

**NRCS State Technical Committee**  
**9:00am Tuesday, November 10, 2020**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Meeting called to order** by Amanda Mathis, Asst. State Conservationist for Partnerships

**Mike Sullivan, Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist**

- Went over FY20 Accomplishments:  
Working together - have provided quality service delivery thru many challenges.
  - New Farm Bill rules
  - CD-CART deployment
  - COVID-19Have improved core strengths of
  - Technical excellence
  - Conservation planning
  - Partnering
- 1.3 million acres of conservation applied – 225 acres of CTA. That is more conservation applied than any previous year.
- EQIP had 8,600 applications; 1,200 contracts, obligating \$45 million (99% of FA allocated.)
- CSP had 1,400+ applications. Over 213 new contracts on 200,000 acres, \$27.7 million (99% of allocation)
- Easements restored 18 existing easements, enrolled 18 new ones on 9,400 acres for \$25.2 million
- Priority training in soil health, conservation planning, IWM, grazing – even in a virtual environment.
- Developed and implemented Soil Health strategy that aligned with producer led Arkansas Soil Health Alliance

FY21 priorities align with the national priorities – to deliver Farm Bill (\$44 million in CSP payments in the past 40 days); streamline services; improve customer service; improve mentoring and training, focused outreach, and elevate importance of soil health.

New direct hire authority to bring more than 1500 external hires in FY21 – hope to add as many as 30 new employees beyond internal process.

State Conservationist to make decisions based on best use of limited resources with input from the State Technical Committee regarding needs and priorities. STC input is vital.

### **NRCS Subcommittee Meetings Recommendations**

A full report was provided in advance of the meeting recapping subcommittee meetings and recommendations. Participants were encouraged to review that report for all recommendations, only those that represent significant change provided verbal reports.

- **Water Quantity** -Shanon Griffin
  - Presented discussion being held over land leveling and reducing the minimum number of yards needed to qualify for financial assistance for the practice
    - Water savings will need to be evaluated based on improvements made to land with less than 100 cubic yards
    - Discussion was held on reduction in payment rates.
  
- **Water Quality** – Roger Cousins
  - Two recommended watersheds
    - Upper Village Creek Recommended for NWQI Readiness Phase
      - Influx of poultry houses to the area adding additional element to the need for watershed scale conservation
      - Within the MRBI and NRS Priority Watersheds
    - North Big Creek-Strawberry River Recommended for MRBI Implementation Phase
      - Sharp County CD and DC brought this watershed forward for consideration
      - Izard and Sharp Counties are both ERS waterbody
      - Within the NPS Priority area

## **Soil Health – Keith Scoggins**

- Recommendation to offer a new practice, 808 Soil Carbon Amendments – Organic Applications and Bio Char to be adopted for use in FY 22

## **Source Water Protection Areas – Edgar Mersiovsky (PowerPoint)**

- Priority Areas of Source Water Protection Areas
  - Based on water quantity and quality
  - National SWP Local Priorities (map)
- Refinement of SW Priorities
  - HQ required reduction of SW Protection priority areas to no more than 20% of the total land in the state. Necessitated a second look at identified priority areas.
  - Local priorities that were identified in FY 19 was the initial starting point for refinement
  - Worked with the same drinking water partners (and new partners as appropriate)
  - Set up a risk-based system to evaluate potential target areas. Points were awarded for each risk factors with a max of 10 points and total points of 90. This information was applied to watersheds within the initial priority areas and watersheds were refined based on risk.
  - Presented Map of Proposed High Priority Source Water Protection Areas
  - Selection of Priority Practices
    - SWP Core Practices
    - Looked at proposed increased incentives for targeted areas
    - Recommended that the payment rate will be 75%
      - Trying to encourage participation by farmers and landowners thus increase in payment rate

## **Feral Swine Eradication & Control Pilot Program – Helen Denniston (PowerPoint)**

- Expressed appreciation for the partners working on this project

- Tier 1 – 12 counties are currently in the program
- Tier 2 counties – a proposal was submitted to add these counties but it was not approved
- Overview
  - Technicians – 9 hired and started July 20
  - Technicians are in the field, training and assisting USDA APHIS with trapping efforts
  - Logistics and field coordination ongoing
  - SW Area has one opening due to a resignation
- Education and Outreach
  - U of A is providing education via zoom
  - Postpone outreach and education within the district in Year 1
- Next Steps
  - Finalize equipment procurement with districts with goal of having traps in place by January 1, 2020
  - Continue field operations
  - Trapping - Assisting APHIS
  - Develop Outreach Components
    - U of A – goal to complete surveys by December 1, 2020
    - West River Valley is being served by Sebastian County for education and they will lead outreach in other project areas as well.

### **Conservation Practice Standards – Walt Delp (PowerPoint)**

- All NRCS work must be tied back to a conservation practice
  - If there is not a standard to work under we don't do it
  - Standards are developed nationally and then adapted/adopted to the state level
- Farm Bill required that all standards to be reviewed
  - Policy requires update every 5 years
  - Nationally all standards have been reviewed
  - This involved internal NRCS committees and state feedback to produce a final draft
  - Soliciting comments on the Federal Register
  - AR NRCS takes national standard and adapts it for state's conditions within one year
  - Add items to clarify its use in the state

- Solicit partner comments at the subcommittee level
- Recent revisions (60 practices shown in power point – includes CSP)
  - Primarily engineering practices
- Arkansas adopts practices and revises supporting documents
  - Not every national standard is used in Arkansas
  - Supporting documents give specific details for each practice
  - These are known now as implementation requirements
- Not every standard is approved for landowner payment such as land clearing
- Payment schedules are different than standards
- Subcommittees were notified of the standards being revised and opportunity to comment
  - State Specialist will work on the standard by incorporating past items
  - Reviewed by Subcommittees
  - Discussed with partners in July
  - Publish in October 2021 for FY22
  - State received a waiver to get this done within two years

**RCPP – Dianne Schlenker**

- Overview of expected proposal submission in response to announcement of \$360 million made earlier
  - Restore the Earth Foundation – Statewide proposal to encourages WRE-like easements and wildlife habitat
  - KKAC Foundation is submitting Arkansas and Mississippi proposal to advance enrollment of easements with Historically Underserved producers – 11 counties in east Arkansas plus MS counties
  - American Bird Conservancy- open pine landscape restoration AR/LA proposal for forest land improvement will include 8 counties in south Arkansas.
  - Illinois River Watershed Partnership – submitted last year but resubmitting it again this year to help with grazing management, riparian forest buffers etc.

- Ducks Unlimited – proposal to continue water conservation efforts, focused in south east Arkansas practices related to surface water
- Bayou Meto Irrigation District also considering a proposal
- Working on three new projects that were funded in previous program announcements
  - TNC -Buffalo River Watershed Project
  - East Arkansas Enterprise Community project in the Delta
  - USA Rice- Mid South Graduated Rice Stewardship project in rice producing counties

**CART (Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool) – Lori Barker (PowerPoint)**

- Process to Build Ranking Pools
  - National Template, State Ranking Pools and Locally Led Ranking Pools
    - Reduces redundancies
    - Non-applicable questions will not appear
    - For greater efficiency and effectiveness
    - Fewer errors
  - Select a National Ranking Template
  - Configure State Ranking Pools
  - Publish Ranking Pools
  - AERT Correlation to CART
  - National, State and Locally Questions fed into the determine of ranking pools
- Ranking Component Weights
  - Factors are considered and total figure is 100 points
    - Vulnerability
    - Planned Practice Score
    - Program and Resource Priorities – each section can allow up to 200 points
    - Efficiency
    - Provided examples of questions
    - Geospatial Supporting Layers
    - Information Needed to Build CART Ranking Pool

- Utilize the locally led process for input
- Feedback from FY2020
  - Struggled with CART from the newness and unsure how it would provide true ranking score.
  - Need to understand what is going on in the background of CART
- Measures taken to streamline ranking across the programs
  - Question asked – “how were ranking numbers derived”
  - Process developed to help landowners understand how their ranking was determined
- 2021 Ranking Pool
  - December 18, 2020 or there after when National ranking template becomes available with information gathered for each strategic pool
  - Train employees with videos

**Comments:**

- Mike Sullivan encouraged the participants to provide input or engage with NRCS staff on any issues related to CART.
- Dianne Schlenker stated that NRCS will work with RCPP Project Partners as needed to develop specific ranking tools for each project.
- Jena Moore stated that the presented PowerPoint will be shared with participants on the call.

**2020 State CIG Projects – Lori Barker (PowerPoint)**

Two approved for State CIG

- Enviroscapes Ecological Consulting, LLC
- White River Regional Water Distribution District

2020/2021 National CIG Classic Projects for Arkansas

- Mississippi State University
- Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation
- Water Reuse – White River Regional Water Distribution District

2021 CIG Priorities (copy provided with invitation email)

1. Nutrient and Sediment Reduction in Impaired Watersheds
2. Irrigation

### 3. Soil Health

- Deadlines are Jan 15, 2021 (tentative)
- Applications Due March 1, 2021 (tentative)
- Comments are needed by November 12, 2020 if changes to 2021 priorities are desired.

