do.

The Newton County Conservation District along with the community of Ponca, an unincorporated village with 175 residents, didn't have the resources to meet the cost-share requirements either.

"I didn't know what I was going to do. I had called other federal agencies and kept being told they would call me back. I have yet to receive a phone call from them," Young said.

But, Margaret Lonadier, NRCS district conservationist for Boone and Newton counties, did keep following up with Young. And, when the cost-share became an issue, she sent a note to Arkansas State Conservationist Mike Sullivan.

Although the EWP program doesn't normally allow NRCS to pay 100 percent of the cost of repairs to an individuals' property, a waiver can be granted for unusual situations or circumstances.

"This site is a true exigency (a site requiring immediate action). The creek bank eroded back to the foundation of the home. It is now completely exposed and could easily fail during another rainfall event," Sullivan wrote in a letter to leaders at NRCS headquarters in Washington, D.C. requesting a waiver of the 25 percent cost share.

"Newton County has over 20 percent of the residents living below the poverty level and is designated a USDA StrikeForce County. Economic development is considered a top priority by the USDA. This project will have a positive economic impact on the community. Conversely, a house falling into the creek will have a negative economic impact," he added.

A 10-foot-wide by 240-foot-long swath of the stream bank was washed downstream to the picturesque Buffalo National River, America's first designated national river.

"Stabilizing the stream bank will not only protect the home, but will also prevent further deposition of sediment



Before: Margaret Lonadier (left), NRCS district conservationist for Boone and Newton counties, and Deanna Young discuss the damage flood water caused to Young's property.



After: Gabion baskets protect Deanna Young's home and stabilize the bank along Adds Creek.

in the Buffalo National River," Sullivan said.

"The repair entails stabilizing the bank with stone filled gabions backfilled with rocks and soil. The gabions, rectangular wire containers, will be stacked on top of each other to prevent further erosion. Gabion baskets have advantages over loose riprap since they are more resistant to being washed away by moving water," said Arkansas NRCS State Engineer Walt Delp.

For Young, talking about the rising waters, the damage afterwards and the help she is receiving from NRCS still brings tears to her eyes.

"I called my children, who are all out of state in college to tell them my good fortune, and we all cried tears of joy," Young said.

Illinois River/Eucha Spavinaw Watershed Initiative

NRCS received funding for a water quality initiative in the Illinois River Sub-Basin and the Eucha-Spavinaw Lake Watershed in northwestern Arkansas and northeastern Oklahoma.

The purpose of the project is to improve water quality of the Illinois River Sub-Basin and Eucha-Spavinaw Lake Watershed (which include Lake Tenkiller, Lake Eucha and Lake Spavinaw in Oklahoma) while maintaining the food and fiber production in the area.

Water quality enhancement is crucial to ensuring an adequate supply of drinkable water for the urban center of Tulsa, Okla., as well as the many smaller municipalities and individuals who rely on these water resources for their water supply.

Improving water quality will benefit recreational industries since the Illinois River is a designated scenic river.

