NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Teri Nehls
NRCS Water Quality Specialist
• NWQI Update
• NWQI Edge of Field Monitoring Update
• WRP/WRE
NRCS Programs and Water Quality

- **EQIP**: Environmental Quality Initiative Program
- **NWQI**: National Water Quality Initiative
- **MRBI**: Mississippi River Basin Initiative
- **MRBI-WREP**: MRBI-Wetland Reserve Easement Program
- **RCPP**: Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- **ACEP-WRE**: Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetlands Reserve Easement
  - Formerly WRP: Wetlands Reserve Program
- **CSP**: Conservation Stewardship Program
• Since 2012:
  – Obligation: $5.2 million
  – 176 contracts
  – Treated Acres: 28,431
  – 2 Edge of Field Monitoring sites
NWQI Practices Installed to Address Water Quality

- Cover Crop: 3,086.3 ac
- Conservation Cover: 7.3 ac
- Conservation Crop Rotation: 1,760.5 ac
- Irrigation Pipeline: 30,286 ft
- Irrigation Water Management: 25,491.1 ac
- Nutrient Management: 3,086.3 ac
- Residue Management:
  - No Till: 770 ac
  - Mulch Till/Ridge Till/Seasonal Till: 17.818.2 ac
- Vegetative Barrier: 1,320 ft
- Streambank & Shoreline Protection: 37 ft

**working on total paid on each practice**
• 23 sites since 2012
  - 13 active
  - 8 completed
  - 2 canceled
• Treated acres: 8,791.8
• Obligated: $3.38 million
• Added benefit
  - 20% increase in irrigation efficiency observed
NWQI Pilot Program

• Started in 2017
• Year 1: HUC12 watershed-level resource assessment
• Year 2+: Funding for implementation of conservation practices
• FY2017: Buffalo Slough-Cache River Watershed
  – Located primarily in Greene county but includes the eastern part of Lawrence county
  – Still working on assessment
• Proposed FY2018: Greasy Creek-Strawberry River Watershed
  – Fulton county
Buffalo Slough-Cache River Watershed

Map produced by: USGS Center for Advanced Spatial Analysis - WRAPS, 2009. Funding for the Arkansas Rural Watershed Assessment Program and the Arkansas River Watershed Assessment Program was provided by the Arkansas State General Assembly through the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission.
ACEP-WRE and WRP

- Easements 1992-June 2017
  - Number: 655
  - Acreage: 250,842

- FY17 ACEP-WRE
  - Number: 17
  - Acreage: 11,820
  - *Obligation: $33.7 million

- FY2016 ACEP-WRE
  - Number: 18
  - Acreage: 4,830
  - *Obligated: $14,372.31

- FY2015 ACEP-WRE
  - Number: 7
  - Acreage: 6,785.6
  - *Obligated: $30,651.46  *includes acquisition and restoration
Erosion from row crop fields led to high turbidity levels in Arkansas’s St. Francis River.

ADEQ added a 55.9-mile section and a 17.1-mile section of the river to the state’s 303(d) list of impaired waters for turbidity in 2006.

Producers implemented conservation practices to reduce sediment from row crop fields.

NRCS provided technical and financial assistance from regular programs plus 5 MRBI projects.

Turbidity levels declined and ADEQ removed segments from the 2014 303(d) list for turbidity.
Arkansas Conservation Partnership:

- Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
- Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
- Arkansas Association of Conservation District Employees
- University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
- University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff
- Arkansas State University and ARS
- Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.

- More than 80 different partners help make Arkansas’s landscape initiatives successful
Helping people help the land!

Teri Nehls
teri.nehls@ar.usda.gov
501-301-3179