

# **POTEAU RIVER SUB WATERSHED PROJECT**



## **Poteau River Conservation District**

**October 1, 2017- October 1, 2020**

### **Final Report**

**POTEAU RIVER SUB WATERSHED PROJECT**

**The Poteau River Watershed and its tributaries (HUC 11110105) in Scott County are located primarily on a hydrologic soils based group that are estimated by run off potential.**

**The Poteau River Watershed was designated as a Nutrient Surplus Area in 2003 and 3 new laws were passed by the Arkansas 84th General Assembly.**

- ACT 1059 – Arkansas Soil Nutrient Management Planner and Applicator Certification Act
- ACT 1060 – Arkansas Poultry Registration Act
- ACT 1061 – Arkansas Soil Nutrient Application and Poultry Litter Utilization Acts

It was determined that there was a major cause of concern for impairment within the Poteau River Watershed because of excessive turbidity from silt and suspended solids loading, possible over application of nutrients (poultry litter and commercial) and having unrestricted access to the Poteau River and tributaries which then drain to the east into Oklahoma before ending up in the Arkansas River. Also proving a concern for the Poteau River Watershed farmers, ranchers and landowners is the unrestricted access of cattle into the Poteau River and its tributaries used as a primary source of water source in the impaired watershed.

The cost of voluntary BMP's projects have been one of the biggest obstacles that local farmers and ranchers face when asked to fence of rivers, creeks, ponds and other water sources to exclude livestock from these, but by doing so it provides a better water source for all, preserving the watersheds water quality for generations to come.

By providing the 319 project cost fund to area farmers it allowed approximately 14,594 feet of exclusion and cross fencing combined, a gravity fed watering system consisting of 4 - 500 gallon tire tanks, 1,096 feet of pipeline and 1,600 square feet of heavy use area. In other practices farmers completed 850 acres of brush management improving forage and nutrient use in grazed and hay land. On our forage and biomass planting project we assisted landowners with 79 acres of pasture establishment.

**The Poteau River Conservation District worked on several tasks in the watershed area of which water quality was the direct objective. There was cooperative assistance from the groups listed below.**

- Scott County Landowners – primarily responsible for implementing BMP's and promotion of project.
- Poteau River Conservation District – assisted landowners in the design and implementation of BMP's associated with each project, District employees worked to develop Conservation Plans while inspecting and certifying BMP's that were installed and completed. The District also promoted the project by landowner assisted field days showcasing projects that were completed.
- Arkansas Department of Agriculture / Natural Resource Division – assisted by general project oversight and management on the state level, providing quality assurance and fiscal reviews.
- Environmental Protection Agency – Primary funding source for the entire project.
- USDA/Natural Resource Conservation Services – Grazing Land Specialist assisted the district and landowners with field day presentations

