

# Financial Assistance for Wildlife Habitat

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Assistance is available for Arkansas private landowners who voluntarily implement management practices promoting sustainable land use and conservation. Practices which reduce soil erosion and improve water quality benefit wildlife and forest resources. Many government and non-government agencies and organizations provide assistance for practices which improve our wildlife, forest and water resources. These agencies and organizations offer:

- Technical assistance on integrated management plans for wildlife, forestry and agriculture (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Conservation programs provide technical and financial assistance for landowners who implement wildlife habitat practices.** Photo by Lynn Betts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

- Financial incentives including cash benefits, improvement cost sharing, tax incentives, conservation easements and “free” materials for improving wildlife habitat.

Conservation programs are voluntary and have been highly successful in helping private landowners restore and preserve the natural, recreational, cultural and economic values of their property. The resulting improvements in land stewardship benefit wildlife habitat and

sustainable agriculture and are essential components of state and national conservation initiatives.

Information presented in this fact sheet will cover sources for financial assistance. For technical assistance, see FSA9103, *Landowner Resources for Wildlife Habitat Assistance*.

Financial assistance offered to private landowners can be classified as tax incentives, yearly rental payments, loans, grants, easements/land retirement and cost-share agreements. Information presented here is current as of its date of publication. However, programs change periodically. Before making any plans, contact the agency or organization managing the program for details and updates.

## Tax Incentives

**Arkansas Private Wetland and Riparian Zone Creation and Restoration Incentives Act.** Any taxpayer whose project restores or enhances streamside zones and wetlands can receive a tax credit for a maximum of \$5,000 per year for 10 years (\$50,000 maximum per project). The Private Lands Restoration Committee reviews proposals. Professionals who possess expertise in restoration and implementation efforts complete the project plans. Contact the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission ([www.anrc.arkansas.gov](http://www.anrc.arkansas.gov) or 501-682-1608).

**Water Resource Conservation and Development Incentives Act.** This tax credit is for practices that convert water usage from ground to surface water, such as building a reservoir to capture rainwater. The tax credit ranges from 10 to 50 percent of the total project cost, depending on

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location outside or within a critical groundwater area. Tax credit for land-leveling projects that conserve irrigation water is 10 percent. Applications must be approved by the county Conservation District and submitted to Arkansas Natural Resources Commission before construction. An application fee of 3 percent of total approved tax credit (maximum of \$1,500) is required. Contact the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission ([www.anrc.arkansas.gov](http://www.anrc.arkansas.gov) or 501-682-1608).

## Loans

**Debt for Nature Program.** The Debt for Nature Program, also known as the Debt Cancellation Conservation Contract Program, is a unique program for eligible landowners that protects important natural resources and other sensitive areas while providing a debt management tool. This program reduces the debt on a loan from the Farm Service Agency in exchange for a conservation contract. Eligible lands include wetlands, highly erodible lands, practices improving water quality, aquifer recharge areas, buffer zones and lands along waterways containing aquatic life. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or call USDA Farm Service Agency – Arkansas (501-301-3000).

**Nonpoint Source Management Program.** This loan program is a cooperative effort of state, federal and local agencies for implementing best management practices to control nonpoint sources of pollution in priority watersheds. The majority of funding comes from EPA grants under 319(h) of the Clean Water Act supplemented with state funding. Agencies, local governments or nonprofits seeking funding for projects must address a category of nonpoint source or an impaired water or watershed resulting in implementation of a best management practice. A 43 percent non-federal cost share of total project costs is required. Contact the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission (501-682-3914 or [www.anrc.arkansas.gov](http://www.anrc.arkansas.gov)).

## Grants

**Arkansas Partners Project.** The Arkansas Partners Project is a cooperatively funded effort among Ducks Unlimited, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. Ducks Unlimited coordinates the program's delivery of free technical assistance and habitat-enhancing practices and practices to restore natural wetlands and selected agricultural fields for waterfowl during migration and in winter (Figure 2). Detailed restoration and habitat management plans are also offered free of charge by trained biologists and natural resource technicians, and engineering assistance may also be available. Restoration and management plans developed through the project will allow natural wetlands to be properly restored and managed for the long-term benefit of both the resource and landowner. For more information, contact the Arkansas Project Biologist at 501-955-9264 or <http://southern.ducks.org/ARPartners.php>.



