



United States
Department of
Agriculture



NRCS Stakeholder Meeting 8-30-23

Natural
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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Soil Health Updates

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Director, Soil Health Division

Economics of Soil Health Systems on 30 U.S. Farms

ECONOMICS of Soil Health Systems on 30 U.S. Farms

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Improving soil health can help farmers build drought resilience, increase nutrient availability, suppress diseases, reduce erosion, and reduce nutrient losses. Many soil health management systems (i.e., a suite of soil health practices) also benefit the environment by storing soil carbon, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and improving water quality. However, investing in soil health management systems (SHMS) is also a business decision. This project was conducted by the Soil Health Institute (SHI) and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) to provide farmers with the economics information they need when making that decision.

A total of 30 farmers from across the U.S. with an established history of successful implementation of SHMS in crop production were selected for this project. NACD interviewed those farmers to learn about their farms and experiences with adopting SHMS, and SHI interviewed them to acquire production information for evaluating their economics based on partial budget analysis. In using this approach, the costs and benefits of a soil health system are compared before and after adoption of that system. A detailed description of the partial budget methodology can be found on the SHI website: <https://soilhealthinstitute.org/economics/>.

Crops for partial budget analysis included corn, chickpeas, cotton, cotton, dried bean, grain sorghum, millet, pea, peanut, soybean, sunflower, rye, walnut, and wheat. Cover crops were planted on 29 of the 30 farms, but not before every cash crop. Two farms produced organic crops in a soil health management system, while four farms gained additional revenue by grazing their cover crops.

Recognizing that each farm is unique, and the specific economic information on each farm is provided in the corresponding fact sheet, the following generalizations were found:

- On average, after implementing a SHMS, it cost producers \$14/acre less to grow corn, \$7/acre less to grow soybean and \$16/acre less to grow all other crops.
- Adopting a SHMS not only reduced expenses, but also increased net farm income.
- Across 29 farms, SHMS increased net farm income by an average of \$65/acre (1 organic farm was excluded due to high revenue from price premiums that would skew the average results).
- Yield increases due to SHMS were reported for 42% of farms growing corn, 32% of farms growing soybean, and 35% of farms growing other crops.
- Cover crop seed costs averaged \$21/acre for corn, \$18/acre for soybean, and \$25/acre when used with other crops.
- Four farms grazed cover crops, allowing them to increase revenue by an average of \$26/acre.
- Additional reported benefits of adopting SHMS included decreased erosion and soil compaction, earlier access to fields in wet years, and increased resilience to extreme weather, among other benefits.



National Association of
Conservation Districts



SOIL HEALTH
INSTITUTE



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Program, Department of Agriculture under contract #19100000000000000000. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or
recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of
the U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA cannot guarantee the accuracy, reliability, timeliness or use of any information
provided.



CPS 336: Soil Carbon Amendment



In Field Forest Soil Health Assessment

Looking at the Results



Helping
Help the Land
NEW ME

unlock the
SECRETS
OF THE
SOIL

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A sign for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is visible on the right side of the image. The sign features a photograph of a woman kneeling in a field, looking at the ground. The text on the sign includes "unlock the SECRETS OF THE SOIL" and "Natural Resources Conservation Service" with the website "www.nm.nrcs.gov".

Rangeland Soil Health

A photograph of a silvopasture system. In the foreground, two black cows with yellow ear tags are grazing in a field of tall green grass. They are positioned between rows of young trees with thin trunks. The background shows more trees and a slightly blurred field, suggesting a larger pasture area. The overall scene is lush and green, indicating a healthy ecosystem.