## **Planned Funding Breakdown**

**Federal - \$ 131,670.00**

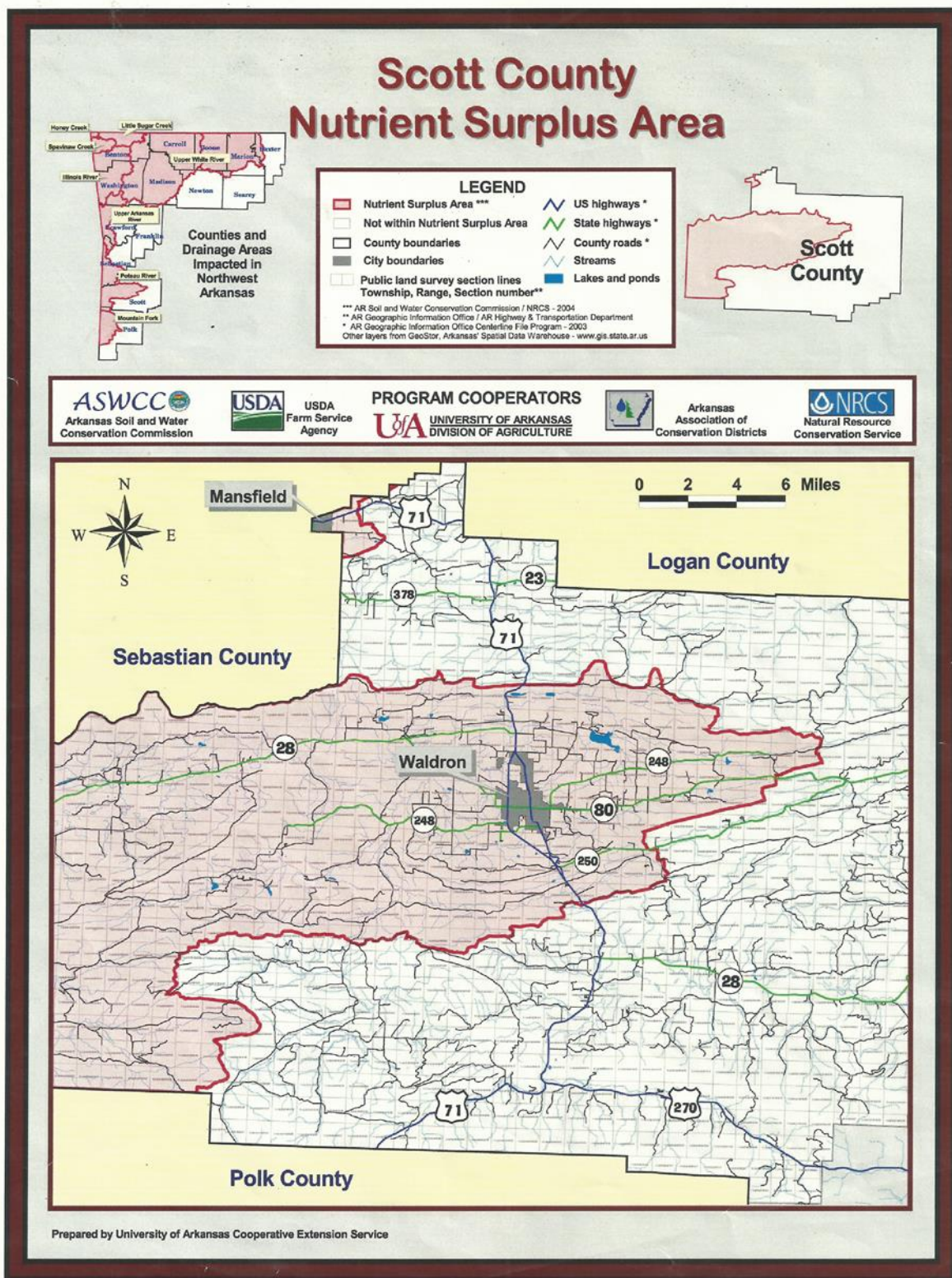
**Non Federal - \$124,558.00**

**Total - \$256,225.00**

<b>BMP</b>	<b>USDA/NRCS</b>
<b>Best Management Practices</b>	<b>Practice Code</b>
Brush Management	314
Fence	382
Forage and Biomass Planting	512
Heavy Use Area Protection	561
Pipeline	516
Pond	378
Watering Facility	614



# Poteau River Sub Watershed Project



In 2017 the employees of the Poteau River Conservation District proposed they take on a 319 cost share program to assist local area farmers and ranchers located inside of the Nutrient Surplus Area of the Poteau River Conservation District. At the time we were assisted by the Arkansas Resource Division Land Resource Specialist for our District. With the guidance and assistance from the Poteau River Conservation District Board and the Natural Resource Division of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, the district was able to enter into the 319 Cost Share Project.

### **ITEMS IN ROJECT FOR FUNDING:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>#Goaled</b>	<b># Accomplished</b>	<b>% Accomplished</b>
<b>Conservation Plans</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Assistance on Farm Plans (Return Visits)</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>81%</b>

### **BMP's Applied In Project Area:**

<b>Brush Management - (314)</b>	<b>1439 Acres</b>	<b>23 Farms</b>
<b>Fence - (382)</b>	<b>12565 Ft.</b>	<b>7 Farms</b>
<b>Forage and Biomass Planting - (512)</b>	<b>79 Acres</b>	<b>3 Farms</b>
<b>Heavy Use Area Protection - (561)</b>	<b>1600 Sq. Ft.</b>	<b>1 Farm</b>
<b>Pipeline - (516)</b>	<b>1096 Ft.</b>	<b>1 Farm</b>
<b>Pond - (378)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Watering Facility - (614)</b>	<b>2000 Gallon</b>	<b>1 Farm</b>

Our first contract was approved and started 6 months after the beginning project date was missed and the Districts last contract was 4 months before the projected deadline of the project. The District were still able to complete a total of 36 contracts that were written and approved for the project.



## Pasture Establishment



**Top picture is before planted**  
**Bottom picture is after being planted**



## **Tire Tank / Pipeline/ Heavy Use Areas/ Fence**



**Dain Laird with his tire tanks and fencing**

**The Poteau River Conservation District had a very successful Educational Outreach meeting with the University of Arkansas. Meeting was held at Dan Lairds Farm on East Hwy 248 May 6<sup>th</sup> 2019.**

**Topics Included: Tire water tank installation & operation, Rainwater runoff demonstration, Stockpiled forage & rotational grazing, & Pasture weed control**



**Picture above is gathering around the Tire tank and Heavy use area. Dan Laird explains the steps and process that he took by using 319 projects.**



**Picture below is Jeremy Huff, NRCS Arkansas State Grazing Lands Specialist. Jeremy is demonstrating the Rainwater runoff.**



**Conclusion:**

We believe that one of best accomplishments was that over the course of the project, over 200 farms were either funded for conservation plans or given technical assistance towards conservation practices. Before our project, the operators of these farms just continual grazed large pastures, over grazed pastures, and over fertilized pastures. Cross fence and exclusion fence were placed on several farms and two sections of Strawberry River.

We believe a great accomplishment was being able to provide much needed financial assistance to operators without having to wait on funding. Many operators came in to the office to apply for EQIP but were discouraged when they were told it would be a year before they knew if they were funded or not, which gave producers almost immediate assistance. With our program, we can provide technical advice promptly; approve applications quickly; and the producer can begin the project soon after.

The last outcome is that through discussions, articles, and field visits producers are beginning to see the advantages and the ease involved in creating a rotational grazing system, the importance of brush management, cross fences, and watering facilities.

We used all cost share funds allocated for landowners/operators. We even had a small waiting list of operators, but the funding was exhausted. Much needed education, assistance, and awareness was provided to those residing in the and around the sub watersheds of the Strawberry River Watershed.