**Figure 2. Installing water control structures and controlling water depths is key for improving waterfowl habitat.** Photo by Tim McCabe, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants.** Grants are provided to the state to participate in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects for candidate, proposed and listed species. States receiving these planning and/or implementation grants can, in turn, provide support to private landowners. The state must provide a 25 percent match of the estimated program costs. Four types of grants under this program are conservation grants, habitat conservation planning assistance grants, habitat conservation plan land acquisition grants and recovery land acquisition grants. Additional information is available at [www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/section6/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/section6/index.html). Contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regional office in Atlanta, Georgia, at 404-679-7132 or 404-679-4144.

**Partners for Fish and Wildlife.** The overall goal of Partners projects is to return a site to the ecological condition that likely existed prior to loss or degradation. This includes conserving or restoring native vegetation, hydrology and soils associated with imperiled ecosystems such as longleaf pine, bottomland hardwoods, native prairies, marshes, rivers and streams or other habitats for a rare, declining or protected species. Priority is given to habitat improvements supporting federal trust species, including migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, interjurisdictional fish and state-listed species of concern. If other considerations are generally equal, then priority is directed to those projects that link private lands to important federal lands (such as refuges), have cooperative agreements of longer duration, multiple partners, cost sharing and the greatest cost effectiveness. Locally based field biologists work one-on-one with private landowners and other partners to plan, implement and monitor their projects. Partners program field staff help landowners find other sources of funding and help them through the permitting process as necessary. This level of personal attention and follow-through is a significant strength of the program that has led to national recognition and wide support. Information is available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (501-513-4473 or [www.fws.gov/partners](http://www.fws.gov/partners)).

**Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Program (SARE).** This program offers a number of competitive grants. The Producer Grant program has six program goals that address (1) limited resource farmers, (2) organic farming systems, (3) environmentally sound practices/agricultural ecosystems, (4) marketing/economic development, (5) policy, program evaluation and quality of life and (6) research on components of sustainable systems. Wildlife projects typically are not funded unless there is a strong linkage with production agriculture. Projects are funded to two years for a maximum of \$10,000 for individual producer or \$15,000 for producer organization. Application information for the southern region is available at 770-412-4787 or [www.griffin.peachnet.edu/sare/](http://www.griffin.peachnet.edu/sare/).

**www.grants.gov.** The best resource for seeking announcements of federal government grants for individuals, landowner associations and local communities is through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). This web site compiles grant opportunities from multiple federal agencies. Users sign up for e-mail announcements when “requests for proposals” are issued for a grant or a granting area of particular interest. Visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) for more information.

## Easement/Land Retirement

**Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission – Easements and Land Acquisition.** The Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission acquires fee or easement in land that has rare species, exemplary natural communities or contributes significantly to functioning of ecosystems – both wetlands and uplands. The Commission purchases easements on wetlands particularly in the Cache River and Bayou DeView watersheds. The program can be extended to other areas. The Wetland Easement Program is directed at protecting broader wetland values and integrity of wetland systems (Figure 3). To do so, limitations on use are minimized – the basic requirement is to maintain wetland vegetation and hydrology. There are few demands placed on the landowner; therefore, the cost of the easement is relatively low.



**Figure 3. Wetlands play an important role in maintenance of water reserves and quality, groundwater recharge and nutrient cycling, and support food chains for fish, amphibians, invertebrates and waterfowl.** Photo by Robert G. Price, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Acquisition is from willing sellers only. Areas to be acquired must have been identified as high priority through agency inventory. The wetland does NOT need to have rare species or exemplary natural communities to be considered. Contact the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (501-324-9150 or [www.naturalheritage.com](http://www.naturalheritage.com)).

