



AARC&D Newsletter

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Arkansas Association of
Resource, Conservation
& Development Councils

Rural Fire Protection Program Loses Funding



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Since 1996 the Arkansas Natural Resource Commission has funded Arkansas RC&D's Rural Fire Protection Program (RFPP). Since the inception of this program over \$6.2 million dollars in grant funds have been awarded to rural fire departments for water supply and communication items. AARC&D is pleased with the large number of fire department improvements and lowered ISO ratings that have been made through this valuable program.

AARC&D recognizes that there are many needs in the state that must be considered by state leaders when developing budgets.

Due to the national and state economies, the RFPP program was not funded for this fiscal year. RFPP Manager, Charles Gangluff stated "We are obviously disappointed, but we are hopeful that the program will be restored for the

2011 grant cycle." Fire departments may wish to contact their local legislators and let them know how the Rural Fire Protection Program has assisted their fire departments over the last 14 years.

Special points of interest:

- * RFPP loses grant 2010 grant cycle funding but will still continue some assistance to rural fire departments
- * Forty-nine REAP applications approved
- * Program brings awareness to Agricultural Energy Risks

RFPP Will Continue Assistance Programs

In spite of the loss of funding for the year 2010 grant cycle the Rural Fire Protection Program will continue to offer their services to rural fire departments. According to the RFPP Manager, Charles Gangluff the following programs will still be available:

- Plans of Improvement tailored to individual fire department's needs will continue to be developed as requested
- Educational Workshops such as ISO and Chainsaw Safety will continue to be offered
- Continued assistance with firefighter retention/recruitment
- The FD Billing Service will continue

For further information regarding any of our RFPP services contact Charles Gangluff at 501-354-7900

Two RC&D'S Participate in the Mississippi River Basin Initiative

The East Arkansas RC&D and the Arkansas River Valley RC&D partnered with local watershed groups in submitting proposals to NRCS for funding under the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative. The purpose of MRBI is to improve the health of the Mississippi Basin including water quality and wildlife habitat. Through this new Initiative, NRCS and its partners will help producers in selected watersheds in the Mississippi River Basin voluntarily implement conservation practices that avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff; improve wildlife habitat; and maintain agricultural productivity.

Bob Young, RC&D Coordinator in East Arkansas has been providing technical guidance to the L'Anguille River Watershed Coalition (LRWC) since 2006. Martha Manley, secretary for the coalition and Young met with all the LRWC members and soon a proposal was developed to address needs within 8 sub watersheds in Cross and Poinsett Counties that covers about 150,000 acres. Through other work that the RC&D and the LRWC have been working on, they realized that much of the problems within the watershed was coming from excessive runoff on the highly



Senator Blanch Lincoln; Randy Young, Executive Director, ARNC and Mike Sullivan, State Conservationist, NRCS discuss MRBI at news conference.

erodible areas on Crowley's Ridge. Sediment loading in the River is caused by so much sediment traveling from the streams that come through the ridge. Pastures are overgrazed and abandoned gravel mines contribute a significant amount of sediment into the river each year. At the same time the cropland areas can help significantly by trapping the sediment before it reaches the river. Through the MRBI the partners plan on applying core and supporting practices through land users within the designated project area. Other collaborating partners are the University of Arkansas that will establish water quality monitoring sites through a Discovery Farms program, the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission helping designate wildlife practices and Ar-

The Arkansas River Valley RC&D Coordinator, Alice Weeks assisted the Point Remove Wetlands Reclamation and Irrigation District in getting \$1,025,000 in assistance

kansas State University will establish a Wildlife Monitoring Program. The other collaborating partners that will also provide in-kind assistance will be the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Poinsett and Cross County Conservation Districts. A total of \$4,182,105.00 was awarded through the Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program and The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and will be available over the next 5 years to address the needs of the project area.

The Arkansas River Valley RC&D Coordinator, Alice Weeks assisted the Point Remove Wetlands Reclamation and Irrigation District in getting over



Group conducts survey to determine amount of sediment coming down Copper Creek in the L'Anguille Watershed

6 million dollars in funds that will be available over a 5 year period. The project area lies within portions of Conway, Pope and Yell counties. The project partners will assist agricultural producers in 15 sub-watersheds of the Lake Conway-Point Remove basin to adopt a systems approach with a variety of core and supporting conservation practices to address natural resource concern of water quality pertaining to nutrient runoff and water management. They will focus on avoiding excess application of nutrients and water on fields; controlling the amount of nutrient and water runoff from fields into the watershed; and trapping nutrients before they leave the field. The project will utilize EQIP funding to assist with practice installation. The partners estimate producer participation at 75 percent.

