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# Agriculture/Conservation Measures: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Announces Multi-Million Dollar Investment

## Arkansas Environmental, Energy, and Water Law Blog

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The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service ("NRCS") announced in a February 26<sup>th</sup> news release what it characterizes as an "investment of \$25 million targeted to help agriculture producers improve water quality in high-priority streams and rivers across the country."

NRCS will undertake this effort through the National Water Quality Initiative ("NWQI") and focus on 187 priority watersheds.

The goal of the NWQI is stated to be the implementation of conservation practices in sufficient quantity within a concentrated area so that agriculture no longer contributes to the impairment of waterbodies within such priority watersheds. The agency states that it works with partners to assist producers and landowners in the implementation of voluntary conservation practices which include:

- Nutrient Management
- Cover crops
- Conservation Cropping Systems
- Filter Strips
- Terraces
- Buffers

The news release cites as an example of the merits of the program improvement of water quality in portions of the St. Francis and Illinois Rivers in Arkansas. The agency notes that these segments of the rivers are no longer considered "impaired" (a Clean Water Act term) streams by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

High priority watersheds in Arkansas include:

- Cousart Bayou – Little Cypress Bayou
- Upper Deep Bayou
- Lower Deep Bayou

The NRCS states that deadlines for applications for funding vary by state and the local USDA Service Center should be contacted for more information.

[Click here to download a copy of the news release.](#)

