

Lower Mississippi Valley

J O I N T V E N T U R E

Management Board Meeting

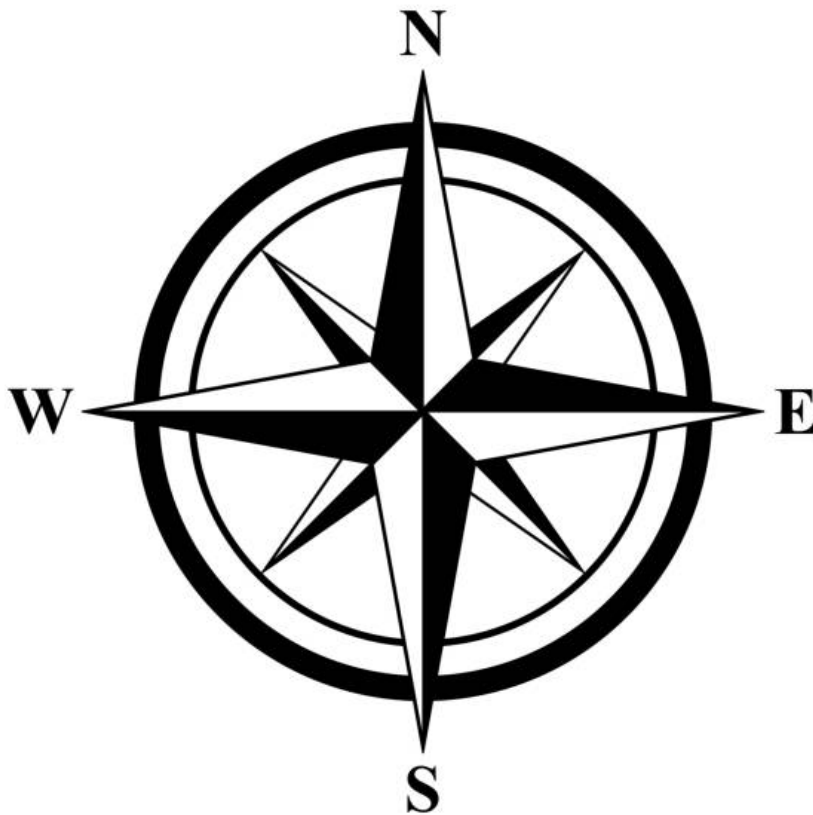


Cleveland, MS
11-12 May 2023



Photo by Mike Checkett

The Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture is a self-directed, non-regulatory private, state, federal conservation partnership that exists for the purpose of sustaining bird populations and their habitats within the Lower Mississippi Valley region through implementing and communicating the goals and objectives of relevant national and international bird conservation plans.



The mission of the LMV Joint Venture is to function as the forum in which the private, state, federal conservation community develops a shared vision of bird conservation for the Lower Mississippi Valley region; cooperates in its implementation; and collaborates in its refinement.

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LMVJV Spring 2023 Board Meeting Agenda

Cotton House Hotel, Cleveland, MS - Donelson Room

Wednesday, 10 May

6:30pm Gather for dinner in hotel lobby

Thursday, 11 May

Organization, Administration, Staff

Notebook

8:00am Welcome, Introductions, Overview of Agenda

Fall 2022 Action Item Progress

p. 4

Spring & Fall 2024 Meeting Venue

p. 12

2023 Operational Plan Progress

WGCPD Delivery Coordinator

FY2023 Budget Outlook

p. 13

Delivery Coordination

Notebook

9:00am WGCPD Delivery Coordination

Arkansas-Louisiana CDN

D. Breithaupt/A. Klais p. 18

Northeast Texas CDN

R. Gay p. 29

Longleaf Implementation Teams

Texas Longleaf Team

B. Bartush p. 32

West-Central Louisiana Ecosystem Partnership

D. Breithaupt p. 33

10:00am **BREAK**

10:30am MAV Delivery Coordination

Arkansas MAV CDN

D. Graves/J. Spears p. 35

Louisiana-Mississippi CDN

D. Breithaupt p. 59

Tri-State Conservation Partnership

R. Seiss p. 79

Wetland Policy Coalition

R. Seiss p. 81

11:15am MAV Private Lands Carbon Initiatives

Ducks Unlimited

T. Willis

The Nature Conservancy

J. Milks

Noon **LUNCH**

LMVJV Spring 2023 Board Meeting Agenda

Cotton House Hotel, Cleveland, MS - Donelson Room

Delivery Coordination (Cont'd)

1:30pm USFWS IRA Lower MS Basin River Funds W. Meeks
Other IRA-Related Potential Opportunities

Field Tour - Charlie Capps WMA

2:15pm Gather at Vehicles
2:30pm Depart for WMA
5:00pm Arrive back at Cotton House Hotel
5:45 Depart for Grammy Museum & Dinner

Friday, 12 May

Science

Notebook

8:00am Waterfowl Plan Revision - Progress Update
MAV Forest Assessment
MAV Reforestation & Water Quality Lit. Synthesis
8:45am Open Pine Decision Support Tool Revision
Louisiana Waterthrush Model Validation
Climate & Louisiana Waterthrush Habitat Nexus
Southeastern 3BB Analysis

9:35am Science Investment - Update on Past Funding p. 85
Science Investment - 2023 Recommendation p. 87
Science Roundup

10:15am **BREAK**

10:45am Desired Forest Conditions for Wildlife Revision Update

Communication & Larger Partnerships

11:15am Assoc. of JV Management Boards Meeting Hi-lights J. Raasch
Cross-JV Coordination

11:45am Action Item Review

Noon Adjourn & Safe Travels!



Administration

LMJV Management Board Contact List - April 2023

Name	Title	Organization	Email	Phone	Address
Jeff Raasch ¹ (Chair)	Statewide Wetlands/Joint Venture Program Coordinator	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	jeff.raasch@tpwd.texas.gov	512.389.4578	Texas Parks and Wildlife 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744
Ron Seiss ¹ (Vice Chair)	Director, Lower Mississippi River Program	The Nature Conservancy	rseiss@tnc.org	601.713.3307	The Nature Conservancy 217 Rocky Branch Road, Covington, TN 38019
E.J. Williams	VP, South East and Atlantic Coast Region	American Bird Conservancy	ewilliams@abcbirds.org	706.818.1799	American Bird Conservancy 1609 William Hapton Way Mount Pleasant SC 29466
Garrick Dugger	Assistant Wildlife Division Chief	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission	Garrick.Dugger@adfc.ar.gov	501.223.6362	Arkansas Game & Fish Commission #2 Natural Resources Dr., Little Rock, AR 72205
Tim Willis	Director, Conservation Programs (MS, TN, AR, LA, AL)	Ducks Unlimited	twillis@ducks.org	601.956.1936	Ducks Unlimited 193 Business Park Dr., Suite E Ridgeland, MS 39157
Dan Figert ¹	Assistant Director	Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources	dan.figert@ky.gov	502.548.6774	1 Sportsman's Lane Frankfort, KY 40601
Tommy Tuma	Director, Habitat Stewardship	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	ttuma@wlf.la.gov	225.765.2349	LA Dept Wildlife and Fisheries 2000 Quail Drive P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898
Russ Walsh	Executive Wildlife Director	Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks	russw@mdwfp.state.ms.us	601.432.2202	Mississippi Dept of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211-6374
Joel Porath	Wildlife Section Chief	Missouri Department of Conservation	joel.porath@mdc.mo.gov	573.522.4115 ext 3188	Missouri Dept. of Conservation P.O. Box 180 Jefferson City, MO 65102
Kacie Bauman	District Biologist (AR, LA, MS)	National Wild Turkey Federation	kbauman@nwf.net	228.222.7463	911 Timberton Drive Pearl, MS 39208
Richard Beagles	Senior Biologist	Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation	richard.beagles@odwc.ok.gov	580.320.3177	PO Box 397 Clayton OK 74563
Patrick Lemons	Wildlife Program Manager, Region 1	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency	patrick.lemons@tn.gov	731.697.5200	200 Lowell Thomas Drive Jackson, TN 38301
Wade Hairrell ¹	Deputy Chief, Migratory Birds	US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2	wade_hairrell@fws.gov	361.676.9953	210 Terra Vista Trail Victoria, TX 77904
Will Meeks	Assistant Regional Director - Refuges	US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 4	will_meeks@fws.gov	720.541.0310	Savannah National Wildlife Refuge 694 Beech Hill Lane Hardeeville, SC 29927
Mike Langston	Deputy Director, SC Climate Science Adaptation Center	US Geological Survey	mlangston@usgs.gov	405.290.8348	201 Stephenson Parkway, Suite 2100 Norman, OK 73019
Kimpton Cooper	Forest Supervisor, National Forests & Grasslands in Texas	USDA Forest Service, Region 8	kimpton_cooper@usda.gov	936.404.9505	2221 N. Raguet Street Lufkin, TX 75904
Mike Sullivan	State Conservationist, Arkansas	USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service	michael.sullivan@ar.usda.gov	501.301.3100	U.S.D.A. NRCS Room 3416, Federal Building 700 W. Capitol Ave, Little Rock, AR 72201-3215

¹Executive Committee

LMVJV Management Board 2-3 November 2022

Heber Springs, Arkansas

Decisions, Action Items, and **Status**



Administration

- Future Board Meeting Locations – **Complete**
 - 2023 Spring: Mississippi; date TBD
 - 2023 Fall: Kentucky; date TBDResponsible: K. McKnight, Russ Walsh, Dan Figert

- 2023 Operational Plan Development *ad hoc* Working Group: - **Ongoing**
 - Jeff Raasch, TPWD
 - Ron Seiss, TNC
 - Russ Walsh, MDWFP
 - Tim Willis, DU
 - LDWF representative (**Tommy Tuma, confirmed**)Group will convene in early 2023 to begin drafting the next 5-year Operational Plan for Board consideration and approval at the Fall 2023 meeting.
Responsible: K. McKnight & WG members

- Executive Committee Membership:
 - Jeff Raasch; Chair, TPWD
 - Ron Seiss; Vice-Chair, TNC
 - Dan Figert; KDFWR
 - Wade Harrell; USFWS R2

- Direct Partner Monetary Support for LMVJV Budget - **Ongoing**
 - MDWFP will be providing support to JVs from stamp revenue beginning this FY
 - Coordinator will work with Board members regarding new and expiring agreementsResponsible: K. McKnight & appropriate Board members

- Joint Venture Positioning to Assist with New Large Funding Opportunities - **Ongoing**
 - Communicate with states' Wildlife Action Plan staff/leads regarding alignment with JV priorities, and how they perceive JVs could be helpful
 - Develop commitments from non-federal partners (primarily NGOs) to handle large grants
 - Clearly articulate and ensure communication of JV priorities with partner staff outside of the JV's usual orbit
 - Communicate the connection of priority bird needs to hydrological issues/questionsResponsible: K. McKnight & JV Staff

Science

- **DECISION: Five Year Science Priorities Approved**
 - Board unanimously approved the draft Science Priorities document. Document will be posted and distributed once graphics and images are inserted.Responsible: A. Mini
- **Science Support Advisory Team for Forest Hydrology Research (FY22 Science Investment Funds) – *Complete & Ongoing***
 - Will expand to include AGFC representation to ensure coordination among Five Oaks and AGFC WMA data collection and analysisResponsible: A. Mini
- **King Rail Habitat Model – Funding for Additional Six Months – *Provided by MDC!***
 - AGFC and MDC potentially interested in considering provision of 6-mo additional funding. Coordinator to send proposal info to J. Porath & G. DuggerResponsible: K. McKnight, J. Porath, G. Dugger
- **2023 Science Investment - *Complete***
 - Science Team charged to recommend FY2023 investment.Responsible: A. Mini & K. McKnight
- **Emergent Wetland Assessment - *Complete***
 - Ensure that partners have the information and access to the tool (send to state agencies).Responsible: B. Elliott & A. Mini
- **Wetland Management Tool - *Complete***
 - Send list of primary partner organization contacts to Board Members in early November.Responsible: K. McKnight & B. Elliott
- **Desired Forest Conditions for Wildlife Revision - *Ongoing***
 - Ensure that appropriate partner staff are engaged, as appropriate, in the revision process. Current Working Group list attached as Appendix 1.Responsible: Management Board Members

Communication

- **Practical Hands-on Training for Future Conservation Partner Staff – *Ongoing***
 - Convene further discussion about potential LMVJV role in facilitating practical training for young future partner staff via efforts like Five Oaks Ag Research & Education certification program.Responsible: K. McKnight & Management Board

November 2-3 Management Board Meeting Participants

Board Member	Organization
Jeff Raasch (Chair)	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Ron Seiss (Vice Chair)	The Nature Conservancy
Richard Beagles	Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
David Briethaupt	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Randy Childress (for M. Sullivan)	USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
Garrick Dugger	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Dan Figert	Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources
Wade Harrell	US Fish and Wildlife Service (Albuquerque)
Patrick Lemons	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Mike Oetker	US Fish and Wildlife Service (Atlanta)
Joel Porath	Missouri Department of Conservation
Russ Walsh	Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks
Tim Willis	Ducks Unlimited
Partner/Guest	
Jason Keenan	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tim Landreneau	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
LMVJV Office Staff	
Janine Antalffy	
Bill Bartush	
Steve Brock	
Blaine Elliott	
Keith McKnight	
Anne Mini	

LMVJV Fall 2022 Board Meeting Agenda

Red Apple Inn, Heber Springs, Arkansas

Tuesday, 1 November

6:30pm Gather for dinner

Wednesday, 2 November

Organization, Administration, Staff

Notebook

8:30am Welcome, Introductions, Overview of Agenda

Dr. Janine Antalffy Introduction

Spring Action Item Progress

p. 5

Spring 2023 Meeting Venue

p. 9

Op Plan Year 4 Progress Update - SHC, JV Matrix, Operational Compass

p. 15

JV Office Staff FY2023 Priorities Summary

p. 33

10:15am **BREAK**

10:45am Staff Vision Statement

p. 37

2023 Operational Plan Development - Call for *ad hoc* Committee

FY2023 Budget Outlook

p. 38

Capacity Needs Update

11:30am Tour Overview & Background

Noon

LUNCH

Field Tour - Henry Gray Hurricane Lake WMA

1:30pm Depart for WMA

6:00pm Social & Dinner on Site Provided by AGFC & DU

9:00pm Approximate Arrival Back at Red Apple Inn

LMVJV Fall 2022 Board Meeting Agenda

Red Apple Inn, Heber Springs, Arkansas

Thursday, 3 November

Science

Notebook

- 8:30am DFCW Revision Drafts Available - Encourage Partner Staff Review
FY2022 Science Investment Project Updates
Science Priorities Document - *Approval by Board*¹
FY2023 Science Investment Discussion
Waterfowl Symposium Report Out

p. 41

p. 69

9:50am **BREAK**

- 10:15am Emergent Wetland Assessment Update
MAV Forest Assessment - Validation & Update
Waterfowl Plan Revision -Timeline & Potential New Approaches
Water Mgmt Unit Update - Heads-up & History of Need
Science Round-up - Quick Bullets of Ongoing Tasks
State of the Birds Report & LMVJV Priorities

11:30am **LUNCH**

Delivery Coordination

- 1:00pm MAV Delivery Coordination
MAV CDN Updates
Tri-State Conservation Partnership (TCP) Updates
Wetland Policy Coalition - New Farm Bill Effort Update & Discussion

2:00pm WGCPD Delivery Coordination

p. 73

- RCPD Annual Report Summary
Longleaf Teams: 5-yr Plans, Progress, etc.
NETX CDN Updates
Joint Chief's Project Planning

3:00pm Applying JV Information, Tools, & Capacity to Large \$\$ Challenges

3:30pm Review Decisions & Actions

3:45pm **ADJOURN**

¹Requesting decision by the Management Board

LMJVJ Management Board Contact List - October 2022

Name	Title	Organization	Email	Phone	Address
Jeff Raasch ¹ (Chair)	Statewide Wetlands/Joint Venture Program Coordinator	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	jeff.raasch@tpwd.texas.gov	512.389.4578	Texas Parks and Wildlife 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744
Ron Seiss ¹ (Vice Chair)	Director, Lower Mississippi River Program	The Nature Conservancy	rseiss@tnc.org	601.713.3307	The Nature Conservancy 217 Rocky Branch Road, Covington, TN 38019
Merrie Morrison	Vice President for Operations	American Bird Conservancy	mmorr@abbirds.org	540.253.5780	American Bird Conservancy 4249 Loudoun Ave., P.O. Box 249 The Plains, VA 20198
Garrick Dugger	Assistant Wildlife Division Chief	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission	Garrick.Dugger@agfc.ar.gov	501.223.6362	Arkansas Game & Fish Commission #2 Natural Resources Dr., Little Rock, AR 72205
Tim Willis	Director, Conservation Programs (MS, TN, AR, LA, AL)	Ducks Unlimited	twillis@ducks.org	601.956.1936	Ducks Unlimited 193 Business Park Dr., Suite E Ridgeland, MS 39157
Dan Figert	Assistant Director	Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources	dan.figert@ky.gov	502.548.6774	1 Sportsman's Lane Frankfort, KY 40601
<i>Vacant</i>	[David Breithaupt & Tommy Turna, contacts]	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries			LA Dept Wildlife and Fisheries 2000 Quail Drive P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898
Russ Walsh	Executive Wildlife Director	Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks	russw@mdwfp.state.ms.us	601.432.2202	Mississippi Dept of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211-6374
Joel Porath	Wildlife Section Chief	Missouri Department of Conservation	joel.porath@mdc.mo.gov	573.522.4115 ext 3188	Missouri Dept. of Conservation P.O. Box 180 Jefferson City, MO 65102
Kacie Bauman	District Biologist (AR, LA, MS)	National Wild Turkey Federation	kbauman@nwtf.net	228.222.7463	911 Timberborn Drive Pearl, MS 39208
Richard Beagles	Senior Biologist	Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation	richard.beagles@odwc.ok.gov	580.320.3177	P.O. Box 397 Clayton OK 74563
Patrick Lemons	Wildlife Program Manager, Region 1	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency	patrick.lemons@tn.gov	731.697.5200	200 Lowell Thomas Drive Jackson, TN 38301
Wade Harrell	Deputy Chief, Migratory Birds	US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2	wade_harrell@fws.gov	361.676.9953	210 Terra Vista Trail Victoria, TX 77904
Mike Oetker	Deputy Regional Director	US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 4	michael_oetker@fws.gov	404.679.4000	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 1875 Century Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30345
Mike Langston	Deputy Director, SC Climate Science Adaptation Center	US Geological Survey	milangston@usgs.gov	405.290.8348	201 Stephenson Parkway, Suite 2100 Norman, OK 73019
Krimpton Cooper	Forest Supervisor, National Forests & Grasslands in Texas	USDA Forest Service, Region 8	krimpton.cooper@usda.gov	936.404.9505	2221 N. Raquet Street Lufkin, TX 75904
Mike Sullivan	State Conservationist, Arkansas	USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service	michael.sullivan@ar.usda.gov	501.301.3100	U.S.D.A. NRCS Room 3416, Federal Building 700 W. Capitol Ave, Little Rock, AR 72201-3215

¹Executive Committee

Appendix 1. Desired Forest Conditions for Wildlife Revision Working Group list, as of 3 November 2022

DFCW Revision Working Group List (Oct 2022)					
Type	Organization	Individual	Title	Email	Steering Committee
Private	Denman Company	Jeff Denman	Consultant	jbdenman2011@gmail.com	X
	Hardwood Silviculture, LLC	Brian Lockhart	Consultant	blockhart@hardwoodsilviculture.com	X
		Wesley Howard	Forester	wesleyhoward1219@gmail.com	
State	AGFC	Rob Willey	Statewide Habitat Program Coordinator	robert.willey@agfc.ar.gov	
		Drew Green	Habitat Biologist	andrew.green@agfc.ar.gov	
	MDWFP	Stan Priest	Lands Coordinator	stan.priest@wfp.ms.gov	
		LDWF	David Breithaupt	Farm Bill/Grants Program Manager	dbreithaupt@wlf.la.gov
	LDWF	Duck Locascio	Forestry Program Manager	dlocascio@wlf.la.gov	X
		Buddy Dupuy	Biologist/Forester	mdupuy@wlf.la.gov	
		Fred Hagaman	Biologist/Forester	fhagaman@wlf.louisiana.gov	
	TWRA	Jordan Nanney	Supervisory Wildlife Forester	Jordan.Nanney@tn.gov	
	MDC				
	TPWD	Clay Shipes	Wetlands Biologist	james.shipes@tpwd.texas.gov	
		Cody Dunagan	Associate Wildlife Biologist	cody.dunagan@tpwd.texas.gov	
	TPWD	Robert Adams	Biologist - Pineywoods Ecosystem Project	Robert.Adams@tpwd.texas.gov	
		TFS	Kevin Coffman	Staff Forester	kcoffman@tfs.tamu.edu
	KDFWR	Kate Slankard	Avian Biologist	kate.slankard@ky.gov	
	LSU	Sammy King	Unit Leader, LA Coop Fish and Wildlife Research Unit	SKing@agcenter.lsu.edu	
		Tom Dean	LSU Professor Quantitative Silviculture	fwdean@lsu.edu	
	MSU	Bronson Strickland	Extension Professor - Wildlife	bstrickland@cfr.msstate.edu	
		Brady Self	Associate Extension Professor - Forestry	brady.self@msstate.edu	
	UofA - Monticello	Doug Osborne	Associate Professor of Wildlife	osborne@uamont.edu	
	Federal	LMJV/FWS	Keith McKnight	Coordinator	steven_mcknight@fws.gov
Steve Brock			Partnership Coordinator - MAV	steve_c_brock@fws.gov	X
USFWS (R4)		Andy Dolan	Partners for Fish & Wildlife Coordinator/LA	andrew_dolan@fws.gov	
		Eric Johnson	Forester Cache River NWR	eric_s_johnson@fws.gov	
		Randy Wilson	Migratory Bird Program	Randy_Wilson@fws.gov	X
USFWS (R4)		Chris Foster	Forester, N LA Refuge Complex	christopher_foster@fws.gov	
		Leif Karnuth	Forester, West TN NWR Complex	Leif_Karnuth@fws.gov	
USFWS (R4)		Bill Burchfield	Forester, South AR NWR Complex	Billy_Burchfield@fws.gov	
		Henry Sansing	Regional Forester	henry_sansing@fws.gov	
USFWS (R4)		Lamar Dorris	Refuge Manager, Morgan Brake	Lamar_Dorris@fws.gov	
		Ashley Cathey	Forester, West TN NWR Complex	ashley_cathey@fws.gov	
USFWS (R2)		John Stephens	Forester, Caddo Lake NWR	john_stephens@fws.gov	