### **EQIP Presentation** – Corey Cornelious is the new EQIP Coordinator

- EQIP Final Rule
  - Updates to EQIP included in the interim final rule
  - Creating incentive contracts and payments for incentive practices to better support locally led conservation needs
  - Offering an advance payment option for HUS producers
- EQIP High Priority Practices
  - The Farm Bill also enables increased payments for priority practices, NRCS can designate up to 10 high priority practices
- EQIP Payment Changes
  - Separate Annual Payment cap for CSP 340 Cover Crop – multi-species payment option
  - CSP 394 Permanent Firebreak payment rate reduced from 50% – 40%. No change to payment cap.
- Local Led Input
  - Increase EQIP funding for cropland and feral swine management in SW Arkansas
  - Increase CSP and EQIP funding and balance distribution of funds
  - Interested in MRBI, NWQI and RCPP
  - PL566 interest in Lee, Scott, etc.
  - Additional feed back will be shared with technical leads and subcommittees
- FY2021 EQIP
  - See chart for 2021 EQIP Allocation and Initiatives
  - Application Deadline – December 18, 2020
  - Eligibility Deadline – March 26, 2021
  - Ranking and Cost Estimates Deadline – Feb. 19, 2021
  - Initial Preapprovals – Feb. 26, 2021
  - Obligation – July 16, 2021
  - Additional signups as needed to expend the funds

## **EQIP Incentives Contract Overview – Jena Moore**

- Identify priority resource concerns and areas of high priority for Arkansas
- Priority Resource Concerns
  - Identify 3 priority resource concerns for each land use within a given high priority area
  - Same priority resource concern may be used more than once
  - Identify incentive practices that will be available for payment under an incentive contract for each priority resource concern
- Recommendations Needed
  - Identify priority areas (regions across the state)
  - Encompass the whole state
  - Utilize existing state priority resource concerns or
  - Update state priority concerns or
  - Utilize priorities identified by local work groups
  - Incentive payments to offer
    - Option list to be provided at later date
  - National Guidance Forthcoming
    - 5 – 10 year contracts
    - How to plan and develop contracts
    - Payment structure
    - Eligibility/limitations
    - Timing
  - Mike Sullivan stated that they have not had all of the guidance from HQ at this time but with limited funds we will need to be strategic in how this is implemented.
    - Should ensure it will result in greater benefits
    - Appreciate thoughts and input, expect to see quick turnaround on input needed when guidance is issued
  - Joe Fox, AFC, reported that they are working on an Arkansas Forest Action Plan and hope that these activities can be aligned as well as the Wildlife Action Plan

## **Conservation Stewardship Program – Clyde Williams**

- CSP Regulatory Changes – Interim Final Rule
  - Permitted certain public lands to be eligible when it is included in a landowner plan

- Regulatory Changes
  - Administration changes (1470.2)
  - Definitions (1470.3)
    - “Enhancement”
    - “Management-intensive rotational grazing”
    - “Resource-conserving crop”
  - Allocation and Management (1470.4)
    - Tied to the amount of funds set aside for targeted programs such as Beginning Farmers, etc.
  - Payments (1470.24)
    - At least one additional conservation activity must be implemented within the first 12 months of the contract
    - Non-compensatory matters
  - Contract Renewal (1470.26)
    - Renewal opportunities are now available more than one time after the initial contract period.
    - Significant change in renewal in that any producer who does not enter a renewal contract after the expiration of previous contract must wait two years before applying again. This includes renewal applicants who competed but were not selected for funding.
- FY2021 CSP Policy Changes
  - Expanded the priority resource concerns from 5 to 8
  - Adjusted policy to more accurately reflect regulatory language in terms of requirements
  - Once participant adopts a new activity then it must be continued for remaining years of the contract to the maximum extent possible
  - Eliminates the option to choose whether to receive their annual payment between Oct – Dec. or defer to the following calendar year
  - Includes language related to establishing payment caps where the participants will exceed payment limitations or the contract limit
- CSP State Priority Resource Concerns

- Stay with 5 or select up to 8
  - Ag Land (Cropland and Pasture)
  - NIPF

**Comments:**

- Mike Sullivan talked about the rebalancing of funds nation wide and the impact on funding allocations to states, resulted in reductions to the funds to Arkansas
  - Demand should be one of the considerations for allocation of funds
  - Expect EQIP, CSP and Easements will continue to see a reduction in funding in FY21

**Easements** – Randy Childress (report document provided)

- 280,00 acres under easement in Arkansas – 2<sup>nd</sup> in the country
- Obligated \$27.5 million – 1<sup>st</sup> in the nation

**Watershed Report** – Randy Childress (report document provided)

- PL566 – shared spread sheet on 7 watershed projects and their funding level
- \$72 million obligated
- National Watershed PL566 Funding Demand
  - Includes high hazard dams, construction needs, etc.

**Voluntary Public Access Program** – \$2.1M proposal approved in FY20, AGFC is implementing the program

**Open Discussion-**

Flyer was shared by the Enviroscapes Ecological Consulting, LLC seeking poultry producers who want to re-evaluate their operations.

Randall Rush, EPA gave a brief report of their activities to work more cooperatively with farmers and ranchers.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

**State Technical Committee Meeting Agenda**  
**Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex**  
**November 10, 2020**

Link to register for the meeting: [Fall State Technical Committee Meeting Webex Registration](#)

**9:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Call to Order	Amanda Mathis
Welcome & Opening Remarks	Mike Sullivan
Abbreviated Subcommittee Reports	Subcommittee Leaders
FY2021 Source Water Protection Focus Areas	Edgar Mersiovsky
Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot	Helen Denniston
National Conservation Standards Update Status	Walt Delp
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Proposals	Dianne Schlenker
Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) Debrief	Lori Barker
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) EQIP Incentives	Corey Cornelius Jena Moore
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	Clyde Williams
Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)	Lori Barker
Easements and Watersheds Programs Agriculture Conservation Easements Program (ACEP) Watershed and Flood Prevention Program Voluntary Public Access Program	Randy Childress
Open Discussion	Attendees
Closing Remarks & Adjourn	Mike Sullivan

## Fall 2020 State Technical Committee Subcommittee Recommendation Summary

The following highlights and recommendations are presented for consideration by the Arkansas State Conservationist and State Technical Committee.

### Energy

The Energy Subcommittee meeting that was held at 10AM on Thursday, October 08, 2020.

Subcommittee Leader: Britt Hill, NRCS Engineer

#### **Recommendation #1**

- For CPS 672 'Building Envelope Improvement' Specification, a technical change is suggested by NRCS for clarification. The wording change will not affect how the practice is implemented. The bolded words are the updated change.
  - 1.b. *"Within bird reach (typically the lower 2 ft.) the foam must be 10 lb./cf density minimum throughout its thickness. If a 10 lb./cf foam **does not meet** the current restrictions of the NI\_20\_301: Part 301 then cover **2 lb./cf** foam with ½" fire rated gypsum board or 22/32: wood structural panel.*

#### **Recommendation #2**

- Two state program questions were recommended by the subcommittee to be added to the existing ranking pool questions. The questions are:
  - 'Are exhaust fans planned for installation?'
  - 'Are rolltop doors planned for installation?'
  - The two questions would be weighted 10 point each out of the 200 point total.

#### **Recommendation #3**

- For FY22, add a new scenario to CPS 374 to allow a dimmer to be installed on LED lights to further energy efficiency. This scenario is currently being offered by MO and OK. It is available in the Delta States region but has not been recommended for use.
  - The estimated cost is \$350.

#### **Recommendation #4**

- For FY22, remove CPS 374 'Farmstead Energy Improvement', scenario 1- CFL bulbs- as an available scenario.
  - These bulbs can only be installed if it is recommended in an energy audit but auditors do not recommend installing them so it hasn't been utilized.

### Soil Health

The Soil Health Subcommittee Meeting that was held virtually on September 03, 2020.

Subcommittee Leader: Keith Scoggins, NRCS State Agronomist

#### Update

- LA and MS have expressed interest in starting their own Soil Health Alliance
- NRCS is still working on the CStwP enhancements
  - Soil health grazing management to be developed

Sunn Hemp Report

## Fall 2020 State Technical Committee Subcommittee Recommendation Summary

- Mississippi State Mini-grant was denied
- Group will move forward with the effort as soon as we get approval from State Plant Board to do research
- Activities thus far
  - Contacted the State Plant Board about proposal
  - No response thus far (Plan for research in 2021 has been submitted since meeting date)

### Soil Health Grants Update

- Mike Daniels, UACES, reported on the status of their grants
  - Holistic Benefits of Soil Health
    - Ends on Sept. 2021, needs an extension due to various issues such as wet seasons and COVID. Subcommittee concurs with the extension request.
- Matt Fryer, UACES, has been doing research on 40 plots on 20 sites
  - Soil Health Guide Book
- Soil Health Institute – ongoing with good media coverage
  - SHI shot a video on the Chappell farm at the end of July for release later this year
- ASHA Board members have made numerous presentations (40) thru Jan 2018 - March 2020
  - 15 field days
- EPA Farmer to Farmer Grant
  - Set a meeting to develop and submit a proposal

### Future research & action

- Salinity in groundwater is becoming more of an issue for SE Arkansas
- Development of Arkansas Soil Health Plan for Arkansas Conservation Partners
- Group met September 8, 2020 at the AACD Office to submit a proposal for the EPA Farmer to Farmer grant

*No formal recommendations for consideration.*

### **Grazinglands**

The Grazinglands Subcommittee did not hold a fall meeting but an update of activities was provided. Subcommittee Leader: Jeremy Huff, NRCS State Grazing Specialist

A recorded presentation updating members were provided to the subcommittee. The presentation shared recent work to provide better technical materials and trainings to field offices and producers.

- Arkansas NRCS released 19 new forage fact sheets and has been providing a series of virtual trainings in 2020. The fact sheets will help field offices transfer technical materials to producers.
- The virtual trainings were originally offered to new employees and interns in June and July. Due to supportive response, the virtual training series continued to be offered starting in September for all employees, partners, and producers. Many of the virtual trainings have been filmed in the field as conservation practices and concepts are being installed. The recordings are blended into a presentation to allow participants a virtual field experience at the comfort of their office or home.
- Special thanks to Dr. John Jennings for his review and input of the forage fact sheets.
- Additionally, special thanks to Debbie Moreland for assisting AR NRCS with the virtual trainings.

## Fall 2020 State Technical Committee Subcommittee Recommendation Summary

- An invitation for recommendations to be discussed and potentially proposed to the state technical committee was offered. No recommendations have been received to date.
- AR NRCS grazing lands subcommittee will host a formal meeting, either in-person or virtually, in the spring of 2021.

*No formal recommendations for consideration.*

### **Water Quality**

The fall Water Quality Subcommittee meeting was held virtually on Oct 20, 2020 at 1pm.