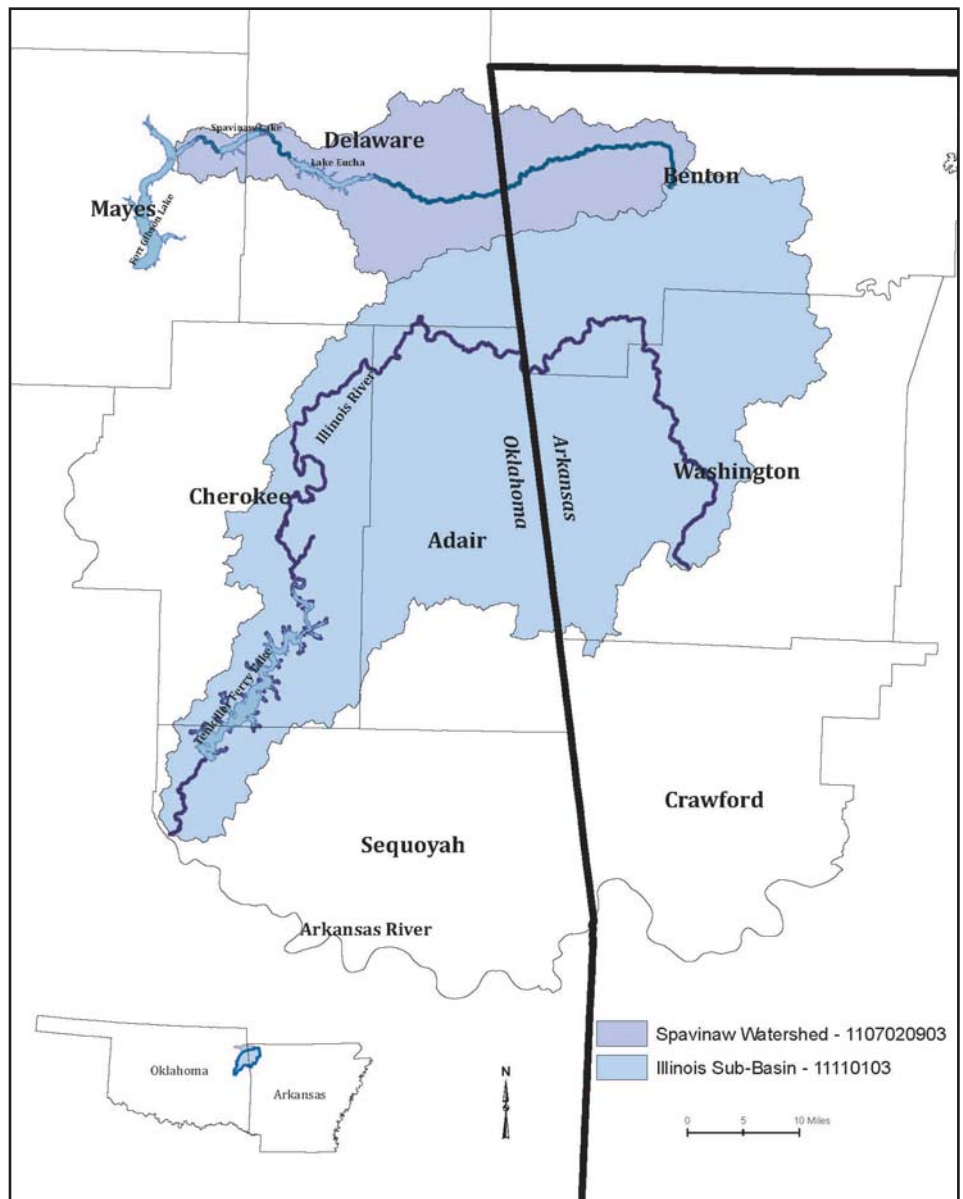
The project is located in portions of Benton and Washington counties in Arkansas and parts of Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Mayes and Sequoyah counties in Oklahoma.

Funding will be used to assist landowners in the 1.32 million acre area over an eight-year period. The area includes 576,517 acres in Arkansas and 739,156 acres in Oklahoma.

NRCS and its conservation partners plan to further treat and reduce water quality resource concerns through conservation practices which will avoid, control, and trap the nutrients and sediments. The combination of these kinds of practices both upland from and adjacent to the water bodies will be highly beneficial to the water resources in the area.

County	Contracts	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
Benton	84	9,952.7	\$2,559,958
Washington	47	4,012.02	\$1,442,964
Total	131	13,964.72	\$4,002,922

Data Source: ProTracts FY 11, Oct. 1, 2011



Illinois River/Eucha Spavinaw Watershed



Rhonda Foster, Washington County district conservationist, meets with Diem and Bruce Norindr on their poultry farm to discuss the operations nutrient management plan.

At the urging of friends in northwest Arkansas, Bruce Norindr gave up his machinist job in Florida and moved to Washington County to become a poultry producer.

For Norindr, who doesn't have a farming background, the transition to poultry production 2 ½ years ago has had a pretty steep learning curve. His neighbor suggested he contact the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for technical assistance.

"Mr. Norindr needed a way to dispose of dead chickens," said Rhonda Foster, the Washington County district conservationist. "When he purchased the farm, the previous owner didn't tell him he couldn't use the existing stacking shed (used to store chicken litter) as a composter for dead chickens."

Foster and the Illinois River Sub-Basin and Eucha-Spavinaw Lake Watershed Initiative provided a solution – a 2,641-square-foot composting facility. The facility uses a mixture of raw organic by-products and chicken litter to dispose of chicken carcasses in an environmentally friendly way.

"This is great and will definitely help my operation. Richard (Guterrez, an NRCS soil conservation technician) gave me the recipe," Norindr said, referring to the proper amount of organic matter and litter.

John Calhoun operates a 200-acre livestock farm for his father-in-law Jimmy Reeves in Washington County, Ark. The farm extends on both sides of the Illinois River. 38-acres on the north side of the river weren't being utilized for rotational grazing due to the lack of a sufficient watering source for his 38 cows and calves. The land was too rocky to build a pond on, so they turned to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for technical and financial assistance.

Reeves received an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract through the Illinois River Sub-Basin and Eucha-Spavinaw Lake Watershed Initiative. NRCS staff from the Fayetteville Field Office provided assistance and developed a conservation plan utilizing an existing well on the property. Through EQIP, a solar powered pumping plant was installed to deliver water from the well to a 700 gallon watering facility to provide water for his livestock.

Through EQIP, NRCS also provided him assistance with 6,363 feet of barbed wire fencing and 3,204 feet of electric fencing to divide his fields for prescribed grazing.

These conservation practices will help the Reeves' farm operation improve energy use efficiency, improve water quantity, reduce soil erosion, improve soil condition, improve air quality, and improve watershed function in the Illinois River Sub-Basin.



