

# Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Investing in Arkansas



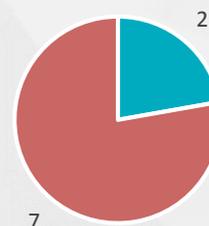
## Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven, locally-led approach to conservation. It offers new opportunities for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to harness innovation, welcome new partners to the conservation mission, and demonstrates the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation.

In 2017, NRCS is investing up to \$225 million in 88 projects that impact nearly every state in the nation, including two in Arkansas. Since 2014, NRCS has invested more than \$825 million in 286 high-impact projects, bringing together more than 2,000 conservation partners who have invested an additional \$1.4 billion. By 2018, NRCS and partners will have invested at least \$2.4 billion. These projects are leading to cleaner and more abundant water, better soil and air quality, enhance wildlife habitat, more resilient and productive agricultural lands and stronger rural economies.

### Arkansas Projects to Date

#### Projects by Resource Concern



- Water Quantity/Drought
- Water Quality

**10**

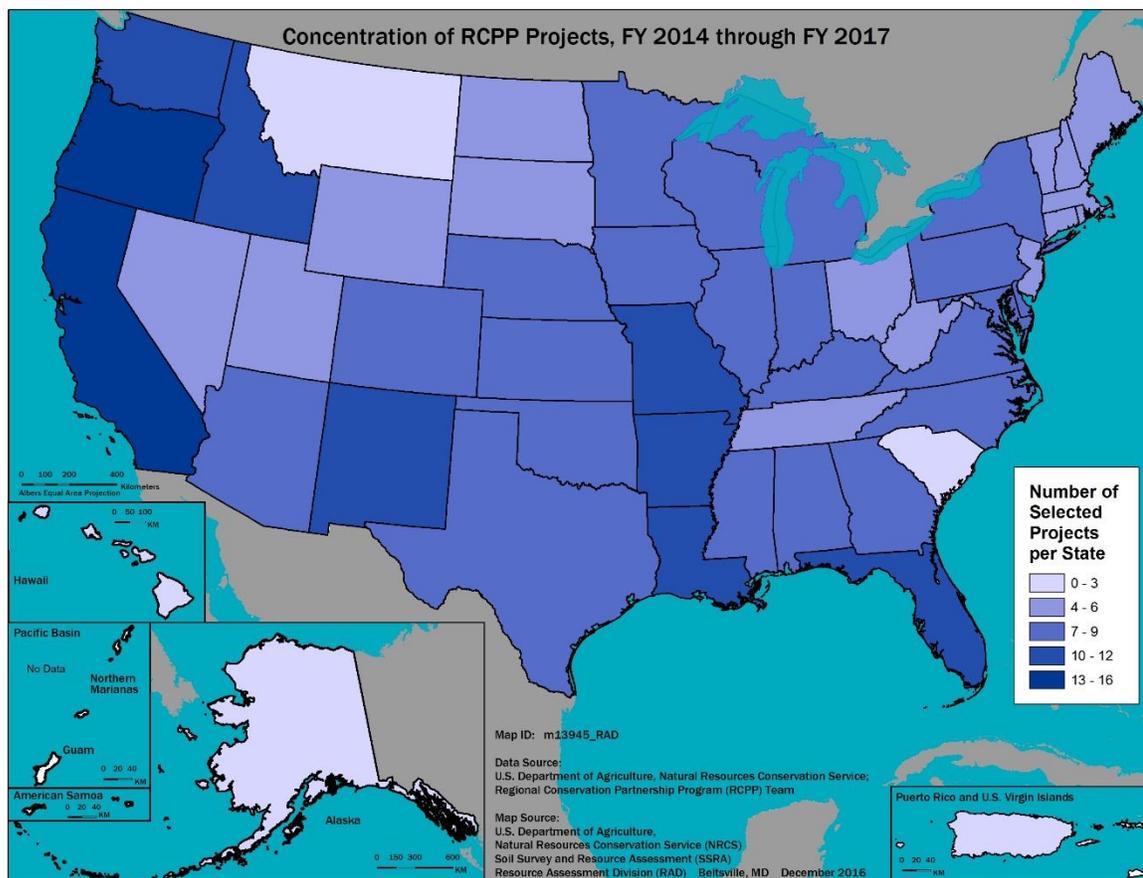
Projects

**\$29.5 million**

NRCS Investment

**150**

Partners



## Existing RCPP Projects

Year	Title	Funding Pool	Lead Partner	Number of Partners	NRCS Investment
2016	East Fork Cadron Creek Project	State	Faulkner County Conservation District	7	\$1 million
2016	Greers Ferry Lake Watershed Project	CCA	The Nature Conservancy	6	\$816,000
2016	West Fork White River Watershed Initiative	CCA	Watershed Conservation Resource Center	14	\$4.3 million
2014/2015	Bayou Meto-Lower Arkansas Regional Conservation Partnership Proposal	CCA	Bayou Meto Water Management District	17	\$3 million
2014/2015	Arkansas Red River Project	State	Southwest Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council	10	\$800,000
2014/2015	Growing Conservation in the Illinois River Watershed	State	Illinois River Watershed Partnership	11	\$1.2 million
2014/2015	Rice Stewardship Partnership - Sustaining the Future of Rice	National	Ducks Unlimited	39	\$10 million

## 2017 RCPP Projects

### Departee Creek Flood Prevention Plan

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$180,000 (Critical Conservation Area – Mississippi River Basin)

Lead Partner: Departee Creek Watershed Improvement District

Number of Initial Partners: 8

Participating States: Arkansas (Lead State)