Silvopasture
for
Soil Health



Advanced
Cropland Soil
Health Training



Urban Soil Health

Indigenous People's Team



Laboratory Testing for Soil Health





Soil Carbon Monitoring Network

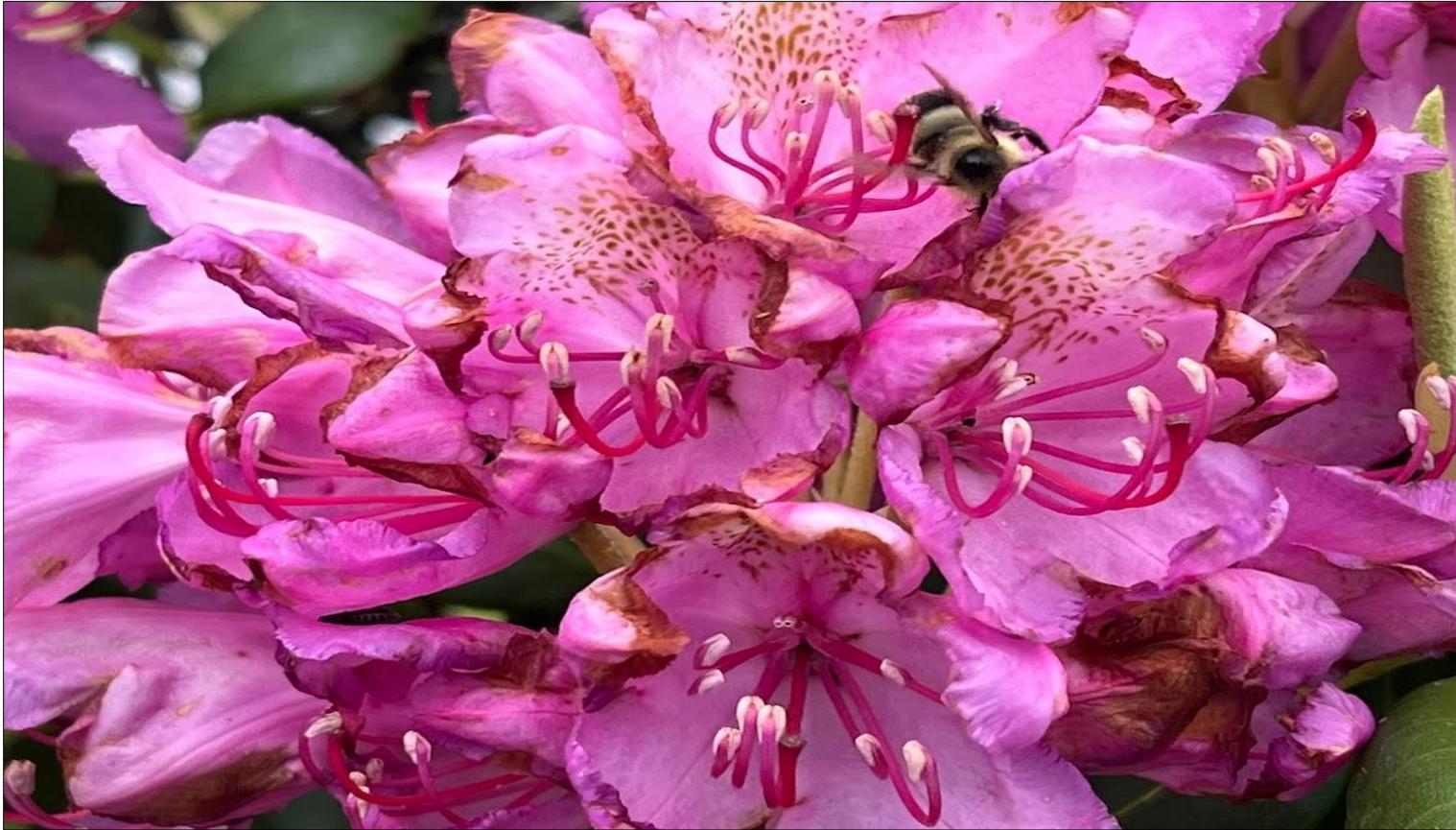


Virtual Soil Health Partnership Roundtable

- Initial session: September 26, 2023
- Invitation from Carl.Koch@usda.gov



United States Department of Agriculture



NRCS and the Inflation Reduction Act

Julie Hawkins, Acting Associate Deputy Chief for Programs
Gayle Barry, Inflation Reduction Act Coordinator

NRCS Stakeholder Meeting | August 30, 2023

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Strategic Actions for Inflation Reduction Act Implementation



Increase Capacity



Streamline
Programs



Build and Expand
Partnerships

Streamlining Programs:

RCPP Improvements

- Simplifying and Reducing the Number of Agreements
- Reducing Lengthy RCPP Easement Transactions
- Improving the RCPP Portal
- Consistent Guidance and Training for Employees and Partners
- Simplifying the Technical Assistance Structure
- Improving the Conservation Desktop
- Simplifying the Partner Reimbursement Process

ACEP Improvements

- Appraisals and Appraisal Reviews
- Boundary Surveys (affects US-held only)
- Certification (affects ACEP-ALE only)
- Internal Controls
- Waivers and Delegations

CSP Improvements

- Looking at options to expand CSP for FY24



FY23 IRA Implementation

- Since the FY23 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding availability announcements, as of **August 28, 2023**, NRCS has received 12,871 applications as shown below.

Program	Applications Received	Contracts/Enrollments
IRA - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	8,791	2,323
IRA - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	3,871	1,549
IRA - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	263	77 <i>selected for funding</i>
IRA - Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	163 proposals were received by the August 18, 2023, application date. NRCS is currently reviewing and evaluating partner proposals.	