	USGS	Tom Doyle	Deputy Director/Ecologist, Wetland & Aquatic Research Center, LA	doylet@usgs.gov	
	NRCS	Doug Akin	State Forester AR NRCS	douglas.akin@usda.gov	
		Alec Conrad	Delta Forester, MS NRCS	john.conrad@usda.gov	
		Rick Williams	State Forester LA NRCS	richard.williams@la.usda.gov	
	USFS	John Simpson	Realty Specialist, NF TX	John.A.Simpson@usda.gov	
		Adam Terry	Forest Wildlife Biologist, TX	adam.terry@usda.gov	
		Todd Sewell	District Ranger, Delta NF	raymond.sewell@usda.gov	
NGO	DU	Michael McVay	Biologist, LA	mmcvay@ducks.org	
	Wildlife MS	Giles Kelly	Bottomland Hardwood Forester	gkelly@wildlifemiss.org	
	LMVJV/ABC	Anne Mini	Science Coordinator	amini@abcbirds.org	X
		Bill Bartush	Partnership Coordinator - WGCP	bbartush@abcbirds.org	X
	TFA	Rob Hughes	Executive Director	rhughes@texasforestry.org	
	TNC	Ron Seiss	Lower MS River Program Coordinator	rseiss@tnc.org	
Retirees	USFS	Paul Hamel	Former USFS Biologist	phamelphamel@gmail.com	
	AGFC	Martin Blaney	Former AGFC State Forester	martinblaney65@gmail.com	
	FWS	Jon Wessman	Former AR MAV Partners Program Forester	jgwess@conwaycorp.net	
	USGS	Dan Twedt	Former Wildlife Researcher	twedtd@gmail.com	
	LDWF	Kenny Ribbeck	Former Wildlife Division Chief	kribbeck@gmail.com	X

Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Management Board Meeting Locations 2002-2023

Fa/Wi 2024
Sp/Su 2024

Fa/Wi 2023
Sp/Su 2023

Fa/Wi 2022
Sp/Su 2022

Fa/Wi 2021
Sp/Su 2021

Sp/Su 2020
Fa/Wi 2020

Sp/Su 2019
Fa/Wi 2019

Sp/Su 2018
Fa/Wi 2018

Sp/Su 2017
Fa/Wi 2017

Sp/Su 2016
Fa/Wi 2016

Sp/Su 2015
Fa/Wi 2015

Sp/Su 2014
Fa/Wi 2014

Sp/Su 2013
Fa/Wi 2013

Sp/Su 2012
Fa/Wi 2011

Sp/Su 2011
Fa/ Wi 2010

Sp/Su 2010
Fa/Wi 2009

Sp/Su 2009

Sp/Su 2008

Sp/Su 2007

Sp/Su 2006

Sp/Su 2005

Sp/Su 2004

Fa/Wi 2003

Sp/Su 2003

Sp/Su 2002

Kentucky (Paducah)

Mississippi (Cleveland)

Arkansas (Heber Springs)

Tennessee (Memphis, DU Headquarters)

Video conference (in-person meeting not possible due to COVID-19 issues)

Video conference (in-person meeting not possible due to COVID-19 issues)

Video conference (in-person meeting not possible due to COVID-19 issues)

Video conference (in-person meeting not possible due to COVID-19 issues)

Texas (Jefferson)

Louisiana (Cypress Bend)

Louisiana (West Monroe)

Mississippi (Natchez)

Missouri (Cape Girardeau)

Tennessee (Dyersburg)

Arkansas (Wildlife Farms)

Louisiana (Baton Rouge, after SEAFWA; October 19-20 OR 20-21)

Mississippi (Tara Wildlife)

Tennessee (Millington)

Texas (Caddo Lake State Park)

Florida (SEAFWA)

Louisiana (Lafayette)

Oklahoma (SEAFWA)

Arkansas (Heber Springs)

Tennessee (SEAFWA)

Arkansas (Eureka Springs)

Mississippi (SEAFWA)

Arkansas (5 Oaks Lodge)

Georgia (SEAFWA)

Oklahoma (Broken Bow)

Mississippi (Vicksburg)

Texas (Tyler)

Mississippi (Vicksburg)

Arkansas (Winrock)

Louisiana (Buras)

Alabama (SEAFWA)

Texas (Big Woods on the Trinity)

Mississippi (Tara Wildlife)

<u>2-Day Location "Box Score"</u>	
Arkansas	6
Mississippi	6
Louisiana	5
Texas	4
Tennessee	3
Missouri	1
Oklahoma	1
<i>Kentucky</i>	<i>1</i>

Bold = Multi-day meeting

Gray = Planned

LMVJV FY2023 Budget Forecast

Income/Expense Summary		Partner Contributed ("PC") Funds Summary	
Income			
FY23 Mig Bird Joint Venture (1234) <i>estimate</i>	\$915,772	Carryover from FY2022 \$29,716	
Partner Contribution & Agreement Funds		FY23 Contributions	
To Agreements		LDWF	\$17,500
Staff Support	\$25,000	AGFC	
Science Project Support	\$0	NRCS	(\$16,347 in 5-year balance carryover)
		ODWC	\$5,000
		MDC*	\$8,000
		MDWFP	\$5,000
		TPWD*	\$25,000
		TPWD	\$12,000 in kind (office space)
		TWRA*	\$11,250
Income Total	\$940,772	<i>subtotal</i>	<u>\$56,250</u>
Expenses			
Salary & Benefits (USFWS) <i>estimated</i>	\$530,192	FY23 Subtotal \$27,500	
Travel	\$19,000	Total Available \$57,216	
Operational	\$20,000	Withdrawal: Agreement/Project -\$25,000	
Regional Office Support (@12.64%)	\$115,793	Balance <u>\$32,216</u>	
Office Space	\$28,200	*MDC (\$8,000), TPWD (\$25,000), TWRA (\$11,250) directly to ABC; accounted as reduction in total ABC JV Staff Expense	
ABC Agreement - Staff (PC, SS, AE)	\$95,000		
ABC Agreement - Comm. Contract	\$10,000		
Science Project Support	\$120,000		
Expense Total	\$938,185		
Balance	<u>\$2,587</u>		

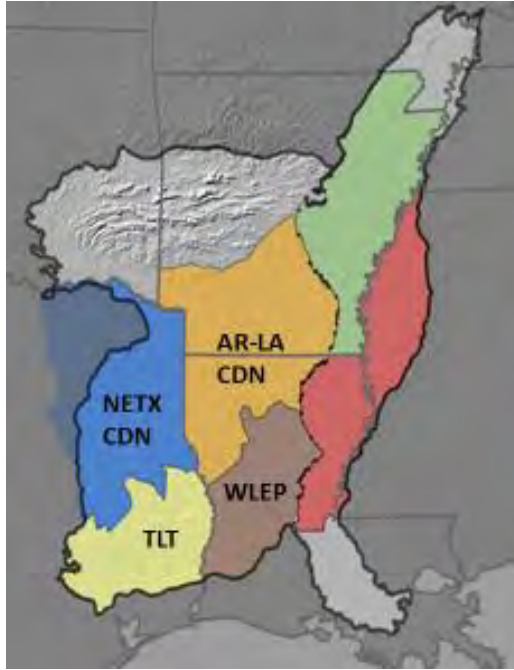
Agreement / Activity	From PC	From 1234	TOTAL
ABC - Partnership Coordination	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
ABC - Science Coordination	\$15,000	\$30,000	\$45,000
ABC - Avian Ecologist	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$35,000
ABC - Communications Contract	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
Science Project Support	\$0	\$120,000	\$120,000
	\$25,000	\$200,000	\$225,000



Habitat Delivery

2022 Annual Report

West Gulf Coastal Plain & Ouachita's (WGCP) Bird Conservation Region 25 (BCR 25)



Arkansas, and Louisiana, as well as both the Texas and Louisiana Longleaf Implementation Teams (LITs), expanded efforts for outreach and habitat delivery. During 2022, new connections included over 3,200 people involved in various efforts (meetings, field days, and virtual participation). Resumption of physical meetings “post-pandemic,” along with the continued use of virtual meetings, has increased outreach efforts and critical connections with new and existing partners. These gatherings are helping to develop collaborations at all levels among organizations/agencies within the WGCP, or Bird Conservation Region 25 (BCR 25). We expanded our audience to many new NRCS agency personnel in 2022, with workshops tailored to open pine practices and use of NRCS Ecological Site Description in planned prescriptions. Increased connections to Landowner Associations, and new connections with Longleaf advocates, made 2022 an exceptional outreach year.

WGCP

The West Gulf Coastal Plain and Ouachita's (WGCP) Coordinator, continues to build partnership strength throughout the four states, with numerous in-person and virtual meetings among Conservation Delivery Networks (CDNs). These CDNs in Texas,



Partners from WGCP at Boggy Slough



Richard Beagles Talks at Pushmataha

Arkansas- Louisiana West Gulf Coastal Plain Conservation Delivery Network



Orange above shows the boundary of the AR-LA CDN within the Joint Venture.

Lower Mississippi Valley
JOINT VENTURE



AR-LA Conservation Delivery Network "CDN" Steering Committee

David Breithaupt, Co-Chair
Bubba Groves
Dan Weber
Jeff Fore
David Hayden
Jeremy Everitts
Ryan Diener



Ricky Chastain, Co-Chair
Rob Smith
Darren Spinks
Bill Holimon
Pat Stinson
Rick Williams
Amanda Mathis

Arkansas – Louisiana Conservation Delivery Network

AR-LA CDN

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Conservation Delivery in Action – Communication is Important

AR-LA 10 Aug 2022 Steering Committee Meeting: The AR-LA Conservation Delivery Network Steering Committee met in Monticello, AR on 10 Aug 2022 to discuss the progress of the RCPP project for Open Pine. The agenda covered our first-year roll-out of the RCPP, initial sign-up, and areas where improvements could be made. With 40 people present, discussion was robust; recommendations were fine-tuned for review in the draft meeting notes, to be circulated to all Steering Committee members. The group concluded the day by visiting a specific RCPP project site to observe both a treated (previous project) and an untreated pine stand. In the pictures below, Bubba Groves and Ricky Chastain (both AGFC) described the process for evaluating a site, and practices that would be used to gain results – such as restoring Northern Bobwhite habitat – with partners like NRCS Amanda Mathis, QF Austin Klais, KIITF Charley Williams, and many others in adjacent stands of “before-and-after” treatment



Numerous field visits in 2022 with CDN partners and private landowners were a significant focus of the AR-LA CDN, and specifically the RCPP effort. Seeing and grasping the issues among CDN partners regarding Open Pine practices, we continue to improve new and better ways to communicate a successful project concept to forest landowners.

Videos developed by Quail Forever and conservation partners in collaboration with private landowners in Arkansas and Louisiana:

Video: [Glen Melton - Active Forest Management Benefits Forest Health and Economics \(LA\)](#) (5 min)

Video: [Miles Goggans - Active Forest Management Benefits Wildlife \(AR\)](#) (4:40 min)

AR-LA RCPP Open Pine Annual Report 2022

Executive Summary

The Arkansas-Louisiana (AR-LA) Conservation Delivery Network (CDN) Partnership was awarded 5.9 million dollars, over five years in 16 counties and parishes, to restore 30,000 acres of open pine habitat. In Year #2 (2022), NRCS **Financial Assistance of \$596,225 was awarded** through contracts, with plans to restore or enhance **2,456 acres of open pine habitat (8% of our target)** through 15 Arkansas and Louisiana landowner projects. In 2022, total partner **contributions of \$4,344,590 and 28,053 acres** far exceeded expectations; when including Year #1 contributions (13,584 acres and \$1,723,841), we have almost met our 5-year obligation for both financial and habitat contributions. Going into 2023, our partners continue to be very optimistic. Our financial assistance to landowners is planned to be almost twice that available in 2022, with expected contracts projected to be at or over 30, and habitat commitments planned for approximately 5k-7k acres. The coordinated effort of our Delivery Team, or ITA responsibilities, of this Open Pine project is to continue regular meetings of partners to communicate and coordinate efforts between the two states. Along with our Communications Team, Social or Human Dimensions Team, and a Monitoring-Science Team, we are moving forward with a truly science-based outreach and education effort that will assist us in understanding the many social elements of private landowner incentive programs. A key to the Open Pine project's success continues to be the significant contributions from 19 partners, including private industry. American Bird Conservancy will continue to serve as grantee for this complex partnership effort, which will continue through 2026.

Project Overview – Progress, Successes, and Milestones

The Open Pine 2319 RCPP project was initiated in earnest upon execution of the Supplemental Agreement 12/15/2021. Between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022, the Arkansas-Louisiana (AR-LA) Conservation Delivery Network (CDN) Partnership convened approximately 32 meetings (both in-person and virtual) of the CDN Steering Committee, Implementation Teams, and Science and Communications “enhancement” Teams, and all 19 partners. In addition to outreach meetings, advertisements, field days, one-one contacts, mailings, and PSAs, allowed us to connect with many landowners in all 16 counties and parishes. AR & LA partner meetings, NRCS, and Collaborators (KIITF) meetings were also used to evaluate sign-up and initial outreach for the Open Pine 2319 RCPP. A major avenue initiated in 2022 is the RCPP-dedicated website used to share meeting and project information with both partners and landowners: <https://www.lmviv.org/ar-la-rcpp>. Several pre- and post-sign-up public awareness documents were sent to local news outlets and disseminated via partner news media. This communication effort resulted in 261 contacts from partners; the Social Communications and Outreach Teams made 134 contacts, and other activities connected with Private Landowners

(241 contacts). These Working Groups were successful in their outreach and communication within the RCPP area, for a grand total of **636 landowner/producer contacts in 2022**. This **outreach resulted in a substantial number (10-12%) of first-time landowners**, who were encouraged to participate in the Open Pine RCPP. The CDN also continued their development of other partner working groups – a formal Implementation Delivery Team (ITA or Technical Advisory), and Social and Communications Teams (ETA) – that will consistently evaluate progress and improve performance. Our pool of applicants was much larger than anticipated; with FSA support, managing that number was handled successfully. Ranking process worked remarkably well, with some adjustments identified and applied successfully for Year #2. Contracting of 15 selected applicants was completed on time and with no issues or concerns.

Project Challenges Year #1 – Year #2

With COVID-19, collaboration in a traditional sense was challenging during Year #1, but with virtual platforms available, and strategic planning early and consistently, our partners and their agencies/organizations managed this difficulty through virtual forums and public platforms like agency commission meetings and webinars. Familiarization with the new portal items kept ABC busy through the Proposal, PPA, and SA; as we began implementation in Year #2, the process and procedural elements became much more familiar and increased our efficiency. Particularly challenging was volume of applicants and funds available for contracts; of 62 applications that were formally evaluated, ranked, and scored, funds were available for only 15 contracts. This issue challenges us to keep those initial contacts open to future project involvement, but we anticipate landowner disappointment and a lack of interest towards submitting new applications. Continual communication among partners, NRCS staff, and landowners must be stressed. Other specific items that we had to overcome, and find efficiencies for, included:

- NRCS 2022 Project timeline (2/10/22 NRCS Bulletin) – The jump from an executed Supplemental Agreement (SA) on December 15, 2021, to the RCPP sign-up closing on February 18, 2022, was a challenge that we handled, albeit at the cost of changes in holiday plans. Some November refinements to the Fact Sheet map were also challenging, but using best boundaries to connect priority areas allowed us to proceed.
- Navigating the Portal requires training and continual use for proficiency; small organizations and partnerships struggle with access and understanding due to its complexity. ABC has developed expertise and a close working relationship with Lead State office to make access and navigation in the Portal easier.
- NRCS procedures – (a) Consistency between states (practice specifications, interpretations, and payment rates) caused some issues with initial contracts. This discussion has continued during preparation for 2023 sign-up; (b) Confidentiality – open sharing of data with 19 partners can be challenging. Our primary partners (ABC, QF) cannot share information outside of ABC; avenues to display our outreach and conservation efforts with the other 17 contributing partners is improving, with clarifications to confidentiality and mapping that is not property-specific.

- A full understanding of the intent of this RCPP, and the responsibility of the 19 contributing partners in this effort, may not be completely understood by agency personnel (NRCS and Agency/Organization partners). We must strive to ensure NRCS and partner ITA delivery team members fully grasp the focus of this RCPP. Because staff changes and new personnel are a constant, we know that continuous communication and coordination is needed. Regular communication can easily and preemptively deal with personnel clarity. Key elements of the PPA and SA should be reviewed to achieve this clarity – in most cases, ITA/ETA partners work well with NRCS field staff, and consistent communication will ensure all parties are on the same page.

Major milestones achieved in 2022, and anticipated 2023 Project outlook

Project outlook continues to be very optimistic. Coordination among ABC, NRCS, and the other 17 partners is open and honest; we have found ways to forge ahead and shore up any questions or issues that arise. Initial sign-up exceeded expectations; our first-time and/or underserved landowner (HU) contacts comprised approximately 25% of our applicants in both states. In 2022, this resulted in 47% HU contracts (almost half), which is considered exceptional. We had been concerned that selection bias would reduce opportunities for smaller landowners, due to ranking of larger landowners (receiving higher scores); with assistance from NRCS staff, our ranking process proved quite successful. Some of the highest-ranked projects contracted had the smallest acreage, and most of the HU applicants were awarded contracts. **Another important point – our contributions continue to be at a high level**, with over \$5mil of our projected \$7mil obligation completed by Year #2. Our ability to communicate, coordinate, and adapt has proven invaluable, and we will utilize adaptive management throughout the life of the project.

Summary of 2021-2022 Open Pine RCPP Project Outcomes

In Year #1, our strategy for the Open Pine RCPP was to begin conservatively, evaluate the process, landowner connections, and outreach; then in Year #2, adjust practice, outreach, and TA to improve our focus, build ITA skills, and improve practice-ranking understanding and processes. Of the 5.9 million dollars allocated, the Year #1 budget was approximately \$309,000 per state; we found this limited the number of contracts initially estimated for Year #1, due to high overall costs per contract. Since each contract has multiple practices over 5 years, the cost was averaging \$30k-\$50k per contract. The cost per contract should be less of an issue, as allocation of funds in Years #2 and #3 will be higher. Other coordination issues should also be smoother; after convening, evaluating, and communicating with NRCS, staff adjustments were identified, and several ranking, priority area, and field-level coordination and training adjustments were implemented during Year #2. In summary, we believe the larger allocated budget in 2022-23, along with targeted ETA outreach, better ranking, practice technical assistance (ITA), and strategic adjustments, will enhance improved sign-up and contracting efforts. The Open Pine 2319 RCPP Project is ahead of schedule.

Ouachita Electric Cooperative Arkansas

Contact: Shawn Dorflinger Contribution: \$ 1,843,152 (In-Kind); 862 habitat acres

Ouachita Electric Cooperative of AR is a major Contributing Partner as one of our Private Sector Partners. Expenditures for Land Management were accomplished using Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) practices on existing Rights-of-Way to promote native herbaceous grasses and forbs for priority species by connecting over 2,700 miles or 6,757 acres of habitat corridors within the open pine landscape.

Claiborne Electric Cooperative Louisiana

Contact: Stephen E Faulk Contribution: \$ 250,749 (In-Kind); 3,462 habitat acres

Claiborne Electric Cooperative of LA is a major Contributing Partner as one of our Private Sector Partners. Contributed expenditures for Land Management were accomplished using Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) practices on existing Rights-of-Way to promote native herbaceous grasses and forbs for priority species by connecting over 700 miles or 8,500 acres of habitat, for a value of \$1,389,268 of conservation land management through IVM practices on existing Rights-of-Way during the five-year span of this project.

