Addressing Water Issues Through Partnerships and USDA Programs

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Addressing Oklahoma Water Issues

- Most efforts done on a field basis with individual landowners
- Landscape is like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle – each piece fits together with another
- Maximum water quality benefits come from a completed puzzle – all stakeholders involved
- Challenge
  - Each piece may be controlled by different landowners with different views and objectives
- Conservation Planning leads to more opportunities for “Conservation on the Ground”
  - Planning = Educate, Motivate and Influence – System Approach
- Partnerships
  - Reaching more landowners/managers
  - Coordinated and Targeted Conservation Efforts
  - Programs working together
Addressing Oklahoma Water Issues

• Conservation Planning and Implementation Process
  – Collection and Analysis – NRCS assessment tools and monitoring activities; benchmark monitoring data; 303d list
  – Develop solutions – Systems Approach – right practices, right time, right place; research
  – Implementation and Evaluation – evaluate effectiveness of implemented practices and allow for adaptive management; monitoring programs

• Financial Assistance - Farm Bill Programs
  – Various programs, purposes and rules
  – Provides financial assistance to apply practices
Targeting Efforts
Partners Working Together

• Working Group to develop Oklahoma Strategies
  – Oklahoma Nonpoint Source Management Plan revision
  – Unified Watershed Assessment –
    • Ranking watersheds (HUC 12)
    • Serves as foundation to target CWA program efforts (319, TMDL, NPS implementation)
    • Serves as resource for targeting NRCS efforts
National Water Quality Initiative

• Goal remove streams from 303d list
  – Ag related - Nutrients, pesticides, sediments, pathogens

• Investment in Conservation yields multiple benefits
  – Reduced Pollutants – Cleaner, safer water; Wildlife; Recreation
  – Enhanced Productivity and food security

• Watershed Selection
  – Local and State Partners
Two priority watersheds (Source Water) – 2015-2020

- Little Beaver Creek (Waurika Lake)
- New Spiro Lake
• 2018- Development of watershed level assessment, outreach plans, and on-farm planning (2 additional HUCS)
  – Used as basis for future FA (EQIP, 319)
  – Vulnerable acres – runoff, sedimentation, lack of conservation practices
  – Identify causes
  – Solutions
  – Outreach Plan – target producers
• Partner with OCC – Water Quality Division
• On farm planning, outreach and contracting beginning in 2019
• $2 million investment over next 5 years
• Future opportunity for expansion to all contributing watersheds
Illinois River – Eucha Spavinaw

- 2010 – 2018 project
- Goal: Improved water quality
  - Animal Wastes
  - Sediment
  - Livestock use
- > $20 million and 100,000 acres
- Work continues through EQIP, CStP, and partner efforts
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

• Promotes coordination between NRCS and our partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners
  – Leveraging Resources to better accomplish common goals

• Oklahoma – 6 projects; 2 Water Quality
  – Elk City Lake - $3.1 Million planned investment
  – Middle and Lower Neosho - $8.1 million planned investment
2019 NPS Success Stories
12 New Stories and 3 Updates
Total of 84 Stories
120 Parameters Delisted
Illinois River Watershed - 5 Streams Delisted for Bacteria

- OCC, conservation districts, and NRCS started working in the IR Watershed in the 1980s.
- OCC and partners have spent tens of millions on NPS controls in the watershed since 2000.
- Conservation efforts focused on:
  - Animal waste management
  - Streambank and riparian area protection
  - Grazing management
  - Septic system upgrades
Other NRCS Program Opportunities

• Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
  – Increased funding in new FB
  – Tremendous flexibility, focused on addressing resource concerns
  – States can target (LEA process in OK)

• Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
Oklahoma Source Water Protection Priorities

Proposed Future Project - Cimarron River - Groundwater

Hobart-Rocky – ACPF Special Project

Proposed Future Project - Lake Ellsworth

Proposed Future Project - Lake Humphreys

Proposed Future Project - Lake Tom Steed

Past Project / Ongoing and Future - Eucha-Spavinaw and Illinois River and Lake Tenkiller

Existing NWQI - New Spiro Lake

Existing NWQI – Little Beaver – Waurika Lake
Questions?

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