



Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

Agriculture: U.S. Department of Agriculture Announces Establishment of Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetland Mitigation Banking Program

Arkansas Environmental, Energy, and Water Law Blog

02/02/2016

The United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) issued a January 28th news release announcing the establishment of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (“NRCS”) wetland mitigation program (“Program”).

USDA states that the NRCS will provide \$9 million to help “states, local governments or other qualified partners develop wetland mitigation banks that restore, create, or enhance wetland ecosystems...” “

The Program is being funded by the 2014 Farm Bill and will broaden the conservation options available to farmers and ranchers so they can maintain eligibility for other USDA programs. The funds from the grant will be competitively awarded to federally recognized Indian Tribes; state and local units of government; for-profit entities; and nongovernmental organizations.

Generally, mitigation banking is a practice in which an environmental enhancement for preservation project is conducted by public agency or private entity to provide mitigation for unavoidable wetland impacts within a defined region. The Clean Water Act requires mitigation for the disturbance or limitation of certain wetland or stream habitats.

A link to the news release can be found here

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/farmbill/?cid=NRCSEPRD362686>.