**Ducks Unlimited – Conservation Easement Program.** Ducks Unlimited’s Conservation Easement Program can meet the needs of interested owners of hunting clubs, farms, ranches, timberlands and other natural areas who wish to protect valuable natural wetlands while retaining ownership of the property. A perpetual conservation easement allows a landowner to protect key natural habitats while continuing to use the area for economic gain or recreation. This arrangement offers donors a potential reduction of current and estate taxes in addition to permanently protecting wetlands and other natural features on the property. The allowance issued by the Internal Revenue Service is a deduction of the value of the easement up to 30 percent of the donor’s adjusted gross income as a donation which may be spread over five years. However, the primary motivation for entering this type of agreement should be protection of habitat rather than the financial incentives, as the easement will limit future development value of the property. Also, check with the IRS and/or a tax accountant to verify that the allowance hasn’t changed since publication of this information. Contact Ducks Unlimited at 901-758-3825, <http://www.ducks.org> or the Arkansas field office at 501-955-9264.

**The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program.** This program provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement. To qualify farmland must be part of a pending offer from a state, tribe or local farmland protection program, be privately owned, have a conservation plan for highly erodible land, be large enough to sustain agricultural production, be accessible to markets for what the land produces, have adequate infrastructure and agricultural support services and have surrounding parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production. Depending on funding availability, proposals must be submitted by the eligible entities to the Natural Resources Conservation Service state office during the application window. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or locate the district conservationist in your area by contacting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Arkansas (501-301-3122 or [www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/)).

**Healthy Forests Reserve Program.** Healthy Forests Reserve Program is a voluntary USDA program established for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species (Figure 4), improve biodiversity and enhance carbon sequestration. The program offers enrollment options for (1) a 30-year easement for which the landowner may

receive 75 percent of the market value of the enrolled land plus 75 percent of the cost of the approved conservation practices or (2) an easement of not more than 99 years for which landowners may receive 75 percent of the market value of the enrolled land plus the cost of the approved conservation practices. “Safe Harbor” provisions of the Endangered Species Act are available to landowners enrolled in this program. “Safe Harbor” promotes voluntary management for listed species on non-federal property while giving assurances to participating landowners that no additional future regulatory restrictions will be imposed. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>), or locate the district conservationist in your area by contacting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Arkansas (501-301-3122 or [www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/)).



**Figure 4. The Healthy Forests Reserve Program helps landowners protect forest ecosystems for endangered species such as the red-cockaded woodpecker.** Photo by John and Karen Hollingsworth, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**The Mississippi River Trust – Conservation Easements.** The Mississippi River Trust is a charitable 501(c)(3) organization which works only with private, willing landowners to find ways to preserve the Mississippi River watershed’s rich history, prairies, red clay hills, bottomlands and bayous, coastal savannas, longleaf pine forests and scenic rivers and streams. Their primary tool for land conservation is a conservation easement as an alternative to selling the land for development. A conservation easement allows a willing landowner to retain ownership of the land, protect important environmental or historical assets of the land from future development and obtain certain tax advantages. Contact Mississippi River Trust (662-686-3508 or [www.mississippirivertrust.org](http://www.mississippirivertrust.org)).

**The Nature Conservancy Conservation Arrangements.** The Nature Conservancy offers a variety of conservation arrangements including management agreements, acquisition (including partial interests and fee title), land exchanges, conservation easements, retained life estates (donate home or farm for tax benefits while retaining lifetime use), bargain sales, donations, technical assistance for identification and

management of natural resources through information transfers and site visits and restoration and enhancement of bottomland hardwoods. The Nature Conservancy is a nonprofit, international, science-based membership organization whose mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. They approach habitat conservation in a nonconfrontational way through creative and flexible conservation arrangements. Their menu of options includes management agreements, partial interests and fee title acquisitions, land exchanges, conservation easements, retained life estates, bargain sales and donations. Contact The Nature Conservancy of Arkansas at 501-663-6699, e-mail [arkansas@tnc.org](mailto:arkansas@tnc.org) or [www.tnc.org](http://www.tnc.org).