- A Notice of Funding for the IRA Conservation Innovation Grants for On Farm Trials (CIG-OFT) will be released September 1st.
- **NRCS is still working with landowners and producers to complete conservation plans and contracts. EQIP, CSP, and ACEP obligations may occur up to September 30, 2023. FY23 final obligation information will not be available until after the close of the fiscal year.**

FY23 IRA Implementation as of August 25, 2023

Program	Total FA Available	Total TA Available	Applications Estimates (FA)	FA Obligations	Total FA Demand
IRA - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	\$174.5 M	\$75.5 M	\$308 M	\$118 M	\$426 M
IRA - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	\$191.4 M	\$58.6 M	\$138 M	\$98 M	\$236 M
IRA - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	\$84 M	\$16 M	\$82.7 M	\$1.8 M	\$ 181 M

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) \$250M available from IRA, with a total of \$500M when including Farm Bill funding.
- Current funding breakdown shows during the IRA-RCPP funding request period NRCS received \$2.2B in requested funding for **both Farm Bill and IRA funding.**
- ***Even with additional IRA funds, NRCS is still receiving more requests for funding through EQIP, CSP, ACEP, and RCPP than there is available funding.***

IRA Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

- Conservation Technical Assistance provides farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners the information they need to conserve, maintain, and restore the natural resources on their lands.
- It is expected it will require a total of \$714M in CTA funding for states to implement the compliance and planning requirements associated with the IRA:
 - 2023 = \$148M
 - 2024 = \$173M
 - 2025 = \$197M
 - 2026 = \$197M
 - TOTAL = \$714



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IRA Technical Assistance Agreements

Program	TA Funds Precommitments
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP-IRA)	2,883,638
Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA-IRA)	100,757,955
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP-IRA)	11,921,222
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP-IRA)	21,031,704
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP-IRA)	4,409,943
Total	141,004,462

Building and Expanding Partnerships

- Additional 3,000 partner staff will be needed (FY23-FY26)
- State Conservationists are working with their State Technical Committees to develop and expanding partnerships throughout the states.
- Umbrella Agreement Pilot
 - Provides additional capacity quickly through a single agreement.
 - Offers flexibility for states to engage at the funding level and program of their choosing based on the number and type of deliverables needed in their area.
 - Allows states to maintain working relationship with partner while benefitting from streamlined process and decreased administrative processes.

Increasing Capacity:

Hiring

- Aggressive bundling of positions to increase hiring numbers and applicant pools.
- Developing incentives for Pathways hiring to retain graduating students for conversion to Federal staff, so they can be utilized in high IRA implementation years.
- Securing Direct Hire Authority for core staffing needs to work in concert with other strategies to meet overall goals.
- Increasing outreach and partnerships for increased hiring in areas like recent graduates and other flexibilities.

Training

- NRCS is finalizing a training strategy to ensure new employees have skills to have immediate positive impacts to field.

Business Planning

- Building National Plan to support State Actions
- NRCS Roadmap for Success

Increasing Capacity:

Staffing Projections-

	NRCS Federal Staff Hiring	Projected Partnership Staff	Annual Total Need
FY 23	673	448	1,121
FY 24	1,567	1,044	2,611
FY 25	1,177	784	1,961
FY 26	1,058	705	1,763
	4,475	2,981	7,456

Note: This is a current estimate that will change as IRA is implemented. NRCS will accelerate hires across fiscal years as opportunities arise.

- NRCS is making great strides with IRA hiring. NRCS is in process on multiple hiring bundles that are expected to result in a significant number of IRA hires.
- A bundling cadence has been established to ensure hiring needs for IRA are addressed through the remainder of the calendar year and will provide states a constant supply of candidates for mission critical series.
- Hiring Bundles for Soil Conservationists, Engineers, CETs, and Natural Resource Specialists have all been released.

NRCS, Producers, and the IRA

- As of 8/15/23, NRCS has added 60,692 new customers to our customer base in FY23.
- NRCS supports farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners in meeting their conservation goals, **regardless of the size, location, and type of operation**
- NRCS is committed to achieving equity in our programs and services by removing barriers, mitigating inequities, and sustaining fairness to ensure that every customer is put in a position to succeed.



Quantification is KEY with IRA

- IRA provides \$300 million to quantify carbon sequestration and GHG emissions through the collection and use of field-based data to assess conservation outcomes.
- To ensure we can quantify the benefits of these IRA investments, NRCS is working to support Department-wide work on Measurement, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MMRV).
- The 7 MMRV key action areas are well underway with teams working on specific action plans related to focus area.



