



Guide to Private Lands Programs for Conserving Fish and Wildlife Resources in Arkansas

Private landowners are vital to the conservation of fish and wildlife resources. As stewards of the majority of all lands in Arkansas, installation of conservation practices on these lands benefit not only resident species such as deer and turkeys, but can have far reaching effects by providing habitat used by migratory species that range from the arctic to South America.

Conservation actions can be taken at many different scales ranging from conversion of large acreages to specific habitat types to installation of field borders around crop fields or fencing of livestock from creeks and streams.

There are numerous federal, state, and non-governmental programs available to help private landowners manage their lands for the benefit of natural resources. These programs provide monetary incentives as well as access to trained professionals to assist in making good land management decisions that benefit conservation of natural resources.

Following is a brief introduction to private lands conservation programs administered by federal, state, and non-governmental agencies as well as contact information for obtaining assistance.

Federal Programs U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) establishes long term conservation covers including restoring forestland, wetlands, native grasses, and early successional habitat. Applies to specific row-crop lands and pasturelands only.

Continuous CRP financial assistance includes 50-90% cost-share, 10-15 year rental payments, and \$100-\$150/acre one-time-signing incentive payment for select practices.



Bottomland hardwood forest restoration, credit USFWS.

General CRP sign-up is competitive and is announced on a periodic basis. Financial assistance includes 50% cost-share and 10-15 year rental payments.

Debt for Nature Program (DFN) is available to persons with FSA farm loans secured by real estate. These individuals may qualify for cancellation of a portion of their FSA indebtedness in exchange for a conservation contract with a term of 10, 30, or 50 years. Contact: Contact your county FSA office

Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Planning and Technical Assistance helps landowners develop conservation plans and address and identify natural resource opportunities, concerns, and alternatives on private lands.

Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) is under the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands.

2015 Geographic Area Rate Caps

Area	Irrigated Croplands	Non-irrigated Croplands	Woodland/Waterbodies
MS River Valley	\$2,900	\$2,100	\$750
AR River Valley	\$2,400	\$2,000	\$750
Gulf Coastal Plain	\$2,000	\$1,800	\$750
Rest of State	80% of Appraisal		

Permanent Easements are in perpetuity NRCS pays 100% of the GARC and between 75-100% of the restoration costs.

Term Easements and 30-Year Easement Term easements are governed by state laws; 30-Year Easements expire after 30 years. Both pay 50-75% of the GARC and restoration costs.

Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) is under the ACEP. It conserves grazing lands and protects farms from development. NRCS provides up to 50% of the fair market value (FMV) of the easement and up to 75% of the easement's FMV on Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance. The duration of each agricultural land easement will be in perpetuity or the maximum duration permitted by State law.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) provides technical and financial assistance to row crop farmers and livestock producers to address resource concerns by improving maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities and taking on new ones. Includes wildlife and forestry practices. Participants earn annual land use payments. Some activities earn supplemental payments. Contracts are for five years and may be renewed.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial assistance to address water and air quality, water quantity, and wildlife habitat. Historically underserved producers are eligible for higher payment rates. At least 5% of Arkansas' EQIP funds are allocated to wildlife.

Western Arkansas Woodland Restoration Project is a three-year, private lands, woodland restoration project focusing on 29 counties bordering the Ozark-St. Francis and Ouachita National Forests. The health and resiliency of woodlands will be improved by providing financial assistance to thin forests, prescribe burn, install firebreaks, and plant native trees, shrubs, and grasses. Contact: District Conservationist/State Office

Other Federal Programs

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Program provides technical and financial assistance: 50-100% cost-share for water control structures/pipes, endangered species management, prairie restoration, moist soil development, wetland restoration, controlling livestock access to riparian areas, bioremediation, rare and declining habitat types.

Contact: Joe Krystofik at 501/513 4479
Jon Wessman at 501/676 3122
Michael Budd at 870/473 2869
Christina Hacker at 501/513 4477

State Programs

Arkansas Game & Fish Commission

Acres for Wildlife Program targets all wildlife species but focuses on species of greatest conservation concern.

It improves habitat and encourages landowners to consider wildlife needs in conjunction with good farming, livestock production, and forestry practices. The participant receives free technical assistance, along with free native grass/forb seed, herbicide, and a 50% cost-share on select wildlife practices to improve wildlife habitat.

Native Warm Season Grass/Forb component focuses on improving habitat for bobwhite quail and other grassland songbirds by providing landowners free native warm season grass/forb packets. A minimum of five contiguous acres is required to participate, and the landowner must maintain the enrolled acres for at least five years. Seed and cost-share practices are based on a competitive process. To contact the Private Lands Biologist that covers your county, go to: www.agfc.com/habitat
Contact Jason Honey at 877/470 3650.

Arkansas Forestry Commission

Forest Stewardship Program works cooperatively with AGFC and recognizes and rewards landowners that manage 10 or more forested acres, provides technical assistance, and provides landowners with multi-use forest management plans.

Tree/shrub Seedlings are grown and sold for habitat restoration and timber production.

Steven's Amendment is a free program that protects National Forests by using prescribed burning for removal of fuels on private lands. Treatment area will be within ten miles of a U.S. Forest Service land boundary. Steven's burns provide no-cost commitment from landowners in protecting National Forest land.

Prescribed Fire program provides timber and habitat improvement (service charge).

Shortleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration Program is an effort to reverse the trend of acreage loss for the important shortleaf pine ecosystem. This program offers prescribed burning services to landowners interested in shortleaf pine restoration on private land, free of charge. Contact: Contact your County Forester.

Arkansas Natural Resource Commission

Wetland and Riparian Tax Credit Program provides tax credits for costs of protecting or restoring wetlands or riparian areas including stream restoration, fencing, off-stream watering facilities, etc. Contact John Turner at 501/682 1608.

Non-Governmental Programs

Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts

Controlled Access and Livestock Fencing (CALF) is a voluntary, cost-share program that provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners to create riparian buffers and control livestock access to streams while also providing livestock with a fresh, clean source of water. Initiative includes fencing, watering facilities, heavy use area protection, stream crossings, pipelines, pumps, solar panels, and native plantings etc.

Initiative is a partnership between several agencies such as USFWS, AGFC, Conservation Districts, NRCS, and The Nature Conservancy.

Contact: Debbie Moreland at 501/682 2915
Joe Krystofik at 501/513 4479
Michael Budd at 870/473 2869

Ducks Unlimited

Conservation Easements

Conserves habitat in perpetuity for waterfowl and other wildlife in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley through donated easements that also offers landowners potential tax benefits. This is an opportunity for landowners who wish to protect the valuable natural resources on their property while retaining ownership of the property. Contact: Tim Willis at 601/956 1936.

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