



NEWS RELEASE

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Contact: Reginald Jackson, State Public Affairs Specialist
(501) 301-3133
reginald.jackson@ar.usda.gov

Arkansas NRCS Receives \$4.264 Million in Additional Program Funds to Assist Producers

LITTLE ROCK, AR July 08, 2011 — The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Arkansas has received \$4.264 million in additional program funding. \$2,698,930 will be available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); \$1,000,064 will be available through the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI); \$250,000 will be available through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and \$315,119 will be available through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP).

“The additional EQIP allocations will allow NRCS to provide funding to private landowners with existing applications, including historically underserved participants, to address priority needs on eligible agricultural land including cropland, forest land, and pasture and hay land, said State Conservationist Mike Sullivan. “The additional MRBI allocation will provide funding for fiscal year 2010 projects to address priority needs and unfunded applications. The additional WHIP and AWEP allocation will allow producers to install conservation practices that will improve water quality, water quantity and wildlife habitat.”

EQIP, MRBI, WHIP, and AWEP are all voluntary conservation programs administered by NRCS that offer landowners the opportunity to conserve, protect, restore and enhance agricultural land and wetlands.

NRCS uses EQIP as a tool to help farmers be stewards of the nation’s resources. EQIP priorities in Arkansas are to reduce erosion; reduce pollution from animal wastes, nutrients and sediments; improve irrigation and reduce dependence on ground water for irrigation; forest improvements; improve grazing lands; and improve wildlife habitat.

The EQIP general fund categories and additional program funding are:

Irrigation (Ground Water Decline) - \$1,124,554.17; Grassland - \$749,702.78; Forestry \$149,940.56; Energy - \$299,881.11; and Animal Waste (Livestock) \$374,851.39.

Through MRBI, NRCS and its partners help producers in selected watersheds in the Mississippi

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River Basin voluntarily implement conservation practices and systems that avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff; improve wildlife habitat; and maintain agricultural productivity.

WHIP addresses wildlife habitat in riparian areas, wetlands, uplands and cave ecosystems; and elk and quail habitat. Each area will have specific conservation practices eligible for cost-sharing that benefit certain wildlife species. A wildlife habitat development plan outlines management practices as well as establishment practices such as planting and seeding. Plans include practices to manage plant succession in fields and forests and may prescribe management techniques such as burning, disking and mowing herbaceous stands.

AWEP is a voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality. As part of EQIP, AWEP operates through program contracts with producers to plan and implement conservation practices in project areas established through partnership agreements. NRCS and associated conservation partners will deliver this program collaboratively.

The additional AWEP program funding projects are:

Little Red River Irrigation Project, a partnership between NRCS and the Little Red River Irrigation District - \$167,754; and

White River Regional Irrigation Project, a partnership between NRCS and the White River Irrigation District - \$147,365.

Additional information about EQIP, MRBI, WHIP, and AWEP can be found at www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/. For more information, contact your NRCS District Conservationist at your [local USDA Service Center](#), listed in phone directories under U.S. Government.

