NRCS State Technical Committee
10:00am Tuesday, May 23, 2017
Arkansas River Room, Little Rock, AR

Agenda (attached)

Members present: (Sign In Sheets attached)

Meeting called to order– Amanda Mathis, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist – Partnership Coordinator
Welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. Reviewed agenda.

Opening Remarks – Mike Sullivan, Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist

- Mr. Sullivan welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.
- Reported on visit with the USDA Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue and his verbal commitment to agriculture and the landscape.
- Reported on the proposals received by NRCS through their open call for proposals (29 eligible proposals).
- Final decision will be made on proposals within a few weeks.
- Strike Force Initiative – working on accelerating programs in poverty stricken areas. Currently evaluating the program and its impact. Asked the group to share any feedback with NRCS regarding this program which might be helpful going forward.

USDA Response to 2017 Flooding – Mike Sullivan, Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist and Dianne Colvard, Farm Service Agency

- Flood of 2017 has had a significant impact on our agricultural industry and landowners
- Secretary of Ag, Sonny Purdue and Governor Asa Hutchinson have committed to provide assistance to landowners, farmers, ranchers, producers as funding is made available
- Emergency Watershed Program – provided to help with removal of debris and sediment from the waterways. 25% cost share from a local sponsor is required to be eligible for 75% federal dollars
    - Report any potential issues to Walt Delp, NRCS State Engineer
- FSA has a number of programs that are available to provide assistance to those impacted
    - Emergency Conservation Program – 21 counties have asked for assistance (75% costs share) Offers four practices under this program but most common are requests for debris removal and fencing from cattle producers.
    - Emergency Forestry Program
    - FSA local offices will be doing environmental evaluation with 120 days to request
    - Waiting for a Presidential designation

- Producers with destroyed or damaged EQIP practices are asked to talk to their local office early to address problems

NRCS Subcommittee Reports

- **Forestry Subcommittee** – George Rheinhardt
  - CRP has changed
    - Asked Headquarters for some new practices and they were approved for mid-management work
    - Statutory cap on CRP – 24,000,000 acres cap
    - No more general sign-ins for CRP or CCRP
    - Acres have to rotate out before new contracts can be added as of May 3, 2017
    - FSA will accept offers on October 1, 2017
    - Contracts that expire on Sept 30th need to be re-applied prior to October 1
    - "First come, first serve" based on when offers are received
    - Plans must be done by July 2017
    - Program will not be able to address the acreage like in previous years unless changed in 2018 Farm Bill
  - Western Arkansas Woodland Restoration
    - Continues but not to the level as in previous year
    - One more year within this program (3 year program)
    - $6 million in FA dollars as well as other funding avenues
    - 482 contracts forest landowners benefitted from program
    - Prescribed burning, forest stand improvements, etc.
    - CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program) has included forestry with the reorganization and rules so it is a good fit for forestry landowners
    - Ranking process similar to EQIP
    - **Recommendation #1**
      1. Forest stand improvement – allow use of containerized pine seedlings and place a cap on containerized pine seedlings to be planted (545 seedlings per acre)
    - **Recommendation #2**
      - Update 612 specification to allow hardwood planting be 12 foot rows rather than 10 foot rows for ease in maintenance
    - **Recommendation #3**
      - Forest stand improvement – kill invasive species rather than cut back
      - AGFC can identify which trees may be allowed to sprout
      - Hinge cutting – put verbiage to limit the amount which is cutting a tree half off
      - Standard will be chemical rather than cutting for permanent impact

- **Wildlife Forestry Subcommittee** – James Baker, NRCS State Biologist
  - Streambank Stabilization – practice is expensive, need to ensure funds are targeted in areas where stream assessments have been completed.

- **Recommendation #1**
    - Form an Ad-Hoc committee to review and prioritize these practices in coordination with TNC/other Stream Assessments
- Safe Harbor Agreements – USFWS
    - To work with endangered species or candidates for endangered species. Landowners within these designated area are eligible for agreements and it provides some protection for landowners from federal regulation
- **Recommendation #2**
    - Landowners in Upper Little Red River and Upper Saline, Ouachita, etc. should receive increase ranking points within these area if they are willing to enter into a Safe Harbor agreement
- Working Lands for Wildlife
    - Northern Bobwhite Quail is the species that was selected due to partnerships that are available with AGFC (10 areas spread around the state
    - Concept is to focus funds on these areas and landowners who live adjacent to these AGFC management areas
    - Headquarters approved the concept but no funds initially
    - $400,000 from EQIP but only funded small number of contracts
    - **Recommendation #3** – Bobwhite Quail
        - Screen applications and focus on these identified areas
        - Ad hoc committee will work on developing a new screening tool to address this goal
    - **Recommendation #4** – Monarch Butterfly
        - Make sure that NRCS is coordinating their efforts with other conservation partners to leverage the funding and resources to strengthen partnerships
        - Pollinator Initiative fits well with the Monarch Butterfly Task Force
    - AG&FC will be hosting Quail 101 course on Aug 3rd- conservation staff are encouraged/welcome to attend.

- **Grassland Subcommittee** – Helen Denniston, NRCS, State Resource Conservationist

  Recommendation 1
  - State Grazing Specialist needs more flexibility regarding the payment rates for enhancement and creating the scenarios.