Enable-Midstream (Energy Transfer) of Arkansas and Louisiana

Contact: Connie Oslica Contribution \$424,883 (In-Kind); plus 2,964 habitat acres

Enable-Midstream was the company which originally committed to our partnership as a contributor for the RCPP during the project proposal phase. During 2021, Enable-Midstream was purchased by Energy Transfer, who has accepted the original commitment to contribute "In-Kind" work. Energy transfer expenditures for Land Management were accomplished using Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) practices on existing Rights-of-Way to promote native herbaceous grasses and forbs for priority species by connecting over 300 miles of managed ROW corridors will provide over 300 miles or 1,460 acres of habitat corridors (with a value of at least \$300,550) during the five-year span of this project.

Entergy of Arkansas and Louisiana

Contact: Brent Davis Contribution: \$1,105,044 (In-Kind); 14,165 habitat acres

Entergy is another private sector partner operating in both AR and LA, and has committed to provide \$1,900,000 value of conservation land management through Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) practices during the five-year span of this project. This focus on native

herbaceous grasses and forbs supports a host of priority species, with these "In-Kind" efforts connecting over 1,100 miles, or 14,750 acres, of habitat corridors within our planned open pine landscape project.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Contact: David Breithaupt Contribution: \$7,500 (cash); plus \$30,000 (In-Kind)

As a primary Active Partner, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) worked closely in 2022 with the lead partner to plan project implementation and management; LDWF collaborated with partners during working meetings and participated in communications for implementing RCPP activities with field staff. LDWF has been a long-term partner of the LMVJV and our CDN and provides valuable outreach to its many private landowner connections in north Louisiana.

LDWF was instrumental in laying the ground work in north Louisiana with landowners and partners; with the lead partner field staff provided facilities and arranged meetings to plan project implementation and management. LDWF also collaborated with partners during working meetings, and participated in communications for implementing RCPP activities with field staff. Their assistance with outreach through hosted events was valuable.

National Wild Turkey Federation – Arkansas and Louisiana

Contact: Kacie Bauman Contribution: \$10,000 (cash) LA; (AR paid in full)

The Arkansas and Louisiana Chapters of the National Wild Turkey Federation are active and engaged in the RCPP. As a Contributing Partner, the NWTF Cash Contributions have been accepted by the lead partner; these funds will be foundational in our ability to establish incentives above and beyond the RCPP funds for FA. NWTF has already provided assistance in outreach, communication, and planning. Most importantly, the Arkansas Chapter paid their full \$50,000, five-year commitment in 2021, and the LA Chapter provided \$10,000 in 2022.

PotlatchDeltic

Contact: Kit Hart Contribution \$127,000 (In-Kind) plus 3,300 acres of habitat

PotlatchDeltic is another private sector partner operating in AR, and has committed to restore habitat for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker on over 17,000 acres managed as a wildlife and conservation area, in conjunction with other partners including ANHC, AFD, QF and AGFC. As a Contributing Partner, PotlatchDeltic performs land management practices that benefit native plant communities, and is setting a real-world example for local landowners on how to make

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Migratory Bird Joint Venture (USFWS-LMVJV)

Contact: Keith Mcknight

Contribution: \$10,228 (In-Kind)

The LMVJV is the umbrella organization/partnership of the AR-LA CDN. The science and strategic habitat planning for this project is founded on work by the "JV". As an active partner they have supported the science and provided material essential for the Lead Partner to operate in the RCPP area. The JV and ABC are working hand-in-hand for project supervision, essentially being engaged in all aspects of implementing RCPP activities: contracting and administration of third-party support service agreements, communications, and reporting.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS-PFW Arkansas)

Contact: Jonathan Baxter

Contribution: \$1,300 (In-Kind)

AR Partners for Fish and Wildlife field staff (PFW) was an Active Partner in 2022. PFW-AR engaged in planning and preparing for 2023 land management, and connecting with private landowners in the RCPP area to promote conservation practices on private lands in the project area to complement the RCPP.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS-PFW Louisiana)

Contact: Seth Bordelon

Contribution: \$5,081 In-Kind

LA Partners for Fish and Wildlife field staff (PFW) was an Active Partner in 2022. PFW-LA engaged in planning and preparing for 2023 land management, and connecting with private landowners in the RCPP area to promote conservation practices on private lands in the project area to complement the RCPP.

In summary, the 19 Contributors to the Open Pine RCPP far exceeded expectations.

- Contributions for land management: **28,354 acres** (includes 3,003 miles ROW corridor);
- Outreach and coordination reached approximately **636 landowner contacts**;
- Total value: approximately **\$4,359,590 of partner contributions**.



NETX Conservation Delivery Network "CDN" Steering Committee

Caddo Lake Institute
USDA – NRCS
National Wild Turkey Fed
Texas Forest Service
The Nature Conservancy
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.
USFWS (Partners)
USFWS (Refuges)



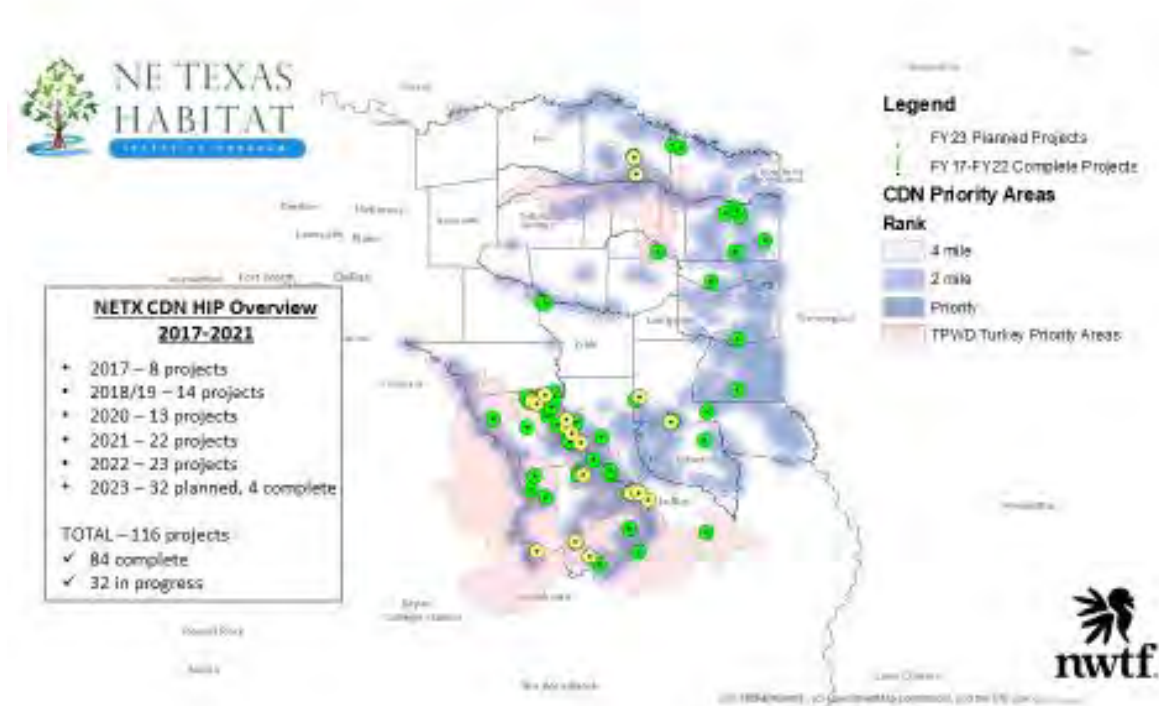
Laura Ashley Overdyke
Rigoberto Lopez
Annie Farrell
Brian Pope
David Bezanson
Stephen Lange
Marcos DeJesus
Steve Arey
Erik Duerkop

NETX, April, 2023

NETX CDN

This partnership and the highly popular Habitat Incentive Program (HIP) continues to bridge conservation among other JVs and new watershed-based groups. Through the HIP, our Northeast Texas (NETX) CDN partnership has successfully restored or enhanced over **20,369 acres through \$929,550** of multiple partner funding as we enter our 7th year. During the 2022 funding cycle, almost twice the number of proposals were received than in previous years; even with substantially more funding available, the HIP was unable to fund all projects submitted. Going into Year #7, the HIP continues to improve open pine habitat, averaging just over \$50 per acre, with the majority of work (85%) done through prescribed burning. Because fire is such an important ecological process, and other agencies have struggled to implement fire on a wide scale, HIP has found a solid niche. Working closely with TX A&M Forest Service and their fire program, the current NETX Chair, Andy McCrady, has been able to support greater “fuel reduction through fire” opportunities. Fire training schools, workshops and landowner connections with the Texas Fire Council continues to build fire as a recognized practice of great importance. The visibility in NETX CDN has prompted the 7th Woodlands Fire Conference to be located in Tyler, Texas on May 16-18, 2023.

The **NETX CDN** Habitat Incentive Program has increased coordination in adjacent partnerships, such as the Texas Longleaf Team. Through the HIP, our NETX CDN partnership has successfully restored or enhanced over **20,369 acres (\$929,550)**. During the FY22 funding cycle, 41 proposals were received, and 29 of those projects funded, which continues to improve open pine habitat with an average just over \$50 per acre, with the majority of work done through prescribed burning.



Arbor Day – Shortleaf Pine Restoration: Shortleaf Pine Restoration has been a long-standing focus of the NETX CDN. In 2019, the NETX CDN was recognized for its efforts to promote shortleaf pine efforts in east Texas. Following that recognition in 2019, and with reduced emphasis at USDA, the NETX partners suggested a proposal seeking landowner incentive funds specifically for shortleaf pine in the WGCP. After several attempts, Arbor Day communicated positive interest for Shortleaf Pine Restoration. In 2022, our proposal to focus shortleaf in areas on the Neches River Corridor and Bienville Parish in Louisiana was a success. Arbor Day has offered to fund approximately 500 acres to plant shortleaf pine. The effort would target private working forests that are certified under both the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council. Some areas are clearly managed with a focus on open pine, which is a cornerstone of priority species like Louisiana Pine Snake, Red Cockaded Woodpecker, and Eastern Wild Turkey restoration efforts. Through planting agreements, these private lands will agree to maintain open pine forest conditions and to restore shortleaf pine. In January 2023, 123 acres of shortleaf pine were planted in Bienville Parish. The opportunity to support both the NETX and AR-LA CDNs with this conservation effort is welcomed by partners.

Year	Dollars (Standard and NR HIP)	Acres Impacted
FY17	\$187,599	942
FY18/19	\$210,827	6,442
FY20	\$140,215	3,543
FY21	\$241,583	5,225
FY22	\$149,325.72	4,217
FY23 (planned)	\$418,104.66*	8,153
Total	\$929,549.86 spent \$375,257.66 planned	20,369 7,446 planned

** funds must be spent by August 31, 2023*

LMVJV and Longleaf Teams Expanding Collaboration

With the additional support of the LMVJV to the Louisiana Longleaf Team (West-Central Louisiana Ecosystem Project [WLEP]) for communications and a website presence, added discussions about strategic planning began. This culminated in a recent NFWF proposal that would be hosted by ABC and the LMVJV to support both the TLT and WLEP. In brief the proposal is summarized as follows:

*The Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture (LMVJV) as manager, and the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) as grantee, propose a NFWF Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund grant to accelerate **“Priority Species Conservation Through Landscape Restoration in the West Gulf Coastal Plain.”** Through a fully-functioning partnership network, the LMVJV Board, West-Central Louisiana Ecosystem Partnership (WLEP), Texas Longleaf Team (TLT) Steering Committees, and Louisiana (LA) and Texas (TX) Conservation Delivery Networks (CDNs) will strategically deliver habitat restoration across this landscape. WLEP and TLT have successfully implemented Longleaf Pine Ecosystem (LLP) restoration for a decade (2012-2022) through NFWF support. Both intend to continue their focus on restoration and enhancement of longleaf within the current RFP from NFWF, but through this proposal, delivery will be improved through a more collective strategy focused on recovery of critical species. The LMVJV and ABC propose a habitat suitability model for open pine that spans both geographies to compliment WLEP and TLT efforts. **This project will enhance our coordinated network to vastly improve Strategic Planning, Science-based monitoring, and our collective conservation delivery for open pine habitat in the West Gulf Coastal Plain (WGCP) of LA-TX, focusing on critical private lands that contribute to accelerated species recovery.** This WGCP, or Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 25, Longleaf Stewardship Fund LMVJV-ABC grant will include all LA-TX portions of the WGCP geography, and include all Red-cockaded woodpecker (RCWO) safe harbor areas and Louisiana*

Pine Snake (LPS) critical habitat on private lands. The 6 parishes and 8 counties comprising the LITs do not include the entirety of LPS or RCWO safe harbor areas, so support for these species on private lands is limited. We propose strategically-focused practices like tree planting, fire, monitoring and, if warranted, translocation in the existing RCWO safe harbor and LPS critical habitat areas outside the SGAs. Our goal is to identify a connected, fire-maintained landscape with sufficient open pine foraging habitat for all RCWO and LPS in both states. This fire-maintained landscape will benefit many declining birds, Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), and other at-risk species. In addition, the project landscape will include Bottomland Hardwood systems critical to ensuring the connectivity and full landscape-scale elements that promote WGCP at-risk species.



The area included in the Proposed “Priority Species Conservation Through Landscape Restoration in the West Gulf Coastal Plain.” WGCP of East Texas and Louisiana.

The Texas Longleaf Team (TLT) garnered significant funding following **Texan by Nature** recognition in 2021. Funds (estimated to be almost **\$700,000 over 10 years**) from three private sources have supplemented the Longleaf Pine conservation work, which until recently was funded solely through NFWF grants. This diversification of funding will be a key element for long-term stability in longleaf restoration. In addition, the association with Texan by Nature has helped “seal the deal” for a clear connection of future incentive funding for conservation; the potential incentive funds for private lands conservation coupling water, carbon, and biodiversity has attracted many corporate leaders through the Texan by Nature partnership.

Communication is strong in both the LA and TX Longleaf partnerships. TLT’s web-based outreach, Facebook, and Instagram complimented the traditional news blasts, and solidified significant habitat conservation efforts. The TLT website added a page, “Reptiles and

Amphibians of the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem,” to convey more about these species and conservation of their habitat: <https://bit.ly/3B0LKQz>. This new resource highlights the herpetofauna of East Texas Longleaf Pine and Open Pine forests, and adds to the plants, birds, and conservation educational material found on the website.

The partnership continues to work with Texan by Nature for its conservation innovation, communication, and collaboration; this has produced additional funding for conservation through industry partners HEB, Apache Energy, and other international firms. During 2022, 14 proposals were evaluated and 16 applications were funded, proposing 3,444 acres of restoration and/or enhancement of longleaf pine. Accomplishment of the Texas LIT includes **43,312 total acres impacted, expending \$1,106.288 from NFWF grants**. With expanded funding invested in restoration, these are our totals to date: **4,536 acres restored; 3,377 acres enhanced; 5,486 acres conserved; and 24,873 acres prescribed burned.**



2022 “Branching Out” TX Forestry Association – demonstrates the rainfall simulator and the impact of Longleaf Restoration on water quality and infiltration quantity.

During 2022, more engagement with **WLEP** of the **Louisiana LIT** occurred, with the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture (LMVJV) becoming a full Steering Committee member. This allowed us to work closely to expand communications and outreach. In 2022, the LMVJV

recognized Mr. Harvey Kieffer, and expanded the Louisiana LIT web-based presence with the addition of the WLEP link on JV website: <https://www.lmvjv.org/louisiana-longleaf-flatwoods-cdn>. Through our expanded communication partnerships, Mr. Kieffer's projects highlighted how he has planted trees and native grasses, conducted forest stand improvement, and continued his consistent prescribed fire program, ushering in a healthy herbaceous understory, and creating habitat for grassland nesting birds, including Wild Turkey.

West-Central Louisiana Ecosystem Partnership WLEP Accomplishments through 2022

- o **5,745 acres** Restored (planted) in longleaf pine
 - o 3,463, of those acres were within the SGA
- o **150,046 acres** treated with Rx Fire.
 - o 100,009 of those were within the SGA
- o **109 acres** Converted to longleaf via silvicultural treatments
- o **27,207 acres** maintained or enhanced
 - o 23,844 acres within the SGA.

WLEP works closely with NRCS to ensure EQIP plans for Longleaf are supported by the Action Team in priority areas. These plans are within the WLEP project area, are obligated and to be funded. Currently, there are 20 NRCS active plans, impacting 2017 acres including 1,327 acres of longleaf pine planted, and 1,971 acres of prescribed burning. With Private Lands making up the majority of WLEP priority areas, the effort through NRCS is significant.



**AR MAV Conservation Delivery Network
2022-23 Annual Report**

**LMVJV Management Board Spring Meeting
May 11-12, 2023**

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Meeting Notes

Delta Ag Lands Working Group

Virtual Planning Meeting

Apr 7, 2022 - 2:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting



Participants: Jason Milks, David Graves, Jason Jackson, Jake Spears, Steve Brock, Amanda Mathis, Willard Ryland, Breegan Andersen, Bubba Groves

- Goals:**
- 1) Outcomes from last meeting
 - 2) Review specific WG input
 - 3) Developed workshop agenda details
 - 4) Discuss/plan workshop site visit

Agenda: Review outcomes and objectives addressed from last meeting - Milks

- Generally agreed theme: Post-harvest farm management & planning
 - Fall/winter objectives, priorities and practices
- Reaffirmed that objective for the 2022 workshop will be as described above

Develop Workshop agenda

- Results of working group input to topics/sub-topics/speakers/sites
 - Review combined spreadsheet
- Finalize specific WS theme

There was significant discussion on how best to represent the generally agreed on theme. Some specific points raised:

 - What are farmers considering at this time of year and how do we best approach that question in the workshop?
 - Basic planning like - what fall/winter field prep is warranted
 - What are soil conditions e.g., evaluating fertilization needs
 - What's the difference between fall/winter planning for conventional till vs conservation tillage
 - How does anticipated crop(s) influence planning
 - What about Fall Tillage question
 - There are important points and reasons for use of fall tillage e.g., Fall tillage can be used to help reduce rutting in the spring; in contrast, farm consultants will advise that if you are planning for irrigated row-crops, fall tillage isn't warranted
 - We need to consider best way to represent the topic both pros and cons
- Breakdown topics, sub-topics and agenda – Classroom and Field Day
 - Speakers?
 - Could we invite both a conventional till and conservation tillage farmers to speak on and contrast both topics?
 - How do we avoid though, it appearing to the speakers as being confrontational or controversial
 - Generally agreed that these topics could/should be included in the workshop:
 - 1) Cover Crops – pros/cons
 - 2) Conventional Tillage - farmer discussing the whys/hows
 - 3) Conservation Tillage – farmer discussing why/how
 - 4) WRICE – landowner/farmer participating in program discussing pros and cons
 - 5) Other to be identified?
- Locations – Classroom and field stops – Not discussed
- Target Date(s) - October
- Other Logistics - No other logistics details addressed

Next Working Group Meeting?

Workshop Planning Spreadsheet

AR MAV 2022. Turn-row Credibility Workshop Ideas Spreadsheet				
Brainstorm Theme Titles				
After the Harvest - Farm Planning & Conservation Opportunities				
Post Harvest Farm Planning & Conservation Actions				
Fall/Winter Farm Planning & Conservation Practices				
Post Harvest Farm Planning and Conservation Inclusion				
Name	Core Topic	Associated Sub-topic	Potential Presenter and/or Organizations	Possible Field Day Sites
Brock	Farmers Perspective	Fall/Winter month by month farm planning	Michael Oxner	
"		Business/Financial Planning		
"		Incorporating Conservation - Pros & Cons		
Hitchcock		Perspectives on Fall Tillage & Fall Flooding		
"		De-water after fall flooding - February vs March	Could get insights from a public land farmer that may be required to leave their water on a little longer	
"		Fall Flooding - beneficial or not?	Farmer	
Brock	Consultants Perspective	Perspectives on any or all of the above	Dean Bell	
Brock	On Farm Fall/Winter Water Management	Private Farm vs Public Land		
Jackson		Wintering Waterfowl Use	AGFC/Farmer	WRICE
"		Waterbird Use	AGFC/Farmer	WRICE
"		Water wintering usage	NRCS/AGFC	
Jackson	Marginal Property	Programs Available	NRCS/AGFC	WRE, CP23 sites, csp in general
Brock/Hitchcock	Cooperative Farming on Public Lands	Whats the difference		Note: Concern expressed over our consideration of 'public land farming' (PLF) as a workshop topic; PLF occurs on NWR's and very few workshop participants will be from NWR's; farming on NWR's is under fire and may not be around much longer; Could consider a topic on management and challenges with 'leased land farming'
Brock	WRICE	Farmers Perspective - Why/Pros/Cons		
Brock	NRCS Farm Conservation Plan	Connecting available practices to actual habitat objectives and outcomes		
Mathis	Conservation Considerations After the Harvest	Winter Waterfowl flooding- ducks		Site to view flooding and have discussion over the "value" of that site as compared to others nearby (i.e. fall tilled, vs rolled, vs kelly harrow etc)
"		Winter Waterfowl Flooding- shorebirds		
"		Cover Crops- habitat benefits?		
"		Fall Tillage- pros and cons from a farmer perspective	NRCS for planning covers, UACES for cover study on Lacy farm	Site to view planted covers- talk about varieties and benefits to soil health and wildlife
"		Farm Planning during the "off months"	Farmer	Could do site but could also just be in class
"		Programs to support winter activities	Farmer	NA
"		Economic Considerations of wildlife habitat on the farm	NRCS/AGFC/DUP	NA
"			UACES through Lacy Farm work?	Lacy Farm or just presentation
Spears/Ryland	The Carbon Opportunity	Farm Carbon Programs	Seek out company and Landowner	
Spears	How incentives drive conservation practice adoption. Available options and how they motivate landowners.	WRICE Program	Luke Naylor/Active participant	
"		Rice Stewardship Partnership	DU Rice Technician/Active participant	
"		Cover-Crop Programs	NRCS?	