USDA hosted a webinar on July 21st that included an overview of the MMRV Inflation Reduction Act GHG Quantification work. The webinar can be viewed here: [USDA Invests in Improved GHG Measurement, Monitoring,](#)



Planning for Future Years

Looking forward— *Roadmap for Success*—

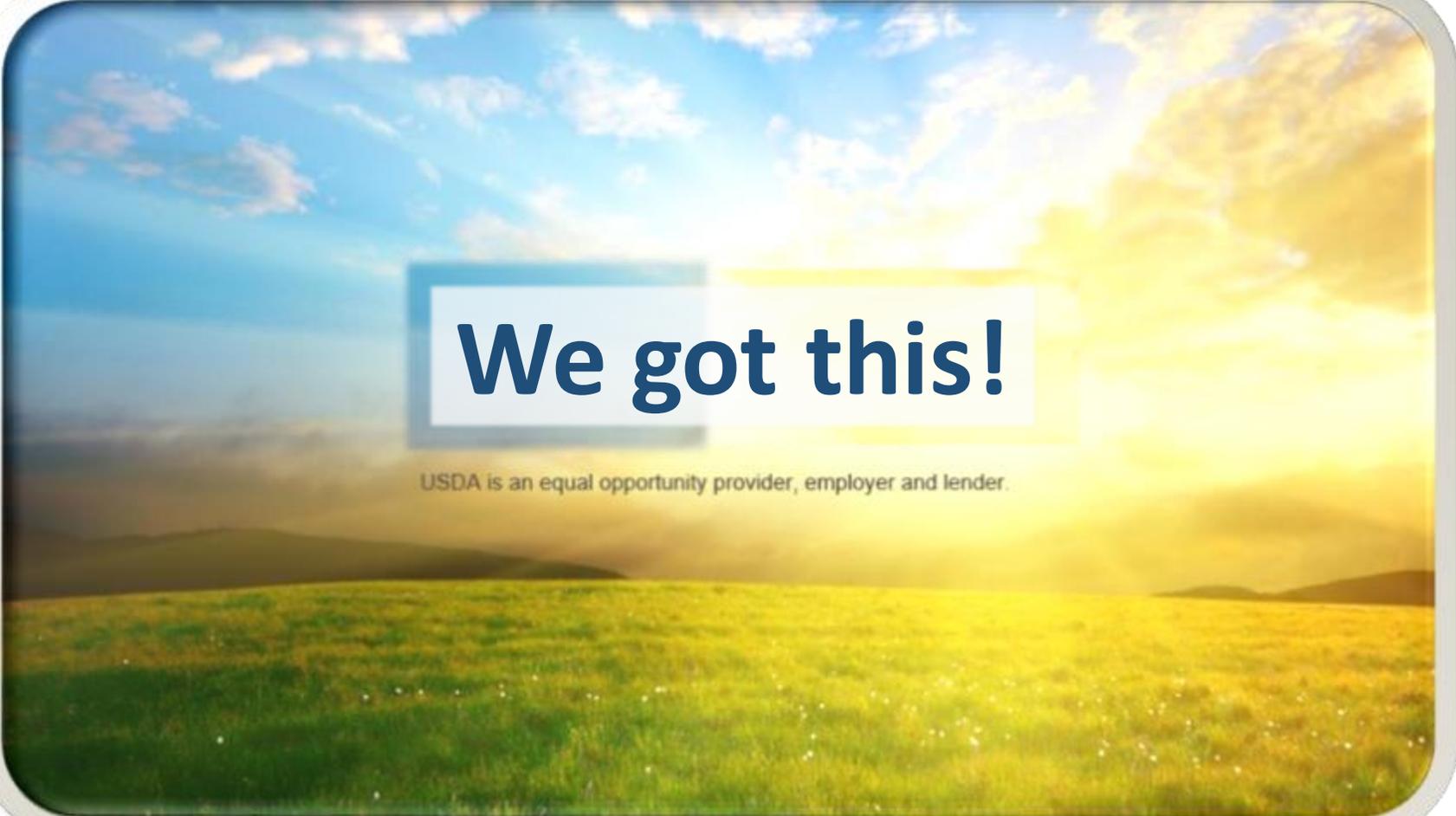
- NRCS States are in the process of developing and finalizing a workload planning tool that will outline the path forward for implementation on all programs, including IRA, for the next 5 years.

Expanding our mitigation activities—

- For FY2024, input for additions to the climate-smart activities list was requested from states, including through state technical committees, partners, or other locally led means. In addition, requests from the Request for Information (RFI) in December were added.
- Currently reviewing internal and external recommendations for activities to be added to the climate-smart mitigation list.