  Recommendation 2
  - More flexibility in the enhancement options
  - More training for partners to include CSP and pollinators

  Recommendation 3 – Pasture Aeration – the aerator conservation practice does not provide the long term resource conservation benefits therefore the committee does not recommend producers be encouraged to utilize this practice with payments

Recommendation 4 - PL566 Dams - the committee does not recommend goats as a means of watershed maintenance and would not recommend it funding as they did not feel it was sustainable

Recommendation 5

- Continue funding for training for livestock/pasture management for staff, partners and producers
- Develop grazing management/forages programs to serve as a guest lecture series at colleges & universities
- Training to target beginning ranchers regardless of age in partnership with other livestock industry partners & universities

Recommendation 6 - Watering Facilities Training is needed to address maintenance, utilization, placement and other issues that producers are encountering.

Recommendation 7 for Giant Miscanthus

- The bio-fuel initiative did not develop and many producers that got into this FSA program now have a growing program
- Producers need assistance in how to rid their land of this species

Recommendation 8 – the committee asked that annual cover crop practice be considered for adoption to allow producers additional options to address resource concerns which have resulted from natural disasters, pasture failures, etc.

Outreach - More needs to be done in the southern part of the state as staff schedule allows

National Cattlemen's Beef Association Environmental Stewardship Award 2017 Nominee

- Brent & Carol Fry, Osage Creek Farms Green Forest in Carroll County, were the regional nominees from Arkansas

Western Arkansas Woodland Restoration Partnership Award – U.S. Forest Service Norm Waggoner presents

Partners impacted 13,000+ acres as well as 7,000 urban interface acres

Partners included:

U.S. National Forest – Sherrie Hamilton is the new supervisor
NRCS – Mike Sullivan
Arkansas Forestry Commission – Joe Fox
Arkansas Game & Fish Commission – Ted Zawislak
National Wild Turkey Federation
The Nature Conservancy – Scott Simon
USFWS – Melvin Tobin
Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission – Bill Holiman
Association of Conservation Districts – Martha D. Manley
Arkansas Natural Resources Commission – Adrian Baber
Central Hardwood Joint Venture
Central Arkansas Water

NRCS Alternative Crops Subcommittee – Keith Scoggins, NRCS Acting State Agronomist

Good attendance from a diverse group on size and scope of alternative crops

Recommendations

a. Request for a conservation practice for injection of fertilizer for micro-irrigation
b. Support funding for conservation districts to help small producers with mulching equipment
    i. Delta Plastics will recycle mulch and drip tape
c. Training on mulching, types, usage, payment rates
d. Partnership efforts to be encouraged

NRCS Soil Health Subcommittee – Keith Scoggins, NRCS, District Conservationist

SARE grants have been approved to work on soil health which demonstrates the interest of multiple entities and producers in the state

Recommendations

- Offer a soil health management plan that is more comprehensive focused
- Start Youtube videos for Mob grazing and showcasing soil health champions
- Develop producer cover crop training and consider attaching to EQIP contracts that include cover crops.

Key staff should visit Auburn, AL and Stoneville, MS
Robby Bevis will be nominated as the 2017 Soil Health Champion
Southern Agriculture Cover Crops, Soil Health and Water Management conference planning committee will be meet on May 30,2017.

NRCS Water Quantity Subcommittee – Charolette Bowie, NRCS, State Irrigation Engineer

Recommendations

a. Working on the gap in the design of the horsepower of the engine and the horsepower that can actually be purchased to incorporate this into the NRCS practices

2) Overview of Latest Water Management Engineering (WME) Conservation Practice Standards – Practices that have been updated include: 449, 447, 608, 607, 442 & 441
    a. Need to add language that state flow meters are installed per manufacturer's specifications
    b. Look at adding the AWD to the practices available

3) IWM Equipment
    - Flow meters and surge valves – discussion was held regarding the implementation of portable equipment versus permanent
    - Flow Meter, water level float, surge valve could possibly be included in future agreements

4) Outreach - How to get farmers on board?
    - Combination of avenues to reach farmers
        - Farmer-led field days

- Economic Benefits
- How can they conserve all resources, including themselves?
- Help them understand it is a holistic activity
- Must build trust and rapport with the farmers

5) Seeding and Mulching of Spoil embankments such as reservoir levees but if a tailwater pit is excavated the excavated material is piled alongside it and left without vegetation. Erosion becomes an issue

Recommendation- Asked that the seeding and mulch be recommended as policy for these spoil piles with the option to not seed and mulch if there are plans to use the material at a later date.

NRCS Energy Subcommittee – Shanon Griffin, NRCS, Water Management Engineer

Recommendation #1

TSPs recommend that we focus on producer converting from old technology to new technology then they qualify based on that conversion rather than "life span"

Fire Retardant Foam is currently not meeting the NRCS specs so producers should hold off until an approved product is available if possible.

Recommendation #2 is to seal the curtain area and above with approved foam insulation

a. $1.50 - $2.00 per square foot is approximate costs

Payment schedule to be adjusted to match the cost of the foam insulation and fire protection due to the lack of 10 pound foam that meets ASABE specs.

Recommendation #3 - No changes to the current slate of conservation practices at this time

NRCS Water Quality Subcommittee – Teri Nehls, NRCS, Water Quality Specialist

Recommendation #1

- Utilize the currently existing advisory groups that are in place
- Increased focus on cover crops and no-tillage during outreach activities
- Provide more support to local conservation districts to promote and hold outreach/education activities

Recommendation #2

- Conservation partnership be utilized to address the multiple issues that will come from increased poultry presence in the NE Area
  - AACD, ArFB, U of A Division of Agriculture, NRCS, ASU, USFWS, AGFC, Arkansas Agriculture Dept., ANRC, Certified Crop Advisors, and others as issues arise
  - Row Crop Phosphorus Index must be completed as part of this process – Dr. Andrew Sharpley is the Chair of that project
  - Identify what conservation practices (BMPs) would be applicable for a conservation system; conservation practices that might interact positively to address the resource concerns