Subcommittee Leader: Roger Cousins, NRCS Water Quality Specialist

Topic: Introduction, Previous Action Items, Presented by Roger Cousins

- Review of action items from the spring meeting, all requested readiness phase NWQI and MRBI projects were accepted into readiness phase by headquarters. Explained that there will be 1 new NWQI project that will receive funding and 4 new MRBI projects that will receive funding.

Topic: RCPP and MRBI Update, Presented by Dianne Schlenker

- Watershed Assessments- this year a contractor will complete 13 watershed assessments MRBI/NWQI
- Showed a map indicating the readiness and implementation phases of all of the MRBI Arkansas project areas along with a chart showing the amount of funding for each MRBI project in FY21, EQIP and CSP dollars.
- RCPP active projects map-West Fork White River, Arkansas Quail Focal Landscape, Buffalo River Watershed Partnership, East Arkansas Delta Regional Conservation Project and RCPP Renewal Mid South Graduated Water Partnership.

Topic: NWQI Update, Presented by Roger Cousins

- Showed current locations of active project areas for NWQI and funding amounts
- Readiness Phase projects FY21 NWQI locations
- 1 new recommended NWQI watershed project was presented to partners that came from the Randolph and Lawrence County Conservation Districts-Upper Village Creek NWQI
- North Big Creek Strawberry River was a NWQI requested project, now it is being requested in MRBI since it was not funded last year. Watershed assessment already complete.

Topic: Open Discussion for new watershed projects, Presented by Roger Cousins and Dianne Schlenker

- No comments from partners at the subcommittee meeting.

Topic: Source Water Protection High Priority Areas, Presented by Edgar Mersiovsky

- Described the charge to NRCS to refine the area to a max of 20% of the state. Has to be at the HUC12 level and described the effort working with drinking water partners, a SWP working group was developed made up of several partners and one meeting has been conducted.
- Explained the methodology and showed map with suggestion for the newly defined high priority areas in Arkansas.
- Edgar also discussed SWP core practices and those practices chosen to receive higher cost share rates within the high priority Ares.
  - Conservation Crop Rotation

## Fall 2020 State Technical Committee Subcommittee Recommendation Summary

- Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
- Cover Crop
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- Riparian Forest buffer
- Filter Strip

Topic: Water Quality Related Practice Standards and Implementation Requirements Updates, Presented by Roger Cousins

- Roger detailed the changes in the Arkansas 590 practice standard including the requirement to only use soil tests no older than 2 years for new nutrient management plans instead of 3 years as in the old standard.
- Other NM documents were updated but no significant changes were made. A new NM jobsheet was made and will be released soon. Includes a nutrient calculator and will serve as a nutrient management plan for NRCS cost share in nutrient management.
- Positive comments made in regard to the jobsheet from partners.

Topic: Conservation Buffer Implementation Barriers, Presented by Roger Cousins

- Roger discussed barriers such as loss of productive land, CRP payment rates, EQIP payments rates, fencing out cattle is not an option because fence will be destroyed by flooding, other known barriers
- Various partners made comments on this topic including other barriers to implementation, but no recommendations made.

Topic: Open Discussion for Recommendations or Closing Remarks, Presented by Roger Cousins

- No additional comments

### **Recommendation #1**

- 1) Request the Proposed Upper Village Creek NWQI project for Readiness Phase FY22

### **Recommendation #2**

- 2) Request the North Big Creek-Strawberry River MRBI project for Implementation Phase FY22

### **Forestry**

The fall forestry subcommittee meeting was held virtually at 1 pm on September 22, 2020

Subcommittee Leader: Doug Akin, NRCS State Forester

Prescribed Burn Rate increase

- Reported on change in the Arkansas Department of Agriculture rate for prescribed burning. Some discussion took place about the rate and the payment amount in EQIP. Prescribed Burn Rate Increase
  - \$50/acre - \$575 minimum which is up from \$32/acre - \$575 minimum
- No action was recommended by the committee.

Forest Mulching (Practice 666)

- FSI Specifications allow for mechanical treatments (mulching) for species that do not sprout such as cedar and pine. There was discussion about allowing mulching on trees/shrubs that

## Fall 2020 State Technical Committee Subcommittee Recommendation Summary

would resprout and using herbicide to control the sprouts (two 666 components on the same acre). The consensus was to NOT change the specifications.

### Priority Areas for Source Water Protection and select underutilized practices

- Discussed the reasons why practice 391, Riparian Buffers is underutilized and if increase cost rate of 90% would increase it's utilization.
- The general consensus is that it would be a hard practice to sell to landowners even at a 90% rate, at least in part because a CRP practice is available to many of the same landowners.

### EQIP/RCP

- RCP – Bill Bartush gave a short synopsis on the Conservation Delivery Network's RCP proposal.
  - Title – AR-LA CDN Open Pine Landscape Restoration
  - 8 counties in Arkansas and 8 parishes in Louisiana
  - Lincoln, Drew, Calhoun, Bradley, Ouachita, Clark, Nevada & Ashley Counties
  - Open Pine Restoration Project
  - Additional money for forestry
  - AR-LA CDN Open Pine Landscape Restoration – The CDN is part of the proposal LEAD – Lower MS Valley Joint Venture – American Bird Conservancy proposal to NRCS – RCP

### Comments

- Ripping payments are not sufficient to encourage vendors to do it to NRCS standards and he recommend increasing the payment
- Participants were asked to provide NRCS with receipts and documentation to back up an increase and NRCS will seek input from LA & MS and report on findings in the spring.

*No formal recommendations for consideration.*

## **Water Quantity**

The Water Quantity subcommittee met virtually on Monday, September 28, 2020 at 1 pm.

Subcommittee Leader: Shanon Griffin, NRCS Engineer

- The Arkansas Groundwater Initiative ranking was revised, and components were enhanced for CART ranking in 2020. At the time of the meeting, contracting was not complete and thus an evaluation as to the impact of the changes was not available but will be completed after the contracts are obligated.
- A updated map of IWM Technician locations was provided to the committee
- Updates regarding salinity issues in groundwater, high resolution groundwater models from USGS and the Bayou Meto Irrigation project were provided by partners.
- Discussion was held regarding State Tax Credits and typical practice completion time
- NRCS will be updating conservation practice standards and input will be sought from partners over the next year.
- A discussion over how Missouri is implementing land resurfacing and potential benefits/drawbacks for Arkansas adopting a similar approach was held. It was recommended

## Fall 2020 State Technical Committee Subcommittee Recommendation Summary

that NRCS explore the current 464 practice standard, clarify MO requirements and report findings back to the subcommittee for continued discussion.

*No formal recommendations for consideration.*

### **Alternative/Specialty Crops**

The NRCS Alternative/Specialty Crops Subcommittee was held virtually on Tuesday, September 22, 2020.  
Subcommittee Leader: Troyce Barnett, NRCS State Agronomist

- The subcommittee reviewed the micro irrigation in high tunnels requirements for financial assistance. The recommendation to be included in all High Tunnel Conservation Plans has been referred to HQ.
- The subcommittee discussed and is in favor of the new upcoming 808 Practice Soil Carbon Amendments – Organic Applications and Bio Char being adopted for use in FY 22.
- The subcommittee is in full support on using Cover Crop as a major part in Soil Health Conservation Planning.
- The subcommittee is very interested in High Priority Practices once additional information is released.

### **Recommendation #1**

Conservation practice code 808 Soil Carbon Amendments – Organic Applications and Bio Char be adopted for use in FY 22

### **Wildlife**

The NRCS Wildlife Subcommittee meeting was held virtually at 10 am on Wednesday, September 30, 2020.

Subcommittee Leader: James Baker, NRCS State Biologist

- Discussion was held over program rankings. Concerns were raised over inconsistent wildlife rankings and over some projects with multiple beneficial practices not ranking as well as those with just a few elements. It was recommended that a small workgroup be established to look at this in more depth and report back.
- Discussion was held over seeding rates for pollinators and native warm season grass establishment. Topics included need for technical note 1 updates and clarification guidance to field offices to communicate why a reduced seeding rate may be recommended by PLBs.
- The subcommittee discussed need for training around Threatened and Endangered species. It has been several years since one was provided; several agencies would like to be part of the training. Recommended training be conducted on-site and virtually to maximize attendance.
- An update on the feral swine eradication and control project was provided.

*No formal recommendations for consideration.*



United States Department of Agriculture



# NRCS FY21 State Technical Committee Water Quality Subcommittee Report

**Roger Cousins**  
**NRCS Water Quality Specialist**  
**Telework: 870-805-8073**  
[roger.cousins@usda.gov](mailto:roger.cousins@usda.gov)