Meeting Notes

AR MAV CDN Steering Committee

TNC HQ, Little Rock

Jun 8, 2022



(Black - Original Agenda; Green - Meeting Notes; Red - Action Items)

Participants:: David Graves (Chair, AGFC), Amanda Mathis (NRCS), Bill Holimon (ANHC), Ron Seiss (TNC), Garrick Dugger (AGFC), Jay Hitchcock (FWS), Jason Milks (TNC), Jake Spears (DU), Steve Brock (LMVJV)

Goals: 1) CDN activities review/debrief & objectives
2) Discuss summer membership meeting objectives/themes
3) Formulate summer meeting agenda and logistics

Welcome and Objectives - Graves

- Welcome (Graves)
- SC Membership/NWTF - Graves was advised by Doug Little (Edge Field HQ) that Jeremy Everitts has moved out of his AR role with NWTF and that hopes to position soon; the JV was advised that Kacie Bauman has been assigned regional duties in AR, LA and MS; Brock invited her to the meeting, she did not respond
Action: Graves will follow up with Little to determine who is covering AR (Bauman or other?)

Debrief on recent activities

- Winter Meeting - Strong agreement that the Forest Carbon theme was successfully addressed and well received by attendees; video and pdfs of presentations are available on [JV website](#)
- Delta Ag Lands WG (Milks) - The WG has agreed on "After the Harvest" as a general theme for the next Turn-row WS; a pretty solid list of draft meeting content/ideas has been developed but has not been finalized; important that the WG get together soon on final agenda and set date if WS is to be held in 2022; might consider hosting in early 2023 as well
Action: Milks will follow up with the Delta Ag WG soon to move effort forward
- Tri-State Conservation Partnership - No update given due to time limitations
- Other?

Summer Membership Meeting Planning:

- **Date**
 - Generally in Aug (2021 was Aug 17) - agreement that meeting should be held second half of Aug
Action: SC will set date and advise membership following the next SC meeting (see actions below)
- **Meeting Topic/Theme**
 - Consider potential/next topic(s)
 - Farm Carbon topic was generally agreed upon at last SC meeting
 - The SC agreed in the Jan SC meeting that after Forest Carbon, Farm Carbon would be the next meeting topic; agreed we'd continue consideration/planning around that topic
 - Brent Rudolph (Dir of Sustainable Partnerships) was connected to SC by Deiner and invited to present information on QF national and regional Farm Carbon related efforts (QF summary doc appended)
 - Discussion on formulating a Farm Carbon agenda:
 - Discussed Indigo website offering carbon contracts and presence of AR farmer as participant on the website
 - Milks has recently talked with Indigo and can follow up to assess their interest in talking with us and farmers in AR that could potentially share story w/CDN

- Amanda shared that Field to Market is working actively with AR RICE, not sure if a good fit though for CDN meeting
- Dugger: Could Truterra data (referenced by Rudolph) be useful to the topic?
- Important that we consider both what's happening now in AR with Farm Carbon i.e., adopting regenerative Ag practices for carbon payments as well as addressing how CDN should be considering effective incorporation of wildlife habitat as QF is aiming at; Need to invite Rudolph to address QF farm carbon efforts to address wildlife element when integrating carbon
- Seiss: Key questions we need to be asking 1) What do we want the CDN to know about Farm Carbon?, 2) Who can best deliver the desired information?
- Agreed to conduct multiple outreach on possible speakers and get back together virtually in two weeks to reassess

Actions:

- Milks** - Will reach out to Indigo contact to ask 1) about participating in the meeting and 2) what AR farmer might be best to contact (e.g., Hollis Mankin)
- Milks** - Will also reach out to ESMC Board Member (from N AM Ag) to assess that organizations potential for CDN mtg participation
- Mathis** - Will touch base with RIPE contact to assess potential fit
- Brock** - Coordinate with Mathis on AR Climate Smart Ag & Forestry Proposals
- Brock** - Contact Brent Rudolph about his SC presentation
- Brock** - Send Doodle Poll to SC to set late June coordination call

• **Field Trip?**

- Could this be viable part of a Farm Carbon meeting?
Briefly discussed but not consider feasible for this meeting theme
- Past: [most recent first] 1) DFCW Dagmar WMA/Aug 2021, 2) Choctaw Island WMA/Oct 2018, 3) CRP/Dark Corner/Jul 2018, 4) Prairie Restoration/Jun 2017, 5) Proctor Tire/Dec 2015, 6) Choctaw Is. WMA/Dec 2014, 7) Cache River Restoration/Mar 2013
- For future planning - GTR work, other?

• **Meeting Location**

- Location could be theme and/or field trip driven
Discussed several alternatives including Jonesboro and Stuttgart; generally agreed that the centrality of Stuttgart may be best option and that the Rice Research Center was an excellent venue
- Past In-person Meetings (most recent first): 1) Stuttgart, 2) Brinkley, 3) DeValls Bluff, 4) McGehee, 5) Cook's Lake, 6) Brinkley, 7) White River, 8) Stuttgart, 9) Little Rock, 10) Jonesboro, 11) Hazen, 12) Stuttgart, 13) Tillar, 14) Pineville, 15) Brinkley, 16) Cooks Lake, 17) Clarendon, 18) Brinkley [Detailed summary of past meetings below]

• **Partner Spotlight**

- Who? [See list of previous on pg 3]
As the agenda is formulated this may be considered if additional agenda content is needed
- Possibilities: FWS/Cache Rvr NWR - overview, AFC, ANRC, AGFC/Programmatic (i.e., waterfowl, deer, turkey, non-game), USFS, NRCS, MRLA

• **Project Spotlight?**

Same as Partner Spotlight, above; some possible topics offered:

- Dugger: Extra funding brought to the state by NRCS for WRICE program and the CDN connection would be great highlight
- Spears: WRE restoration with NFWF funding may also be a good spotlight
- MRT Project Update - Giles Kelly (still not ripe)

- AGFC RICE Update
- Review previous planning list (below)
-
- **Working Group Updates**
 - Delta Ag Lands WG: Current Turn-row Workshop planning
 - Tri-state Conservation Partnership
 - Will include these as standard agenda topics
- **Other Updates**
 - Forest Stewards Guild Workshop
 - Regular NRCS Update
 - CWD Update
 - Open floor for brief high-level updates from CDN partner
 - Other?
- **Review Action Items**

Appendix

Arkansas Mississippi Alluvial Valley Conservation Delivery Network Steering Committee Notes

Farm Carbon Sustainability and Conservation Opportunities

Brent Rudolph, Director of Sustainability Partnerships

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever

BRudolph@PheasantsForever.org

C. 517-980-4570

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever work to sustain a healthy environment, people, and prosperous communities through the quality upland experiences and habitat we provide.

We're expanding partnerships for delivery and reaching additional landowners interested in receiving our support by demonstrating the broad environmental and economic outcomes of our work beyond the benefits to pheasants, quail, and other wildlife.

In 2020, there was a threefold increase in the number of businesses worldwide that have a goal to accomplish net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. These commitments are driving more corporations – especially those connected to agricultural supply chains – to seek partners within the conservation field to help design and deliver projects, provide technical assistance, expand networks of grower contacts, and leverage matching funding.

Our technical assistance teams have grown and diversified, and include Farm Bill Biologists (FBB), Precision Agriculture and Conservation Specialists (PACS), Grazing Specialists, and Habitat Specialists. PACS can work in concert with a FBB (and others) to utilize precision data and technology to drive decisions and results. By identifying low yielding acres to remove from production and enroll in conservation practices, the reduction of inputs can increase a grower's net profit and reduce GHG emissions that would have been associated with the fuel, seed, fertilizer, and other applications to plant and harvest those acres. The vegetation established through conservation practices also sequesters carbon both above and below ground. For example, from 2007 to 2019, the loss of nearly 10 million Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres just within the pheasant range counties resulted in a loss of 7.3 million metric tons of annual carbon sequestration and emission reductions (and also contributed to a 22 percent decline in the U.S. pheasant population index). Other partners or programs wish to focus on increasing carbon sequestration or reducing emissions associated with acres that remain in production – or even the specific acres from which they source ingredients for their products. These efforts can include expanding adoption of low and no-till practices or cover crops. These practices don't always directly translate to high quality wildlife habitat, but they do support responsible producers and landowners and can be part of broader sustainability efforts that include more substantial habitat development on additional acres, even if it takes some time to develop working relationships with those participants and enroll in such programs in the future.

The following page provides examples of programs and partnerships in which we're engaged that seek to provide technical or financial assistance to farmers and landowners to support practices that promote sustainability and conservation, with a focus on those with connections to reducing carbon emissions or increasing sequestration. Contact me for additional information, or to explore ideas about adapting or expanding work into the Arkansas Mississippi Alluvial Valley.

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever [Precision Agriculture and Conservation Specialists](#) are supported by a variety of partners and state and federal grants. Cotton, Inc. has been a leading contributor to our ability to provide one-on-one consultations to growers on landscapes that support bobwhite quail, monarchs, and cotton production. We provide a whole operations review and conservation prescriptions that result in sustainability outcomes of mutual interest (such as biodiversity, water quality, soil health, and erosion management) while also increasing profitability. Existing positions have been able to serve growers in Georgia and Alabama, with an expansion currently underway in the Texas panhandle.

The Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever [Soil Health and Habitat Program](#) (SHHP), supported by Purina, is focused on the prairie pothole region. The goal of the program is to rebuild soil organic matter, sequester carbon, increase water infiltration, and provide quality wildlife habitat on the least productive cropland acres while simultaneously improving profitability and sustainability. Growers can receive cost share support for grass seeding, cover crop payments, and a general sign-on payment for participation. We are tracking and reporting results in partnership with Truterra, who is providing analysis through their Insights Engine.

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever are members of [Field to Market](#), an organization building partnerships across the agricultural supply chain to collaboratively develop science-driven and outcomes-based programs and tools to deliver on sustainability goals. Members include farmers, agribusiness companies, brands and retailers, non-profits, academia, and public sector partners. We are not currently partners on any Arkansas projects, but we did provide a letter of support for a Field to Market [Climate-Smart Commodities Partnership](#) proposal that would develop innovative finance strategies to help farmers manage the financial and agronomic risks of adopting new climate-smart practices. If the proposal is funded, we would look for focal areas to assist with implementation. Additionally, other Field to Market members do have active carbon-related projects for which Arkansas growers might be eligible, including:

- Sound Agriculture, Nutrient Reduction Project: Sound Agriculture is helping growers reduce nitrogen fertilizer use to mitigate GHG emissions, address water quality challenges, improve overall soil health, and increase grower profitability. The program offers an innovative financing guarantee to address the economic risk associated with potential yield loss from reduced nitrogen applications, and the focus is on corn growers. Arkansas is among 33 eligible states.
- Bunge and Mondelez, Wheat Project: Out of interest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, sequestering carbon, and improving water quality, Mondelez and Bunge are engaging wheat farmers to enter data into Field to Market's Fieldprint Platform to develop practice baselines, encourage continuous improvement on these critical resource concerns, and guide future support to farmers throughout the wheat supply chain. The geography covers Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee.

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever are members of [Ecosystem Services Market Consortium](#), a non-profit working to advance ecosystem service markets that incentivize farmers and ranchers to implement practices that can be turned into credits (currently carbon, greenhouse gas, and water quality credits) for sale to corporate buyers in the agricultural supply chain. ESMC sells verified credits to buyers and pays farmers. Markets are currently available for corn, soy, wheat, and alfalfa cropping systems. Pilot projects are evaluating additional credit markets (e.g., biodiversity credits), cropping systems, and will expand geographic scope (the Western Gulf Coast and Delta region is not currently covered but will be an area of expansion).



Meeting Notes

Arkansas MAV CDN

Summer Meeting

Aug 9, 2022

AR Rural Water Assoc., Lonoke, AR

Meeting Theme: Farm Carbon – Another Conservation Tool

Welcome - David Graves (Chair)

Working Group Update & Partner Highlights

- Delta Ag Lands Working Group - Jason Milks (Chair)
 - The Working Group is still in the planning phase for hosting another Turn-row Credibility Workshop; expect a date will be set for sometime this fall or next spring
- NRCS Current Highlights - Amanda Mathis (NRCS)
 - The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Notice of Funding Opportunity closed April 13, Arkansas was part of two proposals; Key Pillars of RCPP include, Impact – Partner Contributions – Innovation – Partnerships and Management Capability; NRCS plans to place significant focus on projects that include Climate Smart Ag & Forestry, Urban Agriculture, and Racial Justice & Equity; NRCS hopes to hear on whether the AR projects are funded very soon.
 - AR NRCS is currently reviewing proposals for Partner TA Agreement projects that are intended to foster partner projects, working with the NRCS to provide technical services that address state resource priorities including Water Quantity & Quality, Plant Health, Soil Health and Wildlife
 - Proposals for the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities are also currently under review and will soon be awarded; The program was offered in two funding pools, the first was for \$5M to \$100M proposals (closed in early Apr) and the second for proposals ranging from \$250K to \$4.99M; proposals were required to target on-farm, on-ranch or forest production of climate-smart commodities and associated reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and/or carbon sequestration
- Tri-state Conservation Partnership - Steve Brock
 - The TCP is focusing on several key objectives for 2022 including:
 - 1) Outreach – after completing the 7 video management series for WRP/E landowners in Dec 2021, the TCP is initiating a new video production effort aimed at helping potential WRE applicants better understand the WRE application process; Again this year, Tri-state Partners are supporting LA and MS NRCS offices in accomplishing outreach for new enrollment. The effort included direct mailings to 3500 and 4500 landowners in LA & MS, respectively.
 - 2) WRE Forest Management – the TCP has recently initiated a working group to develop a new WRE Landowner Non-commercial Treatment Guide. The TCP is also preparing for a landowner BHW plantation management workshop that will be held in the S MS Delta in late Sep.;
 - 3) Funding – The TCP was successfully awarded \$5M for its Tri-state WREP project proposal in FY21 and is preparing to submit a proposal in response to the recent FY22 WREP funding announcement. FY 22 WREP projects are again capped at \$5M. Also in the Outreach category, the TCP Steering Committee is preparing to host the Washington Office, NRCS Easement Program Division Staff for a late Oct tour of easements in AR, LA & MS. The tour is intended to strengthen awareness of the TCP;
 - 4) Wetland Conservation Policy Coalition is currently setting priorities and formulating strategies for the next Farm Bill

- Open Mic: Hot Updates from Other CDN Partners
 - Kevin McGaughey (ANRD) shared the great success of having the West Fork of the White River recently removed from the 303(d) list
 - Amanda Mathis offered a reminder for the upcoming (Oct 4-6) [Private Lands Partners Day](#) to be hosted in Fayetteville

Carbon/Green Markets - Opportunities & Considerations from a Producer Viewpoint – Mark Isbell

- Due to a health related issue, Mark was not able to attend

Rural Investment to Protect our Environment (RIPE) - Andre Carter

- RIPE was established to advance a voluntary stewardship program that would “provide a reasonable return as part of a national climate policy”; RIPE is a proposed strategy that is not yet funded
- Highlights of the RIPE 100 Proposal
 - \$100 per acre or animal unit, for voluntary stewardship w/price floor that surpasses climate policy costs
 - Does not compete with existing federal safety net programs; funded by new climate funds
 - All farm/ranch sizes & types qualify
 - Simple enrollment, no ranking
 - No penalty for early adopters
- Would include a wide-variety of climate friendly farm practices for various [Crops](#), [Rice specific practices](#), [Livestock](#) and [Forestry](#)

Lunch (Sponsored by AR TNC & Walton Family Foundation)

Anheuser-Busch & ESMC (Ecosystem Services Market Consortium) - Bill Jones, Rice Agronomy Mgr

- AB works with more than 25K farmers in 14 countries to produce the agricultural commodities needed for beverage production and within the U.S. originates barley, rice and hops production from 5 regions
- AB InBev has set an ambitious 2025 global sustainability goal; to address goals, the North American AB program is targeting four key areas to achieve the greatest impact, 1) Water Stewardship, 2) Renewables & Carbon, 3) Smart Agriculture and 4) Circular Packaging (recyclable)
- Of particular focus in AR, are collaboratives that foster water stewardship (TNC is a partner) and soil health including fertility management, minimum till, crop rotation, continuous cover and regenerative landscapes
- AB has established a Grower Panel with the mission “To ensure the development of a **strategic partnership** between Anheuser-Busch and our direct growers resulting in **common good** and **continuous improvement** throughout our supply chains.”

Indigo Ag/AR Program – Lee Atwill, Field Data & Technology Manager

- Indigo has two corporate strategies 1) Carbon and 2) Source; In AR, Atwill works specifically within Source; the approach is based on the fact that farming can function to both produce greenhouse gases and to sequester them
- A core strategy of Indigo Source, in working with AR farmers, is to incentivize farming practices that will reduce the release of greenhouse gases carbon into the atmosphere (i.e., [pre-carbon](#) management as opposed to post-sequestration)
- The Indigo Source approach identifies emissions that arise from pre-farm, on-farm & post-farm sources and focuses specifically on “reduction that quantify avoidance of GHG emissions release into the environment through reduced inputs and better mgmt. practices within the agricultural supply chain”.
- Indigo Carbon works specifically with the sequestration realm, purchasing “Carbon Credits that: quantify net sequestration of carbon in the soil of **already emitted GHGs** in the environment, accounting for soil carbon flux events such as nitrogen leaching, run-off and volatilization from the soil.”

The mission of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture is to function as the forum in which the private, state, federal conservation community develops a shared vision of bird conservation for the Lower Mississippi Valley region; cooperates in its implementation; and collaborates in its refinement.

