

Mississippi Progress

August 13, 2010



Water is being pumped into a moist soil area.

Landowner Response

430 applications were received from landowners wanting to enroll

84,023 acres in the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative in Mississippi.

Background

The oil spill is adversely affecting marshes and coastlands used by shorebirds, waterfowl, and other migrating birds.

Under the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI), farmers and ranchers in Mississippi are working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop and enhance habitat for birds making their annual migration south.

Priority areas for MBHI in Mississippi are in Adams, Bolivar, Carroll, Claiborne, Coahoma, DeSoto, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower,

Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica, Warren, Washington, Wilkinson, and Yazoo Counties.

NRCS in Mississippi is providing support to landowners through two components—one for private agricultural lands and another for lands enrolled in NRCS' Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).

Through the agricultural lands component, NRCS is providing payment incentives for flooding existing farmed wetlands, prior-converted croplands, or other lands that can provide immediate habitat.

The WRP component addresses food habitat needs for species

expected to be significantly impacted on WRP easement land. It will provide habitat features that are appropriate for the area and habitat management methods that are not currently in use.

In addition, NRCS is using its Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program to help producers enhance habitat by flooding fields and establishing or maintaining vegetation for cover and food.

NRCS works with several partners on this initiative including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Delta Wildlife, and Wildlife Mississippi.