

Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Approves Funding for Historically Underserved Producers (Including Arkansas)



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The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (“NRCS”) announced in a November 3rd news release that it is investing 11 million dollars in partnerships to restore wetlands for projects that bring together partners and landowners to voluntarily return wetland functions to agricultural landscapes.

The funding is for two new projects and additional funding to existing ones that are described as prioritizing high-impact projects and provide assistance to historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

The Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (“WREP”) is a voluntary program in which NRCS enters into agreements with eligible partners to leverage resources to carry out high priority wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement to improve wildlife habitat. This Farm Bill conservation program is part of the Wetland Reserve and Easement component of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.

State agencies, county and local governments, non-governmental organizations and American Indian tribes are provided the opportunity to submit proposals for priority project areas. If a proposal is accepted for funding, the partners work with the landowners who voluntarily enroll eligible land into easements to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on the properties.

An ongoing project receiving additional funding that includes a portion of Arkansas is included. The NRCS news release notes:

The Tri-State partnership, led by the Nature Conservancy, which seeks to enroll an additional 1,500 acres of wetlands as part of a multi-year effort in the project area. A minimum of 750 acres (50%) will be specifically targeted for enrollment of historically underserved landowners. This project focuses on restoration of forested wetlands within priority portions of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

The new projects being undertaken include those undertaken by the Georgia-Alabama Land Trust and the Athens Land Trust.

The additional ongoing project involves the Lower Wabash River & White River Oxbow project which is being undertaken in Indiana and Illinois.

A copy of the news release can be downloaded [here](#).