- Indigo Source 1) Co-develops value chain intervention projects with supply chain brands for farmers, 2) Aligns supply chain partners within brand's supply sheds, 3) Enrolls farmers and verifies on-farm practices and 4) then Quantify and report on project impact e.g., GHG avoidance - some examples of on-farm practice categories offered to farmers include soybean rotation, straight levee rice production, multiple inlet irrigation, 100% surface water utilization, conservation tillage, alternate wetting and drying; farmers are categorized based on the number of practices they adopt
- Anheuser-Busch is a key supply chain partner working with Indigo since 2019 to formulate and implement the program
- In addition, Indigo Source programs are based on region-specific practices and impacts; some key examples of intervention programs for AR Rice farms also focus on water stewardship and GHG reduction specifically focusing on Zero-grade, Multiple-inlet, Furrow-irrigation, Conservation Tillage and Crop Rotation
- At scale, Indigo Source projects can improve water quality, reducing nutrient leaching with the ability to save 125B gallons of ground water annually with soil/solids leaching reduced by 33M lbs

Promoting Carbon Benefits for Habitat – Brent Rudolph, Director of Sustainability Partnerships, QF

- Mission: Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever's mission is to conserve pheasants, quail, and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public access, education, and conservation advocacy.
- Since 1966, Quail have declined by 83% and since 1970 Pheasant population has dropped by 70%
- QF acknowledges that based on EPA inventory of U.S. GHG emissions and sinks, that agriculture only contributes 10% of the total emissions; though Ag production is only a small part of the GHG emission issue, it has the potential to be a large part of the solution
- QF/PF is working, including in AR, to capitalize on the growing opportunities associated with global climate change, leveraging both government, cooperate and private philanthropic interests to support and help implement on integration on-farm habitat development and management
- One example of a targeted effort include a program working with Purina in the mid-west; QF/PF offers a program to farmers with the benefit of Flexible Short-Term Contracts & Precision Ag Data Analysis through Truterra Insights Engine; Eligible cooperators can receive \$250/ac Sign-On, \$150/ac Grass Seeding Cost Share, & \$20/ac Cover Crop Payment
- The federal government is making major investments aimed at addressing global climate change goals; This creates a great opportunity for QF/PF, working with its partners, to develop and deliver programs that support habitat restoration and management; QF has a solid partnership established in AR and is working with NRCS, AGFC and other partners to maximize on both current and evolving funding opportunities associated with Global Climate Change

Wrap up & Adjourn - David Graves

Attendees

Name	Organization	Email
David Graves	AGFC	david.graves@agfc.ar.gov
Jason Milks	TNC	jmilks@tnc.org
Andre Carter	RIPE	acarter@riperoadmap.org
Amanda Mathis	NRCS	amanda.mathis@usda.gov
Breegan Andersen	TNS	breegan.andersen@tnc.org
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Lee Atwill	Indigo	latwill@indigoag.com
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Jay McEntire	Farmer	jay3farm@gmail.com
Chris Himyak	SCA	chrishimyak@protoemail.com
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Anna Baker	Anheuser-Busch	agbaker4@gmail.com
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Shea Leatherman	Cargillcotton	shea_leatherman@cargill.com
Brent Rudolph	Quail Forever	brudolph@pheasantsforever.org
Jake Spears	DU	jspears@ducks.org
Tucker Collins	AGFC	james.collins@agfc.ar.gov

Agenda

AR MAV CDN Steering Committee

Fall Meeting (AACD Office, Maumelle, AR)



(Black - Original Agenda; Green - Meeting Notes; Red - Action Items)

Date: Nov 7, 2022
Time: 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Location: AACD Office (8100 Bicentennial Rd, North Little Rock, AR)
Participants: David Graves (Chair, AGFC), Ron Seiss (TNC), Jay Hitchcock (FWS), Jason Milks (TNC), Jake Spears (DU), Steve Brock (LMVJV)
Goals: 1) Debrief on Summer meeting & any other CDN activities e.g., WG/TCP
2) Discuss winter membership meeting objectives/potential themes
3) Formulate winter meeting agenda and logistics

Welcome and Objectives - Graves

- Welcome

Debrief/Update on Recent Activities

- Summer Meeting – brief discussion on mtg outcomes; general agreement that the summer meeting was productive and beneficial, while at the same time did not fully achieve all our objectives for the Farm Carbon topic; appears that Farm Carbon needs to mature more
- Delta Ag Lands WG (Milks) – Good discussion on next steps for the WG; Milks shared that he would like to consider transitioning Breegan Andersen into the WG Chair role; SC agreed and Milks will explore that possibility with Breegan and follow up
 - Brock shared that recent Turn-row Credibility Field days in LA & MS had heavy participation by newer USDA staff (n=31) and was generally well received by participants; the committee agreed that while Turn-row workshop planning should be fully focused on benefiting traditional CDN participants, we could increase our invitation to NRCS staff in the 2023 Turn-row training (e.g., offer 30 slots)
 - General agreement also that the WG will need to have a reboot planning call to get Turn-row Credibility planning back on track for 2023 – Brock will work with Milks to get scheduled in Jan
- Tri-State Conservation Partnership (Seiss/Brock) – Seiss/Brock shared updates on TCP priority activities including initiation of new video development project targeting WRE new enrollment, as well as development of an additional video for socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers/landowners, it will also be new enrollment based; the TCP has also initiated development of a new Landowner Guide for WRE plantation non-commercial treatment; also working to reschedule, for early 2023, a NRCS Easement Program Div staff tour in AR, LA & MS
- Other?
 - Seiss/Brock additionally shared some highlights from last weeks JV Mgmt Board meeting in Heber Springs; meeting was well attended and included ASC's for Easements from AR, LA & MS (a first to have all three attend) but also clarified that Mike Sullivan is the primary JV Board Rep representing NRCS; The meeting field trip was at Hurricane WMA to see GTR renovation effort, this prompted a brief discussion that **this work may serve well for an upcoming CDN meeting and w/field trip**
 - Milks shared an update on the TNC program he has been leading the development of that will focus on Markets for Floodplain Reforestation; TNC is on the cusp of approving a 3600 acre pilot project; Carbon Registry work for the project will be conducted by the American Forest Foundation; TNC will handle reforestation/restoration work

Actions:

- o **Milks** will coordinate with Breegan A. re potentially assuming leadership of the Delta Ag Lands WG
- o **Brock** will develop Doodle Poll to schedule a Delta Ag WG meeting for Jan 2023 to reinstate Turn-row planning and will coordinate with Milks to set the meeting

Winter Membership Meeting Planning:

- **Date** - First 2 weeks Feb
 - Jan 16 is target date for meeting with Jan 15 as alternate
- **Meeting Topic/Theme** - Identify potential/next topic(s)
 - Major conservation projects/efforts/opportunities/issues?
 - Summary of past topics: (oldest to newest):
 - Diverse project updates
 - **WRP Reclamation**
 - MAV Hydrology & For Health
 - WRP Reclamation
 - MAV Hydrology & For Health
 - MAV Infrastructure & Conservation (e.g., ROWs, Wind Energy, Solar)
 - Grand Prairie Restoration
 - Waterfowl Research & Management
 - Enhancement of BHW Plantations and Wetlands
 - Invasive Fauna - Addressing Fish & Swine
 - Managing Wetland for Waterbirds
 - Quail, Monarchs & Native Plant Management
 - DFCW
 - WRP/E Reclamation was identified as a prime topic for the winter membership meeting; the NRCS has initiated a pretty aggressive effort to treat older age class easement plantations; it is also supporting FSA in treating CRP stands as well
 - Also discussed the significant amount of CRP related work needed in the MAV and the benefit of inviting FSA to update the CDN on program funding changes and opportunities (e.g., CP9 & CP23); Doris Washington and Steve Walker are best POC's for FSA; Steve Walker was identified as best potential speaker for membership meeting
 - Randy Childress would be great for providing an update on Easement reclamation objectives and actions
 - Field Trip: (see action item in Field Trip category)
 - Sid Munford and Rich Johnson are good contacts for identifying potential sites for a field tour to visit, review and discuss management actions/strategies; Jody Pagan is managing much of the NRCS contract work
 - Eric Johnson may also have a good forest treatment site for field trip
 - Buck Johnson may be a good source for sharing wetland management information in the field or possibly in the meeting

Actions: **Milks** will contact Steve Walker (FSA) and Randy Childress

• **Meeting Location**

- o Location could be theme and/or field trip driven
- o Past In-person Meetings:

1) Lonoke	6) Cook's Lake (2)	11) Tillar
2) Stuttgart (3)	7) White River	12) Pineville
3) Brinkley (4)	8) Little Rock	13) Clarendon
4) DeValls Bluff	9) Jonesboro	
5) McGehee	10) Hazen	

- Based on tentative identified field trip locations, aiming to host meeting at Brinkley Convention Center
- Milks indicated he should be able to cover meeting room and meal

Actions: **Brock** - Once speakers are lined up, book Brinkley Convention Center
: **Milks** - Brock will coordinate with on meeting room payment and lining up lunch

- **Field Trip?**

- Past: [most recent first]

- 1) DFCW Dagmar WMA/Aug 2021
 - 2) Choctaw Island WMA/Oct 2018
 - 3) CRP/Dark Corner/Jul 2018
 - 4) Prairie Restoration/Jun 2017
 - 5) Proctor Tire/Dec 2015
 - 6) Choctaw Is. WMA/Dec 2014
 - 7) Cache River Restoration/Mar 2013

- Previously considered future possibilities

- AGFC GTR work
 - Other opportunities?

Actions: **Graves, Hitchcock & Spears** will coordinate with identified leads (Eric J., Munford/R. Johnson, Buck J.) to determine best potential field trip sires and lock them in with site presenter, for Jan 16 : **Hitchcock** reached out to Eric Johnson, he indicated he is available to support the meeting as needed on Jan 16

- **Partner Spotlight** (See list of previous on pg 3)

- Possibilities:

- FWS/Cache River NWR overview
 - AFC
 - AGFC/Programmatic (i.e., waterfowl, deer, turkey, non-game)
 - USFS
 - NRCS

- Depending on agenda flexibility, could consider having Doug Osbourn do Partner Spotlight highlighting on Five Oaks student project

Actions: **Spears** - once base agenda is formulated, Jake will reach out to Osbourne, if needed

- **Project Spotlight?** (see list below)

- Possibilities:

- MRT Project Update - Giles Kelly
 - Five Oaks Ag Education and Research Center
 - NFWF/Wetland Rehab (Spears)

Actions: **Milks** will present highlight of new 3600 acre TNC pilot project - Markets for Floodplain Reforestation

- **Working Group Updates**

- Delta Ag Lands WG: Current Turn-row Workshop planning
 - Tri-state Conservation Partnership

Actions: **Milks or Andersen** to provide update
: **Seiss/Brock** to provide TCP update

- **Other Updates**

- ~~Forest Stewards Guild Workshop~~
 - Regular NRCS Update
 - CWD Update
 - Open floor for brief high-level updates from CDN partner
 - Other?

Actions: **Mathis or Cousins** – coordinate with them to determine which is available for NRCS update

Appendix

Partner Spotlights:

- Aug 2022: None / Mar 2022: None / Aug 2021: None / Feb 2021: None / Feb 2020: None
- Oct 2019: Audubon (Scheiman)
- Feb 2019: TNC (Milks)
- Summer 2018: Quail Forever (Diener)
- Winter 2017/18: National Wild Turkey Federation (Everitts)
- Summer 2017: Dale Bumpers White River NWR (Hitchcock)
- Winter 2016/2017 AR Natural Heritage Commission (Holimon)
- Spring 2016: AGFC Private Lands (Groves)
- Fall 2015: Ducks Unlimited (Callicutt)
- Spring 2015: AR PFW Program (Krystofik)

- Some Potentials:
 - o State Agency/Programs: Waterfowl (Naylor); WMA Management; Private Lands; Turkey; Forestry
 - o Extension Service
 - o Federal: NRCS Programs - Easements, Other Programs; FSA; Ecological Services; Refuges (White Rvr, Cache, Felsenthal); US Forest Service
 - o NGO's: TNC; Audubon

Project Spotlights:

- Mar 2022: Markets for Floodplain Reforestation - Jason Milks
- Aug 2021: Fall Water Bird Habitat Use in the MS Delta, Jason Hoeksema, Univ. of Miss.
- Feb 2021: AGFC WRICE & GTR Restoration (Luke Naylor); AR-LA CDN RCPP (Bill Bartush); NRCS NWTF WRE Project (Sid Munford); AR TNC/Kellogg Partnership (Jason Milks)
- Feb 2020: APHIS/NRCS Feral Swine Eradication & Control Pilot Prog. (Robert Byrd)
- Oct 2019: White River NWR Habitat Development/Mgmt on "The Farm" (Hitchcock)
- Feb 2019: AGFC/Waterfowl Rice Incentive Conservation Enhancement Program (Graves)

List of Potential/Future Project Spotlights Topics:

- Monarch & Pollinator Habitat (Deiner)
- NFWF/Wetland Rehab – **Originally Massey topic/Check status with Spears**
- NFWF/Northern Cache River - Irrigation Efficiency (Milks)
- Active Floodplain Easement Program efforts (Mathis)
- TNC Flood Team Update
- AR Forestry Association - Forest Assessment
- Five Oaks Ag Education and Research Center



Meeting Notes

Arkansas MAV CDN

Winter Meeting

Thursday - Feb 16, 2023, 9:30 a.m.

Brinkley Convention Center

(Black - Original Agenda; Green - Meeting Notes)

Meeting Theme: Forest & Wetlands Stewardship

Welcome - David Graves (Chair)

Based on the theme, a fundamental goal for today's meeting will be to highlight forest and wetlands stewardship work being accomplished by CDN partners in the MAV. The plan is to follow this meeting with a summer meeting that will be a field trip to look at and discuss stewardship efforts being accomplished on the ground

Working Group Update & Partner Highlights

- Delta Ag Lands Working Group - Jason Milks (Chair)
 - The working group has done a significant amount of initial coordinating on hosting the next Turn-row Credibility training but planning has slowed in recent months; the WG will be convened in the coming months to nail down planning details
- NRCS Current Highlights - Roger Cousins
 - EQIP: Currently selecting applications for funding – funded \$15M in MRBI; Mar 14 application deadline for FY23 IRA EQIP funding
 - RCPP: Mar 10 ranking deadline; next opportunity for IRA related proposals will be sometime in Spring (\$550M available nationwide); anticipate offering grant opportunities with next round
 - CSP: Traditional CSP application deadline Mar 24; IRA CSP deadline Mar 14
 - CRP: Deadline not yet established
- Tri-state Conservation Partnership - Steve Brock/Ron Seiss
 - Outreach:
 - o Getting great use of WRE mgmt. 7 video series; To date, 14000 visits to NRCS YouTube sites across the three states; currently initiating development of new "Understanding NRCS WRE" video, also plan to make an additional video focused on limited resource landowners
 - o WRE New enrollment outreach in LA – 3561 mailers to landowners, sharing program details; also mailed WRE workshop notifications to 4500 MS landowners
 - o Supported KKAC in obtaining grant award from WFF for \$100k to support limited resource & minority producer outreach and to address Heirs & Title issues and development of Wills & Trust
 - WRE Forest Mgmt:
 - o Initiating development of new Non-commercial Treatment Guide for landowners
 - o Held Sep. 20, 2022 WRE landowner workshop in South MS Delta – topics: WRE & CRP forest management; Forest management policy & procedures; Impacts of flooding; Research updates
 - Funding:
 - o FY22 Tri-state WREP Awarded = \$5M w/1500 acre enrollment objective; \$2.5M of \$5M funding in pool for minority landowners; Total of ~\$45M awarded for Tri-State WREP since FY17
 - TCP Outreach & Communications:
 - o Tri-state tour for Washington Office Easement Prog. Div. Staff scheduled for Feb 28-Mar 2
 - Wetland Conservation Policy Coalition
 - o Submitted comments in response to "**Request for Public Input about Implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act Funding**"
 - o Is pro-actively formulating and pushing forward policy recommendations for 2023 Farm Bill
 - o Developing WRE video to share with the House and Senate Ag Committee
 - o Also attending Farm Bill hearing on the Hill

The mission of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture is to function as the forum in which the private, state, federal conservation community develops a shared vision of bird conservation for the Lower Mississippi Valley region; cooperates in its implementation; and collaborates in its refinement.

- Open Mic: Hot Updates from CDN Partners
 - AR Dept of Ag/Natural Resources Div: AR to receive \$2.2M to pilot [RIPE](#) program in six counties; Also developing a new conservation state income tax credit program
 - NRCS: Randy Childress - selected as new Asst. State Conservationist for Water Resources

Project Spotlight - Markets for Floodplain Reforestation, Jason Milks – TNC

Planning and development of this new program has been underway for several years and recently TNC approved a pilot to test the feasibility of the project. A flyer is provided in **Appendix A** that is designed help describe the project. It is not a landowner handout, but rather, is intended as an informational flyer for both TNC staff and its partners.

Partner Spotlight - AGFC’s New Private Lands Habitat Division, Bubba Groves – AGFC

- AGFC has recently created a new Private Lands Habitat Div; currently have 13 AGFC private lands staff and will be seeking thr legislature support for 5 to 8 additional; the division is also supported by 17 additional shared capacity positions with QF, DU and NWTF

Various Arms of the Division:

- o Private Lands Biologist (PLB’s) are responsible for a suite of priorities including deer management particularly DMAP & CWD, wetlands including AR WRICE/waterfowl, feral swine, forest stewardship, quail & turkey mgmt., Rx fire and nuisance animals; these missional priorities for the agency typify both need for the new Division, need for additional staff, and the great value in working with partners through on shared capacity to address priorities of mutual interest
- o Several key examples of the work accomplished by PLB’s include:
 - DMAP - PLB’s handle 490 DMAP clubs, averaging ~45 clubs each; analyze biological data and provides harvest recommendations, issue bonus deer tags and make site visits to deer clubs
 - Wetlands - AGFC’s Voluntary Public Access program, aka WRICE has been very effective and successful thus far, spending ~\$600K annually since 2019; The program has not only benefitted from NRCS’s VPA funding but also received addt support of \$2.1M in NRCS EQIP funding to be delivered from 2021-23 (this funding is allowing AGFC to extend the program into 2024); PLB’s also actively work with private landowners on wetlands management, including working with NRCS to provide assistance with WRE wetlands restoration as needed
 - Forest Stewardship – The Private Lands Habitat Div also supports forest management, including assisting landowners in implementing prescribed fire

FSA Conservation Program Overview, Stephen Walker – FSA

Some key current figures related to CRP in AR include:

- 4,626 contracts totaling 193,523 acres
- Annual rental payments totaling over \$16M and averaging \$85 per acre

Practice Code	CRP Practice Description	Total Contracts	Total Acres
CP23	Wetland Restoration	66	3,582.81
CP3	Tree planting	62	3,337.25
CP22	Riparian buffer	80	1,929.37
CP23A	Wetland restoration, nonflood plain	39	1,032.86
CP2	Establishment of permanent native grasses	23	985.19
CP31	Bottomland timber established on wetland	2	854.36
CP1	Establishment of permanent introduced grasses and legumes	15	468.32
CP3A	Hardwood tree planting	6	422.09
CP4D	Permanent wildlife habitat, noneasement	10	210.81
CP21	Filter strips	18	120.24
CP33	Habitat for upland birds	5	85.77
CP9	Shallow water areas for wildlife	7	54.82
CP29	Marginal pastureland wildlife habitat buffer	1	7.20
CP42	Habitat for upland birds	1	3.70
	TOTAL	341	13,094.79

Table 1: snapshot of AR CRP contract types with start date 10/1/22

Lunch - Sponsored by AR TNC & Walton Family Foundation

Easement Stewardship, Randy Childress – NRCS

- Arkansas has been #1 in the Nation in Easement Funding Allocation over the last 4 years and in the Nation in Easement Acres Enrolled
- Total of 286,097 Easement Acres Enrolled since program inception with 748 easements
- AR has Easements in: HFRP – Healthy Forest Reserve Program; GRP – Grassland Reserve Program; WRP – Wetland Reserve Program; EWPP-FPL – Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Flood Plain Easements; WRE – Wetland Reserve Program
- In addition to State Office easement staff in LR, there are four Area Easement Coor's that support the program in the field
- In addition to annual efforts associated with establishing and restoring new easements, easement stewardship (i.e., managing, maintaining and enhancing existing easements) has gained increasing focus; For example, in FY22 AR received \$3M specifically for stewardship with an additional \$1.8M in FY23
- Working with its partners, NRCS is delivering these dollars to the ground for both hydrology and forest stewardship

In addition to sharing examples of their hydrology and forest management work, Childress also highlighted the success of coordinated efforts with AGFC on establishing King Rail habitat on Choctaw Island WMA

First Thinning of Hardwood Plantations at Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, Eric Johnson - FWS

- Some important facts related to hardwood plantations on the Refuge Complex:
 - o 31,792 acres of the Refuge Complex or roughly 28%
 - o 7,500 acres are over 25 years old
 - o Distance to available pulpwood mills 45 to 180 miles
- Refuge forest stands are divided into compartments that are evaluated for treatment (cruised) on a standardized schedule
- Hardwood plantations are evaluated based on the Stocking guide for young BHW stands provided in the [Tool for Assessment and Treatment of Reforested BHW Stands on WRE](#) developed by the Tri-state Conservation Partnership and MAV CDN's
- Examples of pre and post mulching contract treatments applied to BHW plantations in high priority compartments



Revitalizing Restored Wetlands, Jake Spears – DU

- WRE's in AR are receiving increasing interest among many easement landowner seeking assistance with proper wetland mgmt. and many older WRE tracts are in need of wetlands restoration/improvements
- As a result of interest among a variety of partners, particularly NRCS and including DU, NFWF, WFF and AGFC, grant funding has been established to support a fulltime DU staff position to work collaboratively to meet this need
- The original funding agreement through NFWF, targeted delivery of hydrologic restoration on 7,095 acres in the MAV of both AR and MS; The funding also supports on-the-ground delivery through AGFC and MDWFP, along with DU
- With limited funding, partners work to target highest priority projects (of greatest need)

- Project are accomplished by establishing a “Wetland Development Agreement” with the WRE landowner
 - o 10-yr agreement that defines work to be accomplished and reimbursable costs
 - o Landowner is responsible for hiring contractor to complete work, then submits invoice for reimbursement

Release of New DU Reforestation Program (See Appended B Fact Sheet)

- DU has just released a new private lands reforestation program
- The initial program seeks to reforest 3000 acres and is accepting applications through June 2023
- Is focused on restoring BHW's and will include carbon sequestration offsets as part of the model, which will be used to fund the program
- DU will cover all planting costs
- Program will include either a 40-year or permanent conservation easement
 - o Landowner may select the preferred easement term, which determines the payment structure:
 - 40-year: \$1,700/acre of restored land (\$340/acre/year for 5 years)
 - Permanent: \$2,200/acre of restored land (\$440/acre/year for 5 years)
- Minimum 200 acres of tree planting to qualify (areas already planted and/or tracts harvested within the past 10 years do not qualify)
- Targeting restoration of flood-prone/poor producing marginal croplands
- Cannot be combined with government programs
- Applications selecting perpetual easement will be more competitive

Wrap up & Adjourn - David Graves

Attendees

David Graves – AGFC (Chair)
 Johnny Abernathy – NRCS
 Steve Brock -LMVJV
 Keith McKnight – LMVJV
 Jason Milk – TNC
 Jake Spears – DU
 Jessica Allen – DU
 Cindy Neal – DU
 David Oaks – ADAFD
 Stephen Walker – FSA
 Paul Casey – FSA
 Bubba Groves – AGFC

Roger Cousins – NRCS
 Doug Akin – NRCS
 Tate Wentz – ADA Nat Resources
 Andy Cameron – NativState
 Tucker Collins – AGFC
 Andrew Green – AGFC
 Richard Crossett – USFWS/Refuges
 Randy Childress – NRCS
 Tyler Corbin – NRCS
 Rich Johnson – NRCS
 Ronnie Potts – NRCS
 Chris Swanson – USFWS/Refuges
 Eric Johnson – USFWS/Refuges

Appendix A



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The Mississippi River Delta region suffers from more frequent and devastating floods, depleted aquifers, harmful nutrient and sediment levels in waterways, fragmented habitats for migratory species and aquatic life. The results—catastrophic damage to crops & the environment and escalating costs for farmers and landowners.