Recommendation #3

- Place greater emphasis given to buffer strips along the stream in the ranking system and funds should be designated to provide an incentive to implement the practices

Recommendation #4

- Greasy Creek, Fulton County would be another good watershed for planning because it is at the head of the watershed, research is currently on-going so it would be a good 12-digit HUC to consider in the future

Recommendation #5

- Outreach and education with producers in the NE Area due to the increase in poultry operations currently and in the future on conservation practices that might help mitigate nutrient loss and/or minimize losses

Conservation Planning Policy Changes – Helen Denniston, NRCS

1) Improve and standardize the training for NRCS employees, conservation partners and others for certification
2) Apprentice Planner must have 16 courses (Ag-Learn, on-the-job training, and in person courses)
3) Certified Planners must take an additional 18 courses
4) Three year transition period but it will be quite rigorous for employees/partners

Feral Swine Project Evaluation – James Baker, NRCS

- Reported on the progress of the 3 year pilot program (8 counties in original pilot project)
- Partnership included:
  - NRCS, APHIS, AGFC, AACD, Districts,
  - Practices included cameras and feral swine traps
  - Management is focused on getting the whole sounder not just shooting at random
  - Technical assistance is one of the most critical components of this effort
- **Recommendation**
  - Need more technical assistance in the form of manpower (at least 4 four technicians are needed to provide the support landowners will need)
  - Goal is two traps per county
  - Selection of counties should be based on:
    - County interest
    - Current manpower and their location
    - Ashley County and Sebastian/Scott Counties
    - Newton County is being considered
    - Drop Chicot and Pope
    - Izard County has suffered a big increase in feral swine
  - Feral Swine Eradication Task Force may provide some partnership opportunities

Program Updates (See handouts)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – Corey Farmer, NRCS

- $42 million for 2016
- 3552 active contracts
- FY18 EQIP & CSP Implementation Timeline (Draft)
  - Application deadline is November 17, 2017
  - More funding will be provided for select priorities

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – Corey Cornelious, NRCS

- Participation remains strong
- Evaluation tool – Conservation measurement tool has been changed
- Conservation Evaluation Activity Tool is the new tool
- 2 – 4 hours to evaluate one application
- Renewal contracts will still have to meet the two resource concerns to meet the threshold but the process should not be as long for the renewal contracts

Regional Conservation Partnership Program - Dianne Schlenker, NRCS (Handout)

- 10 current projects

Mississippi River Basin Initiative – Dianne Schlenker, NRCS (Handout)

- 7 projects - $4,524,023
- 360,387 sacks of fertilizer has been saved
- $1 federal dollar has a return of $1.57 added to the economy
- Input needed on what the producer contributes
- Special event to share success of project is being planned for July 2017

Agriculture Conservation Easements Program (ACEP) – Marilyn Ott, NRCS

- All funded applications ranked very high for this year's evaluation
- 27 easements selected for 2017
- Funding Obligated for 2017 - $33,700,000 million
- New GARC is being developed

FY 2018 Locally Led Process Feedback – Kenneth Lee, NRCS

- In October 2017 a report will be provided on the recent locally led work group
- 152 total projects
  - 75% were pasture
  - Cropland use
  - Forest use
  - All land uses
  - Screening tools were used by districts
  - Lafayette County wants center pivots – can Arkansas participate?
  - Feral Swine was mentioned by several
  - Sebastian County
    - urban practices such as rain gardens

        - high tunnel hoop houses
    - Scott County – no more poultry houses hook onto city water
        - Can they use ponds
    - Eradication of giant Miscanthus practices
    - Wants more input from districts regarding practices that they might want to try
    - Deadline to remain March 30, 2018

Open Discussion

- October 3, 2017 is the scheduled date for the next State Technical Committee, location TBD.
- Farm Service Agency Acting Chairman Clayton Parr and Mike Sullivan gave a brief overview of the USDA Reorganization
    - NRCS and FSA (individual missions to stay the same) but what actions can be taken to better serve the client by working together
    - Farm Production and Conservation is the new identifier to better serve producers

Closing comments

- Mike Sullivan said they would review the recommendations and seek clarification when needed but hope to move forward to developing a path forward based on the Subcommittee recommendations
- Waiver process in place to start hiring staff – workload is heavy and need to fill 60 positions
- Secretary of Ag Perdue – growing better together regardless of the resources we are given (President's Budget includes some cuts)
- Asked to complete the STC meeting evaluation forms and return to NRCS