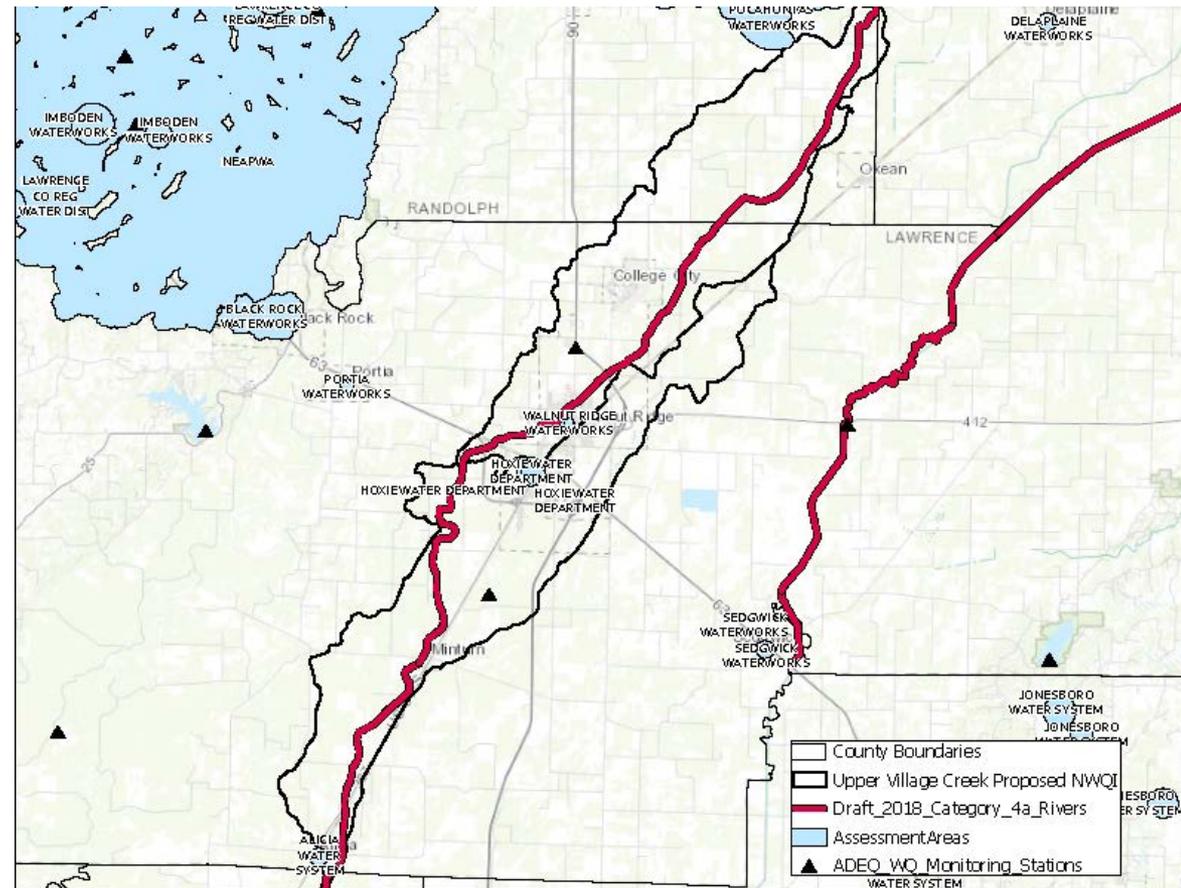
Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)



## Upper Village Creek Recommended NWQI Readiness Phase

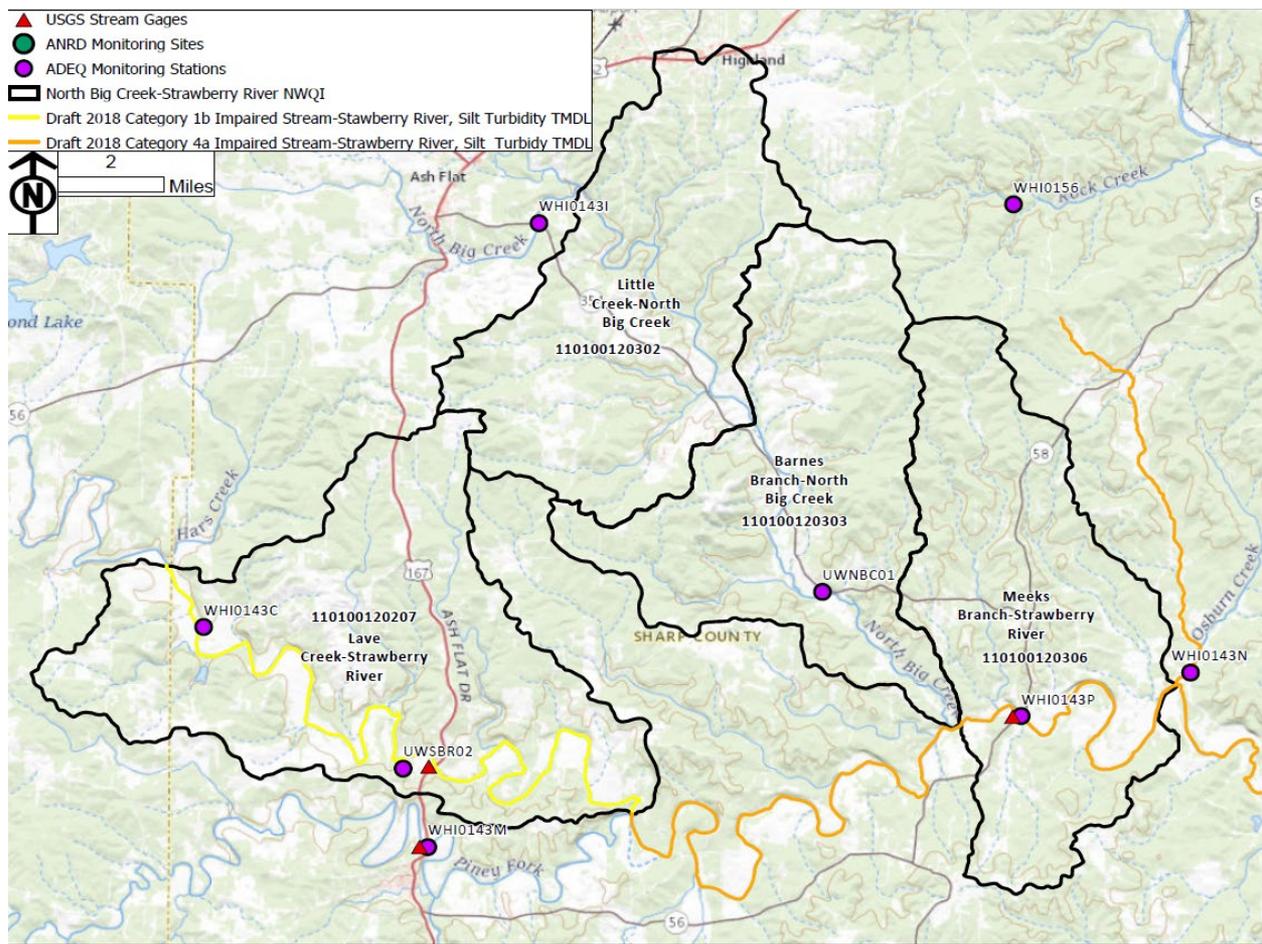
- Brought forth by the Lawrence and Randolph County Conservation District Boards and District Conservationists
- Village Creek is a Category 4a Silt Turbidity TMDL
- Groundwater SWP located within
- Would also help with the success of an existing project MRBI project
- Lawrence and Randolph Counties
- Within the MRBI Focus areas and NRS Priority Watersheds
- Influx of poultry houses to the area adding an additional element to the need for watershed scale conservation.





## North Big Creek-Strawberry River Recommended MRBI Implementation Phase

- Brought forth by the Sharp County Conservation District Board and District Conservationist
- Strawberry River is a Category 1b, 4a Silt Turbidity TMDL
- Would also help with the success of an existing project,
- Izard and Sharp Counties
- Extraordinary Resource Waterbody
- Within a Nutrient Reduction Strategy Priority Watershed, Non-Point Source Pollution Priority Watershed, and MRBI Focus Area





United States Department of Agriculture



## SWP Update

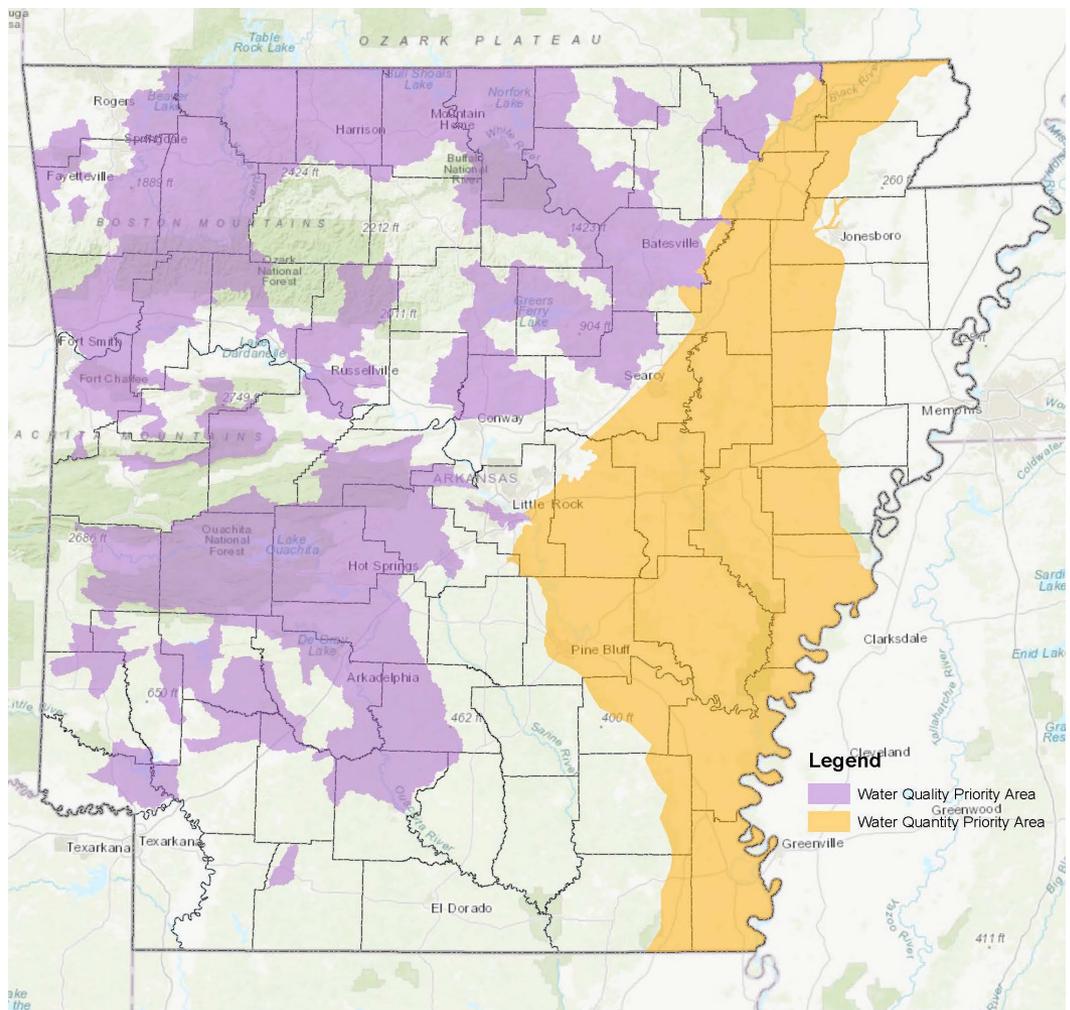
Edgar Mersiovsky  
USDA-NRCS  
State Soil Scientist