John Calhoun and Rhonda Foster, Washington County district conservationist, check Calhoun's solar pumping plant.



Tim Crawley and Mike Whitis, Benton County district conservationist, discuss prescribed grazing on Crawley's dairy operation.

Tim Crawley is a fourth generation dairy farmer in Benton County, Ark. At one time the county had more than 400 dairies, but the number has dropped to a dozen over the last couple of decades.

Crawley's Valley View Farms is one of the largest dairy farms in the county and one of the top milk producers.

With grain prices steadily increasing, Crawley turned to USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to convert his 300-head dairy herd from a confined operation to prescribed grazing.

Crawley signed up 750 acres through the Illinois River Sub-Basin and Eucha-Spavinaw Lake Watershed Initiative to plant forage and biomass, install electric fencing, underground pipelines and watering facilities. The plan also calls for planting a cover crop on 75 acres to decrease soil erosion and nutrient runoff. Two waste storage ponds are also being incorporated into his system to store manure, wastewater and runoff from his dairy barn and feed stalls.

"These practices will not only help keep my operation financially viable but also improve the environment," Crawley said.

In addition to dairy cattle, he grows silage for feed and manages a two-house breeder hen operation.

Mississippi River Basin Initiative

To improve the health of the Mississippi River Basin, including water quality and wildlife habitat, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has announced the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI).

Through this Initiative, NRCS and its partners will help producers in selected watersheds in the Mississippi River Basin voluntarily implement conservation practices and systems that avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff; improve wildlife habitat; and maintain agricultural productivity.

The focus areas in Arkansas are Lake Conway-Point Remove, L'Anguille, Cache, Lower St. Francis, Bayou Macon, Boeuf River and Little River Ditches watersheds.

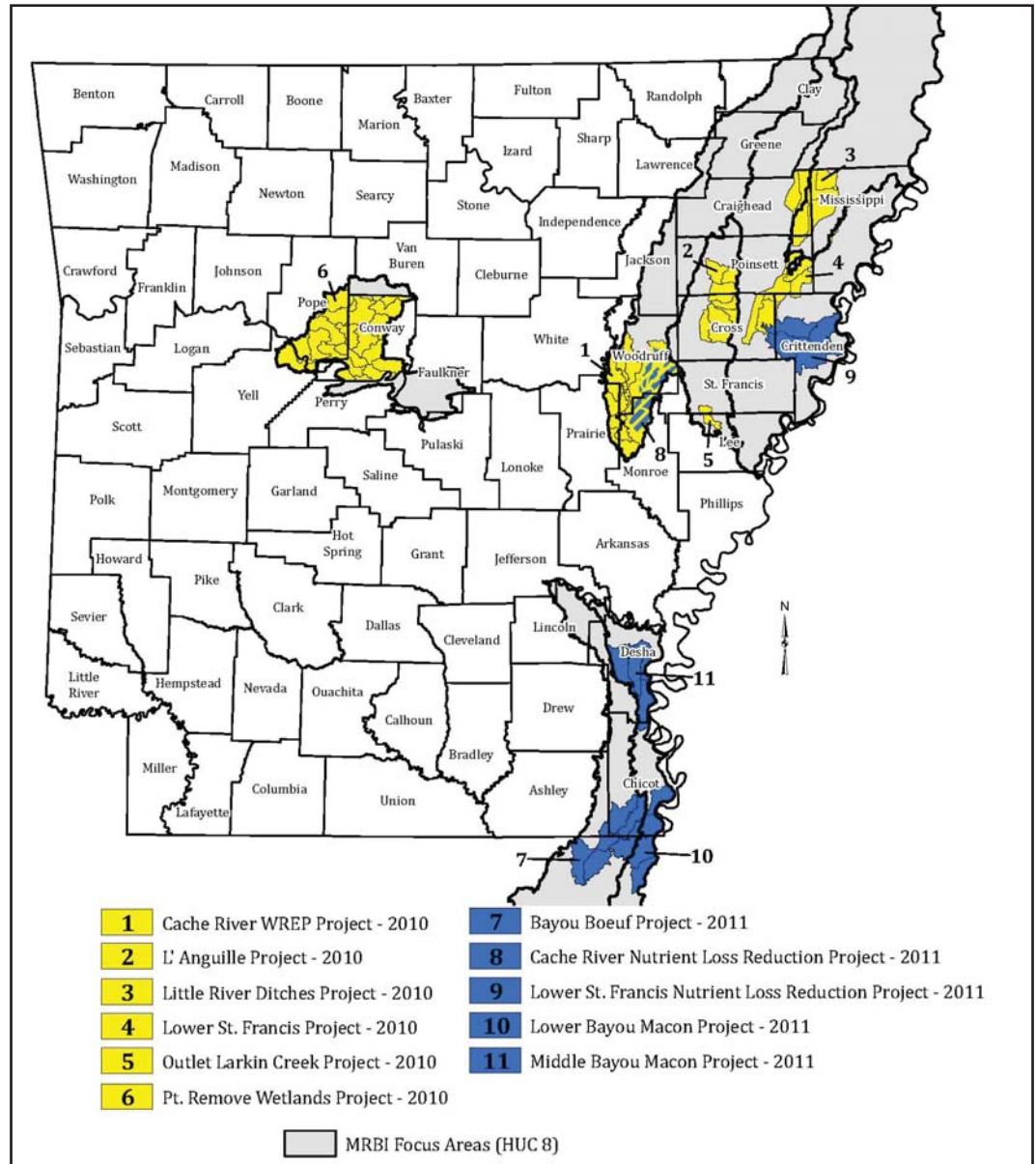
Six Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative projects were selected for funding in Arkansas in 2010 and five in 2011 from within the eligible watersheds.