### Cost-Share and Rental Payment Programs

Cost-share assistance may be available for some habitat practices through government programs, the largest of which is the conservation provisions in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill). The 2008 provisions build on the conservation gains made by farmers through the 1985, 1996 and 2002 Farm Bills. They simplify existing programs and create new programs to address high-priority environmental goals.

Most of these programs are designed for conservation of row crop, pastureland and forestland. (Table 1). Land that was once farmed may be eligible for enrollment in Farm Bill programs. Applications

Table 1. Examples of selected sustainable land management practices and cost-share programs providing financial incentives.	
Land Management Practice	Farm Bill Program
<b>Row Crop Production</b> Field borders Contour buffer strips Conservation tillage Efficient water management	Conservation Reserve Program Environmental Quality Incentives Program Conservation Stewardship Program Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
<b>Livestock Production</b> Forested riparian buffers Livestock exclusion Streambank protection Watering facilities	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Environmental Quality Incentives Program Conservation Stewardship Program Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
<b>Streambank Restoration</b> Restore grassland buffers Stream habitat improvement Establish trees and shrubs	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Environmental Quality Incentives Program Conservation Stewardship Program Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
<b>Wetlands</b> Restore wetlands	Arkansas Partners Project Arkansas Wetlands SAFE CRP Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Wetlands Reserve Program Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
<b>Forest Management</b> Tree planting Forest stand improvement Thinning Control invasive plants Prescribed burning	Arkansas Trees SAFE CRP Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Environmental Quality Incentives Program Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
<b>Grassland Management</b> Native grass establishment Prescribed burning	Arkansas Grass SAFE CRP Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Environmental Quality Incentives Program Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

for land that is currently farmed can add points for implementing wildlife habitat practices and increase the plan's competitiveness. If your land doesn't qualify as farmland, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program is open to landowners regardless of the land's farming history. For more details about these programs, contact or visit a local USDA Service Center ([www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov)) or the agency listed under each program.

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).** The Conservation Reserve Program encourages farmers to enroll highly erodible cropland and/or land contributing to a serious water quality problem into the reserve for 10 to 15 years. The Conservation Reserve Program assists private landowners in reducing soil erosion, protecting the nation's ability to produce food and fiber, reducing sedimentation in streams and lakes, improving water quality, establishing wildlife habitat and enhancing forest and wetland resources. It encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as introduced or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filter strips, field borders or riparian buffers (Figure 5). Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multiyear contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or call USDA Farm Service Agency – Arkansas (501-301-3000).



**Figure 5.** Field borders with marginally productive soils can be planted in native grasses to reduce soil erosion, buffer pesticides leaching into streams and provide wildlife habitat. *Photo by Jeff Vanuga, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.*

**Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign-Up (CRP Continuous Sign-Up).** Unlike the regular Conservation Reserve Program with sign-up deadlines, producers can apply for continuous CRP at any time. Environmentally desirable land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled.

Conservation practices include the following:

- CP9 – Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife
- CP21 – Filter Strips
- CP22 – Riparian Forest Buffers

- CP23 – Wetland Restoration
- CP23A – Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain
- CP29 – Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffers
- CP31 – Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands
- CP33 – Wildlife Habitat for Upland Birds
- CP38E – Native Grass

Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and are not subject to competitive bidding. Continuous sign-up contracts are for 10 to 15 years. Farm Service Agency provides participants with 10- to 15-year rental payments, 50 percent cost-share assistance, 40 percent Practice Incentive Payment (PIP), \$100 per acre Signing Incentive Payment (SIP), 20 percent additional rental payment incentive and other financial incentives based on eligibility. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or call USDA Farm Service Agency – Arkansas (501-301-3000).

**The Arkansas “State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement” (SAFE) programs.** In 2008 Arkansas received USDA approval for three SAFE programs under the continuous Conservation Reserve Program which target high-priority wildlife species.