[edgar.mersiovsky@usda.gov](mailto:edgar.mersiovsky@usda.gov)

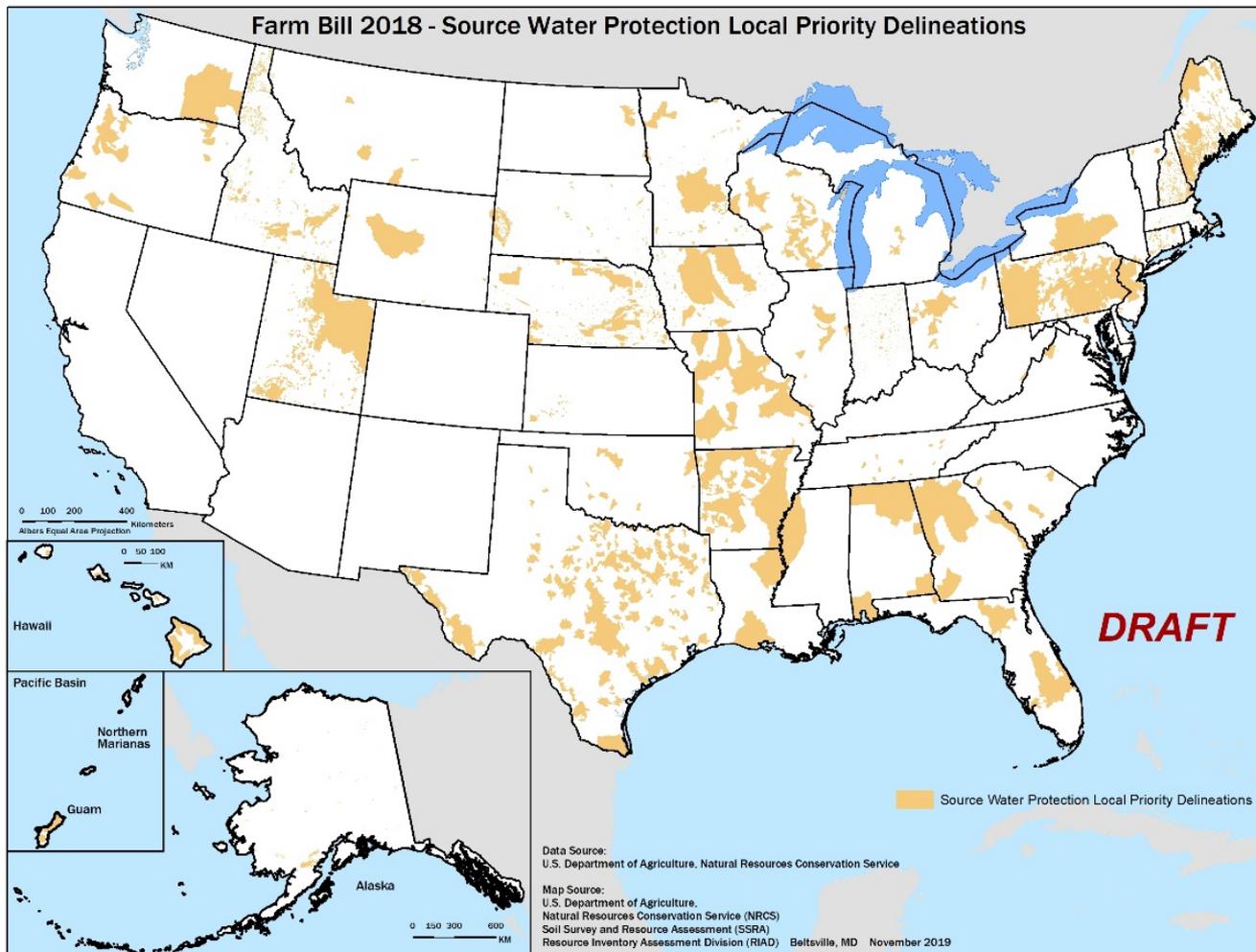
# Source Water Protection

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

# Priority Areas of Source Water Protection Areas



# National SWP Local Priorities



## Refinement of Source Water Priorities to Ensure Consistent Targeting

- Local Priorities that were submitted in FY19 should be the basis for refinement
- Work with the same drinking water partners (and new partners as appropriate) to identify “high priority” areas within Local Priorities
- High priority areas should be selected based on the following criteria:
  - Should represent no more than 20 percent of total land area of the state
  - Will be delineated using HUC12 watershed boundaries
  - Will be attributed with data indicating the type of water source addressed (surface, ground) and the potential threats (water quality, aquifer depletion).
  - Will consider for State/utility SWPA delineations and EPA’s density data for location and extent of SWPAs provided in their drinking water database



# Methodology

- Points were awarded for each risk factor. Each factor received a maximum of 10 points. The total possible points is 90. Cutoffs for classification was determined using the Natural Breaks method in ArcPro.

Arkansas Risk Factor Points	
	Points
NRCS Initiative Projects	10
Erodible Soils	10
Excess Nutrients	10
Excess pathogens	10
Excess Pesticides	10
Groundwater Depletion	10
Wildfire Risk	10
EPA % Watershed in SWPA	10
Outside Federal Land	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>





# Selection of Priority Practices

## Guidance from Science and Technology:

- Use the NWQI core practices as guidance for practice selection
- Select only those practices that have a significant impact on either water quality or water quantity (or both if applicable), based on the threats to drinking water in the local priority area(s)
  - Be selective – consider selecting only major practices that have impact (i.e., not all supporting practices)
  - Practices selected should specifically address the source of the drinking water (ground vs. surface)
  - Use the CPPE to assist in determining impacts
  - Include management practices where applicable
  - With respect to irrigation practices and water quantity – consider whether water savings will actually be realized



# SWP Core Practices

SWP Core Practices	Code
Conservation Cover	327
Conservation Crop Rotation	328
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed	329
Cover Crop	340
Critical Area Planting	342
Waste Facility Closure	360
Field Border	386
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390
Riparian Forest Buffer	391
Filter Strip	393



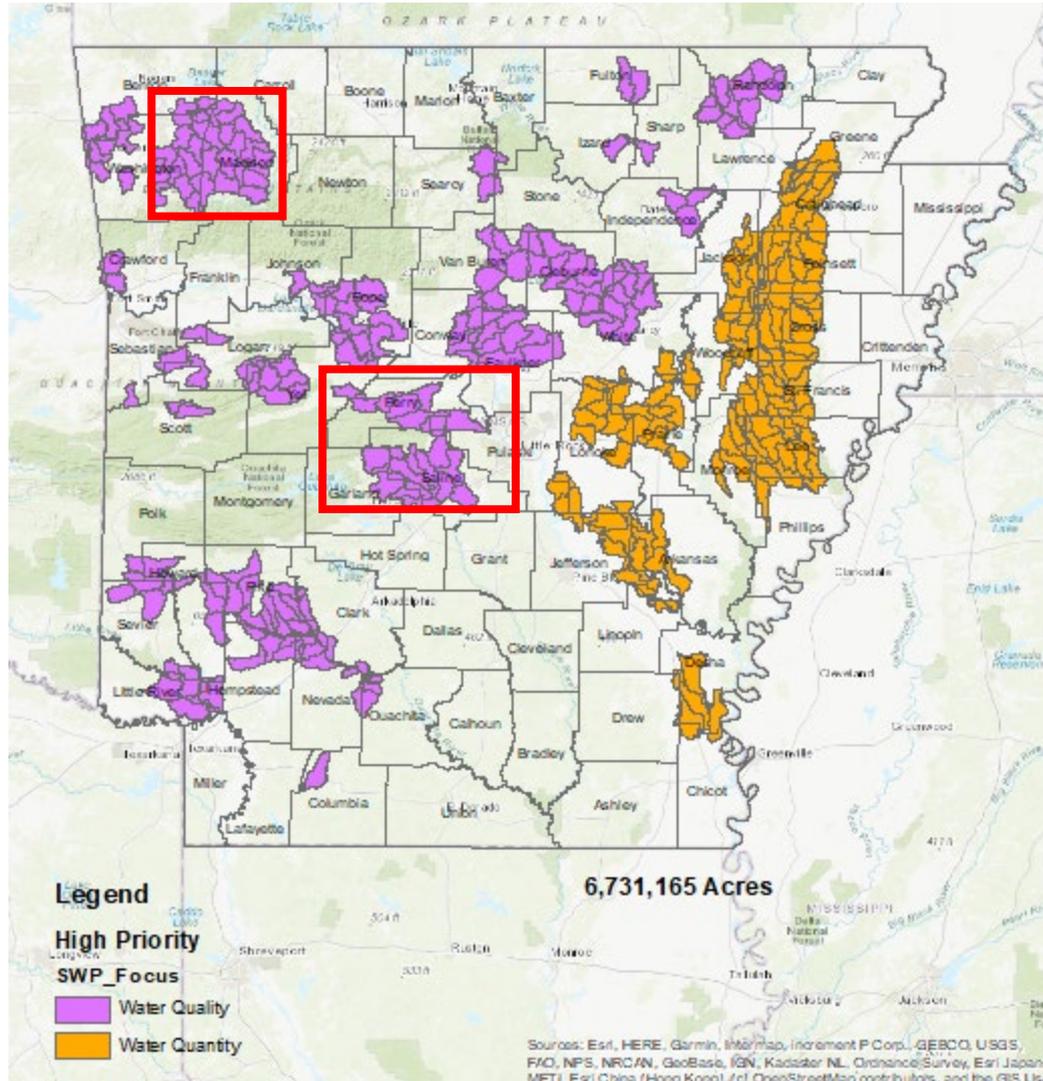


## SWP Core Practices Proposal

	Code	Increase %
Conservation Cover	327	
Conservation Crop Rotation	328	75
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed	329	75
Cover Crop	340	75
Critical Area Planting	342	
Waste Facility Closure	360	
Field Border	386	
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390	75
Riparian Forest Buffer	391	75
Filter Strip	393	75