Arkansas's projects are:

- L'Anguille River Watershed Coalition (2010)
- Lake Conway-Point Remove Wetlands Reclamation and Irrigation District (2010)
- St. Francis County and Lee County Conservation Districts, Outlet Larkin Creek (2010)

- Northeast Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Little River Ditches (2010)
- Northeast Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Lower St. Francis (2010)
- Cache River Watershed Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (2010)

- Bayou Boeuf (2011)
- Cache River Nutrient Loss Reduction (2011)
- Lower St. Francis Nutrient Loss Reduction (2011)
- Lower Bayou Macon (2011)
- Middle Bayou Macon (2011)



Mississippi River Basin Initiative

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Project	Contracts	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
L'Anguille River	20	12,030	\$423,582
Outlet Larkin Creek	6	766	\$379,432.95
Point Remove	39	14,589	\$1,871,890.58
Lower St. Francis (2010)	48	10,373	\$685,622.75
Lower St. Francis (2011)	17	1,936	\$425,955
Little River Ditches	60	9,236	\$725,188.92
Cache River (2011 CCPI)	3	1,431	\$195,096
Middle Bayou Macon	24	8,178	\$890,418
Lower Bayou Macon	4	2,406	\$313,096
Bayou Boeuf	4	2,015	\$329,786
Total	225	62,960	\$6,240,068

Unofficial Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Oct. 28, 2011

Conservation Stewardship Program

Project	Contracts	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
L'Anguille River	8	9,789.9	\$245,146
Bayou Boeuf	1	1,978	\$40,000
Lower Bayou Macon	1	2,048.2	\$55,431
Total	10	13,816.1	\$340,577

Unofficial Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Dec. 2, 2011

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

Project	Contracts	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
L'Anguille River	1	105	\$17,826
Total	1	105	\$17,826

Unofficial Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Dec. 2, 2011

Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program

Project	Parcels	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
Cache River (WREP)	13	4,200	\$5,188,743
Total	13	4,200	\$5,188,743

Unofficial Data Source: NRCS Arkansas Easements Department, Oct. 28, 2011

Total FY11 MRBI	Contracts/ Parcels	Acres	FY11 Financial Assistance
EQIP, CSP, WHIP, WREP	249	81,801	\$11,787,214

Unofficial Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Dec. 2, 2011

Mississippi River Basin Initiative



Dr. Tina Gray Teague, ASU, Charles Glover, NE AR Conservation District, Producer Steve Craig, and Dr. Michele Reba, USDA Agricultural Research Service, in field in Marked Tree.

Arkansas State University Professor Tina Gray Teague is leading a two-year Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative study in the Little River Ditches Watershed located in parts of Craighead, Mississippi and Poinsett counties in northeast Arkansas. The project will help farmers use spatial technologies to adjust fertilizer application rates for optimum yields with reduced nutrient runoff from agricultural fields.

Local producers have invested in auto-steer systems linked to GPS satellite systems. The technology allows variable-rate fertilizer application based on soil test data from grid sampling and identifying management zones in a field with characteristics that affect fertilizer uptake by plants, runoff and leaching into groundwater.

The project will demonstrate practices that can enable producers to reduce nitrogen and phosphorous use without sacrificing cotton yield or quality. Reduced tillage, cover crops and other conservation practices will also be evaluated on demonstration farms. The expected results of these efforts will provide evidence that show improved crop productivity through earlier maturity, higher yields and improved watershed water quality as a result of decreased nutrient loss.

Willow Bend Farm, a 1,650-acre cattle farm, lies in the shadow of Petit Jean Mountain, nestled between the Arkansas River and Point Remove Creek.

Fluctuating water levels, along with flooding, causes erosion issues on the property.

“My dad used the Soil Conservation Service when I was a kid to help deal with erosion problems. I also need technical and financial help with the erosion issues,” said Ruth Spiller, the farm manager. “I read a lot, but most of the data is from controlled studies. I needed the expertise of the Natural Resources Conservation Service to figure out what works best on this farm.”

Thanks to the Point Remove Wetlands Reclamation and Irrigation District Mississippi River Basin Initiative Project the financial assistance is also available.