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General Program Updates

Programs Deputy Area
August 30, 2023



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General Program Updates

- **Major Program Progress – FB & BIL**
- **WLFW/LCIs**
- **RCPP Improvements**
- **RCPP and CIG rollout schedule**
- **Easement program improvements**
- **TSP Updates and Streamlining**



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Farm Bill Progress

Program	Contracts	Obligations	Acres
FB - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	3,976	\$317 M	5.5 M
FB - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	28,638	\$1.21 B	8.0 M

Program	Reservations	Obligations	Acres Closed
FB - Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	\$87 M	\$154 M	130K+
Conservation Easement Monitoring	80%		

As of August 25, 2023

BIL/IIJA Progress

Watershed Programs

WFPOs and REHAB

- **\$589.5 M – 240 Projects in 39 states**

EWP

- **\$213.7 M – 26 EWP Projects**
- **LRA Initiative**



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LCIs

**Landscape conservation initiatives (LCI) are an approach
NRCS uses to deliver**

- ✓ **the right conservation assistance**
- ✓ **in the right places**
- ✓ **to achieve conservation outcomes that matter.**



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NRCS Conservation Frameworks

➤ Western Water and Working Lands

➤ Working Lands for Wildlife

Update 3 existing WLFW

- Sagebrush Biome, Great Plains Grasslands, Northern Bobwhie, Grasslands and Savannas

Develop 4 new Frameworks

- Western Migratory Big Game, Eastern Deciduous Forest, Eastern Aquatic Connectivity, Southeastern Pine Ecosystems



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program) Improvement Effort
Stakeholder Meeting - August 30, 2023

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

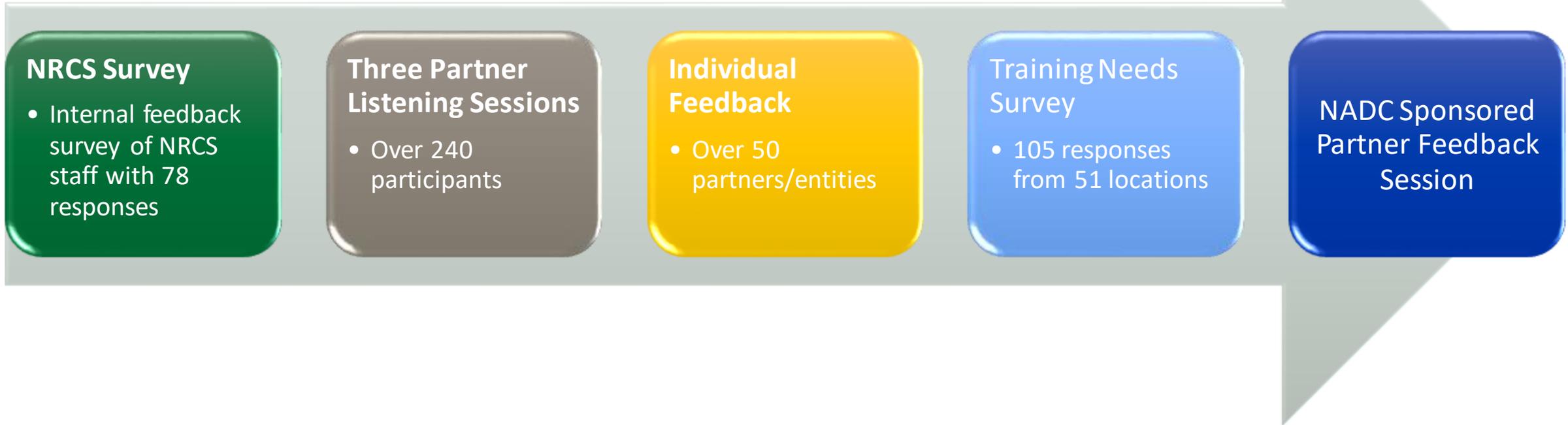
RCPP Improvement Effort Background

- Partners and staff have expressed concerns about RCPP program processes and implementation:
 - Proposal process is too complex
 - RCPP portal is cumbersome
 - Agreements take too long to establish
 - Manual contracting process is time consuming, with an increased chance for error

We're working to streamline and simplify RCPP and to improve processes and implementation.