# Areas Proposed for Increased Incentive



# Questions



In accordance with Federal Civil Rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Civil Rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior credible activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

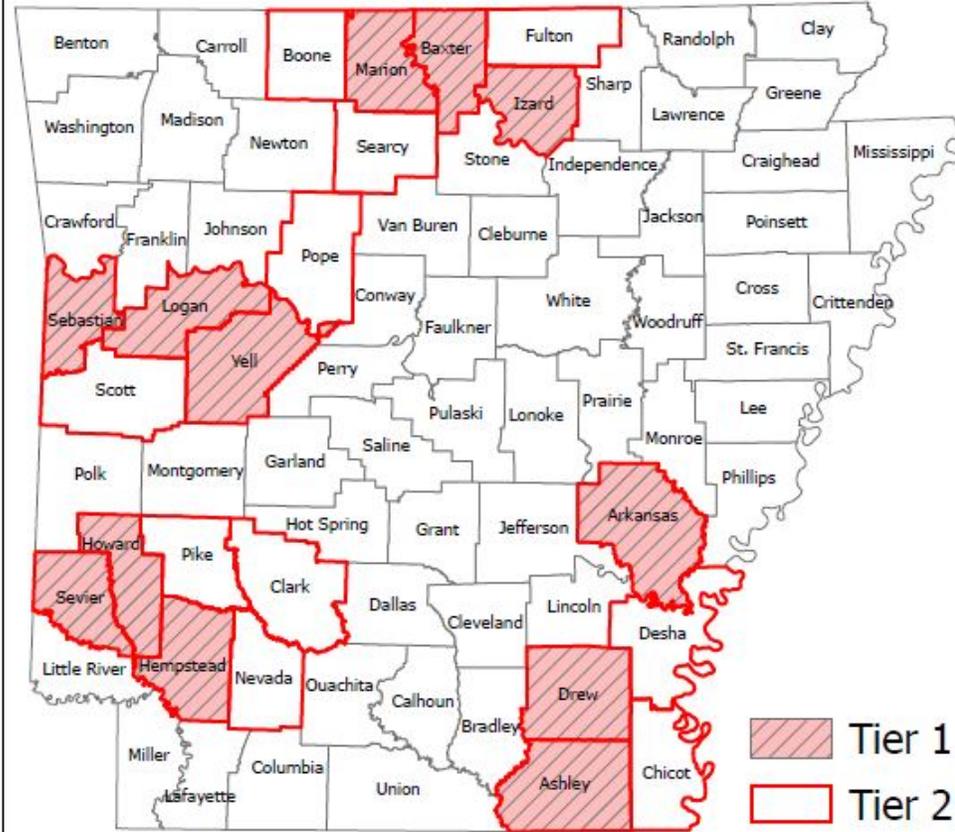
To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).



# Feral Swine Pilot Project Update



# Arkansas Feral Swine Potential Proposals



# Feral Swine Pilot Project Update

- USDA NRCS Feral Swine Pilot Project
  - Technicians
    - 9 of 10 Program Technicians currently hired:
      - Start date range: July 20 through September 13
      - Technicians in field; training and assisting USDA APHIS with trapping efforts
      - Logistics and field coordination ongoing
        - Southwest Area: 1 Position open due to resignation
          - Coordinating with districts to fill vacant position
  - Education and Outreach:
    - University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture
      - Zoom meeting with USDA APHIS, AGFC and UACES within project areas
      - Inform partners of resources available with the project areas
    - Postpone outreach and education efforts within districts (Year 1)
    - Modify Education and Outreach budget in year one for equipment and supplies
    - Limited outreach efforts in West Arkansas River Valley
      - NRD grants to district funds (submitted November 1, 2020)
      - Federal funds
        - 11 traps, M&O and supplies

# Feral Swine Pilot Project Update

- USDA NRCS Feral Swine Pilot Project Continued

- Next Steps:

- Finalize initial equipment procurement with districts

- Goal: Traps in place January 1, 2021

- Continue Field operations in coordination with USDA APHIS

- Training with USDA APHIS

- Trapping-assisting USDA APHIS

- Develop Outreach Components

- University of Arkansas: Division of Agriculture/Surveys

- Goal: Complete surveys and associated forms: December 1

- Education and Outreach: Limited to West Arkansas River Valley other outreach postponed until trapping program delivered

# Questions?

J.P. Fairhead - Feral Swine Coordinator  
Arkansas Department of Agriculture-  
Natural Resources Division

[j.p.fairhead@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:j.p.fairhead@agriculture.arkansas.gov)

Phone: 870.253.3721

James Baker - State Biologist  
USDA NRCS

[James.baker2@usda.gov](mailto:James.baker2@usda.gov)

Phone: 501-837-5895



# Conservation Practice Standards

Walt Delp, State Conservation Engineer, PE





# All NRCS work is tied back to a conservation practice



- **If there is not a standard to work under we don't do it.**
- **Standards are developed nationally and then adapted/adopted at the state level.**
- **Not all the national standards are used at state level.**



# Example Standard



316 CPS-1

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

### CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

#### ANIMAL MORTALITY FACILITY

(No.)

CODE 316

#### DEFINITION

An on-farm facility for the treatment or disposal of animal carcasses.

#### PURPOSE

This practice may be applied to achieve one or more of the following purposes:

- Reduce pollution impacts to surface water and groundwater resources;
- Reduce the impact of odors;
- Decrease the spread of pathogens.

#### CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies to livestock and poultry operations where animal carcass treatment or disposal is needed.

This standard does not apply to catastrophic animal mortality. In cases of catastrophic animal mortality, use NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Code 368, Emergency Animal Mortality Management.

# 2018 Farm Bill Required all Standards to be Reviewed

- **Policy requires updates every five years.**
- **Nationally all standards have been reviewed.**
- **This involved internal NRCS committees and state feedback to produce a final draft and**
- **Soliciting comments on the Federal Register to final draft.**





# Arkansas Adapts and Adopts Practice



- **AR NRCS takes national standard and adapts it for state's conditions within one year.**
- **Add items to clarify its use in the state.**
- **Solicit partner comments at the sub-committee level and final review.**
- **Publish in October each year.**





United States Department of Agriculture

# Recently Revised and Published National Practices



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)

## Revised National Standards Needing to be Adopted by States

NHCP 170 was issued on August 19, 2020, effective September 30, 2020

NHCP 171 was issued on September 30, 2020, effective October 1, 2020

The following 41 CSPs (almost all engineering) were updated in NHCP 170 including two practices which were archived:

- 560 – Access Roads
- 591 – Amendments for Treatment of Agricultural Waste
- 450 – Anionic Polyacrylamide (PAM) Application
- 397 – Aquaculture Pond
- ~~310 – Bedding (ARCHIVED)~~
- 400 – Bivalve Aquaculture Gear and Biofouling Control **Arkansas doesn't use**
- 317 – Composting Facility
- 605 – Denitrifying Bioreactor**
- 672 – Energy Efficient Building Envelope
- 670 – Energy Efficient Lighting System
- 412 – Grassed Waterway
- 561 – Heavy Use Protection Area
- 447 – Irrigation and Drainage Tailwater Recovery
- 430 – Irrigation Pipeline
- 436 – Irrigation Reservoir
- 441 – Irrigation System, Microirrigation
- 449 – Irrigation Water Management
- 460 – Land Clearing
- 468 – Lined Waterway or Outlet
- 516 – Livestock Pipeline
- 576 – Livestock Shelter Structure
- ~~482 – Mole Drain (ARCHIVED)~~
- 353 – Monitoring Well
- 500 – Obstruction Removal
- 533 – Pumping Plant
- 555 – Rock Wall Terrace**
- 557 – Row Arrangement
- 604 – Saturated Buffer
- 318 – Short Term Storage of Animal Waste and By-Products
- 572 – Spoil Disposal
- 574 – Spring Development
- 570 – Stormwater Runoff Control
- 607 – Surface Drain, Field Ditch
- 600 – Terrace
- 575 – Trails and Walkways
- 620 – Underground Outlet
- 629 – Water Treatment
- 636 – Water Harvesting Catchment

614 – Watering Facility  
640 – Waterspreading  
351 – Well Decommissioning

The following 19 CSPs were updated in NHCP 171:

402 – Dam  
348 – Dam, Diversion  
554 – Drainage Water Management  
511 – Forage Harvest Management  
410 – Grade Stabilization Structure  
355 – Groundwater Testing  
315 – Herbaceous Weed Treatment  
320 – Irrigation Canal or Lateral  
428 – Irrigation Ditch Lining  
388 – Irrigation Field Ditch  
464 – Irrigation Land Leveling  
512 – Pasture and Hay Planting  
595 – Pest Management Conservation System  
338 – Prescribed Burning  
391 - Riparian Forest Buffer  
610 – Saline and Sodic Soil Management  
580 – Streambank and Shoreline Protection  
490 – Tree/Shrub Site Preparation  
642 – Water Well



# Arkansas Adopts Practice and revises supporting documents.

- **Not every national standard is used in AR.**
- **Supporting documents such as Specifications, Job Sheets, and Standard Drawings give specific details for each project.**
- **These are known as implementation requirements.**