Spiller enrolled 1,456 acres of the farm into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program portion of the project. Her conservation plan calls for monitoring and evaluation of nutrient runoff, waste transfer and utilization, planting cover crops, nutrient management with grid sampling, a structure for water control, wetland enhancement, conservation crop rotation and fencing off the wetland. A second contract on the property includes heavy use protection areas, a grade stabilization structure and grass waterway.

“It behooves us to know what nutrients are running off the field,” Spiller said. “One of the projects will monitor a natural wetland in one of our pastures to see what is coming into and out of the wetland. This is a great opportunity to learn about what is happening on the farm and gain this valuable knowledge.”



Ronnach Day, Conway County district conservationist, discusses MRBI work on Willow Bend Farm with Ruth Spiller, the farm manager.



Richard Young (right), an NRCS soil conservationist, and Edgar Perry discuss the work planned on Perry's 85-acre farm.

For Edgar Perry, erosion problems on his 85-acre farm on Crowley's Ridge have seemed like a downhill battle, literally. “I've wanted to get this erosion problem under control for a while,” the retired doctor said. “It has been a real mess.”

With the help of NRCS, Perry is receiving assistance through the L'Angeuille River MRBI project.

By leveling gullies, then planting Bermuda grass on the highly-erodible land, Perry will see a reduction in erosion on his field. A sediment basin, planned in 2012 through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program portion of MRBI, will add another level of protection and catch debris and sediment.

The remaining 40 acres will be planted in native grasses and managed for upland wildlife habitat. The plan calls for planting a variety of native warm season grasses and trees to attract a greater diversity of wildlife species. Trees will also be planted on 11 acres through the Conservation Reserve Program as a riparian buffer. The buffer will serve as a filter to trap sediments and other contaminants before they reach nearby water bodies.

Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative



Birds migrating south this year will find more than 65,000 additional acres with enhanced habitat and water in Arkansas. In 2010, NRCS in Arkansas received \$7.22 million and funded 343 contracts through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program and Wetlands Reserve Program.

Though no new contracts were funded in 2011, the current contracts run through 2012 and producers will again this year provide additional habitat for migratory birds.

- Key conservation practices being implemented are:
- ♦ Shallow Water Development and Management – Flooding rice fields or other crop fields which are in rotation with rice;
 - ♦ Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management – Providing nesting boxes for wetland bird species and planting food crops for migratory waterfowl; and
 - ♦ Early Successional Habitat Establishment and Management – Disking to promote early successional growth of forbs, legumes, and other food plants.



Levell Foote, Jefferson County district conservationist, reviews the MBHI plan with Dr. DeWayne Goldmon (left) for his farm in Jefferson County.

For Dr. DeWayne Goldmon, who operates the 750-acre Dell-Cam Farm, Inc., in Jefferson County, Ark., flooding fields through the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative was the right thing to do and helped fulfill a critical need.

“It was a win-win situation,” said Goldmon, referring to the initiative designed to enhance habitat for birds making their annual migration towards the Gulf of Mexico.

Goldmon signed up to flood 14.3 acres through the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program portion of MBHI that weren’t flooded in the past three years. “We had a concentrated effort that attracted birds to rest and feed in the area,” he said. “I noticed a slight increase in the number of waterfowl in the fields.

“Although we had below normal rainfall during the critical period which probably affected the success of the program, I feel the project provided an added benefit to the migratory bird population.”

“Arkansas’s success in MBHI shows the importance our farmers and ranchers place on doing something positive to help the migrating birds – not only during this initiative but in subsequent years as well,” said Arkansas State Conservationist Mike Sullivan.



John Wheeler, Lee County district conservationist, discusses the success of MBHI with Andre Peer on his farm in Lee County.

Like most Americans, Andre Peer, a rice, wheat and sweet potato farmer from Lee County, Ark., watched with great interest the affect the 2010 Deepwater Horizon/BP oil spill had on the gulf coast. Little did he know he would have a chance to reduce the impact on the migratory waterfowl population that would travel to that area.

Peer heard about the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative when John Wheeler, Lee County district conservationist, visited with him and dropped off information about the program.

“Normally, I would have planted wheat in the fall, but when I heard about MBHI, I signed up,” Peer said. “This part of Arkansas is prime territory for migratory waterfowl to rest, feed, nest and breed on their way down to the Gulf of Mexico. I decided to provide a few extra food resources and habitat for the birds before they went.”

Peer received a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program contract through MBHI and signed up to flood 243 acres. NRCS staff from the Marianna Field Office provided assistance and developed a plan on the property to seasonally flood the fields as a shallow water area for migratory waterfowl.

“Because of our participation in MBHI, I noticed an increase in the number of ducks in the fields despite the lack of rain early in the fall,” said Peer. “I think that MBHI was very good because it allowed me the opportunity to utilize the land as an alternative habitat for the birds and hopefully reduce the negative impact from the spill.”