Getting Feedback - Voice of the Customer



Seven Focus Areas for Improvement

Improvement Areas

Simplifying and Reducing the Number of Agreements

Reducing Lengthy RCPP Easement Transactions

Improving the RCPP Portal

Consistent Guidance and Training for Employees and Partners

Simplifying Technical Assistance Structure

Improving the Conservation Desktop

Simplifying the Partner Reimbursement Process

Training Roadmap for NRCS Staff

- **July 27:** Virtual Training #1
 - Introduction to the State Conservationist Questionnaire, putting together an effective team, status of improvement effort, and more. 11am-1pm EST
- **August 10, 17 and 31:** Virtual Training #2, 3 and 4
 - Sharing a matrix of resources, Classic vs. AFA, role of Coordinator, and more. 11am-1pm EST
- **November 13-17:** In-Person Training
 - Agreement development, project management, and reporting, RCPP 101, and more.
 - Bloomington, MN
- **RCPP Office Hours:** Ongoing support every Thursday



For Your Awareness

FY23 Key Changes to the NFO

- Up to \$500 million available for RCPP Classic and AFA. This notice advertises both program opportunities, unlike previous notices.
- Funding from two separate authorizations—the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA).
- Increased project funding ceiling from \$10M to \$25M.
- Simplified FA/TA structure, partner may request up **to 25 percent** TA
- US-Held and Entity-Held Flexibilities and clarifications
- Clarified Historical Underserved (HU) Opportunities
- Emphasizing local/State involvement with an STC questionnaire
- Agreement neutral references

RCPP Eligible Activities

Activity Type	Similar Program Authorities
Land Management	EQIP ACEP-WRE/HFRP - restoration component- PL-566 – land treatment activities
Rental	CRP
US-Held Easement	ACEP-ALE/WRE & HFRP (easement acquisition component)
Entity-Held Easement	ACEP-ALE/WRE & HFRP (easement acquisition component)
Watershed Project	PL-566

RCPP TA Guidance for negotiations

- Provides partners clear guidelines for salary ranges based on the technical expertise of the partner employee.
- Provides descriptions of typical positions (skillsets) for NRCS jobs

RCPP TA GUIDANCE

RCPP offers the opportunity for Partners to apply for Technical Assistance (TA) funds. Salary rates shown below are to be used as a guide. Partners can use the descriptions below to determine acceptable rates by positions.

TA CAPACITY

What skillset are you bringing to the table: *Are more employees needed within the proposed project area? And if so: in what disciplines?*



Salary Comparison

Type of Position	Grade	Hourly Rate	OPM Base Salary*	USDOL Mean Salary	Reference
Soil Conservationist	GS-05	\$20.47	\$42,724		
Soil Conservationist	GS-07	\$25.36	\$52,921	\$ 69,810.00	19-1031 Conservation Scientists
Soil Conservationist	GS-09	\$31.02	\$64,732		
Soil Conservationist	GS-11	\$37.53	\$78,319		
Civil Engineering Technician	GS-09	\$31.02	\$64,732	\$ 61,480.00	17-30722 Civil Eng
Civil Engineer	GS-12	\$44.98	\$93,875	\$ 90,710.00	17-2021 Ag Eng
Management Analyst (Initiative Coordinator)	GS-12	\$44.98	\$93,875	\$102,980.00	13-1111 Mngt. Analyst
Program Manager (Director of Organization)	GS-13	\$53.49	\$111,628	\$101,610.00	13-1082 Project Mngt Specialist

*Table does not represent benefit costs and is based on Step 5

Links: [OPM](#) and [USDOL](#)

Position Descriptions

• Soil Conservationist GS-05

- Can identify the common agricultural crops, plants, and land uses in the work area and can describe what farming operations, land management systems, implements, equipment and cultural resources are present.
- Work towards obtaining appropriate practice certification.
- Recognizes and can explain the relationship between land uses, crops, management, and the content of conservation practices within a conservation plan and the resource conditions on-site.
- Assists staff in conducting surveys and develops understanding of basic surveying principles.
- Can identify the natural resource issues and concerns that are most critical in the management unit/resource team and can provide planning options for conservation practices according to standards and specifications, especially focusing on applicable rates and dates for vegetative practices.
- Has a working knowledge of Farm Bill programs application management and contract management.
- Has obtained Level I Conservation Planner certification.

• Soil Conservationist GS-07

- Performs all routine duties listed on the GS-07, plans and manages own schedule and work assignments with only limited direction from supervisor.
- Can function independently in carrying out customer consultations, conservation planning and application activities.
- Proficient in explaining Farm Bill programs and state conservation programs to producers. This includes explaining program rules and requirements, handling producer interviews, and field reviews.
- Has experience in treating major resource concerns associated with cropland, forest land, pastureland/rangeland, hayland, and critical areas as applicable in the management unit/ resource area.
- Obtained approximately 70% of Job Approval Authority (JAA) necessary to preform conservation planning and implementation in area of responsibility.
- Has obtained Level III Conservation Planner certification.