# Arkansas Adapts and Adopts Practice



- **Not every standard is approved for payment in EQIP.**
- **Payment schedules are different than standards.**
- **Payment schedules are typical scenarios.**
- **Implementation Requirements are what are required for each project.**





## What Happens Next



- **Sub-Committees were notified of the standards being revised and opportunity to comment.**
- **State Specialist will work on standard by incorporating past items.**
- **Reviewed by field engineers.**
- **Reviewed in Sub-Committees**
- **Sent out to partners in July for final review.**
- **Publish in October, 2021 for FY22**





Additional slides that provide an in depth look at Conservation Practice Standards and the update process is available upon request





# **CART RANKING: *PROCESS TO BUILD RANKING POOLS***

STATE TECHNICAL MEETING FALL 2020

# CART – CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT RANKING TOOL

- **National Template, State Ranking Pools, & Locally Led Ranking Pools**
  - Duplicative questions eliminated
  - Non-Applicable questions will not appear
- **State and Locally Led Ranking Pools**
  - Geospatial Conditions – integrates priority maps
  - Applicable Practices – integrates practice reference matrices
- **Results:**
  - Decreased potential for errors
  - Ease of use
  - Increased efficiency
  - Increased consistency

# RANKING POOLS BREAKDOWN

## Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART)

1. Select a National Ranking Template

2. Configure State Ranking Pool:

- Landuses
- Resource Concerns ( weights % assigned to each one that will be addressed in Ranking Pool)
- Practices
- Ranking Weights (weights % to be assigned to each one)
- Display groups
  - ❖ Applicability Questions
  - ❖ Category Questions
  - ❖ Program Questions
  - ❖ Resource Questions

3. Publish State Ranking Pool

# AERT CORRELATION TO CART

- National Ranking Questions
- State Ranking Questions
- Locally Led Questions

**National Ranking Templates**

**State Ranking Pools**

- Plan Assessment
- Pool Priorities

**Locally Led RCs Weighting & Questions**

# RANKING COMPONENT WEIGHTS

Ranking score contribution area weights

Apply the desired percentage weights distribution below

Example of weights

## Ranking Weights

Factors	Min/Max Range	Weight (%)	Included
Vulnerability	Min: 10%, Max: 40%	<input type="text" value="12"/>	✓ Complete
Planned Practice Effects	Min: 15%, Max: 15%	<input type="text" value="15"/>	✓ Complete
Resource Priorities	Min: 20%, Max: 60%	<input type="text" value="48"/>	✓ Complete
Program Priorities	Min: 5%, Max: 15%	<input type="text" value="15"/>	✓ Complete
Efficiencies	Min: 10%, Max: 10%	<input type="text" value="10"/>	✓ Complete

Total: 100%

APPLY

# VULNERABILITY

- For a given resource concern, CART establishes a site vulnerability. Site vulnerability is determined by subtracting the existing condition and existing practice scores from the threshold. These values are weighted by a ranking pool to address the resources concerns prioritized by that ranking pool.

# PLANNED PRACTICE SCORE

- The planned practice score is based on the sum of the planned practice on that PLU, which addresses the resource concern. These values are weighted by a ranking pool to address the resources concerns prioritized by that ranking pool.

# PROGRAM AND RESOURCE PRIORITIES

- Ranking Pool Specific questions that provide criteria in order to address program objectives
  - Program questions
  - Resource questions
- Each of these sections allow 200 pts per set of questions

## EXAMPLE PROGRAM QUESTIONS (200 PTS TOTAL)

- 1. At the time of application, the applicant meets one of the following range of resource concerns. (Text)**
- 2. What is the Range of Percentage of Prime, Unique, or Locally Important Soils in the PLUs? (Text)**
- 3. Are the PLUs located in a 303D Watershed? (Geospatial)**

## EXAMPLE RESOURCE QUESTIONS (200 PTS TOTAL)

1. By the end of the EQIP contract, the applicant will implement additional conservation activities across the operation that allows the producer to address resource concerns. (Text)
2. Will the application address water quality concerns?
3. Will the application address soil health resource concerns?
4. The PLUs are adjacent to other protected habitats. (Geospatial)
5. Are the PLUs within 2 miles of a river or stream (Geospatial)
6. Are the PLUs located within a priority watershed? (Geospatial)

## GEOSPATIAL SUPPORTING LAYERS

- CART will have access to enhanced geospatial support and will utilize this for setting priorities as well as supporting the conservation planning process.
- Priorities for setting layers used for ranking will be ranking pool specific layers determined by the state with input from the locally led process.

# INFORMATION NEEDED TO BUILD CART RANKING POOL

- Utilize the Locally Led Process for Input for the following:
  - Review Resource Concerns Categories and determine the ranking weights
  - Determine Ranking Component Weights (vulnerability, planned practice affects, resource priorities, program priorities, efficiency)
  - Review Priorities of Programs
  - Review Program and Resource Questions
  - Review approved program practices
  - Determining Geospatial Supporting Layers, if needed

## FEEDBACK FROM FY2020

- Struggled with CART from the newness and unsure of how it would provide true ranking score.
- Ranking scores seemed to be different if a practice schedule needed editing
- One practice schedule and one assessment to rank more than one application
- When we totally understand how the ranking weights affect the different areas of scores: vulnerability, planned practice effects, resource priorities, program priorities, and efficiency.... that run in the background.

# MEASURES TAKEN TO STREAMLINE RANKING ACROSS THE PROGRAMS

- Question asked-"how were ranking numbers derived "
- Built a excel sheet based on simple application to look at what made the ranking scores change when not expected to by planner or expected different score.
- Look at the different resource concerns, thresholds met and not met , part of the farms vs. whole farm treated, and practices selected.
  - ✓ If assessed properly, the ranking points you get that you weren't aware were being calculated too.
  - ✓ Selection of "necessary" resource concerns for each landuse in assessments
  - ✓ how thresholds work for met and not met
  - ✓ how amount acres being treated are important to the ranking score, more resource concerns are being addressed in application.

## 2021 RANKING POOL

- Begin developing December 18<sup>th</sup> or there after when National ranking templates become available with information gathered for each strategic pool.
- Train employees with videos
  - ✓ Fill assessment based on applicant and resource concerns met and not met, and use the necessary set of resource concern based on landuse to increase resource concerns addressed.
  - ✓ Business and resource tools to complete ranking process

## Conservation Innovation Grants

# 2020 State CIG projects

---

[Enviroscapes Ecological Consulting, LLC](#): *A Holistic, cost effective approach for reinvigorating practice 360 (Waste Facility Closure) for poultry houses in Northwest Arkansas.*

Throughout the 3 years of the project, there will be intensive look into the soil health of the decommissioned poultry pads, natural resource agencies. Deliverables include survey results, multilingual field days and extension documents, public service announcements, research results on soil remediation efforts,

[White River Regional Water Distribution District](#): *Improving Irrigation scheduling with innovative wireless sensors and evapotranspiration network.*

Project focuses on irrigation scheduling and addresses the critical shortage of groundwater and the high cost of transmitting relevant data to and from farmers which prevents the adoption of new technology to improve Irrigation Water Management (IWM) decisions. It also develops and introduces new smart sensors, develops an Irrigation Scheduling App (ISA), and demonstrates and documents the benefits of utilizing this Evapotranspiration prototype network. The proposed Agriculture Data Network (AgDaN) will provide real time weather, soil moisture, and water data

## 2021 CIG Priorities:

Soliciting additional recommendations for state priorities to consider.

### 1. Nutrient and Sediment Reduction in Impaired Watersheds

- Demonstrate effectiveness of “high potential” conservation practices (such as drainage management, wetlands designed for nutrient reduction, conservation buffers, cropping systems including cover crops, manure management, in-field nutrient management) in reducing nutrient leaching and runoff and document benefits in small watersheds.

### 2. Irrigation

- Evaluate alternative cropping systems and water management schemes to reduce water use and develop educational materials for producers to obtain a comfort level with these ideas so that they may adopt those cropping systems or water management schemes.
- Demonstrate innovative irrigation water management techniques documenting water quality improvements associated with irrigation systems in Arkansas.
- Unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) use with IWM uniformity and crop monitoring.

## Conservation Innovation Grants

- In field trials for alternative crops that uses in field weather stations that can integrate Evapotranspiration data and soil moisture sensors. These trails should be able to evaluate real crop water use during alternative crop growth stages. Develop brochures to help producers incorporate both method of IWM into to their farm practices.
- Development of an Evapotranspiration network to be used for alternative crops in order to better plan and manage irrigation events. Develop instructional documents for producers to incorporate evapotranspiration base scheduling into their Irrigation Water Management plans based on crop type. Example networks are mesonet used in Oklahoma.
- Irrigation Water Management project for alternative crops to provide more instructional documents to producers on how to use IWM devices to trigger irrigation for alternative crops. The documentation should indicate the number of devices needed, measurement depths, and how to use the device reading to know when to irrigate; base on crop and IWM device type.

### 3. Soil Health

- Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of cover crops, crop rotations, tillage and/or soil amendments on soil chemical, physical, and/or biological properties and their relationships with nutrient cycling, soil water availability, and plant growth in areas that have been land leveled in Arkansas.
- Quantifying Green House Emissions Assessment from Rice Production in Arkansas.
- Transfer and demonstration of row rice technology can improve soil health, reduce irrigation, and allow rice production to use no-till methods. Demonstration of the use of soil health practices (i.e. cover crop, nutrient management, irrigation water management) in a row rice cropping system, including cost-benefit information and yields.