Meeting adjourned at 2:00pm

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Moreland, Acting Secretary

State Technical Committee Meeting Agenda

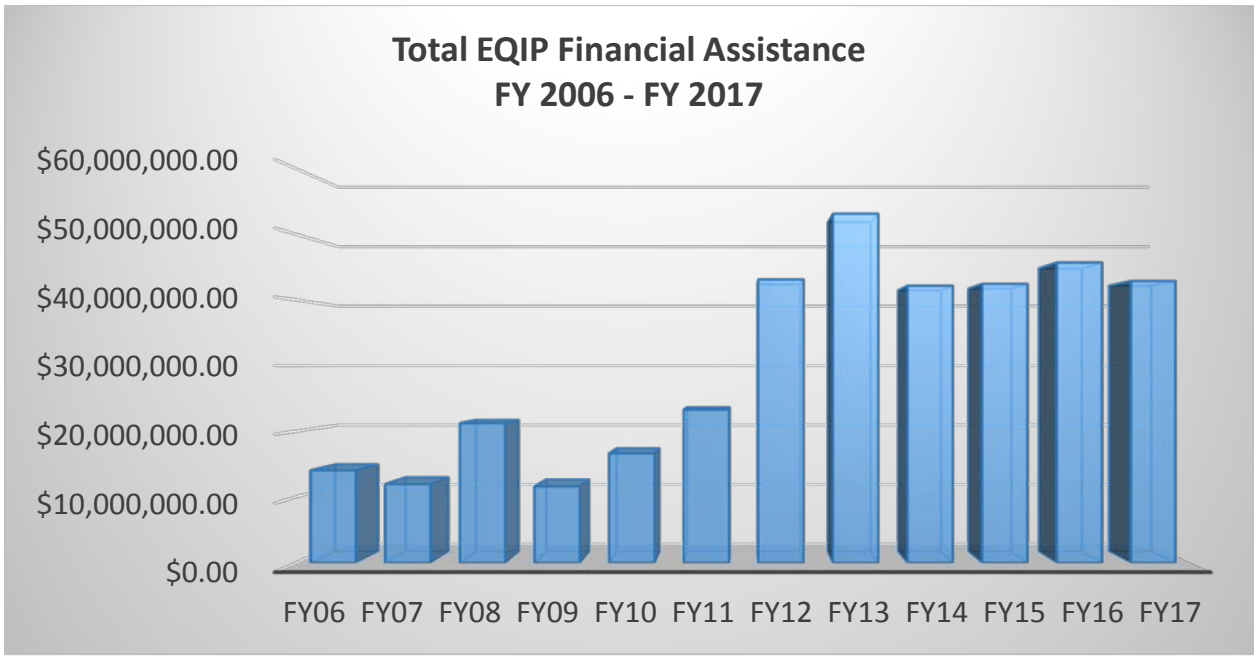
Arkansas Natural Resources Commission- River Room
May 23, 2017
10:00 am – 2:00pm

Welcome & Opening Remarks	Mike Sullivan State Conservationist
USDA Response to 2017 Flooding	
Subcommittee Reports (max 10 mins each)	
Forestry	George Rheinhardt
Wildlife	James Baker
Grassland	Helen Denniston
Alternative Crop/Soil Health	Keith Scoggins
Water Quantity	Charolette Bowie
Energy	Shanon Griffin
Water Quality	Teri Nehls
Conservation Planning Policy Changes	Helen Denniston
Feral Swine Project Evaluation	Helen Denniston
Special Award Presentation	Reginald Jackson
Lunch	
Program Updates (max 10 mins each)	
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	Corey Farmer
Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)	Corey Cornelious
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	Dianne Schlenker
Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI)	Dianne Schlenker
Agriculture Conservation Easements Program (ACEP)	Cindy Neal
FY 2018 Local Led Process Feedback	Kenneth Lee
Open Discussion	Attendees
Closing Remarks & Adjourn	Mike Sullivan

Environmental Quality Incentives Program Updates

Current EQIP Summary for Active Contracts - Arkansas

Active Contracts	Active Contract Acres	Obligation Amount
3,552	577,592	$125,164,745



EQIP – Historical Funding Request

Fiscal Year	Applications Received	Estimated Cost Requested	Application Acres	Contracts Obligated	Obligation Amount	Contracted Acres	Percent Unfunded
2014	4,094	$85,562,538.56	516,408.15	1,478	$41,742,320.81	247,323.33	51%
2015	4,617	$97,287,373.26	505,894.46	1,836	$41,149,906.37	251,816.92	58%
2016	4,101	$100,775,915.24	473,209.18	1,492	$42,244,034.12	208,255.40	58%

EQIP - FY 2017 Allocations Summary

Account Type	**Allocation Amount**
Conservation Activity Plans	$214,410.00
Feral Swine	$320,350.32
Forest Service Partnership	***$1,000,000.00***
FY17 CIG State Component	$300,000.00
Groundwater Decline	$2,500,000.00
Historically Underserved	$3,430,560.00
Illinois River	***$1,000,000.00***
Locally Led	$16,880,528.83
MRBI	$5,783,000.00
National Initiative	$2,694,935.48
National Water Quality	***$1,439,000.00***
State	$1,372,224.00
Strike Force Initiative	$4,122,993.00
Wildlife 5% - Pollinator	***$230,000.00***
Wildlife 5% - State	$386,191.00
Wildlife 5% - WLFW	$400,000.00
RESERVE	$807,807.87
Grand Total	**$42,882,000.50**

FY 2018 EQIP & CSP Implementation Timeline (DRAFT)

CATEGORY	Application Deadline	Eligibility Deadline	Ranking Release Deadline	Ranking Deadline	Preapproval	Obligation
EQIP - Historically Underserved	17-Nov-17	45 Days from the Application Deadline	1-Dec-17	60 Days after the Ranking is Released	7 Days after the Ranking Deadline	45 Days after the Preapproval
Strike Force	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
EQIP National Initiatives: (Energy, Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel)	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
Illinois River	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
Woodland Restoration Forestry Project (CLFR)	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
Feral Swine (Pilot)	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
EQIP General - (Statewide)	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
Alternative Crops	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
EQIP Conservation Activity Plans	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
GWD	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
Pollinator	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
WLFW	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
NWQI	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17			
EQIP General - (Local)	17-Nov-17		1-Dec-17	90 Days after the Ranking is Released		
*EQIP MRBI	17-Nov-17	TBD	1-Dec-17	TBD	TBD	TBD
*RCPP-EQIP	17-Nov-17	TBD	1-Dec-17	TBD	TBD	TBD
CSP - General	TBD by NHQ	30 day after application deadline	15-Jan-18	27-May-18	4-Jun-18	27-Aug-18