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June 2023



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



CIG – Conservation Innovative Grants
Stakeholder Meeting - August 30, 2023

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

CIG On-Farm Trials (OFT)

OFT funds the implementation and evaluation of innovative approaches and practices that provide a known conservation benefit.

The focus is on scaling proven, innovative ideas and collecting additional field data.

Program Overview

- Funding awarded via grant agreements
- Up to \$50 million available per year (half IRA, half Farm Bill)
- Award size ranges from \$250k to \$5 million
- Projects can be 3-5 years in duration
- Individuals cannot apply
- Applicants must have experience with agriculture



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FY23 Competitions



- Estimated dates:
 - Both Classic and OFT NOFOs post – August 31
 - Award selection announcement – late January 2024
 - Project target starts – May 2024
- FY 23 Priorities:
 - Feed management and enteric methane reduction
 - Irrigation management technologies
 - Grazing lands
 - Nutrient management
 - Soil health demonstration (SHD) trial
- Will prioritize proposals that utilize diet and feed management to reduce enteric methane emissions from ruminants.



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Streamlining of Easement Programs

Easement Programs Division



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Streamlining Efforts



- **Appraisals and Appraisal Reviews**
- **Boundary Surveys (affects US-held only)**
- **Certification (affects ACEP-ALE only)**
- **Internal Controls**
- **Waivers and Delegations**



Appraisal Process Improvements



- **ACEP-ALE: Raising National Appraisal Review Threshold from \$1 million to \$3 million transaction cost – Projected to reduce National reviews by over 50%**
COMPLETED: Bulletin (300-23-26) posted April 28, 2023
- **ACEP-ALE: Increasing duration of appraisal effectiveness and removing gap in which appraisals could expire**
COMPLETED: Currently available under ACEP-ALE program agreement and modifications for such approved.
PENDING: Manual update for FY 2024 implementation.



Appraisal Process Improvements - Continued



- **ACEP: Using purchase cards – Completed**
- **ACEP-ALE: Promoting Alternative Methodologies for Federal share - Ongoing**
- **All Programs: Hiring two (2) additional National Appraisers – Completed (Onboarded)**



Boundary Survey Process Improvements (US-Held Easements)

- Moving survey procurement up in the process –
Piloting: For IRA-ACEP (NB300-23-39)
- Partnership agreements for obtaining surveys
 - **Under development:** National-level agreements
 - **Pending for FY 2024 implementation:** Pilot for state-level agreements
- Promotion of State-Level IDIQs
Pending: Template under Development – FY 2024
- Spot-check approach to Landowner-procured surveys
Completed





ACEP-ALE Certification

Expanding Number of Certified entities

- **Certification Initiative – Chief proactively notified qualified State agencies, County agencies, and Accredited Land Trusts that they can be certified upon return of a streamlined request (check the box and sign)**
 - **Notice to qualified State agencies – Completed**
 - **Notice to qualified County agencies – Completed**
 - **Notice to qualified accredited Land Trust – Completed**
- **ACEP-ALE Certification Fact Sheet posted to NRCS ACEP Page**



ACEP-ALE Certification



- **Nine Certified Entities prior to certification initiative**
- **Since May 2023 have added the following**
 1. CT – Connecticut Farmland Trust
 2. CT – State of Connecticut
 3. KS – Ranchland Trust of Kansas, Inc.
 4. KY – Fayette County Rural Land Management Board Inc.
 5. MA – Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
 6. MT – Five Valleys Land Trust
 7. MT – Flathead Land Trust, inc.
 8. MT – Gallatin Valley Land Trust
 9. MT – Montana Land Reliance
 10. NC – County of Orange
 11. NC – Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
 12. NY – Town of Warwick
 13. PA – Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
 14. SC – Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District
 15. UT – State of Utah
 16. UT – Summit Land Conservancy
 17. VA – Clarke County
 18. WA – Methow Conservancy
 19. WA – Whidbey Camano Land Trust
 20. WV – Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board
 21. WV – Berkley County Farmland Protection Board
 22. WV – WV Agricultural Land Protection Authority





Other Process Streamlining

- **Reducing time for internal processes**
 - **Completed:** EPD worked with FBC to remove need for data calls to states to review easement accruals, making time available to complete easement acquisition tasks
 - **Underway:** Policy updates for FY 2024 implementation to provide flexibility to timing and procedural items reducing the need for NHQ approvals
- **Delegating to State Conservationists most ACEP-ALE Program Agreement approvals and related modifications**
Completed: 440 CPM Part 527 Subpart I “Program Agreements and Parcel Contracts for Entity-Held Easements” (May 2023)