## Arkansas FY 2020 Environmental Quality Incentives Program At-A-Glance

### FY 2020 EQIP Obligation

Account Name	Obligated	Contracts
FY20 Organic Transition	\$108,690.00	16
FY20 On-Farm Energy	\$1,735,685.99	130
Cropland	\$107,534.00	1
Forestland	\$84,886.00	2
Pastureland	\$326,600.00	9
Water Quality - Livestock (CAFO)	\$373,740.00	7
Wildlife	\$1,655,063.79	48
Beginning Farmer/Rancher - Statewide	\$1,716,332.64	14
Socially Disadvantaged - Statewide	\$1,357,365.00	39
Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher	\$359,405.94	9
Alternative Crop - Statewide	\$506,644.00	10
Arkansas Groundwater Initiative	\$3,226,895.00	10
Flood Disaster Recovery & Restoration	\$3,422,879.52	54
Working Lands for Wildlife	\$920,517.16	26
Conservation Activity Plan	\$40,075.00	12
Strike Force (HU)	\$762,927.00	11
Strike Force (HU) - Healthy Forest	\$252,808.00	15
Western AR Woodland Restoration	\$1,546,925.64	53
Building Resilient Watersheds	\$1,368,026.82	81
MRBI: Cache	\$801,533.00	16
MRBI: Cadron Creek-Brewer Lake	\$318,143.40	19
MRBI: Lower St. Francis	\$1,175,740.00	23
MRBI: Middle Cache	\$1,649,058.00	24
MRBI: Upper Lower St. Francis	\$1,431,623.00	20
NWQI: Buffalo Slough-Cache River	\$306,177.00	13
NWQI: Greasey Creek-Strawberry	\$241,955.00	8
NWQI: Departee Creek-Willow Slough	\$1,233,041.00	20
Local - Crop	\$6,475,292.88	78
Local - Pasture	\$5,830,932.77	276
Local - CAFO	\$4,772,331.10	100
Local Forest	\$1,375,641.87	82
	<b>\$45,484,470.52</b>	<b>1226</b>

### Top 10 EQIP Practices Planned in FY 2020 Contract:

Code	Practice	Items	Extent	Units
394	Firebreak	263	1,478,224.0	Ft
382	Fence	687	1,283,360.0	Ft
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	503	764,891.0	SqFt
516	Livestock Pipeline	354	442,114.2	Ft
672	Energy Efficient Building Envelope	49	364,413.0	No
430	Irrigation Water Conveyance	209	325,203.2	Ft
430	Irrigation Pipeline	209	325,203.2	Ft
449	Irrigation Water Management	749	107,725.0	Ac
325	High Tunnel System	29	83,832.0	SqFt
560	Access Road	26	66,786.0	Ft

## 2020 Arkansas Conservation Stewardship Program At-A-Glance

### FY 2020 CSP-GCI

Contracts	Obligation	Acres
69	\$355,316.82	3,947.1

### FY 2020 CSP Obligations

	Obligation	Contracts	Acres
2020-1 Renewals	\$13,119,290.85	103	107,731.20
2020-1 Classic	\$14,585,997.23	121	97,069.10
	<b>\$27,705,288.08</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>204,800.30</b>

Account	Obligation	Contracts	Acres
Agricultural Land	\$20,137,786.55	134	153,932.54
Agricultural Land BFR	\$2,773,211.00	28	17,322.26
Agricultural Land SDFR	\$999,644.30	12	4,330.26
NIPF	\$1,206,576.10	21	9,893.40
NIPF BFR	\$1,035,506.45	18	5,071.83
NIPF SDFR	\$176,602.00	4	553
MRBI	\$1,375,961.68	7	13,697.00

### Top 10 Planned CSP Enhancements in FY 2020:

Enhancement Code	Enhancement Name	Items	Extent	Unit
E595B	Reduce risk of pesticides in water and air by utilizing IPM PAMS techniques	417	416,093.0	Ac
E590A	Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses	336	240,465.9	Ac
E590B	Reduce risks of nutrient loss to surface water by utilizing precision agriculture technologies	217	225,343.0	Ac
E595A	Reduce risk of pesticides in surface water by utilizing precision pesticide application techniques	301	198,321.9	Ac
E345A	Reduced tillage to reduce soil erosion	268	165,367.9	Ac
E646A	Close structures to capture and retain rainfall for waterfowl and wading bird winter habitat	313	76,950.6	Ac
E345D	Reduced tillage to increase soil health and soil organic matter content	132	62,673.3	Ac
E345C	Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture	149	55,958.2	Ac
E511A	Harvest of crops (hay or small grains) using measures that allow desired species to flush or escape	48	54,750.1	Ac
E328D	Leave standing grain crops unharvested to benefit wildlife	297	46,223.2	Ac



## Arkansas Natural Resources Conservation Service – Easement Program

*Conservation Easements in Arkansas* – 280502.63 Acres on 743 Easements

*Easements Restored* – 263,595.72 Acres on 691 Easements

*Easement Restoration Remaining* – 16,906.91 Acres on 52 Easements

### 2020 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Wetland Reserve Easements

- Wetlands Created, Restored or Enhanced – 19 Easements – 6,648.71 Acres
- Tree Planting - Hardwoods – 5,188.98 Acres
- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 18 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition – 7,924.14 Acres

### 2020 Wetland Reserve Easements – Activities

Item	Amount
<b>Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition</b>	<b>7,924.14</b>
<b>2020 Funding to be Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration</b>	<b>\$ 27, 518,772</b>

### 2020 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Wetland Reserve Easements

- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 8 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition – 5,713 Acres
- 2020 Funding to be Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - \$21,319,240.56

### 2020 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Batture Land WREP

- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 3 Easements
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition – 988 Acres
- 2020 Funding to be Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - \$2,139,451.00

### 2020 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – Tri-State WREP

- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 6 Easement
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition – 873.74 Acres
- 2020 Funding to be Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - \$3,029,751.00

### 2020 Wetland Restoration and Reforestation Activities – TNC WREP

- Number of Easements Selected for Acquisition - 1 Easement
- Number of Easement Acres Selected for Acquisition – 349.4 Acres
- 2020 Funding to be Obligated for Acquisition and Restoration - \$1,030,330.00



# PL83-566

## Small Watershed Program



**General:** The PL83-566 Small Watershed Program provides federal technical and financial assistance from NRCS to local project sponsors such as watershed districts, irrigation districts, cities and others to address water resource problems. Funding is provided incrementally as program requirements are met including sufficient justification warranting federal investment. The program had been dormant for several years for new projects until the recent **Farm Bill provided \$175 million annually.**

**Purposes:**

Flood Prevention	Agricultural Water Management
Watershed Protection	Public Fish and Wildlife – Recreational Development
Water Quality Management	Municipal and Industrial Water Supply
	Watershed Structure Rehabilitation

Active Arkansas PL566 Watershed Projects and Funding Levels – 2018 through 2020			
Project	County	Purpose	PL566 Funding
Grand Prairie Irrigation Project	Arkansas, Prairie	Ag Water Supply	\$35,632,883
Bayou Meto Irrigation Project	Lonoke, Arkansas, Jefferson, Prairie, Pulaski	Ag Water Supply	\$28,111,375
Lake Bennett	Faulkner	Planning Phase – Dam Rehab	\$550,779
West Fork White River	Washington	Planning Phase – Bank Stabilization	\$375,000
Departee Creek	White	Construction – Channel, Dam Site 1	\$6,750,000
Muddy Fork Site 1	Washington	Design Phase – Dam Rehab	\$400,000
Ozan Creek Site 19	Hempstead	Construction – Dam Rehab	\$6,480
<b>TOTAL FUNDS RECEIVED</b>			<b>\$71,826,517</b>

National Watershed PL566 Funding Demand				
Program	Category	States	Projects	Estimated Cost
REHAB	Projects Needing Construction Funds	29	153	\$535,500,000
REHAB	High Hazard Dams Not Assessed	39	916	\$3,206,000,000
WFPO*	FY 2018 Backlog Projects	29	50	\$306,649,725
WFPO*	FY 2019 Backlog Projects	15	68	\$184,023,600
<b>NATIONAL -</b>	<b>TOTAL FUNDS DEMAND</b>			<b>\$4,232,173,325</b>

\*WFPO – Watershed Flood Prevention Operations



November 10, 2020 Arkansas State Technical Committee Meeting  
Attendee List- meeting held virtually via Cisco Webex Meetings

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency/Organization</b>
Alan York	ADEQ
Albert Jones	ALCDC
Andrew Grobmeyer	Ag Council
William Bartush	ABC Birds
Becky Roark	Beaver Watershed Alliance
Breegan Andersen	ADA-NRD
Clyde Williams	NRCS
Amanda Mathis	NRCS
Corey Farmer	NRCS
Darcia Routh	Arkansas Dept of Health AR
Darren Spinks	ADA-Forestry Division
Debbie Moreland	AACD
Dianne Schlenker	NRCS
Doug Akin	NRCS
Edgar Mersiovsky	NRCS
Eugene Young	NASS
Emily Woodall	USA Rice
Levell Foote	-
Gary Bennett	NRCS
Helen Denniston	NRCS
Jena Moore	NRCS
Jeremy Huff	NRCS
James McCarty	Beaver Water District
Josh Hankins	USA Rice
Jason Milks	TNC
Joe Fox	ADA-Forestry Division
Jonathan Baxter	USFWS
Britt Hill	NRCS
Keith Scoggins	NRCS
Luke Lewis	AGFC
Mike Daniels	UAEX
Melvin Tobin	USFWS
Mike Sullivan	NRCS
Charley Williams	UAPB
Randy Childress	NRCS
Randy Easley	Central AR Water
Ryan Diener	Quail Forever
Reginald Jackson	NRCS
Rick Monk	Forest Service
Robert Byrd	USDA APHIS
Roger Cousins	NRCS
Randall Rush	EPA
Ryan Benefield	ADA-NRD
Shanon Griffin	NRCS
Susan Rupp	Enviroscapes
Steve Brock	LMVJV

Ted Zawislak	AGFC
Tony Ramick	AR Natural Resources
Tina Gray Teague	AR State University
Willard Ryland	-
Lori Barker	NRCS
Corey Conelious	NRCS
Diana Colvard	FSA
Harvey Groves	AGFC
Bob Blanz	ADE
Walt Delp	NRCS
Karen Thompson	NRCS
Vic Ford	UAEX
Troyce Barnett	NRCS
Bill Holimon	AR Natural Heritage Commission