Departee Creek Watershed Improvement District and local partners, including beginning farmers and under-served producers, will implement a “shovel ready” flood prevention plan and restore natural flow to Departee Creek in Arkansas. Frequent flooding results in high quantities of sediment buildup, nutrient loss and erosion along the waterway and adjacent lands. The partners will restore critical sections of the river and then develop a low water weir on a lake located mid-stream to maintain desired water levels. The work will improve wildlife habitat, limit loss of nutrients and crops, and reduce damage to personal property and roads. With successful implementation of the flood plan, the waterway also may be removed from the 303 (d) Impaired List.

### The Little Red River Water Improvement Project

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1,200,000 (State)

Lead Partner: Little Red River Irrigation District

Number of Initial Partners: 14

Participating States: Arkansas (Lead State)

The Little Red River Regional Irrigation Water District in Arkansas was formed in 1991 with a goal of creating sustainable sources of irrigation water throughout parts of White County. The Little Red River Water Improvement Project, managed by the District and 13 partners, will encourage irrigated cropland producers to implement structural irrigation practices. The project will result in a higher level of irrigation efficiency and water quality throughout the area. Wildlife habitat also will be increased on enrolled land.



## Mid-south Graduated Water Stewardship Program

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$7,000,000 (National)

Lead Partner: USA Rice Federation

Number of Initial Partners: 24

Participating States: Arizona (Lead State)

The economically-distressed Lower Mississippi River Valley region of the United States has long been fighting an uphill battle to retain groundwater levels, improve water quality and provide a suitable habitat for the diverse array of wildlife that inhabit the region. The Mississippi River Alluvial Aquifer serves as a vital and valuable irrigation source for rice growers throughout the region. Decades of annual withdrawals in excess of the aquifer's recharge capabilities have resulted in severely declining water levels that threaten the entire region's viability and could result in regulation for farmers. To address this, USA Rice has partnered with Ducks Unlimited and more than 20 other partners to increase conservation efforts at all levels of producers – from those who are just beginning their conservation efforts to those who are on the cutting edge of conservation innovation. In addition to offering appropriate practices/enhancements for producers, the Mid-south Graduated Stewardship project will include an innovative option for producers to enter the carbon market by adopting advanced Alternate Wetting Drying through Environmental Quality Incentives Program/EQIP 449 Irrigation Water Management practice. The project will include 25 Strike Force counties and parishes and use an innovative outreach plan devised to reach a new and diverse set of farmers that may not often participate in USDA or conservation programs.