*** Dates determined by Partner/NHQ rollout timelines**

United States Department of Agriculture

Arkansas Natural Resources Conservation Service

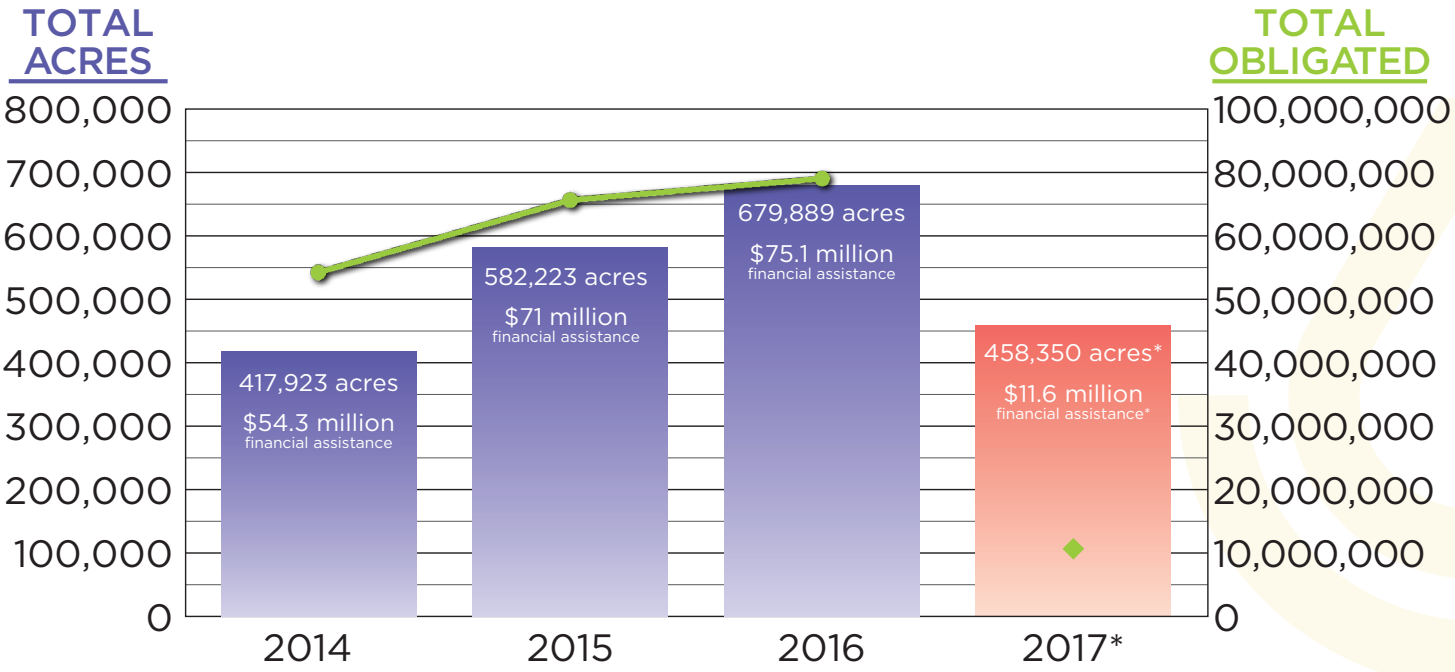
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

2008 Farm Bill:

470 active contracts totaling $76,911,633 and 454,044 acres enrolled. These contracts will be eligible for renewal in FY 2018, subject to the contract remaining in compliance.

2014 Farm Bill:

Participants have enrolled 2,050,925 acres in 2,151 contracts totaling $128,422,971 in CSP.



*2017 numbers current as of 19 May 2017. Data Source: Protracts

Data Source: REAP

FY 2017 Acre Allocation and Applications:

For FY 2017 we have been allocated 251,630 acres for General CSP; 21,291 acres for MRBI; 48,000 acres for Rice Stewardship RCPP; and 17,000 acres for Bayou Meto Lower Arkansas RCPP resulting in a total of 337,921 acres. This allocation is much lower than we have received in previous years.

We have 1,198 applications which is more than or equal to the applications we have received in past years, demand remains strong.

FY 2018 New Activities Requested:

- Arkansas enhancement ENR09 Variable speed drives for electric motors.
- Arkansas enhancement WQT12 computerized hole selection for poly-pipe. It consists of calculating hole sizes for poly-pipe tubing using computer software to determine the optimal size hole per furrow in order to improve irrigation efficiency.
- Arkansas enhancement WQT05 Remote monitoring and notification of irrigation pumping plant.
- Arkansas enhancement WQT07. Regional weather network.
- Complete Use of Surface Water for the Irrigation System (Practice 447).
- An enhancement similar to E449114Z1, adding an advanced surge valve. The advanced surge valve should be capable of being controlled and monitored via telemetry. (Arkansas currently pays for this through CPS 443 irrigation system, surface and subsurface).
- An enhancement which deals with adding irrigation pump timers and shut off valves on applicable pumps.
- An enhancement similar to E449114Z1, adding advanced pumping plant automation. The advanced pump automation should be capable of being controlled and monitored via telemetry. (Arkansas currently pays for this through CPS 533 pumping plant).
- An Enhancement similar to ANM61, hosting a grazing field day.
- An Enhancement similar to SQL17, placement of hay feeding areas on low fertility soils.
- An Enhancement similar to WQL03, rotation of supplement and feeding areas.
- An Enhancement similar to AIR04, use drift reducing nozzles, extremely popular practice in Arkansas.

We have been working closely with Game and Fish and others in looking at wildlife.