- **Arkansas Wetlands SAFE.** The goal of the Arkansas Wetlands SAFE project is to enroll 4,700 acres in CRP to benefit targeted species including the bald eagle, American black bear (Figure 6), American black duck and the Mississippi kite. Many species on Arkansas’ list of greatest conservation concern ([www.WildlifeArkansas.com](http://www.WildlifeArkansas.com)) will benefit from habitat restoration including the ivory-billed woodpecker. Examples of habitats to be restored include shallow water (emergent) and wetland forested habitat. A host of species use these habitat types such as migratory waterfowl, neotropical migrant songbirds, resident wood ducks, shorebirds, wading birds and many species of amphibians and reptiles.



**Figure 6.** The Arkansas continuous CRP cost-share program provides landowners with financial support for improving wetlands and forests for the American black bear and other wildlife. *Photo by Hal Korber, Pennsylvania Game Commission.*

- **Arkansas Trees SAFE.** The goal of the Arkansas Trees SAFE project is to enroll 3,000 acres in CRP to restore trees, primarily hardwoods, to create habitat that will benefit the American woodcock, swallow-tailed kite, bald eagle and American black bear. In addition, many species on Arkansas' list of greatest conservation concern ([www.WildlifeArkansas.com](http://www.WildlifeArkansas.com)) will benefit from practices implemented under SAFE. This project will also provide recreational opportunities such as hunting, hiking, wildlife photography, bird watching and nature viewing.
- **Arkansas Grass SAFE.** The goal of the Arkansas Grass SAFE project is to enroll 4,000 acres in CRP to restore early successional habitat that will benefit bobwhites. Another 53 species of concern ([www.WildlifeArkansas.com](http://www.WildlifeArkansas.com)) will potentially benefit. Many songbird species, such as grasshopper sparrows, painted buntings, dickcissels and Henslow's sparrows, require grassland habitat. This project will also provide recreational opportunities such as hunting, hiking, wildlife photography, bird watching and nature viewing.

Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or call USDA Farm Service Agency – Arkansas (501-301-3000).

**Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).** The Conservation Stewardship Program supports ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural lands by providing payments to producers who maintain and enhance the condition of natural resources plus address at least one additional priority resource by the end of the contract. In addition to private agricultural lands, up to 10 percent of the enrolled acreage may be in nonindustrial private forestland. CSP payments will compensate producers for (1) installing additional conservation practices, (2) improving, maintaining and/or managing conservation activities already in place, (3) adopting resource-conserving crop rotations, (4) engaging in on-farm conservation and demonstration activities and (5) pilot testing new technologies or innovative conservation practices. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or locate the district conservationist in your area by contacting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Arkansas (501-301-3122 or [www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/)).

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).** This Farm Bill program provides educational, technical and financial assistance to farmers for implementing conservation practices on private lands. The 2008 Farm Bill clarifies EQIP purposes to include forest management, wetlands and wildlife as well as practices related to organic production and fuels management. Individuals eligible to participate in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) must be engaged in livestock (Figure 7), crop or timber production. Conservation plans must address conservation needs for 1 to 10 years. The USDA will pay 50 percent of the cost of eligible practices in most cases and up to 75 percent for selected high-priority practices. Limited-resource producers may receive up to 90 percent cost share. Forestry

practices for EQIP in Arkansas are cost-shared to address forest protection, health and water quality concerns. These include firebreak construction, prescribed burning, tree planting, forest stand improvement, access road components and others. Cost-share practices should not begin until after the contract is approved. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or locate the district conservationist in your area by contacting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Arkansas (501-301-3122 or [www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/)).



**Figure 7. Technical assistance and cost-share agreements are available for reducing livestock impacts to water resources. Adding grasses, shrubs and trees to stream-banks will stabilize the soil and provide wildlife habitat.**  
Photo by Jeff Vanuga, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**Healthy Forests Reserve Program.** This is a voluntary program established for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, improve biodiversity and enhance carbon sequestration. The program offers a 10-year cost-share agreement for which the landowner may receive 50 percent of the cost of the approved conservation practices. To be eligible for enrollment, privately owned land must restore, enhance or measurably increase the likelihood of recovery of a threatened or endangered species, improve biological diversity or increase carbon sequestration. “Safe Harbor” provisions of the Endangered Species Act are available to landowners enrolled in HFRP. “Safe Harbor” promotes voluntary management for listed species on non-federal property while giving assurances to participating landowners that no additional future regulatory restrictions will be imposed. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or locate the district conservationist in your area by contacting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Arkansas (501-301-3122 or [www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/)).

**Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).** This program offers payments up to \$1,000 per acre for restoring and protecting croppped wetlands and adjacent forestland deemed necessary to protect the restored wetlands. Under the Wetlands Reserve Program, landowners have three program participation options: short-term 10-year restoration cost-share agreements, mid-term 30-year conservation easements and permanent

easements. Eligible for inclusion in the Wetlands Reserve Program are wetlands farmed under natural conditions, farmed wetlands, farmed wetlands pasture and wetlands converted to cropland prior to December 23, 1985. Because of the multiplicity of these values provided by connecting riparian strips, riparian offers are generally given a top priority for acceptance. Landowners participating in WRP continue to control access, have use of non-developed recreational activities such as hunting and fishing and maintain the right to lease the recreational uses of their land for financial gain, provided this use does not otherwise impact or conflict with other uses prohibited by the warranty easement deed. At any time during the contract period, landowners may request NRCS approval of other prohibited uses that may be compatible with wetland and wildlife conservation objectives of the program. WRP funds and subsequent lease revenue provide financial relief to landowners and reduce future disaster assistance needs. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or locate the district conservationist in your area by contacting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Arkansas (501-301-3122 or [www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/)).

#### **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).**

WHIP is a voluntary program for landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands. The purpose is to (1) promote the restoration of declining or important native wildlife habitats; (2) protect, restore, develop or enhance wildlife habitat of at-risk species; (3) reduce the impacts of invasive

species on wildlife habitats and (4) protect, restore, develop or enhance declining or important aquatic wildlife species' habitats (Figure 8). In Arkansas, some WHIP funding is restricted to a specific geographic area in the state, for example, to establish habitat for bobwhites or elk. Visit your local USDA Service Center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>) or locate the district conservationist in your area by contacting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Arkansas (501-301-3122 or [www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/)).



**Figure 8. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program provides landowners with cost-share support for streambank restoration.** Photo by Gary Wilson, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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**Table 2. Who to contact for assistance about selected wildlife management practices.**

Management Practice	Type of Assistance	Who To Contact
Establish native plants	Technical assistance	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Natural Resources Conservation Service University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
	Financial assistance	Farm Service Agency Natural Resources Conservation Service
	Rental of native plant seeders	Natural Resources Conservation Service (in some districts) Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (in some regions)
	Identify vendors selling <b>native</b> plants	Arkansas Native Plant Society Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission
Food plots	Technical assistance	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
	Free small seed packets – Acres for Wildlife program	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
Forest stand management	Technical assistance	Arkansas Forestry Association Arkansas Forestry Commission Arkansas Forest Resource Center University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
	Financial assistance	Farm Service Agency Natural Resources Conservation Service
	Selling timber	Forestry Consultant
Herbicide application	Technical assistance	University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Arkansas State Plant Board
	Pesticide Applicators License	University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
	Free herbicide for fescue conversion	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Pond construction and repair	Technical assistance	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Pond management	Technical assistance	University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Aquaculture and Fisheries Center of Excellence
Prescribed burning	Technical assistance	Arkansas Forestry Commission Arkansas Game and Fish Commission University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
	Financial assistance	Farm Service Agency Natural Resources Conservation Service
	Professionals for hire	Arkansas Forestry Commission The Nature Conservancy (occasionally private landowners) Forestry Consultant
Reduce streambank erosion	Technical assistance	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
	Financial assistance	Farm Service Agency Natural Resources Conservation Service
Restore wetlands	Technical assistance	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Natural Resources Conservation Service U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ducks Unlimited
	Financial assistance	Farm Service Agency Natural Resources Conservation Service U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
Wildlife-friendly farming practices	Technical assistance	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Natural Resources Conservation Service
	Financial assistance	Farm Service Agency Natural Resources Conservation Service

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