USDA StrikeForce Initiative

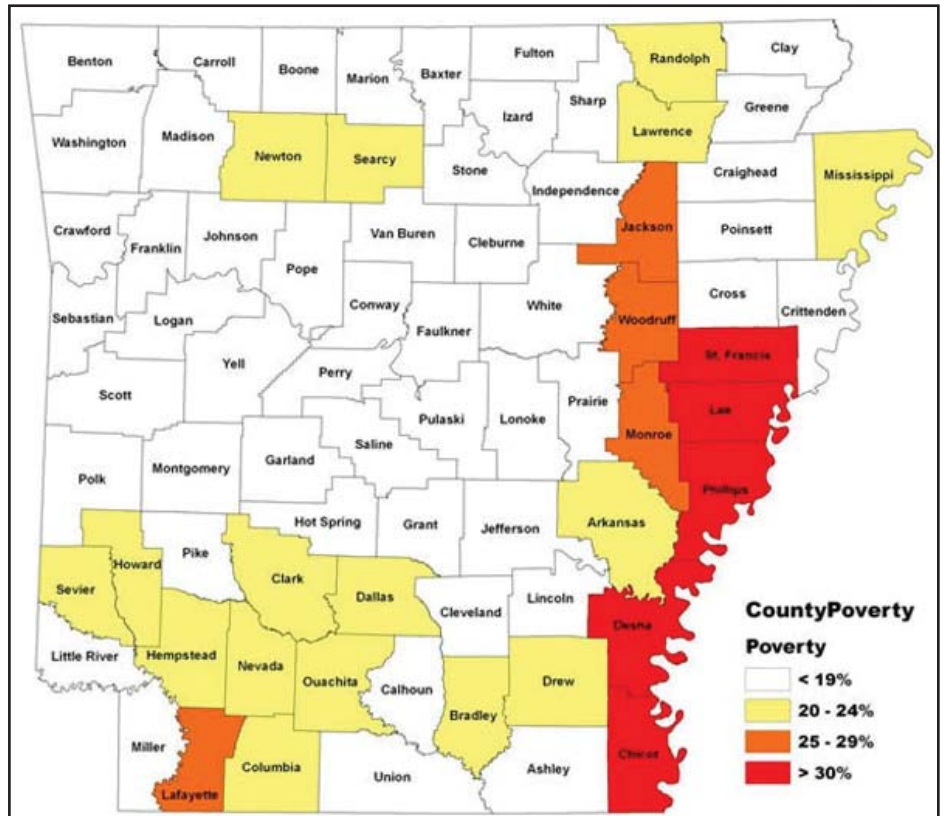


Arkansas is one of three pilot states participating in the USDA StrikeForce Initiative. The initiative is designed to help relieve persistent poverty in high poverty counties by accelerating USDA assistance while working closely with Community Based Organizations.

Funding was provided through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP).

Sixty-seven EQIP applications by historically underserved were funded for \$1,083,874. Thirty additional EQIP contracts for \$713,096 and 11 WHIP contracts for \$124,485 were also funded in Arkansas's StrikeForce counties.

The counties are: Arkansas, Bradley, Chicot, Clark, Columbia, Dallas, Desha, Drew, Hempstead, Howard, Jackson, Lafayette, Lawrence, Lee, Mississippi, Monroe, Nevada, Newton, Ouachita, Phillips, Randolph, Searcy, Sevier, St. Francis and Woodruff.



County	Contracts	Acres	Financial Assistance
Arkansas	8	1,933.4	\$477,989
Arkansas*	1	801.5	\$14,953
Bradley	2	256	\$47,498
Chicot	2	284	\$68,177
Clark	1	24	\$6,166
Columbia	1	70	\$5,336
Columbia*	1	138.9	\$3,781
Dallas	2	74	\$19,057
Desha	7	234.2	\$130,457
Drew	3	124.4	\$50,816
Hempstead	2	110	\$12,914
Howard	5	155	\$47,197

County	Contracts	Acres	Financial Assistance
Jackson	1	318	\$45,026
Lafayette	3	219.7	\$43,293
Lee	7	418	\$114,181
Nevada	2	98	\$49,248
Phillips	19	1,214.94	\$196,097
Randolph	22	2,786	\$413,470
Randolph*	2	245	\$14,878
Searcy	2	140	\$16,774
Searcy*	7	1,262.7	\$90,873
Sevier	9	662.8	\$53,275
Total	108	11,570.54	\$1,921,455

* Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

USDA StrikeForce Initiative

County: Lee



Arkansas USDA StrikeForce members from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and Rural Development facilitate a meeting with Wal-Mart officials and local vegetable producers to begin implementation of Wal-Mart's Locally Grown Vegetable Initiative.

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., officials and 15 local vegetable producers met in Marianna to address a USDA StrikeForce Initiative – that of helping stimulate the local economy through agriculture crop production.

According to Dr. Robert Cole, Director of the East Arkansas Enterprise Community and sponsor of the vegetable growers meeting, Wal-Mart has a genuine interest in making locally grown vegetables available for consumer purchase at their stores.