Mississippi River Basin Initiative and Regional Conservation Partnership Program

2008 Farm Bill **MRBI- 19 projects**
1716 contracts on 402,856 acres
$83,753,413 obligated
Implementation of practices ongoing until 2020

Year Project started	Project Name	Number of Contracts	Acres Under Contract	Total Dollars Obligated
2010	L'Anguille	88	35,539	$3,507,951
2010	Point Remove	189	51,691	$8,629,636
2010	Outlet Larkin	45	5,318	$1,445,458
2010	NE-Little River Ditches Nutrient Reduction Loss	117	17,818	$3,247,720
2010	NE-Lower St. Francis River Nutrient Reduction Loss	112	23,370	$2,581,341
2011	Cache River Nutrients Loss	31	7,678	$1,733,452
2011	Lower Bayou Macon	18	13,792	$1,370,175
2011	Middle Bayou Macon	110	22,771	$5,813,101
2011	Bayou Boeuf	33	12,226	$1,611,901
2011	Lower St. Francis	131	20,651	$3,997,291
2012	Big Watershed	57	5,907	$2,658,349
2012	EAEC	67	11,867	$3,061,968
2012	Tyronza River	61	11,513	3,937,597
2012	Wapanocca	82	10,947	982,011
2012	Middle Cache	93	13,257	$3,989,527
2012	Bayou Meto AR	80	32,768	$7,968,783
2012	Lower AR Upper	161	35,984	$9,004,405
2012	Grand Prairie	135	42,682	$9,615,614
2012	Bayou Meto Middle	106	27,077	$8,597,133
Total		*1716*	*402,856*	*$83,753,413*

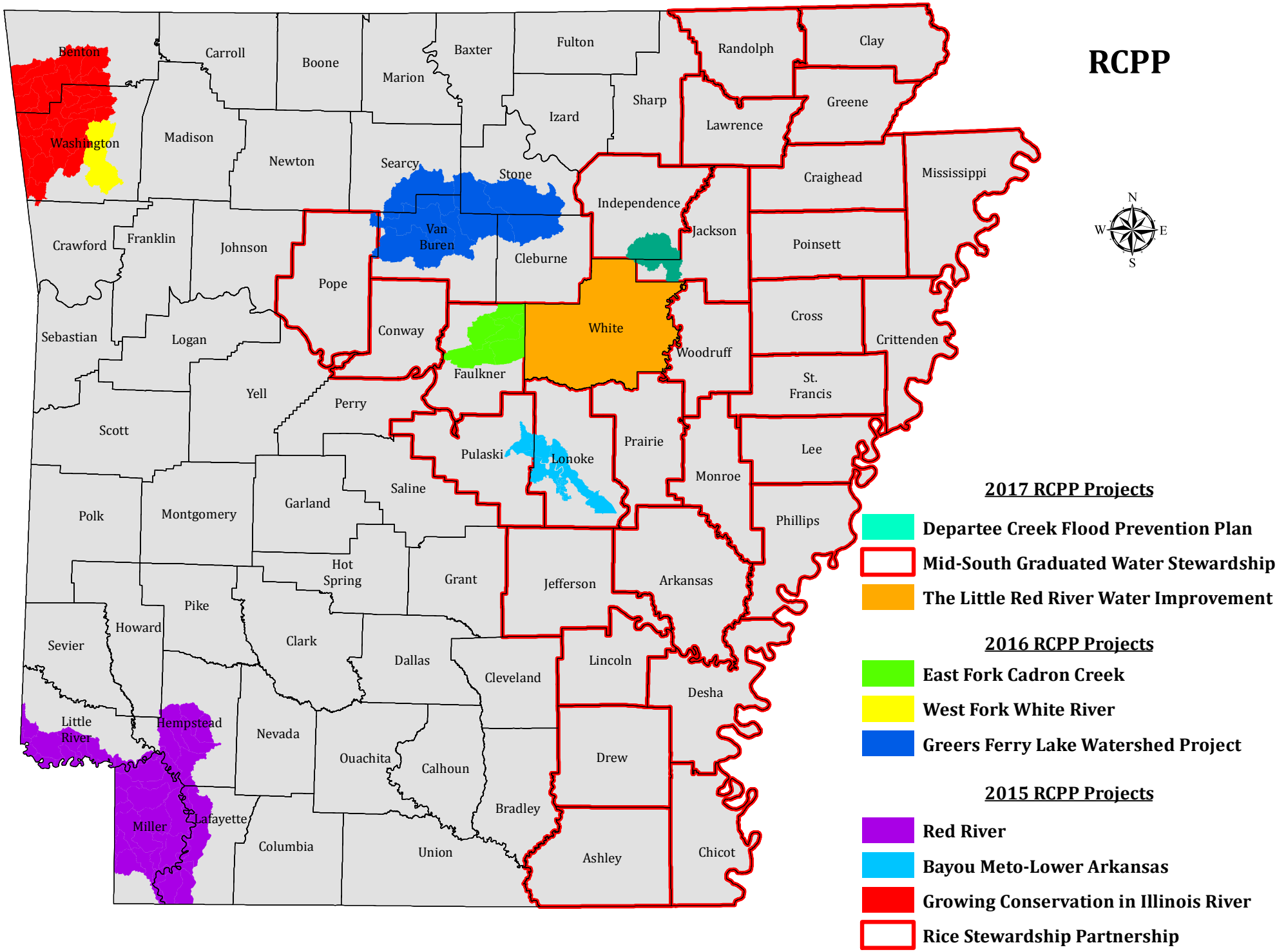
2014 Farm Bill **MRBI– 7 projects**
98 contracts on 18,432 acres
$4,524,023 obligated to date
One year left of funding-2018
Implementation of practices ongoing until 2022

Year Project started	Project Name	Number of Contracts	Acres under Contract	Total Dollars Obligated
2015	Upper Cache	18	3,343	$1,294,997
2015	Strawberry	37	6,506	$953,768
2015	Caney Creek	12	911	$806,145
2016	Middle Strawberry	12	1,339	$197,849
2016	Tupelo Beaverdam Creek	3	2,100	$357,056
2016	Cache Willow Podo	8	1,353	$508,414
2016	Upper Bayou Macon	8	2,879	$405,794
Total		*98*	*18,432*	*$4,524,023*

Path forward – Sharing success, developing progress sheets showing total of financial and environmental impacts for all years by project and then total impact of entire initiative. Develop communication campaign to highlight success of targeted voluntary conservation efforts.