The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) scientists estimate mitigating the worst climate impacts to freshwater along the Mississippi River requires reforesting 2-3 million acres of floodplains by 2030.

This means more than doubling the 1 million acres now conserved in the next 15 years. To accomplish this, TNC offers an innovative investment model to benefit a diverse set of stakeholders.

Bullseye on the Delta

A focused reforestation effort in the Delta's 100-yr floodplain will reduce damaging impacts on productive farmland, while providing beneficial flood resiliency, diversified revenue, jobs, and additional recreational opportunities to people locally and regionally.

Conservation at this scale requires ambitious, 'big idea thinking' to expand the community of stakeholders invested in reducing future losses from floods.

'Big idea thinking' will create opportunities for landowners in a new, revenue-generating alternative, to offset increasing needs and escalating costs for crop insurance relief, as farmers struggle, enduring more frequent and catastrophic floods.



caption © credit



© Jason Whaley/TNC

The Region

24 Million acres in size

More than **75%** of the Delta is developed for agriculture

The Rain

\$10B Spent on crop insurance payments for rain & flood damage since 2015

3x increase in precipitation is forecast between now and 2050

The Solution

Companies and foundations provide support to the reforestation finance effort

Landowners receive payments and frequently flooded land is reforested by planting 500,000 trees

Funders Catalyze forest restoration and innovative carbon program development with co-benefits.

Landowners Generate dependable income from previously low performing or problematic acres

Environment Reforestation of habitat, reduction of sediment, and millions of tons of CO2 sequestered

Conservation Dollars

Only 1 in 9 applications for reforestation of flooded lands are funded annually

CO2E Demand up 4x

Global demand for carbon credits is now a \$2B industry

Big Ideas in Action

The Nature Conservancy is partnered with Bain & Company, the Walton Family Foundation, Harvard Business School's Community Partners Program, and the American Forest Foundation to research, model and evaluate an innovative partnership utilizing private foundations, and impact investments as capital to protect and restore marginal farmland.

The Reforestation Finance Plan will:

- Develop carbon credits
- Generate sustainable timber
- Create recreational hunting benefits
- Provide significant Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) benefits/disaster payments in the event of floods
- Reduce flood impacts to thousands of landowners
- Save billions of federal dollars in crop insurance and disaster relief
- Sequester up to 6M metric tons of CO2E per year
- Significantly reduce sediment and nutrients loading into the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico
- Plant millions of trees for habitat necessary for migratory species

Research completed by Bain & Company outlines a basic framework and financial model to test assumptions and highlight future steps. Our work with Harvard Business School's Community Partners, developed insight to explore investor needs for participating in reforestation and carbon markets. A survey of Delta farmers and landowners was conducted to better understand incentives and structures to meet their needs, and to insure equitable participation.

The Need

As development of a social impact investment strategy takes shape, TNC is seeking philanthropic funding to secure agreements with landowners for the initial floodplain acres to test market assumptions, and to build proof of concept. Forward carbon sales will also partially finance the pilot.

Initially 3,600 acres of floodplain will be targeted for our launch, operationalizing an economy of scale and demonstrating comparable performance necessary for attracting future investors.

Startup funding of \$4.5 million will purchase and restore floodplain acres, develop a reforestation project for carbon credit development, and establish land use agreements with landowners.

How You Can Help

Here are three ways individuals, organizations and businesses can participate in the pilot development of the social impact investment strategy:



Network

We are looking for strategic relationships to shine a 'big light' on project opportunities.



Align

We believe everyone wins when we align investors, landowners and foundations.



Support

Provide philanthropic funding for the project's pilot to deliver essential floodplain reforestation to benefit the Mississippi River Delta and demonstrate proof of concept for expansion.

The Nature
Conservancy 

For more information contact

Jason Milks

Director of Strategic Partnerships, Freshwater
The Nature Conservancy
jmilks@TNC.org

caption © credit

Appendix B



DU Reforestation Program Landowner Fact Sheet



Program Overview

- DU is seeking to reforest a minimum of 3,000 acres of privately owned land in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley, and is accepting applications *through June 2023*
- Restoring these properties to native hardwood forests provides habitat for waterfowl, deer, and other wildlife, and delivers ecosystem benefits, such as enhanced water quality, groundwater replenishment, greater biodiversity, and carbon sequestration
- Some of these benefits, such as the carbon sequestered by trees, can be converted into units called “offsets” and sold to buyers such as corporations to support their sustainability objectives
- DU’s is funding its reforestation program by selling these carbon offsets to buyers on voluntary markets; this is not a governmental program
- DU works with interested landowners to design reforestation projects to balance desirable forest conditions for wildlife with the need to produce marketable carbon offsets to cover project costs
- DU covers all site prep, tree planting, and certain adaptive management activities necessary to ensure survival of the seedlings (e.g., invasive species control, replanting)
- Project will be protected with either a 40-year or permanent conservation easement covering the area enrolled in the reforestation project.
- Landowner may select the preferred easement term, which determines the payment structure:
 - 40-year: \$1,700/acre of restored land (\$340/acre/year for 5 years)
 - Permanent: \$2,200/acre of restored land (\$440/acre/year for 5 years)

Eligibility

- Target size for each property to qualify is *at least* 200 acres that is available for tree planting
- Areas that are already planted in trees are not eligible. Similarly, areas that have been clearcut or harvested within the last 10 years are not eligible.
- DU is targeting marginal agricultural lands that are flood-prone or produce lower than average crop yields
- Landowners must own property free and clear. Any mortgages will need to be subordinated to the restoration project
- Cannot be combined with other government programs that pay for tree planting (e.g., WRE, CRP)
- Selecting the perpetual term option will result in a more competitive application

Landowner Responsibilities

- Landowner must commit to reforesting eligible acres and maintaining a minimum basal area for the duration of the project, which will be based on the initial planting density and a minimum allowable biomass
- Landowner must agree to refrain from activities that may cause mortality to seedlings or mature trees
- Once recorded, the conservation easement runs with the land and binds future landowners for either 40 years or permanently

- The easement will allow DU to inspect, monitor, and manage the reforestation project and limit commercial harvests or thinnings, except as approved by DU
- For the first 40 years (the “carbon phase”), the 40 year and permanent easement options are identical in that management options will be tailored towards supporting the production of marketable carbon benefits.
- Beginning in year 41:
 - The **40-year easement** expires and there are no restrictions on the land
 - The **permanent easement** will transition from the “carbon phase” to the “habitat phase.” The primary objective of the habitat phase is to prohibit the forest from being converted, but landowners can pursue sustainable management under a forest management plan approved by DU. Activities designed to support forest health, waterfowl, and other wildlife habitat will be allowable.
- Landowner is not responsible if trees are destroyed by natural disasters or other causes beyond landowner’s control. However, if the landowner violates the terms of the project agreement or conservation easement, he/she is responsible for the damages.

Benefits

- Landowners retain ownership of the land, and are paid to restore it to a valuable forest resource that can enhance the habitat and recreational value of the property
- The program does not require retiring all working land on a property and encourages a diversity of land uses.
- Care will be given to exclude areas the landowner wishes to manage for food plots or other wildlife habitat, or areas where landowner wishes to construct a camp, house, etc.
- Trees selected will be native hardwood species, based on hydrology and soils
- Specifications will be based on the Lower Mississippi Joint Venture’s recommended 10x10 foot spacing and 436 stems/acre
- Bottomland hardwood forests attenuate floodwaters, filter nutrients, improve water quality, and provide habitat for ducks and other game such as deer, turkeys, neotropical songbirds

Next Steps

- If interested, complete and return an application form by June 30, 2023, indicating the number of acres you would like to enroll, and your easement term/payment schedule preference
- DU will evaluate applications on a first come, first serve basis through a competitive scoring process to determine which properties will qualify for the program
- If selected, landowner formally enrolls in the program by signing a project agreement, which allows DU to design and implement the reforestation project and gives DU the exclusive right to quantify, market, and sell the carbon and related ecosystem service benefits resulting from the project.
- After tree planting, conservation easement is recorded, and landowner receives the first of five payments
- *Program and payments are contingent on DU’s ability to enroll 3,000 eligible acres*

**LA/MS MAV Conservation Delivery Network
2022-23 Annual Report**

**LMVJV Management Board Spring Meeting
May 11-12, 2023**

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Working Ag Lands Working Group – May 31, 2022 Core Agenda Items: Continued formulation of draft Fall Flooding CSP Enhancement : Ongoing planning for 2 (LA & MS) Turn-row Credibility Field Days	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Summer Membership Meeting - Jul 27, 2022 Theme: Forest Carbon Agenda Items: Partner Highlights & Working Group Updates : Forest Carbon 101: Basics of Carbon Cycling and Offsets, Dr. Ellen Herbert, DU : NativState, Robert Stainton (Forester) : GreenTrees, Steve Burgess (Forester) : NCX - Natural Capital Exchange, Lucas Vold (Forester Engagement Manager) : Carbon Contracts - Working with Landowners, Jeff Denman (Consultant) : Speaker Panel - Question & Answer Session	6
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- **Winter Membership Meeting – Feb 14, 2023**

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Theme: Funding for Conservation Delivery - Preparing for What's Ahead

Agenda Items: Working Group Updates & Partner Highlights

- : Partner Spotlight - AGFC Leveraging Partnerships - A Portrait of Success, Brock
- : Federal Funding - What's Ahead, Ed Penny, DU Director of Public Policy
- : LA Outdoors Forever Fund - Brian McClinton, LDWF Undersecretary
- : MS Outdoor Stewardship Fund – Ricky Flint, MS Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund
- : Breakout Groups - Prioritizing Funding Needs & Opportunities

Meeting Notes
LA/MS MAV CDN Steering Committee
Virtual Spring Meeting
May 31, 2022



(Black - Original Agenda; Green - Meeting Notes; Red - Action Items)

Participants: David Breithaupt (Chair), Houston Havens (Vice-chair), Kevin Nelms, Dustin Farmer, Darrin Hardesty, Erin Cox, Seth Swafford, Jeremy Ballard proxy for Todd Sewell, Austin Klais, Michael McVay, Ron Seiss, Steve Brock

-
- Goals:** 1) Review/Update most recent meetings
2) Discuss potential theme and agenda for the summer membership meeting
3) Address necessary logistical planning and agenda action items for the membership meeting
-

Welcome & Objectives

Welcome (Breithaupt)

Topics

Brief Review: Most recent meetings

- o Quick update on May JV Mgmt Board Meeting – Following a conversation about organizational awareness and potentially increasing staff engagement with CDN’s, relevant board members requested their names be added to the CDN mailing list to help keep them aware of activities
- o Oct 2021 SC meeting (Virtual) - Brock provided short review of below CDN activities/outcomes
 - Discussed Forest Markets activities (re Poirier) post the Jul 2021 membership meeting; stimulated some outreach efforts in LA and MS
 - Working Ag Lands WG - discussed outcomes of first WG plng meeting in several years
 - TCP - Highlighted status on closing out and initiating distribution of WRE videos
 - Discussed possible carbon theme for winter meeting, landed on fall flooding
- o Dec Membership meeting (Delhi)
 - Debrief on any meeting outcomes (Theme: Advancing Fall Flooding)
 - Not well attended but very well received agenda line-up
 - Only Action items were related to Working Ag Lands WG planned outreach to members re Turn-row topics ID and prioritization

Working Groups: Status/Planning/What’s Ahead

- Working Ag Lands – WG is actively preparing for two Turn-row Credibility Field days (planning one each in LA & MS) to be hosted both in the fall of this year; field day planning site visits are scheduled for summer in both states to help finalize agenda details
- TCP – The TCP is focusing on a variety of projects for 2022 including WRE landowner new enrollment outreach in LA, supporting MS with both WRE landowner enrollment workshops and a landowner BHW plantation management workshop; development of a new “How WRE Works” video for landowners; also developing a non-commercial treatment guide for WRE landowners; will pursue WREP funding and related other relevant funding opportunities as they emerge
- Other?

Other CDN opportunities, objectives and priorities?

Summer Meeting Planning

- o Date – The SC agreed that the best potential time window for the next membership mtg is the last week of July with a goal to host on Jul 27
Action: Breithaupt/Havens/Brock - Once agenda is locked in and meeting site reserved, send save the date to members

- o Location – Agreed on the new TR Visitor’s Center near Onward, MS
Action: **Swafford** - check on VC availability and tentatively reserve July 26/27/28 until date set
- o Agenda
 - Potential Theme(s)?
 - >Carbon Sequestration topics - Forest and/or Farm Carbon (e.g., AR CDN Mtg)
 - Discussed agenda and outcomes from the AR MAV CDN’s Mar membership meeting that was themed around Forest Carbon; the meeting was successful and very well received
 - Developed objectives and agenda topics for the summer meeting; potential presentations: begin with as high level overview of the topic first requesting if Dr. Herbert (DU) is available, then NCX, GreenTrees, and NativState
 - >Public Lands
 - >Other priority topics to consider (review past themes pg 2)?
 - Action: **Nelms** – Reach out to GreenTrees
 - Brock** – Reach out to NCX, NativState, work with McVay on outreach to Dr. Herbert & invite Brett Moule to offer brief VC overview/highlight
 - Brock** – Reach out to Meg Cooper for lunch
- o Partner Spotlight –Partner Spotlight - see Summary pg. 2
 - None defined, but will consider if needed to develop full agenda
- o Project Spotlight
 - Discussed inviting Jason Milks (AR TNC) to discuss their evolving carbon related project but ultimately agreed that the agenda wouldn’t allow time and that his project may benefit from maturing more before presenting to CDN
- MRT Project Update - Giles Kelly
 - Also discussed Giles Kelly/MRT WRE project but also agreed it would likely be better for the Dec meeting or next Spring
- Others?
- o Working Group/Partner Updates – Will incorporate all of the below WG/ORG updates as usual

✓Working Ag	✓TCP	✓NRCS Update	-Other?
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- o Hot Happenings
- o Field Trip? No field trip

Past Meetings

Summary of Past Membership Meetings (Theme/Topic):

- Dec 8, 2021 (Delhi) - Advancing Fall Flooding: Partner Spotlight: Delta Wind Birds (Hoeksema); LA WLFW/Shorebirds Project (Ritenour/Manomet); AGFC Waterfowl RICE Update (Naylor); Fall Waterbird Habitat Use in the MS Delta (Hoeksema); Winter Flooding Effects on Soil Health (Firth/MSU REACH)
- July 29,2021 (Vicksburg) - DFCW: Markets & Certification (Poirier); Pltn Mgmt (Dupuy); DFCW on Prvt Lands (Denman); Panel Discussion
- Feb 10, 2021 (Zoom) - Highlighting DFCW: Forest Bird Habitat Objectives & DFCWs (McKnight) & WRE Plantation Project Objectives (Kelly, MRT); Chronic Wasting Disease Update (LA & MS)
- July 22, 2020 (Zoom) - DFCW Overview (Locascio); One hour webinar
- Winter 2019 (Delhi) - “Addressing the Feral Swine Challenge”; JV Shorebird Plan (Mini); Turn-row WS Highlights (Nelms); Swine Research Update (Strickland, MSU); LA & MS Swine Mgmt. (APHIS)
- Summer 2019 (Vicksburg) - “Mississippi Alluvial Valley Flooding”; CWD Updates; Mississippi River Watershed Mgmt & Update; State Agency Flooding Update-Wildlife & Related Impacts
- Winter 2018 (Tensas NWR) - “Approaches to Wetland Restoration in the MAV”; Upper Ouachita NWR Restoration (Bergan), Tensas NWR Andrews Bend planning (Hortman)
- Summer 2018 (Vicksburg) - CWD: “We’ve got the Chronic”

- Winter 2017 (Delhi) - MAV Delivery “Tools in the Tool Chest”
- Summer 2017 (Vicksburg) - Waterfowl: DU Prvt Lands Habitat Study (D. James); LDWF WRP Waterfowl Habitat analysis (Olszack); White-front Goose Study (E. Massey)
- Winter 2016 (Delhi) - Diverse Agenda: LDWF Waterfowl Mgmt (Smith); NRCS WLFW (Breithaupt); New CSP (Nelms); Focus on revised Project List (Callicutt)
- Spring 2016 (Vicksburg) - Only major speaker topic was WRP Forest Mgmt Doc
- Fall 2015 (Delhi) - Waterfowl focus, DU overview and MBHI results
- Spring 2015 (Vicksburg) - MAV Hydrology & For Health and DFC for Wildlife Update
- Fall 2014 (Delhi) - Public Lands: Refuge GMO issue, LA BB Research and Feral Swine
- Spring 2014 (Vicksburg) - New Farm Bill, MS DEQ Water Quality, several JV tools
- Fall 2013 (Delhi) - Gulf Spill Funding, MS REACH, LA NRCS Working Lands Strategies
- Spring 2013 (Vicksburg) - MSU Precision Farming Tool, JV FRCWG Update/MS Issues and NRCS new 612 Planting Specs
- Summer 2012 (Vicksburg) - 1rst Mtg, all startup planning

Partner Spotlight Summary

- Dec 2021 – Delta Wind Birds (Hoeksema)
- July 2021 - Quail Forever (Klais/LA & J. Mark Curtis/MS)
- Winter 2019 - LA SWCD (Breaux)
- Summer 2019 – MS Rvr Landowner Alliance (Bucky Murphy)
- Winter 2018 - Tensas NWR (Hortman)
- Summer 2018 - MDWFP/Turkey Program (Butler)
- Winter 2017 - LDWF/Deer Program (Bordelon)
- Summer 2017 - Refuges/TR Complex (Swafford)
- Winter 2016 - NWTF (Dutoit)
- Spring 2016 - MS PFW (Austin)
- Fall 2015 - Ducks Unlimited (Callicutt)
- Spring 2015 - MS TNC (Lemmons)

Some Potentials:

- State Agency/Programs: Waterfowl (Havens/Olszack); WMA Management; Private Lands; Turkey (Cedotal); MS Museum of Nat Science (Birds)
- Extension Service: MS & LA
- Federal: NRCS Programs - Easements, Other Programs; FSA; Ecological Services; Refuges: North LA Refuge Complex, North MS Refuges Complex, St Catherine Creek; US Forest Service: Delta NF
- NGO's: TPL; TNC (LA); Audubon (MS & LA); Wildlife MS/MRT; ~~Delta Wind Birds~~

Meeting Notes

CDN Working Ag Lands Working Group

Virtual Planning Meeting

May 31, 2022

(Black - Agenda; Green - Meeting Notes; Red - Action Items)

Participants: Austin Klais, Dustin Farmer, Michael McVay, Houston Havens, David Breithaupt, Kevin Nelms, Seth Swafford, Karis Ritenour, Jason Hoeksema, Steve Brock

Core topics: 1) Update status of sub-committees work on CSP Fall Flooding Enhancement
2) Discuss LA & MS Turn-row Field Day site visits and zero in on final objectives

Status of New CSP Fall Flooding Enhancement (Sub-committee – Nelms/Hoeksema/Farmer)

- Nelms provided update on sub-comm. actions to date and objectives to ultimately submit the proposed enhancement:
 - Clarified that one of the core issues is the non-specific language in the existing 646 enhancement that says “fall or winter”
 - Spoke with the NRCS national biologist who expressed concerned about potential issues with stacking enhancements based on how our initial draft was worded
 - Since our proposed enhancement would ultimately be national in scope, it is important that we coordinate with some key players nationally to define and address needed tweaks
 - This year’s request for proposed enhancements was due in Apr and timeline was too tight to address adjustments that are needed for it to be successful; will plan to submit in 2023
 - Nelms will be at national meeting in early Aug and plans to discuss with key individuals
- Also, Farmer is talking with NRCS leadership about efforts/interest to get enhancement 646 better in-line with 647

Action: Once the sub-committee has worked through critical planning details and incorporated final fixes, they will share with the full working group for review

Turn-row Credibility Field Day Planning

- Discussed upcoming Field Day site visits and associated objectives for finalizing the field day agendas in both states
- Whether there will be any classroom time or all in field; previous WG discussions agreed on all field; did acknowledge that we could incorporate any desired class-like presentations in equipment sheds as appropriate
- Also discussed whether landowners would be invited to the Field Day; agreed that the audience is conservation professionals, CDN participants first and foremost
- Agreed we would not limit participation; may need to consider RSVP; if necessary we could split the Field into separate groups, alternating them on sites

Mississippi

- MS site visit is scheduled for July 12 (Nelms, Hoeksema, Brock – other interested WG members are welcomed to join); will meet at Indianola NRCS office at 10:00 a.m.
- **Firm date for the MS Field Day is Oct 12**
- Hoeksema shared his perspective/recommendations for the MS Field Day agenda:
 1. Highlight fall flooding related research being conducted on four farms in area
 2. Include farmer(s) on agenda to share perspectives on fall flooding outcomes – farmer at primary site is a great speaker
 3. Look at infrastructure that will encourage fall flooding, ideally that fosters use of surface water (Havens noted that the primary site landowner has participated in the PFW WCS program in the past)
 4. Incorporate a shorebird identification segment

5. If needed, could incorporate topic “Potential farmer incentives for incorporating fall flooding – available NRCS practices”; also per Havens MDWFP still has a PFW-like private landowner WCS project available

Action: MS planning team will conduct visit to proposed Field Day sites on July 12 to formulate a final agenda; will update full WG on outcomes and final agenda in Jul 18 WG planning meeting

Louisiana

- Louisiana site visit is scheduled for Jun 21 (McVay, Klais, Farmer, Brock – other interested WG members are welcomed to join)
- McVay highlighted plans
 - Meeting farmer (John Owen) in south Richland Parish
 - Owen floods for Mig Birds and uses surface water pumps; generally begins flooding in Oct
 - Incorporating some bird ID in Field Day may be possible; the site is part of Manomet project (Manomet project offers incentives payments for two windows to add boards to risers 1) Sep 1 to 15 & 2) Nov 1 but the majority of funding is awarded to the later window
- Could also incorporate “Potential farmer incentives for incorporating fall flooding – available NRCS practices”; also highlight Manomet project
- Discussed the possibility of focusing on contrasting farming practices and flooding options between Corn/Soybean vs Rice; could include landowner perspectives for each

Action: LA planning team will conduct visit to proposed Field Day sites on Jun 21 and work on formulating a proposed agenda; will update full WG on outcomes and planned final agenda in Jul 18 WG planning meeting

Upcoming Manomet Workshop

- Ritenour shared that Manomet is working with the LMVJV to host a shorebird ID workshop at Sherburne NWR Aug 30 to Sep 1

Attendees

Wayne Roberts - NRCS, LA
Bickham Crooks - Green Trees
Steve Burgess - Green Trees
Robert Stainton – NativState
Michael Lauve - NativState
Russell Singleton - NRCS, MS
Lexi Firth - MSU REACH
Saahirah Walton - NRCS, MS
James Callicutt - MSU Extension
Brittany Edwards - Trust for Tomorrow
Wade Tracy - LDWF
Stephen Bourque - LDWF
Darby Simmons - LDWF
Mac Cox - NRCS, LA
Jim Bergan - Delta Land Services
Dylan Philippe - Delta Land Services
Murray Biedenharn - Landowner
Darrin Hardesty - MDWFP
Chris Hinyak - SCA
Troy Mallach - NRCS, LA
Kevin Nelms - NRCS, MS
Scott Baker - MDWFP
Houston Havens - MDWFP
Megan Martin - DU
Jeff Denman - Denman Co.
Skye Kreisler - FWS Refuges, MS
Stacey Shankle - TPL
Michael McVay - DU
Tim Landreneau - NRCS, LA
Ray Aycock - Retiree
Chris McDonald - MDAC
Peyton Pierce - MDAC
Seth Swafford - FWS Refuges, MS
David Hayden - LDWF
Erin Cox - FWS Refuges, LA

Meeting Notes
LA/MS MAV CDN Steering Committee
Virtual Fall Meeting
Sep 22, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.

