

# Assistance for Improving the Health of Creeks & Streams

Texas Riparian & Stream Ecosystem Workshop

2015

# Agencies Available to Assist With Riparian Conservation Projects

- Local Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- Agrilife Extension
- Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
- Texas A&M Forest Service
- Texas A&M Feral Hog Resources
- USDA NRCS

# Conservation Programs Available through the USDA-NRCS





# Agricultural Act of 2014 Conservation Programs



# Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)



EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to agriculture producers to promote agriculture production and environmental quality as compatible goals.

# Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)



- New program designed to be an all encompassing program focused project.
- Uses EQIP, CSP, and ACEP WRE and ACEP ALE programs
- Addresses a multitude of resource concerns

# Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)



- CSP pays farmers who are improving conservation treatment on their working lands.
- Encourages the continuation of practices that benefit soil, water and air resources.
- A person or legal entity cannot receive CSP payments exceeding \$200,000 during any five-year period.



# ACEP – Agricultural Land Easement (ALE)

- Helps landowners restore and protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands.
- Program emphasis is on support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grasslands under the greatest threat of conversion.
- Enrollment options:
  - Permanent easements
  - Rental agreements





# ACEP - Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE)

A voluntary, non-regulatory, incentive-based program that helps private landowners, farmers and ranchers protect and restore wetlands on their property.



## Enrollment options:

- Permanent easement
- 30-year easement
- 10-year restoration agreement

# CTA- Conservation Technical Assistance

The CTA Program provides land users with proven conservation technology and the delivery system needed to achieve the benefits of a healthy and productive landscape. Technical assistance is the help provided by NRCS to address opportunities, concerns, and problems related to the use of natural resources.



- Assist individuals or groups of decision makers, communities, conservation districts, units of State and local government, tribes, and others to voluntarily conserve, maintain, and improve natural resources
- Provide community, watershed, and area-wide technical assistance in collaboration with local units of government, to develop and implement resource management plans that conserve, maintain and improve natural resources

# Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

\* Administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA)

*In exchange for a yearly rental payment, land owners agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality.*



- Contracts are 10-15 years in length.
- Producers plant long-term resource conserving covers.
- Re-establishes valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.



# Continuous CRP (CCRP)

\*Administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA)

## Conservation Practices include:

- Wetland Buffer
- Riparian Buffer
- Wetland Restoration
- Filter Strips
- Grass Waterways
- And Others



# The ACT

## Avoid, Control or Trap

When performing conservation planning with landowners emphasize a “systems approach” to address their resource concerns. When you consider water quality, encourage producers to select practices that address the concept for Avoiding, Controlling, or Trapping pollutants, or “ACT.”

# Avoid

Avoidance helps manage nutrients and sediment source control from agricultural lands, including animal production facilities. Practices such as Nutrient Management, Cover Crop, and Conservation Crop Rotation help producers avoid pollution by reducing the amount of nutrients available in runoff or leaching into water bodies and watersheds. Practices such as cover crops and crop rotation help take up nutrients to avoid potential runoff and pollution. Crop rotations that include differing crops, such as legumes, can limit amounts of commercial nutrients applied.

# Control

Land treatment in fields or facilities that prevents the loss of pollutants includes practices such as conservation tillage and residue management, which improve infiltration, reduce runoff, and control erosion. Specific practices such as No-till/Strip/Till/Direct Seed, Mulch Tillage, and Ridge Till are foundation practices to recommend to producers. Practices such as Cover Crop will also do double duty by helping with Avoidance as well as Controlling. Other facilitating practices, such as Terraces or Stripcropping, help control erosion and may manage runoff to reduce nutrients loading.

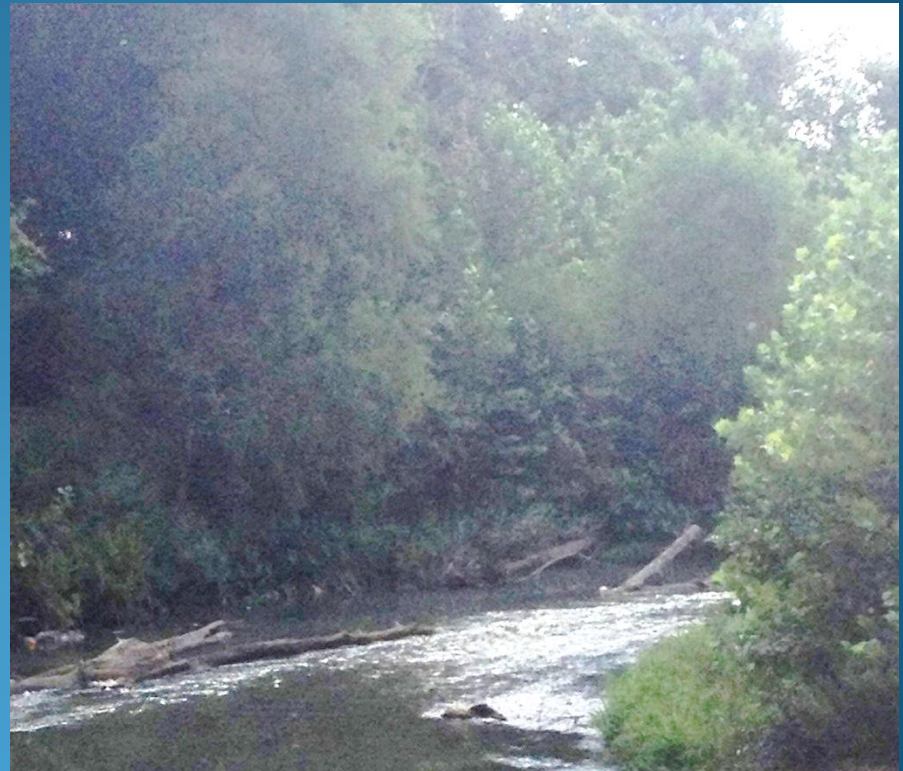
# Trap

The last line of defense against potential pollutants is to trap them. Practices such as Contour Buffers, Filter Strips, Riparian Buffers and the suite of wetland practices to create, enhance, and/or restore wetlands all serve to trap and uptake nutrients before entering water bodies.



# Practices utilized in Riparian Area Conservation Work

- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Riparian Herbaceous Buffer
- Fencing
- Alternative Water Sources
- Filter Strips
- Grassed Waterways
- Prescribed Grazing
- Livestock Exclusions
- Brush Control
- Others as needed



# Questions?



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