

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) FY-2006 Report

The total WRP financial assistance allocation for fiscal year 2006 totaled \$3.5 million. With this allocation, Oklahoma enrolled land into 2 restoration agreements for 121 acres, and 11 permanent easements restoring and protecting over 2,110 acres of wetlands and associated buffers in 9 counties. Since 1996, Oklahoma landowners have enrolled over 56,158 acres into the WRP through 236 agreements with over \$37 million in federal assistance for acquisition and restoration of wetlands in 48 of Oklahoma's 77 counties.

Beginning with the programs inception, NRCS has worked directly with landowners, state and federal agencies, and private conservation organizations to complete hydrology restoration, bottomland hardwood reforestation, native wet meadows, rangeland reestablishment and natural regeneration on 50,086 of these acres. The Oklahoma conservation partnership has completed restoration action on over 90% of the enrolled property at the end of 2006. In 2006, hydrology restoration was completed on 37 easements totaling 5,316 acres protected. Over 455,000 bareroot seedlings were planted in the winter of 2006 on 1,507 acres. One unique accomplishment completed in 2006 was the hydrology restoration and reforestation of 3,022 contiguous acres in McCurtain County. Known as the Walnut Bayou project, this project area is comprised of 8 separate landowners and 11 easements acquired in the period 1998 to 2004 that traverse portions of three distinct watersheds. The contiguous arrangement of the easements allowed application of the hydrology restoration to be completed as a single project in lieu of performing restoration based on property boundary restrictions. AS the Walnut Bayou project matures the expectations are optimistic that this site will compare with the nationally recognized Red Slough WRP.

We anticipate the completion of 3,500 acres of wetland restoration in 2007 and 1400 acres of bottomland hardwoods reforestation, utilizing Air Root Pruned Method tree seedlings. Work continues across the state on closing easements and completing restoration activity on existing easements.