(Black - Original Agenda; Green - Meeting Notes; Red - Action Items)

Participants: David Breithaupt (Chair), Houston Havens (Vice-chair), Kevin Nelms, Dustin Farmer, Darrin Hardesty, Seth Swafford, Todd Sewell, Ron Seiss, Steve Brock

- Goals:** 1) Review/Update summer membership meeting
 2) Working Group updates
 3) Discuss potential theme and agenda for the winter membership meeting
 3) Agenda, logistics and action items for membership meeting

Welcome & Objectives – Breithaupt

- o Review meeting objectives
- o SC changes – John Hanks has transitioned to a new roll in LDWF; it is likely that Johnny Berry will fill his SC role going forward

Working Group Updates:

- o Working Ag Lands WG - Upcoming Turn-row Field Days
 Sep 29 (Rayville, LA) and Oct 12 (Indianola, MS) Turn-row Credibility Field Days are prepped and ready to go; Lower Delta Partnership is handling online registration and paying for lunch for both events; Current registrants for both field days is 32 and LA registration has been closed, MS numbers will likely grow a little over the next few weeks; both training days will address on-farm IWM and strategies that benefit migratory birds and each event will include wetland bird identification stops
- o TCP - What’s on the burner for remainder of calendar year
 2023 WREP Proposal was submitted to NRCS today; The planned NRCS WO Easement Program Division field tour has been postponed until early 2023 due to an unforeseen NRCS schedule conflict; Work on producing a new “How WRE Works” video has begun with two video collection field trips, the video will be I & E for landowners interested in the WRE program and application process; A working group to develop a new “Landowner Non-commercial Treatment Guide for WRE Plantations” has been initiated; The TCP will also be hosting the new Walton Family Foundation MAV lead Rebecca Power (replacing Paul Wolfe) for an MAV tour and partner meet, likely before the end of the year; The Wetlands Conservation Policy Coalition has initiated planning for the next Farm Bill and has contracted with Kevin Norton to support the effort; The Inflation Reduction Act has \$1.4 Billion allocated to ACEP (new money), don’t know yet what portion will go to WRE

Recent meetings/outcomes

- o May SC meeting (Virtual) – Nothing to report
 - Focused on upcoming summer membership meeting agenda and logistics
 - No additional action items identified
- o July membership meeting (TR VC)
 - Any debrief on meeting outcomes? Meeting was successful, well attended and well received by participants
 - Videos of presentations posted to JV Website

Next Membership Meeting

Identify CDN opportunities, objectives and priorities for winter meeting:

- o No pre-identified meeting theme
- o Some suggested and potential (based on past meetings) topics:
 - Invasive plants suggested as potential topic
 - Funding? Current and potential flow of federal money & conservation community response
 - SC discussions gravitated to this topic:**
 - Based on unprecedented pots of committed and potential federal funding (i.e., IRA, RAWA, LWCF) in the Billions, there could be a critical need to identify conservation priorities and consider strategies for providing capacity support to help agencies/partners deliver the funding
 - There are also significant new state conservation funding pots in MS and LA
 - Could develop regional delivery staff WG's to consider and identify resource needs; Possibly hold breakout session in membership meeting to brainstorm e.g., What are needs beyond known WRE priorities?
 - Would need to effectively highlight specific funding pots, how much and what for, to fuel the topic
 - Important that we provide information on funding sideboards i.e., capturing unrealistic funding needs/desires may not be value added without clarity
 - Who might best be able to address primary funding pots
 - Jen Mock Schaeffer – good for RAWA and possibly some other federal pots
 - Possibly Ed Penny (DU) – might be good for new MS conservation fund
 - James Cummins - IRA
 - Havens & Breithaupt can also identify possibilities for each new state fund (Tim Landreneau was on the team that worked to establish LA fund)
 - Could have State Action Plan coordinators highlight highest and best needs in each state wrt RAWA
 - Next Farm Bill – planning and details won't be adequately developed by Dec meeting
 - Waterfowl Management & Research
 - Forest Breeding Birds (e.g., 3 Billion Birds) & Research
 - MAV Hydrology & Forest Health (e.g., any post-flooding research)
 - Public Lands?
 - Research Smorgasbord
 - o Field Trip? **Not considered feasible for Dec meeting**

Summer Meeting Planning

- o Date / Location
 - Date: Dec 1 is first choice for meeting with Nov 29 or 30 as alternate dates
 - Location: LA normally hosts winter meeting
- o Partner Spotlight - see Summary pg. 2 (State Waterfowl Programs, CWD Update, N LA Refuge Complex, LDWF Turkey Program, WMA Mgmt, Shared Capacity e.g., DU/QF, Delta NF)
 - We could invite AGFC to highlight its success in leveraging various funding sources e.g., USDA Voluntary Access Program, NRCS WLFW/QF partnership, etc.
- o Project Spotlight
 - MRT Project Update - Giles Kelly
 - Other?
 - Possibly invite Troy Mallach (LA NRCS) to highlight Mig. Bird Resurgence Initiative
- o Working Group/Partner Updates
 - ✓Working Ag ✓TCP ✓NRCS Update -Other?
- o Hot Happenings

Action Items:

- Draft Agenda: Highlight top/new funding sources – IRA/RAWA/LWCF/State Conservation Funds
 - : Possible AGFC for Partner Spotlight & Troy Mallach for Project Spotlight
 - : Usual Working Group Highlights – Working Ag WG Field Days and TCP
 - : Partner Updates – NRCS, Other?
 - : Hold breakout session (possibly regionally based) for participant input on conservation priorities, based post new funding presentations
- **Brock will coordinate with Breithaupt (DB) to contact Jen Mock** to assess willingness & funding she could address (targeting Dec 1 meeting date w/Nov 29 & 30 as options)
- Based on what DB learns, we'll coordinate and reach out to other SC members on next contacts for presentations e.g., Seiss/Penny, DB/Mallach, state fund presenter(s)/DB & Havens, AGFC/DB or Brock, etc.
- May need to host hybrid in-person/virtual meeting to get some presentations – if so, will need to seriously consider wifi access before locking in meeting location (State Park in Delhi, LA may not suffice)
- Once agenda/date is locked in:
 - Lock in meeting a site
 - Send save-the-date to membership
 - contact Lower Delta Partnership on lunch

TURN-ROW CREDIBILITY FIELD DAY

LA/MS MAV CDN Working Ag Lands Working Group
Rayville, LA

September 29th, 2022

- 8:30 a.m.** **Gather at NRCS Field Office: Rayville, LA**
 (141 Industrial Loop, Rayville, LA 71269)
- 9:00 a.m.** **Depart for Field Tour at Owens Farm (Rice & Soybean operation)**
- 9:30 a.m.** **Load on trailers at Owens' Grain Bins**
- 9:45 a.m.** **Stop 1 – Irrigation Reservoirs (Farm and Conservation Benefits)**
 Discuss water quality benefits, recreational uses and
 surface water irrigation infrastructure
- 10:15 a.m.** **Stop 2 – Flooded Fields (Timing for Rice, Ducks, and Shorebirds)**
 Discuss agricultural practices and their benefits for migratory
 waterfowl and shorebirds
- 10:45 a.m.** **Stop 3 – Tailwater recovery area (Farm Uses and Conservation Benefits)**
 Discuss irrigation efficiency and infrastructure
- 11:00 a.m.** **Depart for McConnell Farm (Pin Oak Mallard Hunt Club)**
- 11:30 a.m.** **Stop 4 – Water Management (Bayou Lafouche Pump Station)**
 Discuss surface water irrigation management and infrastructure, as
 well as recreational uses
- 12:00 p.m.** **Lunch with Presentation on Birds of Pine Oak Farms**
 (Lunch sponsored by Lower Delta Partnership)
- 1:00 p.m.** **Stop 5 - Flooded Ag Field (Teal and early migrant management)**
 Discuss typical agricultural practices that benefit early migrants
- 1:45 p.m.** **Shorebird and waterfowl ID and Ecology**
- 2:15 p.m.** **Stop 6 – Integrating Dove Field Management in Working Ag**
- 2:45 p.m.** **Adjourn**

*Dress appropriately for field conditions - boots and bug spray recommended (if wet conditions, rubber boots are recommended)

* Participants should be asked to bring binoculars if they have them available

TURN-ROW CREDIBILITY FIELD DAY

LA/MS MAV CDN Working Ag Lands Working Group
Indianola, MS

October 12, 2022

- 9:00 a.m.** Gather at NRCS Field Office, Indianola (212 North Martin Luther King Dr.)
- 9:30 a.m.** Depart for Field Tour to Failing Farm East
- 9:45 a.m.** Stop 1 - *Flooded Field*
- *Infrastructure & Fall Flooding*
 - *Integrating Pollinator Plantings*
 - *Bird ID & Ag Field Utilization*
- 10:45 a.m.** Stop 2 - Irrigation Reservoir
- *IWM Design & Management Capability*
 - *Farmer Perspective on Fall Flooding Research*
 - *Q & A*
- 11:30 a.m.** Depart for Parker Farm
- 12:00 a.m.** Lunch (Sponsored by Lower Delta Partnership)
- *Presentation of Research Outcomes*
- 1:00 p.m.** Stop 3 - Flooded Field
- *Invertebrate Research and ID*
 - *Site quality influence – texture/flood capability*
 - *Tillage/soil potential effect on invert production*
- 1:45 p.m.** Stop 4 - Irrigation Reservoir Levee
- *Pollinator plantings overview – compare/contrast*
 - *Integrated Water Management*
- 2:30 p.m.** Adjourn

Meeting Notes

Louisiana-Mississippi MAV CDN

Winter Meeting

Tuesday – Feb 14, 2023

Poverty Point Reservoir State Park

(Black - Original Agenda; Green - Meeting Notes; Breakout Group Summary)

Meeting Theme: Funding for Conservation Delivery - Preparing for What's Ahead

Welcome - David Breithaupt (Chair)

Working Group Updates & Partner Highlights

- Working Ag Lands Working Group - Austin Klais (Chair)
 - CSP Enhancement – The WG will continue to work with the national NRCS office to address interest in advancing Fall Flooding enhancements
 - Two Turn-row Credibility Field Days on Sep 29/LA & Oct 12/MS
 - o Topics Covered: Infrastructure and Fall Flooding; Integrating Conservation Practices w/Pollinator Planting; Waterbird Identification; Fall Ag Field Flooding Research Overview; Invertebrate Identification; Irrigation Water Management
 - o Had significant NRCS participation in both field days - 31 new NRCS CDN participants
- Tri-state Conservation Partnership - Brock/Seiss
 - Outreach:
 - o Getting great use of 7 video WRE mgmt. series – to date, 14000 visits to NRCS YouTube sites across the three states; now initiating development of new video “Understanding NRCS WRE”, also plan to make separate limited resource landowner video
 - o New enrollment outreach in LA – 3561 mailers to landowners sharing program details; also mailed workshop notifications to 4500 MS landowners
 - o Supported KKAC in obtaining grant award from WFF for \$100k to support limited resource & minority producer outreach and to address Heirs & Title issues and development of Wills & Trust
 - WRE Forest Mgmt:
 - o Initiating development of new Non-commercial Treatment Guide for landowners
 - o Held Sep. 20, 2022 WRE landowner workshop in South MS Delta – topics: WRE & CRP forest management; Forest management policy & procedures; Impacts of flooding; Research updates
 - Funding:
 - o Tri-state WREP Awarded FY22 = \$5M w/1500 acre enrollment objective; \$2.5M of \$5M funding pool for minority landowners; Total of ~\$45M awarded for Tri-State WREP since FY17
 - TCP Outreach & Communications
 - o Tri-state tour for Washington Office Easement Prog. Div. Staff scheduled for Feb 28-Mar 2
 - Wetland Conservation Policy Coalition
 - o Submitted comments: **“Request for Public Input about Implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act Funding”**
 - o In pro-actively formulating and pushing forward policy recommendations for 2023 Farm Bill
 - o Creating WRE video to share with the House and Senate Ag Committee
 - o Also attending Farm Bill hearing on the Hill
- NRCS Current Highlights - Dustin Farmer – delivered a brief status of current NRCS Farm Bill Programs

Partner Spotlight: AGFC Leveraging Partnerships - A Portrait of Success, Brock

- AGFC has recently created a new Private Lands Habitat Div.; currently have 13 AGFC private lands staff and will be seeking legislature support for 5 to 8 additional; the division is also supported by 17 additional shared capacity positions with QF, DU and NWWTF
- In recent years (2016-2022), cooperating with DU, has obtained significant NAWCA funding for public lands wetlands projects and to support one shared capacity staff position - funding totaling ~\$8M
- Also worked with DU from 2019 to 2022 obtain NFWF funding totaling over \$1.6M for public lands wetlands work and addt support for the DU shared capacity position to work on private lands on WRE
- Additionally received 2022 funding from the Walton Family Foundation (WFF) for public lands wetlands enhancement (a first grant for WFF on public land)
- AGFC's Voluntary Public Access program, aka WRICE has enjoyed great success thus far spending ~\$600K annually since 2019; The program has not only benefitted from NRCS VPA funding support but also received addt support of \$2.1M in NRCS EQIP funding to be delivered from 2021-23 (this funding will allow AGFC to extend the program into 2024)
- AGFC has also worked with partners to obtain three successful RCPP's – w/two Quail RCPP grant awards and an Open Pine RCPP awarded

Federal Funding - What's Ahead, Ed Penny, DU Director of Public Policy – provided an overview of some of the federal funding sources that are and will be coming available in years ahead, specifically noting:

- IRA - \$121.25M allocated through the IRA to the USFWS (available through Sep 2026) for invasive species threats, resiliency and capacity of habitats and infrastructure to withstand weather events and reducing damage caused by weather events;
- NAWCA - \$50M appropriated for FY23 and NAWCA council also increased cap from \$2M to \$3M for Standard Grant proposals and from \$100K to \$250K for Small Grant proposals;
- CLIMATE SMART Grants - Funding for Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities will be pooled, which includes proposals seeking funds from \$250,000 to under \$5 million; Will be delivered through USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation in two pools; 70 projects announced in September 2022 are from the first funding pool, with proposals seeking funds ranging from \$5 million to \$100 million; Then 71 addt projects were announced in December; USA Rice/Ducks Unlimited Rice Stewardship Partnership received \$80 million in funding to reduce emissions on 300,000 acres of working rice lands through irrigation alternate wetting and drying and furrow irrigation;
- LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM (H.R.7776 - James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023) allocated \$40M to CoE for design and construction assistance for flood or coastal storm risk management or aquatic ecosystem restoration projects in the Lower Mississippi River Basin

LA Outdoors Forever Fund - Brian McClinton, LDWF Undersecretary

House Bill 762 created the "[Louisiana Outdoors Forever Program](#)" was passed in the 2022 legislative session; The bill provides \$10 million for the program's first year; Working through voluntary conservation measures, the program will help fund projects that protect drinking water supplies, conserve wildlife habitats, provide recreational opportunities in urban and rural areas, sustain working farms and forests, and much more; a bulletin highlighting the program can be found in Appendix A

MS Outdoor Stewardship Fund – Ricky Flint, MS Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund

Created through the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Act; effective July 1, 2022; Additional legislation appropriated \$10 million into the Fund; A Board of Trustees oversees disbursement of funding for:

- Improvement of state park outdoor recreation features and trails;
- Acquisition and improvement of parks and trails by counties and municipalities;
- Restoration or enhancement projects to create or improve access to public waters and lands for public outdoor recreation, conservation education;
- Restoration or enhancement on privately owned working agricultural lands and forests that support conservation of soil, water, habitat of fish and wildlife resources;
- Restoration or enhancement of wetlands, native forests, native grasslands and other unique habitats important for Mississippi's fish and wildlife;
- Acquisition of critical areas for the provision or protection of clean water, wildlife, hunting, fishing, military installation buffering or natural resource-based outdoor recreation;

For addition information: <https://www.dfa.ms.gov/ms-outdoor-stewardship-grant>

Breakout Groups - Prioritizing Needs & Opportunities

The following list reflects information gleaned from discussions in four breakout groups

Some Opportunity Area's to consider:

- Cropland/Grassland Interface
- Emergent Marsh
- Young Growth Forests
- Water Quality

Focused Opportunities:

Early Successional Habitat Management

- Maintaining/converting shallow water early for shorebirds – especially public
- Moist-soil management – Winter water recovery (e.g., passively maintained private)
- Incentivize early successional habitat development
 - o Create program to hold water in desired time periods
 - o Pairing management practices with water mobility
 - o Through federal funding – will benefit wildlife, WQ and help reduce fall tillage
 - o Payment should be adequate to truly cover costs; enough incentivization to get landowners who were not going to flood anyway

Invasive species

- Water Hyacinth & Salvinia on public lands Refuges and neighboring lands
- Control woody invasives in conjunction with forest treatment (thinning):
 - o Chinese Tallow
 - o Trifoliate Orange
 - o Chinese Privet
- Capacity to address invasives is limited (\$ & staff) – create regionwide program anyone can tap
- Feral Hogs – Expand control pilot program to statewide

Voluntary Public Access Program

- . Significant public support & limited access to hunting in many areas

Lack of hardwood pulp/sawlog industry

- . Significant limiting factor in much of MAV
- . Issue on both public & private; cost of mgmt. to pay for thinning
- . Consider use of federal funding for thinning on adjacent private lands

Timber Stand Improvement

- . Non-commercial Treatment – WRE/CRP
- . Incentivize thinning (mechanical, crop tree release)

Land Acquisition

- . Program with fewer strings attached – be able to compete in the market
- . Utilize partners to purchase land outside the gov to move funding more quickly
- . Connect and expand WMA's and other public lands
 - o utilize funds to purchase map voids/fill gaps rather than more dispersed acquisitions

Ag Lands

- . Pay more landowners to leave marginal areas in fields fallow
 - o Make it worthwhile - paying slightly high than average yield
 - o Provide solid data and financial incentive numbers to landowner that clearly demonstrate increased profitability – agencies need to know the actual costs and real value of the program
 - o Utilize 3 year agreements
- . Change wording on water holding to “non-tilled ground”
- . Focus on quality over quantity
- . Offer financial assistance to shift from fall tillage

Public Land Capacity Contracting (Support critical needs not being met)

- . Early successional habitat management
- . Invasives control
- . Increase forest stand re-entry on public lands to meet DFCW's

Attendees

David Breithaupt – LDWF (Chair)
Houston Havens – MDWFP (Vice-chair)
Kevin Nelms – MS NRCS
Dustin Farmer – LA NRCS
Ed Penny – DU
Lamar Dorris – MS FWS Refuges
Seth Swafford – MS FWS Refuges
Jim Bergan – Delta Land Services
Chris Rice – TNC
Wade Tracy – LDWF
Ricky Flynt – MS Outdoors Stewardship Trust Fund
Curtis Hopkins – Private
Nathan Yeldell – LDWF
Saahirah Walton – MS NRCS
Joycelyn Reese – LA NRCS
Darby Simmons – LDWF
Adam Foster – NRCS
Stephen Bourque – LDWF
Austin Klais – QF
Jason Olszak – LDWF
Owen Best – LDWF
Lowrey Moak – LDWF
Brad Kennon – LDWF
Philip Prichett – LDWF
Darrin Hardesty – MDWFP
Ben Holten – LDWF
Lane Hudspeth – LDWF
Dustin Champagne – LDWF
Timothy Bumgardner – LDWF
Nick Stanek – FWS
John Dickson – LA FWS Refuges
Parker Wohlstein – FWS
Max Cox – LA NRCS
Terry Johnston – NRCS
Bickham Crooks – GreenTrees
Pierce Young – MDWFP
Giles Kelly - Wildlife MS
Shubham Datta – Audubon Delta
Mark C. Brown – NativState
David Hayden – LDWF
Keith McKnight – LMVJV
Troy Mallach – LA NRCS
Tommy Tuma – LDWF
Steve Smith – LDWF
Rick Williams – LA NRCS
Karis Ritenour – Manomet
Bryan McClinton - LDWF (Undersecretary)

Appendix A



Louisiana Outdoors Forever Program was established with the passage of House Bill 762 during the 2022 Legislative Session. The purpose of this program is to provide funding for outdoor conservation projects in the State of Louisiana. House Bill 406 provides \$10 million in funding for the program's first year.