RCPP in Arkansas- 10 current projects

Year Project Started	Project Name	Lead Partner
2015	Arkansas Red River	Southwest RC& D Council
2015	Growing Conservation in Illinois River	Illinois River Watershed Partnership
2015	Rice Stewardship Partnership Sustaining the Future of Rice	Ducks Unlimited
2015	Bayou Meto-Lower Arkansas	Bayou Meto Water Management District
2016	East Fork Cadron Creek	Faulkner County Conservation District
2016	West Fork White River	Watershed Conservation Resource Center
2016	Greers Ferry Lake Watershed Project	The Nature Conservancy
2017	Departee Creek Flood Prevention Plan	Departee Creek Watershed Improvement District
2017	Mid-South Graduated Water Stewardship	USA Rice Federation
2017	The Little Red River Water Improvement	Little Red River Irrigation District


RCPP
Benton
Carroll
Boone
Marion
Baxter
Fulton
Randolph
Clay
Washington
Madison
Newton
Searcy
Izard
Sharp
Lawrence
Greene
Stone
Independence
Craighead
Mississippi
Crawford
Franklin
Johnson
Van Buren
Cleburne
Jackson
Poinsett
Pope
Conway
White
Cross
Crittenden
Sebastian
Logan
Faulkner
Woodruff
St. Francis
Yell
Perry
Scott
Pulaski
Lonoke
Prairie
Lee
Saline
Monroe
Polk
Montgomery
Garland
Phillips
Hot Spring
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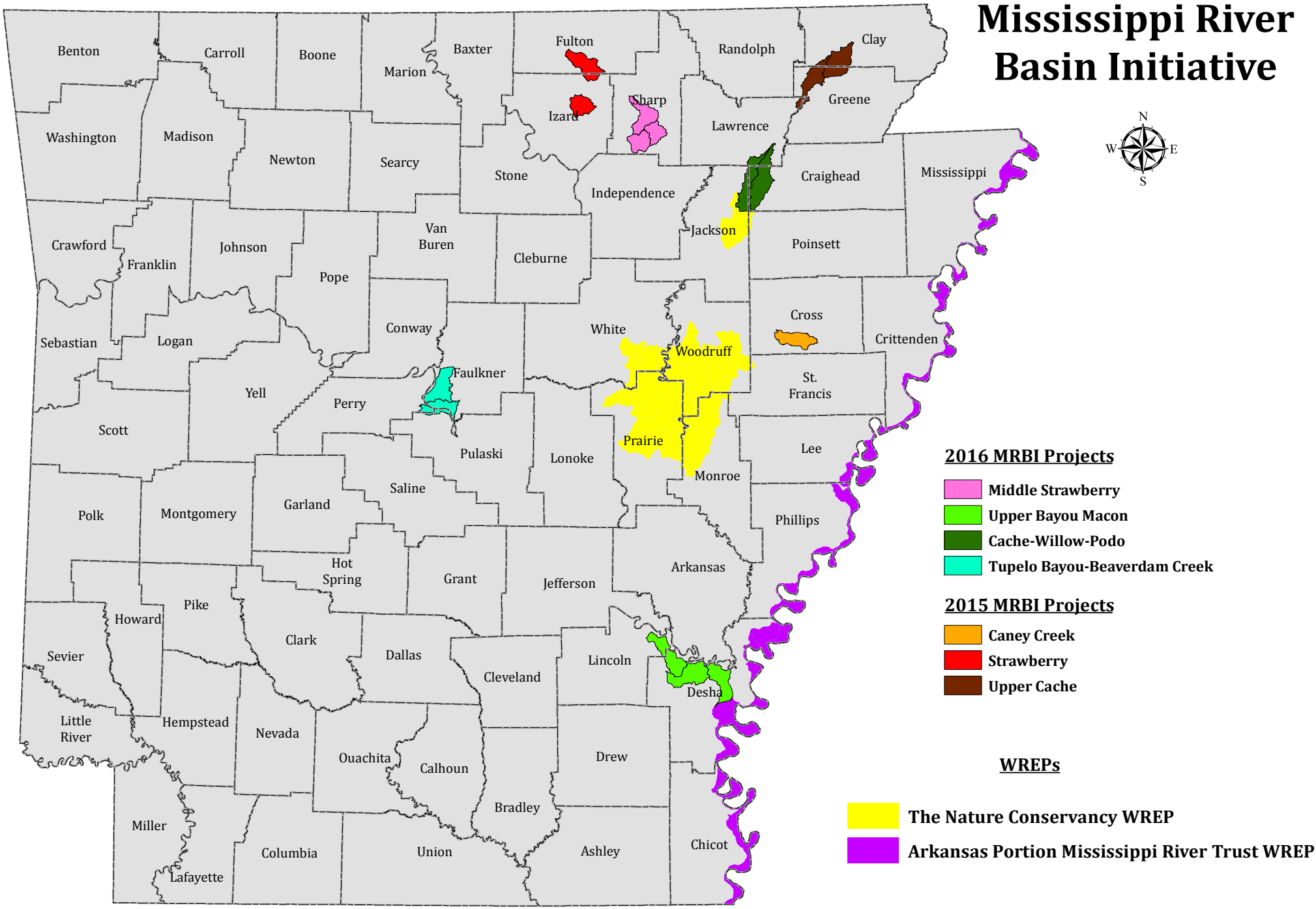
2017 RCPP Projects
Departee Creek Flood Prevention Plan
Mid-South Graduated Water Stewardship
The Little Red River Water Improvement
2016 RCPP Projects
East Fork Cadron Creek
West Fork White River
Greers Ferry Lake Watershed Project
2015 RCPP Projects
Red River
Bayou Meto-Lower Arkansas
Growing Conservation in Illinois River
Rice Stewardship Partnership

