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Arkansas Department of Agriculture Awards More than \$300,000 for Conservation Projects

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture (Department) is partnering with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide \$309,172 in grants to 18 conservation districts across the state. The grants must be used to carry out natural resource enhancement, restoration, or protection activities. A list of the conservation districts receiving grant awards may be found [here](#).

“We appreciate the opportunity to share grant funding from the USDA NRCS with conservation districts across the state for activities that will further conserve and protect Arkansas’s natural resources,” said Wes Ward, Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture. “Even during this challenging time, our partnership with USDA and conservation districts remains strong and active, providing needed resources to Arkansans,” said Ward.

The USDA NRCS awarded the Arkansas Department of Agriculture \$866,044.66 for grants to conservation districts through the federal Grant to District program. In addition to the \$309,172 in competitive grants, the award from NRCS included \$290,000 in continued funding for two water quality technicians in Lawrence County. An application process for the remaining grant funds will be announced this summer for grants to be awarded in the fall.

“Our agency was built on the foundation of partnering with local conservation districts to address conservation priorities,” said Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist Mike Sullivan. “By partnering with the Department’s Natural Resources Division, NRCS can leverage federal resources with those of the state to maximize impact. The proposals funded through this round of grants will provide direct conservation technical assistance to producers, establish demonstration projects highlighting irrigation water management, rotational grazing, and urban gardening. They will also support pollinator habitat practices, conservation field days, and conservation education in schools,” he added.

Conservation districts are political subdivisions of the State of Arkansas created by popular vote of resident landowners as authorized by the Arkansas General Assembly in 1937 for the purpose of conserving land and water resources. There are 75 conservation districts in Arkansas, each governed by a board of five directors who serve without pay. Two directors are appointed by the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission and three are elected by resident landowners.

“The grant funding awarded to the Sebastian County Conservation District will greatly enhance the development and acceleration of conservation efforts in the western border counties of Sebastian, Crawford, and Scott,” said Conaly Bedell, Finance and Administration Committee Chairman, Sebastian County Conservation District. “The District deeply appreciates the valued support of the Natural Resources Division in helping with these ground-breaking projects.”

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit <https://www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/>.