“I was very interested when we were asked by Charlie Williams, Arkansas USDA StrikeForce leader, to conduct a survey among our clientele to identify potential growers in preparation for a meeting to discuss Wal-Mart’s Locally Grown Vegetable Initiative,” said Cole. “The Arkansas delta has all the essential natural resources to sustain an enormous vegetable production industry,” Cole added.

The Arkansas StrikeForce Team, according to Williams, is working with other retail grocers, cooperatives and vegetable producers to identify USDA programs to assist in making the initiative a success. Producers and producer groups are encouraged to contact the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Rural Development to identify programs having the potential to sustain vegetable production and protect environmental resources.

County: Sevier

Program: Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Lee Pauley, an 84-year-old farmer from Mineral Springs, Ark., plants and harvests produce to sell within the StrikeForce designated counties farmers’ markets. Pauley was introduced to NRCS by the Silas Hunt Community Development Corporation and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, one of our conservation partners. Thanks to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) irrigation project on his property, keeping vegetables watered on his farm has become much easier. He no longer uses a bucket to irrigate his crops.

Through EQIP, Pauley was able to install an irrigation well. The well is equipped with a submersible pump that pumps 40 gallons of water a minute allowing Pauley to use drip lines for irrigation. To improve his irrigation system NRCS helped fund the installation of 4,620 feet of PVC irrigation pipeline underground. This pipeline connects to 86 sprinklers that waters about 10 acres. All of this operates from the well Pauley also got through the EQIP program at a 90 percent cost-share rate.



Lee Pauley (right) discusses his farming operation with NRCS employees Abe Hester and Burthel Thomas.



A contractor completes work on a streambank stabilization project in Lynn, Ark.

County: Lawrence

Program: Emergency Watershed Program

Heavy rains in April 2011 severely eroded the streambank adjacent to the city of Lynn, Ark., sewer pumping station, a water main and city street. But, thanks to the NRCS’s Emergency Watershed Program and a 90 percent cost-share, the city of just over 300 people in Lawrence County was able to get the damage repaired.

The work consisted of grading and shaping the existing channel and placing rip rap on each side for 150 feet to stabilize the banks. “We could not have done the repair without NRCS funds and their technical expertise,” said Lynn Mayor Van Doyle. “The whole project went off without a hitch. Myself and the citizens of our small city are very grateful.”

The project was completed in early June 2011.

Arkansas Leadership Team

Name	Title	Phone
Mike Sullivan	State Conservationist	(501) 301-3100
Steve Jacks	Assistant State Conservationist for Operations	(501) 301-3162
Kenneth Lee	Assistant State Conservationist for Programs	(501) 301-3165
Reed Cripps	Assistant State Conservationist for Easements	(501) 301-3131
Nancy Young	State Resource Conservationist	(501) 301-3134
Luis A. Hernandez	MLRA Leader/State Soil Scientist	(501) 301-3116
Walt Delp	State Conservation Engineer	(501) 301-3141
Rose Webb	State Administrative Officer	(501) 301-3174
Reginald Jackson	State Public Affairs Specialist	(501) 301-3133
Robert Young	Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Northeast	(870) 972-4671 x 135
Burthel Thomas	Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, South	(870) 367-8400 x 126
Erica Westbrook	Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Northwest	(479) 646-8300 x 132