For more information about MRBI go to www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/mrbi/mrbi_overview.html

**Resource Conservation
& Development**

"Making Things Happen"

Ozark Foothills RC&D assists with REAP Applications

Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grants were awarded to four crop and grain farms and three poultry farms in the Ozark Foothills Resource Conservation and Development council area. The grants totaled \$101,277.00 with total project cost of \$595,823.00. These grants will help farmers be more efficient and competitive, while creating green jobs in manufacturing and installation of renewable energy technologies. The

REAP program will also help reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil.

The Council assisted by collecting data from the applicants agricultural operations for the required energy audit. The energy audit is a valuable tool used to determine what equipment and /or practice is most cost effective. The Council also provided assistance with preparation of the REAP application.

Forty-four applications were funded statewide for a total \$999,604.00 in grant dollars and one loan guarantee of \$44,813.00. The REAP program is administered by USDA Rural Development and offers a 25% grant with the option of applying for a loan guarantee of 50% of the total project cost or a 75% loan guarantee without the grant.

For more information please call your local RC&D office. To find your local RC&D area office go to www.aarcd.org

Identifying Energy Risks in Agriculture

Sustaining the Agriculture enterprise in Arkansas requires careful evaluation of all production factors to identify potential options to control economic outputs, according to Otto Cowling, President, Southwest Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council. The sustaining of all essential facets of agriculture production is essential to the economy of Arkansas, Cowling added. Of the many variables impacting the sustainability of agriculture production, the control of energy output is one variable in which agriculture producers can obtain assistance. That is why the Resource Conservation and Development Councils in Arkansas partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Develop-

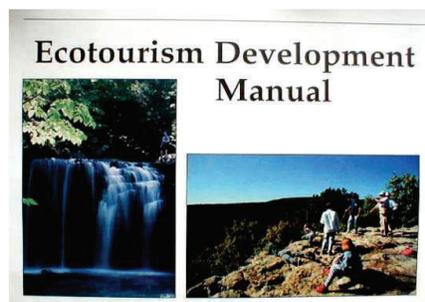
ment (RD) to help increase agriculture producers awareness and participation in United States Department of Agriculture, energy conservation programs.

As a part of the USDA 2008 Farm Bill, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) administered by NRCS, provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Assistance to producers is authorized for installing and maintaining conservation practices that sustain food and fiber production while enhancing soil, water, and related natural resources including grazing land, forestland, wetland, wildlife, and conserving energy. By

developing an Agriculture Energy Management Plan, agriculture producers can identify potentials for reducing energy outputs in agriculture production operations. Additionally, Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program provides financial assistance to rural small businesses and agricultural producers to purchase renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements.

Farmers needing more information on how to obtain assistance to make energy efficiency or renewable energy improvements should contact the local resource conservation and development office in their area. To find your local RC&D area office go to www.aarcd.org

NW AR RC&D has Ecotourism Development Manuals for purchase to anyone who may be interested. The purpose of this manual is to serve as a tool, or guidebook, to illustrate the foundational steps for Ecotourism development at a community level.



For more information go to:
www.nwarrcd.org/Ecotourism

Or call:
870-741-8600 ext. 118

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**Resource Conservation
& Development**

"Making Things Happen"

We're on the Web!

www.aarcd.org

RC&D is a local grass roots organization whose leadership comes from its sponsors, Conservation Districts and Local units of Government. The decision making body, called a Council, determines the social, economic, and environmental problems and issues relevant to the area. The Council then develops and implements a plan with local citizens in leadership. The RC&D concept is that local communities, all levels of government, and grassroots organizations, working together, can develop and implement solutions to widespread and local problems and develop opportunities that will help sustain rural communities, local economies, and natural resources. There are seven RC&D areas in Arkansas involved in AARC&D.

NW AR RC&D says, "Grill Green" and "Taste the Difference"

BBQ 07E Little Tex Elite



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