



## Better Unpaved Roads for Nature and People in Arkansas

A common FEMA project in rural areas is the repair or rebuilding of unpaved roads. In 2013, the Arkansas Association of Counties, the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, the Farm Bureau, The Nature Conservancy and a dozen public and private partner organizations joined forces to establish the Arkansas Unpaved Roads Program. Over 85 percent of county roads in Arkansas are unpaved.

Eroding unpaved roads can channel rainfall runoff, increasing erosion, and sediment delivery to streams, rivers, and lakes. This sediment can have negative effects for both people and nature. It can fill in gravel stream beds, causing the loss of in-stream habitat for game and non-gamefish and other aquatic species alike, make freshwater sources more expensive to treat for drinking water, and ultimately contribute to loss of lake capacity,

Best Management Practices (BMPs) for construction and maintenance of unpaved roads are broadly accepted by road engineers and maintenance professionals as the most effective approach to managing roads that minimize sediment impacts to adjacent water bodies and aquatic habitat. Use of BMPs reduces erosion and sedimentation by providing better drainage to the road system, stabilizing erodible ditches and drainage outlets, and creating a more durable driving surface. BMPs can reduce long-term costs by greatly reducing the need for replacing road surface gravel and reducing the need for road grading.

The program's vision is to establish a proactive, incentive-based unpaved roads management program that results in the utilization of best management practices on rural, unpaved roads to minimize erosion, stretch county dollars further, and maintain and improve the health of priority lakes and rivers.

The partners envision a program that coordinates federal, state, and private funding to implement projects, trainings, and demonstrations. Counties or other road managers will leverage program funding for projects by matching one-to-one with cash or in-kind contributions and will be eligible to apply for funding once they have completed an unpaved roads BMP training workshop. For more information, visit: [www.arcounties.org/public/userfiles/ARRoadsBrochure.pdf](http://www.arcounties.org/public/userfiles/ARRoadsBrochure.pdf)