Mississippi River Basin Initiative



USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Arkansas Natural Resources Conservation Service – Easement Program

Wetlands Reserve Easements in Arkansas – 250,842 Acres on 655 Easements

WRE Restored – 234,440 Acres on 611 Easements

WRE Restoration Remaining – 14,076 Acres on 35 Easements

2016 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Wetland Reserve Easements

- Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced – 37 Easements - 7,120 Acres
- Tree Planting - Hardwoods – 3,600 Acres
- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 17 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition – 4,600 Acres
- 2016 Funding Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - $14,500,000

2017 Wetland Reserve Easements – Activities

Item	Amount
Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition	**27**
Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition	**11,820**
2017 Funding Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration	**$33,700,000**

2017 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Wetland Reserve Easements

- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 7 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition – 6,364 Acres
- 2017 Funding Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - $19,700,000

2017 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Batture Land WREP

- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 2 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition – 1900 Acres
- 2017 Funding Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - $4,100,000

2017 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – TNC WREP

- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 18 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition – 3,556 Acres
- 2017 Funding Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - $9,900,000

2017 National Conservation Innovation Grants Reviewed/Recomended by Arkansas				
Applicant	**Title / Description**	**Funds Requested**	**States in Project**	
Field to Market	Development of a Pre-Competitive Field Scale Sustainability Calculator to Track Key Environmental Metrics and Identify Opportunities for Improvement Conservation Innovation	$ 1,957,830.00	AR, GA, ID, IL, IA, KS, MN, NE	
PastureMap Inc	Grazing Planning and Analytics – There Should Be an App for That	$ 524,120.00	US-ALL	
Terra Global Capital, LLC.	Demand Driven Conservation through Payment for Success Agreements (PFSA's) in US Food Value Chains	$ 973,665.00	AR, CA, WA, OR,WI, IL, TX MT, MI, MI	
University of Tennessee	Improved Drought Resiliency and Production Efficiency for Grasslands Agriculture	$ 2,000,000.00	AR, MO, KY, TN	
White River Irrigation District	Internet of Agriculture IoAG Network and Services Platform	$ 600,000.00	AR	

2017 Arkansas Conservation Innovation Grant Applicaitons				
Applicant	**Title / Description**	**Federal Funds Requested**	**Non Federal Match**	**Total**
University of Arkansas	Improving management strategies for reducing soluble phosphors losses from poultry litter in pasture system	$ 74,831.00	$ 74,831.00	$ 149,662.00
University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service	InVessel Mortality composter management guidelines refinement and educational material development project	$ 67,730.00	$ 67,730.00	$ 135,460.00
University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service	Demonstrating the benefits of conservation of Health Science Water Quality and Resilience to Climate Extremes	$ 74,984.00	$ 74,984.00	$ 149,968.00
Water Resources Monitoring Group LLC	Realtime in field, hydrologic sensor networks to improve irrigation efficiency	$ 74,964.00	$ 77,816.00	$ 152,780.00
	Total	$ 292,509.00		

Total allocation for 2017 State CIG: $300,000

No public announcement will be made until National Office announces the 2017 National CIGs

Anticipated National announcement: May

Anticipated State Announcement: June 1st to July 1st

State Technical Committee Meeting
May 23, 2017

Attendees:

Bubba	Groves	Arkansas Game & Fish Commission
Josh	Hankins	USA Rice
Bill	Holiman	Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission
Reggie	Jackson	NRCS
Joe	Krystofik	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Kenneth	Lee	NRCS
Matt	Lindsey	Delta Plastics
Martha	Manley	Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
Amanda	Mathis	NRCS
Becky	McPeake	Cooperative Extension Service
Jason	Milks	The Nature Conservancy
Debbie	Moreland	Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
Terri	Nehls	NRCS
Marilyn	Ott	NRCS
Clayton	Parr	Farm Service Agency
Tony	Ramick	Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
George	Rheinhardt	NRCS
George	Richardson	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
Dianne	Schlenker	NRCS
Keith	Scoggins	NRCS
Adam	Shea	Riceland Foods
Scott	Simon	The Nature Conservancy
Brittany	Singleton	Cooperative Extension Service
Earl	Smith	Izard County
Darrin	Spinks	Arkansas Forestry Commission
Mike	Sullivan	NRCS
Zach	Taylor	NRCS
Karen	Thompson	NRCS
Melvin	Tobin	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Patti	Turpin	U.S. Forest Service, Ozark National Forest
Norman	Wagoner	U.S. Forest Service, Ouachita National Forest
Lauren	Ward	Arkansas Rice
Andrew	Wargo, III	Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
Jon	Wessman	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Kennard	Williams	NRCS
Ted	Zawislak	Arkansas Game & Fish Commission