Louisiana Outdoor Forever is intended to serve as a matching source for other funding. This program was designed to help Louisiana projects be more competitive by providing additional funding or match to maximize other grant applications. These projects will expand the footprint of conservation in the state, restore valuable habitat, provide for land management, and enhance public access. The state's \$10 million initial investment is seed money to establish the program and gauge the need for future investment. Preference will be given to projects based on how well they meet the scoring criteria but will also consider the dollars the project will bring to Louisiana.

Program Eligibility

Project Applicants include:	Eligible Project Types:
State Agencies	Land conservation of important natural areas, including fish and wildlife habitat.
Political Subdivisions of the state	Historic properties adjacent to or integral to habitat restoration or enhancement.
Local governing authorities	Working land, farms, and forested land. ✱
Nongovernmental organizations working in coordination with public agencies	Water quality projects related to land conservation or land management, including those lands that protect drinking water supplies. ✱
	Recreational properties related to important natural areas and public use.

The Process

Two Phases	Expected Timeline	
Phase 1: Pre-Application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should explain the project, project benefits, and process to accomplish said benefits Reviewed for Eligibility 	Request for Proposals	March 20 ✱
	Deadline to Submit Pre-Applications	May 19
	Eligible projects are invited by the Technical Advisory Board to complete a Full Application.	June 19
Phase 2: Full Application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should meet all criteria as outlined in the LOF Program Manual and include supporting documentation Reviewed, Scored, and Ranked for funding consideration 	Full Applications are due 90 days from the day invitation is sent.	September 17

What's Next

The Technical Advisory Board scores and ranks projects and submits findings to the Project Selection Board. The Project selection board will approve projects* for funding. Applicants will be invited to LDWF for a financial workshop and to sign a Project Agreement. Grant Recipients have 24 months to complete the approved project from the project agreement date.

*Projects can receive contingent approval by the Project Selection Board if due diligence is needed. More information can be found in the LOF Program Manual.

www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/louisiana-outdoors-forever

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Required to include in pre-application:

Cover Letter – This official letter is the instrument demonstrating support and authority to submit a pre-application, signed by a ranking authorizing representative of the entity (board chairperson, commissioner, mayor, etc.). It must be on official letterhead.

Project Title

Project Category/Categories

Project Location

Project Map (in addition to the 7 page maximum)

Project Description including benefits related to project category and surrounding community/state

Generalized Project Budget Worksheet

Responses to each of the evaluation criteria:

Total project cost

Total funding requested

Match Commitment(s) – including type, status - committed or potential, and source

Accordance /non-conflict with existing state, local, and federal plans (list which plan(s))

Timeline – time to complete, time to realization of conservation benefits, and if the project could be completed by close of this funding cycle

Estimated Appraisal (if applicable, in addition to the 7 page limit on Letters of maximum)

Optional documents to include:

Letters of Support

Letter of financial commitment from sponsors and partners

Requirements for a Full Application can be found in the LOF Program Manual at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/louisiana-outdoors-forever



Technical Advisory Board contains subject experts from the following:	Project Selection Board is composed of the following members or their designee:
(a) The office of the governor.	(1) Governor
(b) The division of administration.	(2) The executive assistant to the governor for coastal activities
(c) The office of coastal activities.	(3) The lieutenant governor from the office of state parks
(d) The office of state parks.	(4) The commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry
(e) The Department of Agriculture and Forestry.	(5) The secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality
(f) The Department of Environmental Quality.	(6) The secretary of the Department of Natural Resources
(g) The Department of Natural Resources.	(7) The secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
(h) The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.	(8) The speaker of the House of Representatives
Up to three representatives of nonprofit conservation organizations. Currently they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nature Conservancy • Audubon Louisiana • The Conservation Fund 	(9) The president of the Senate

www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/louisiana-outdoors-forever



TRI-STATE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP



COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION

Working at eco-regional scale
Delivering conservation on-the-ground
Coordinating through communication, trust & fellowship

WHO WE ARE

- ▶ Strong partnership working in support of ACEP-WRE

OUR FOCUS

- ▶ Wetland restoration and management
- ▶ Bottomland hardwood restoration and management
- ▶ Wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity
- ▶ Minority landowner enrollment

HOW WE WORK

- ▶ Champions - advocating for conservation
- ▶ Programs - enhancing administration and delivery
- ▶ Policy - enhancing statutory language and maximizing funding
- ▶ Funding - driving additional dollars to the region

WHERE WE WORK

- ▶ Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi
- ▶ Lower MS River Valley wide impact
- ▶ National influence

WHY IT WORKS

- ▶ Committed NRCS leadership and support
- ▶ Broad partner participation and engagement
- ▶ Complementary conservation objectives
- ▶ Dedicated capacity



Natural Resources Conservation Service

A powerful example of effective regional partnership

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ▶ NRCS & Lower MS Valley Joint Venture Declaration of Partnership
- ▶ Awarded >\$150M in Conservation Funding
- ▶ 13 Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership Projects (WREP)
- ▶ 13 Shared Capacity Positions
- ▶ Harmonized Tri-state WRE Ranking Criteria
- ▶ Strengthened the WRE Closing Process
- ▶ Enhanced Approaches to Hydrology Restoration
- ▶ 2017 Tri-state 700,000 Acre WRE Celebration
- ▶ WRE Communications Plan
- ▶ Enhanced WRE Policy in 2014 & 2018 Farm Bills
- ▶ Annual Targeted Outreach to Increase WRE Enrollment
- ▶ Supporting Increased Minority Landowner Enrollment
- ▶ Assisting with WRE Easement Monitoring
- ▶ Supporting NRCS Easement Program Division Working Groups

EDUCATIONAL & OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ▶ *Restoring America's Wetlands Through the Farm Bill* - Video for Senate and House Ag Committees
- ▶ *Tool for Assessing & Treating WRP/E Forest Plantations* Booklet
- ▶ *Landowner Guide - Habitat Improvements in Hardwood Plantations on WRE* Brochure
- ▶ *WRE Plantation Age Estimator* Database
- ▶ *Understanding NRCS Wetland Reserve Easements* Booklet
- ▶ *Managing Your Wetland Reserve Easement* – 7 Part Video Series

TCP PRIORITIES

Forest & Wetlands Management

Supporting NRCS and landowners in meeting habitat management objectives

WRE Enrollment & Management Outreach

Advancing program knowledge & awareness through videos, mailouts and workshops

Minority Landowner Enrollment

Increasing program awareness and providing enrollment assistance

2023 Farm Bill

Addressing funding and key policy improvements



ENGAGED PARTNERS

Tri-state Representation

focused on common objectives

Strength in Diversity

15 federal, state, private and non-governmental organizations

Broad Participation

rallying around shared interests



OPTIONS TO ENCOURAGE MINORITY LANDOWNER PARTICIPATION

Include new provisions for minority landowners including resolving Heirship Issues, separate ranking pools, and allowing for 30-year contracts.

- Addresses known program issues and barriers to minority landowner access and use of the program.
- Provides clear statutory direction and flexibility to the Secretary to operate the program in a manner that promotes opportunities for minority landowners.
- Secures an opportunity for minority landowners to receive a level of financial compensation to resolve title issues relative to heirship of the enrolled property.

WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PARTNERSHIP

Provide no less than 15% of the total dollars allocated to ACEP-WRE financial assistance (FA) annually for Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP) projects.

WREP targets wetland protection and restoration in priority areas that provide greater impacts on the landscape while leveraging federal dollars through partner contributions including cost-share for restoration and staff capacity for acquisition, due diligence, and restoration activities.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



FROM THE
Wetland
Conservation
Policy Coalition

ACEP-WRE Recommendations

WHO WE ARE

The Tri-state Conservation Partnership (TCP) is a collaborative effort of 15 federal, state, private and non-governmental organizations promoting landscape-level conservation through Farm Bill programs, but with a unique focus on the Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE), Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP) and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) in the three Lower Mississippi Valley (LMV) states of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Collectively, we have partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) since the inception of these programs, assisting the agency in building the Wetlands Reserve Program and its successor, WRE, into the flagship model for landscape-level ecosystem restoration in the LMV. Today, the LMV holds more than 29% of the programs acquired and restored easements nationwide.

The Lower Mississippi Valley holds more than 29% of the programs acquired and restored easements nationwide.

The science-based approach of restoring historically converted or manipulated wetlands using hydrologic restoration balanced with greater than a 3-1 ratio of hardwood buffers is tailor-made for long-term sustainable reductions in atmospheric greenhouse gasses (emissions and sequestration) and building ecosystem resiliency.

The Wetlands Conservation Policy Coalition (WCPC) is an affiliate of the TCP that focuses on Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)-WRE policy. The conservation partners of the WCPC worked collaboratively to identify and support the following priorities aimed at further strengthening ACEP-WRE.



RESTORING AMERICA'S
WETLANDS THROUGH
THE FARM BILL



WATCH THE VIDEO



AVERAGE CAPS AND ENROLLMENT LIMITATIONS

Remove the 15% percent acreage limitation for WRE and add Land Capability Class III, subclass “w” to the list of exempt acres for enrollment calculation purposes.

- Provides a voluntary off-ramp for agriculture producers to remove marginally productive crop and pasture sites from production.
- Reduces impacts on crop insurance and commodity title payments on marginal agriculture fields by permanently removing cropland base acres from enrolled fields.
- Using the “w” designation for capability class III – VIII soils limits widespread enrollment of non-wetland acres to WRE since these soils do not dominate cropland landscapes of the Great Plains, where CRP is the predominant land retirement program.

RESTORATION OF EASEMENTS AND CONTRACTS

Revise current law to remove the cost-share limitation for restoration of 30-year easements and 30-year contracts, allowing all restoration to be compensated at the same rate as perpetual easements.

- Allows easements to be fully restored without limitations based on the landowner’s ability to pay their share of restoration costs.
- Ensures that quality restoration is accomplished and maintained throughout the life of the easement and contract.
- Yields greatest flexibility for USDA to accomplish establishment and stewardship of easement restoration activities without creating fiscal hardship on the landowner.
- Does not impact the ability to enter into compatible use agreements with the landowner or stewardship agreements with partners.

ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME LIMITATION

Amend ACEP to exempt the program from the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) requirements of section 1001D for participant eligibility.

- Different from cost-share and subsidy payments, easements are a purchase of rights from a willing landowner. The government is acquiring a right and value for the price paid.
- Creates greater opportunity to improve connectivity/continuity of restored and protected wetlands and removes a barrier for applications from high conservation value, high priority restoration projects.
- Reduces the administrative impacts and application delays associated with determining an individual’s AGI eligibility through the Farm Services Agency and the Internal Revenue Service. AGI eligibility determination is required for all applications, not just exemption requests, and typically delays the lengthy enrollment process an additional 60 – 120 days. Less than 5% of applications do not meet the AGI requirement, but all applications are delayed.
- May provide opportunities for a “lessor of” purchase price offer by the landowner creating greater value for the federal investment.
- Reduces the workload associated with Secretarial waiver requests that are rarely denied.
- By virtue of program policy, land eligibility, and the ranking and selection process, these lands uniformly fall under “the Secretary determines that environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected as a result of such waiver” criteria established in the law.
- Secures opportunities for ecologically land-based enrollment, instead of financial landowner-based enrollment.

EASEMENT STEWARDSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

Include language within ACEP-WRE requiring continual stewardship of enrolled WRP and WRE acres, in addition to current law requirements for acquisition and restoration.

- Language should require the Secretary to conduct an assessment of stewardship needs and develop and to execute a stewardship plan.
- Language should require a report to Congress for future needs and accomplishments.
- Include language in the WRE section of the text, rather than the Administration section, to avoid confusion in application to Agricultural Land Easements (not applicable).
- Provides clear priority for the Secretary to address stewardship of existing enrolled acres, previously not addressed in the statute.
- Does not prohibit the use of partners and landowners in addressing easement stewardship.

FUNDING

We advocate for an increase in overall funding to the ACEP, above the current Farm Bill level, to \$750 million per year.

To accomplish this, we request Congress maintain the total conservation funding provided through the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act for Farm Bill conservation title programs. We propose the funding be utilized by the Agriculture Committees to strengthen programs across the title. Increased ACEP funding is necessary to address rising acquisition and restoration costs, meet growing stewardship needs on existing easements, and to support the high demand for the voluntary program. Currently, program demand exceeds available funding by 9:1 in the Lower Mississippi Valley.

In addition to this funding, we advocate for the authorizing Committees and Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to capture the cost avoidance to commodity and crop insurance titles achieved through the croplands set-aside of base acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the permanent retirement of ACEP-WRE acres that occur during the new Farm Bill. We ask that the savings generated through cost avoidance be substantially allocated to the conservation title for use in strengthening the CRP, ACEP-WRE and other programs across the title.





Science

Former and Current Science Spending Investments

FY 2021

Development of an Emergent Wetland Data Layer

Lead: Mike Mitchell, Ducks Unlimited

Amount: \$10,000

Purpose: Use remote sensing techniques to develop an Emergent Wetland geospatial data layer for use in waterbird and waterfowl planning

Status: Completed and available at <https://www.lmvjv.org/emergent-wetland-assessment>

Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) to Detect Marshbird Use of Emergent Wetland Sites

Lead: Doug Osborne & Gabby Hargrove, University of Arkansas, Monticello

Amount: \$8,000

Purpose: Pair ARUs with callback surveys to determine occupancy rates and detection probability for marsh birds; 15 ARUs were purchased

Status: Ongoing; pending completion of thesis. Worked with Cornell Lab of Ornithology to analyze the sound files through BIRDNet (automated process)

FY 2022

Initiation of Hydrologic and Soil Moisture Monitoring in Greentree Reservoirs in the Bayou Meto Basin

Lead: Doug Osborne, University of Arkansas, Monticello

Amount: \$25,000

Purpose: 1) Install water level and soil moisture loggers to initiate long-term monitoring of hydrologic/soil moisture across elevation gradients in the Bayou Meto Basin of Arkansas and Jefferson counties, AR; and 2) Evaluate the effects of flood inundation and dewatering schedules on soil moisture in greentree reservoirs and across elevation gradients

Status: Ongoing. Water loggers and pressure transducers were deployed November 2022 on 9 of 12 GTRs at Five Oaks; soil moisture meters were not deployed due to water levels at the time. Equipment will be moved and re-installed this year based on feedback from Bottomland Hardwood Advisory Committee

Quantifying King Rail Habitat Suitability in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley

Lead: Lisa Webb & Dustin Brewer (University of Missouri, Columbia)

Amount: \$100,000 (additional 6 months provided thru MDC)

Purpose: 1) Synthesize existing literature and expert knowledge on King Rail habitat requirements to determine habitat factors important for their distribution throughout the annual life cycle; 2) Develop a conceptual model for King Rail habitat relationships throughout the full annual cycle using a Bayesian Belief Network approach and identify uncertainties associated with species-habitat relationships; and 3) Conduct additional data analysis including geospatial analysis of potential occupancy and important areas within the LMJVJ

Status: Postdoctoral position in place, to begin July 2023

Applications in Remote Sensing to Assess Quality and Quantity of Emergent Marsh for Waterfowl and Other Wetland Bird Species in the Arkansas Delta

Lead: Hamdi Zurqani, University of Arkansas Monticello

Amount: \$51,153

Purpose: 1) Quantify composition of wetland plant communities and identify the energetic carrying capacity for wintering waterfowl within a semi-permanent emergent marsh; 2) Use local energetic values and remote sensing applications to assess landscape level (MAV) contributions of energetic resources for wintering waterfowl; and 3) validate accuracy of the LMJVJ emergent marsh spatial data dataset

Status: Contract in development; student to be advertised and begin August 2023

Assessment of Landowner Motivations and Barriers to Enrolling in Conservation Programs and Adopting Conservation Practices in the West Gulf Coastal Plains/Ouachitas

Lead: TBD [either Elena Rubino, University of Arkansas Monticello or Jerrod Penn, Louisiana State University]

Amount: \$75,000

Purpose: 1) Quantitative survey and analysis to address landowner perceptions of the ecological and economic benefits of the AR-LA Open Pine RCPP, conservation ethic, and willingness to conduct management behaviors after the program ends; and 2) Quantitative survey and analysis to address barriers to enrollment in the AR-LA Open Pine RCPP program

Status: Pending completion of Phase 1 (currently ongoing)

Science Spending FY 2023: Bottomland Hardwood Forest Health and Hydrology

Background

The LMJV Science Team was charged by the Management Board to decide best use of FY2023 science investment funds (+/- \$100,000) to address science priorities. Our Science Team met in January 2023 and concluded that the wisest use of funds was to invest in furthering our understanding of bottomland hardwood forest health as related to hydrology. The intent is to magnify our FY22 investment in monitoring of forest health and hydrology.

The Bottomland Hardwood Hydrology Advisory Group (“Advisory Group”), formed to provide guidance on the FY22 project, met February 14, 2023 to discuss the status of current monitoring efforts at the Five Oaks Ag Research and Education Center, current efforts of AGFC and additional equipment provided to them, as well as identify the ultimate objective that these annual investments are intended to achieve. Participants included Sammy King, Coop Unit-LSU; Richard Keim, LSU; Mary Grace Lemmon, USFWS; Janine Antalffy, LMJV Office; Keith McKnight, LMJV Office; Anne Mini, LMJV Office; Luke Naylor, AGFC; Brett Leach, AGFC; Allison Fowler, AGFC; Buck Jackson, AGFC; and Doug Osborne, Univ. Arkansas Monticello/Five Oaks. The Advisory Group concluded that our greatest need is monitoring forest health and hydrology across different geomorphic settings throughout the valley, as our current sampling frame is extremely small. The ideal is a network of sites distributed across a diversity of relevant conditions linked to remote sensing data to enable a large landscape assessment.

On March 22, 2023, several members of the Advisory Group met in conjunction with additional representatives from AGFC and Ducks Unlimited to discuss the best way to begin establishing such a network. Partners present included Sammy King; Richard Keim; Mary Grace Lemmon; Aaron Pierce (DU); Buck Jackson; Brett Leach; Anne Mini; Keith McKnight; and Janine Antalffy. The Advisory Group recommends that best use of FY2023 funds is deploying a set of monitoring sites distributed across the LMJV geography based on specific criteria. Long-term data management and analysis responsibilities have been discussed, and will be resolved by Fall 2023. Equipment should be purchased and deployed as soon as feasible.

Decisions

- Invest science funds (up to **\$100,000**) on **equipment** (soil & water sensors, recording devices, etc.) necessary to initiate a complex of hydrology monitoring nodes across the LMJV geography
- Invest at least **\$20,000** in the **capacity needed to deploy equipment** at monitoring sites

Next Steps

- A sub-team has agreed on the general criteria for characterizing potential monitoring sites. These include: Within LMJV geography, BLH habitat on federal and state lands, diverse/representative geomorphic features, representative soil types, LIDAR data quality/availability, hydrologic connectivity, restored vs mature second growth BLH, and green tree reservoir vs non-green tree reservoir
- Mike Mitchell (Ducks Unlimited) is exploring available geospatial layers to address the above criteria, will describe all federal and state sites by available criteria, and report back to the group
- From the analysis, we will develop a list of potential sites based on criteria and determine number of sites and monitors per site
- Begin contacting respective agencies, land managers, and other relevant parties to determine the feasibility of establishing these monitoring sites (e.g., access, ability to assist in deployment & maintenance, etc.)