



**Natural Resources  
Conservation Service**

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# News Release

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## **NRCS Announces Assistance Available to Help Arkansas Landowners Restore Wetlands**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR, March 11, 2019** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for enrollment in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) to help landowners protect and restore wetlands across the state and in two special project areas.

The funding is provided through the Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE) portion of ACEP, created by the 2014 Farm Bill to protect critical water resources and wildlife habitat. Through the voluntary sale of an easement, landowners limit future development to protect these key resources.

WRE applications may be submitted at any time to NRCS; however, applications for the current funding round must be submitted by April 12, 2019. Landowners statewide should visit their local USDA field service center to apply.

Funding is also available in two special Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) projects. They are:

- Cache River Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP): The purpose of this project is to improve water quality and restore forested wetlands to reduce non-point source pollution affecting the Cache and White Rivers. The project area is in portions of Monroe, Prairie and Woodruff counties.

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- Batture Lands WREP: The purpose of this project is to achieve more sustainable land and water management in the active floodplain of the Lower Mississippi, thus providing significant ecological, economic and societal benefits. The project area includes the portions of Chicot, Crittenden, Desha, Lee, Mississippi and Phillips counties inside the Mississippi River levee.

“Wetland reserve easements provide habitat for fish and wildlife, improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reduce impacts from flooding, recharge groundwater, and provide opportunities for educational, scientific and outdoor recreational activities,” said Mike Sullivan, NRCS state conservationist in Arkansas.

Eligible landowners applying for WRE easements can choose to enroll in a permanent or 30-year easement. Tribal landowners also have the option of enrolling in 30-year contracts.

To learn about WRE and other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS conservation programs, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted), [www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov), or your [local USDA Service Center](#).