County/Field Service Center Index

County	Field Service Center	Phone	County	Field Service Center	Phone
Arkansas	DeWitt Field Service Center	(870) 946-3331	Lee	Marianna Field Service Center	(870) 295-5211
Ashley	Hamburg Field Service Center	(870) 853-9881	Lincoln	Star City Field Service Center	(870) 628-4542
Baxter	Mountain Home Field Service Center	(870) 425-3527	Little River	Ashdown Field Service Center	(870) 898-3611
Benton	Bentonville Field Service Center	(479) 273-2622	Logan	Paris Field Service Center	(479) 963-2612
Boone	Harrison Field and Technical Service Centers	(870) 741-8600	Lonoke	Lonoke Field Service Center	(501) 676-5116
Bradley	Warren Field Service Center and L' Aigle Creek Conservation District	(870) 226-6751	Madison	Huntsville Field Service Center	(479) 738-6321
Calhoun	Calhoun County Conservation District	(870) 798-4297	Marion	Crooked Creek Soil and Water Conservation District	(870) 449-6356
Carroll	Berryville Field Service Center	(870) 423-2638	Miller	Texarkana Field Service Center	(870) 773-3531
Chicot	Lake Village Field Service Center	(870) 265-2608	Mississippi	Osceola Field Service Center	(870) 563-3207
Clark	Arkadelphia Field Service Center	(870) 246-9816	Monroe	Clarendon Field Service Center	(870) 747-3431
Clay	Piggott Field Service Center	(870) 598-2287	Montgomery	Montgomery County Conservation District	(870) 867-2671
Cleburne	Heber Springs Field Service Center	(501) 362-2628	Nevada	Nevada County Conservation District	(870) 887-3210
Cleveland	Cleveland County Conservation District	(870) 325-6581	Newton	Newton County Conservation District	(870) 446-2236
Columbia	Columbia County Conservation District	(870) 235-5270	Ouachita	Camden Field and Technical Service Centers	(870) 836-2089
Conway	Morrilton Field Service Center	(501) 354-2000	Perry	Perry County Conservation District	(501) 889-2715
Craighead	Jonesboro Field and Technical Service Centers and Construction Office	(870) 972-4671	Phillips	Helena Field Service Center	(870) 338-6651
Crawford	Crawford County Conservation District	(501) 474-2281	Pike	Pike County Conservation District	(870) 285-2424
Crittenden	Marion Field Service Center	(870) 739-4464	Poinsett	Harrisburg Field Service Center	(870) 578-2444
Cross	Wynne Field Service Center	(870) 238-3285	Polk	Mena Field Service Center and Rich Mountain Conservation District	(479) 394-1782
Dallas	Fordyce Field Service Center	(870) 352-2630	Pope	Russellville Field Service Center	(479) 968-3881
Desha	McGehee Field Service Center	(870) 222-4867	Prairie	Hazen Field and Technical Service Centers	(870) 255-3573
Drew	Monticello Field and Technical Service Centers	(870) 367-8400	Pulaski	North Little Rock Field Service Center	(501) 758-2544
Faulkner	Conway Field Service Center	(501) 327-6509	Randolph	Pocahontas Field Service Center	(870) 892-3325
Franklin	Ozark Field Service Center	(479) 667-8600	Saline	Benton Field Service Center	(501) 778-2251
Fulton	Salem Field Service Center	(870) 895-3201	Scott	Poteau River Soil and Water Conservation District	(479) 637-3633
Garland	Hot Springs Field Service Center	(501) 624-2574	Searcy	Marshall Field Service Center/ Buffalo Conservation District	(870) 448-3184
Grant	Grant County Conservation District	(870) 942-2826	Sebastian	Ft. Smith Field and Technical Service Centers	(479) 646-8300
Greene	Paragould Field Service Center	(870) 239-8586	Sevier	DeQueen Field Service Center and Cossatot Conservation District	(870) 584-3111
Hempstead	Hope Field and Technical Service Centers and Construction Office	(870) 777-8800	Sharp	Ash Flat Field Service Center	(870) 994-7335
Hot Spring	Malvern Field Service Center	(501) 337-7381	St. Francis	Forrest City Field Service Center	(870) 633-3055
Howard	Nashville Field Service Center/ Mine Creek Soil and Water Conservation District	(870) 845-4121	Stone	Mountain View Field Service Center	(870) 269-3726
Independence	Batesville Field Service Center	(870) 793-4164	Union	Union County Conservation District	(870) 863-8634
Izard	Melbourne Field Service Center	(870) 368-4413	Van Buren	Clinton Field Service Center	(501) 745-5161
Jackson	Newport Field Service Center	(870) 523-8986	Washington	Fayetteville Field Service Center	(479) 442-4160
Jefferson	Pine Bluff Field Service Center	(870) 534-3200	White	Searcy Field Service Center	(501) 268-5866
Johnson	Clarksville Field Service Center	(479) 754-2800	Woodruff	Augusta Field Service Center	(870) 347-2593
Lafayette	Lewisville Field Service Center	(870) 921-4206	Yell	Danville Field Service Center	(479) 495-2441
Lawrence	Walnut Ridge Field Service Center and Construction Office	(870) 886-7791			

Farm Bill Program Funding - 2011

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Congressional District	Applications Funded	FY11 Funds Obligated	Applications Unfunded	Dollars Unfunded
First	453	\$9,989,894	8	\$206,424
Second	132	\$2,760,030	1	\$64,955
Third	316	\$6,729,386	3	\$58,893
Fourth	338	\$7,394,138	4	\$52,091
Total	1,239	\$26,873,448	16	\$382,263

Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Oct. 1, 2011



Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

Congressional District	Applications Funded	FY11 Funds Obligated
First	41	\$522,853
Second	3	\$35,723
Third	11	\$138,892
Fourth	3	\$33,403
Total	58	\$730,871

Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

Conservation Stewardship Program Wetlands Reserve Program

Congressional District	Applications Funded	FY11 Funds Obligated
First	351	\$7,743,700
Second	7	\$53,576
Third	15	\$58,273
Fourth	80	\$2,907,688
Total	453	\$10,763,237

Data Source: ProTracts FY11, Oct. 1, 2011

Congressional District	Easements Funded	FY11 Dollars Obligated
First	18	\$5,225,408
Second	3	\$1,164,270
Third	2	\$520,390
Fourth	4	\$769,950
Total	27	\$7,680,018

Data Source: NEST/FFIS FY11, Oct. 1, 2011