The Arkansas Unpaved Roads Program: A Five-Year Summary
Arkansas Unpaved Road Program - Why?

- Unpaved roads can be significant contributors of sediment runoff into our streams and lakes (52,552 miles of unpaved roads in AR).
- These problem areas can persist and put a drain on public tax dollars (infrastructure, labor, equipment, etc.)
- Extreme weather events are putting stress on older infrastructure
- Many of these areas can also be public safety hazards.
County Road Maintenance Cost $$$$$

- Counties spend nearly $85 million per year on unpaved road maintenance.
- Each county on average is spending over $1.1 million per year.
- Cost is going up every year due to inflation.
Arkansas Unpaved Road Program

• In 2015, Act 898 of the 90th General Assembly officially established the Arkansas Unpaved Roads Grant Program funding at $300,000 per year.

• Provide training to road maintenance professionals on techniques of dirt and gravel road maintenance that minimize negative impacts to water and air quality.

• Conduct demonstrations of new and innovative techniques of dirt and gravel road construction and maintenance to assist in training of road crews and to more broadly share BMPs.
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Program Eligibility

• The Program is designed to fund work on public unbound (no asphalt, concrete, etc.) roads
• Counties are the primary applicants for funding
• The entity that owns and maintains the road is the entity eligible to apply for Program funding
• $75,000 project cap, matched at 50:50
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Program Eligibility

• A water body containing an aquatic species listed as threatened, endangered or a candidate species by the Federal Government or a water body that has been determined to be impaired as a result of turbidity or sediment;
• A water body used as a drinking source for people;
• A water body used as an interstate waterway;
• A water body the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission had determined contains a species of greatest conservation need;
• A water body important to agricultural or pasture land use; or
• A water body important to forestry land use
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Program Eligibility

• An Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) *certified person* must be *in charge* of work plan development and *project implementation* for the applying county
• Training to become ESM certified is provided through a *one-day course* which is of *no cost* to potential grant applicants
• Recommended for all persons representing the county such as county judges, road crew, and administrative personnel
• ESM training *certification is good for 5 years*
• ESM practices are discussed in detail during the workshop
No. ESM Certified Personnel by Year


No. ESM Certifications:
- 2016: 90
- 2017: 45
- 2018: 45
- 2019: 35
- 2021: 35
- 2022: 45
- 2023: 20
2019-2022 No. of ESM Practices Implemented

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Arkansas Unpaved Road Program

Program Successes

Training (since 2015)
• 331 ESM Certified Personnel
• 57 Counties Trained (76%)

Projects (since 2019)
• 38 projects funded, 22 counties
• $4,853,549 (state, federal, county)
• 46,571 linear feet (8.8 miles)
• 174 BMPs installed
AURP-Bang for the Buck?

- Average Cost for unpaved road work has been around $70/foot
- Bank stabilization work has averaged over $250/foot
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Program Successes

Lincoln County
Arkansas Unpaved Road Program

Program Successes

Calhoun County
Arkansas Unpaved Road Program

Program Successes

Independence County
Arkansas Unpaved Road Program

What are program participants saying?

“The process is extremely easy, the program is built on common sense, and both our employees and constituents are happy. Projects have been completed that otherwise would have perpetually sat on the back burner.” – Van Buren County Judge Dale James

“It’s a great source of funding to assist counties in solving road problems.” – Calhoun County Judge Floyd Nutt
AURP Pre-project Questionnaires

Are we making a difference?

Average number of visits to site per year: 4.3

Average number of tons of soil/aggregate needed: 225 per trip

Average Cost to the county per year: $18,000

Each project on average is saving 967 tons and $18,000 per year
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What’s on the horizon to leverage funds?

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)/Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

- Rural Surface Transportation Grant
- Secure Rural School Program
- Bridge Investment Program
- National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan
- Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership Program
Questions

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