Other Process Streamlining

- **Refocusing of IC reviews on completeness of critical items –**
 - **Completed:** IC review streamlining bulletin (300-23-32)
 - **Pending:** Overhaul of National IC Policy
 - **NB300-23-36 Solicitation for feedback from States on Easement Internal Controls Guidance**
 - **Three Sessions held in July**
- **Developing Business Tools to integrate acquisition processes for project management tracking supporting transparency for partners and others regarding project status**





United States Department of Agriculture



Inflation Reduction Act ACEP FY 2024

Easement Programs Division



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Solicitation of State Data



- **National Bulletin 300-23-42 “Soliciting Proposals for Inflation Reduction Act Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Priorities”**
 - State conservationists and directors, in consultation with their state technical committees, provided information for expanding target areas with IRA funds for the ACEP
 - This data will help establish IRA ACEP priorities for fiscal year 2024
 - NRCS will be holding an application cut-off- period in FY 2024 First Quarter using expanded priorities





United States Department of Agriculture



Miss
Oper

Technical Service Provider Program



August 2023



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What is the TSP Program?

Provides a Certification in which TSPs are certified to provide conservation activities and/or conservation practices according to NRCS standards and specifications.

TSPs are valuable to aiding states in meeting the needs of their customers where specialized expertise is not available within the agency.

Certified TSPs may provide **conservation planning services, design and implementation activities, and conservation evaluation and monitoring**. In addition, certified TSPs may assist customers in the **design, installation and checkout** of conservation practices.

How does the TSP fit in the NRCS conservation BIG picture?

Certified TSPs **work on behalf of NRCS**, so they maintain the confidentiality of the agricultural producers they help.

TSPs can help **producers address natural resource concerns** in diverse areas, including nutrient management, energy use, forestry, grazing, irrigation, organic agriculture and wildlife habitat.

The **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** offers opportunities for producers to receive a financial assistance payment in order to obtain Certified TSP services where applicable.



Who is a TSP?



- TSPs include individuals, private businesses, American Indian tribes, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies.
- To become a Certified TSP an applicant would apply in NRCS Registry system and provide information to meet current certification criteria for activities or practices in which they would like to offer. Their application would then be processed and their status would be determined either certified or deferred.
- Customers search for Certified TSPs on a public website, called “Find A TSP”



Advanced Filters | **Simple Search** | B = Business TSP | I = Individual TSP | [Print Results](#)

Showing 0 results

Filter By Location

State: ALL STATES

County:

Filter By Practice

Practice Code: All

Practice Name: All

Practice Type:

TSP Program Management-Positions

The TSP Branch was reestablished on August 28, 2023.

Currently:

- **Acting Branch Chief**
- **1 Program Manager**
- **3 Regional Coordinator**
- **50 Collateral duty state TSP coordinators**

- ***4 Regional Certifiers (Pending in HR)***
- ***Permanent TSP Branch Chief (Pending in HR)***



Benefits of the Reestablishment of the TSP Branch

- **Allows TSP Branch to focus TSP priorities**
- **Allows a Team approach to management**
- **Provides a more consistent and uniform review of applications**
- **Improved commitment to the TSP Program by removing collateral duties and establishing full time employees**
- **Expedited review of application process**
- **Enhanced customer service to TSPs**

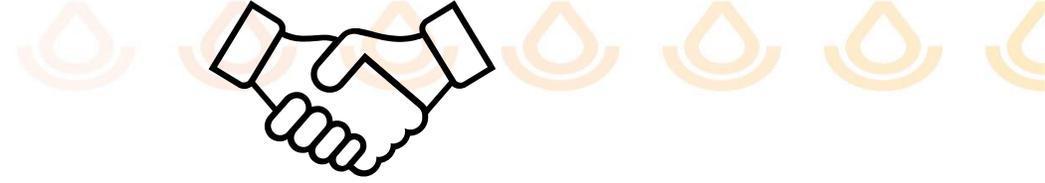


Continued Certification Criteria and TSP Product Improvements

- Continue to realign Conservation Planning Activities (CPA), Design and Implementation Activities (DIA) with practices and activity certification requirements
- Align CEMA certification criteria to be consistent between activities and practices to reduce number of sample plans
- Continue to acknowledge Third-party certifications for a majority of certification criteria requirements
- Allow for additional support activities needed to support plans and designs which may be performed by qualified individuals



Streamlining Certification: MOUs with Partners



Goal: To establish MOUs with all recommending organizations identified in TSP certification criteria

Current Approved MOUs:

- **American Society of Agronomy--*Signed April 2023***
- **Land O' Lakes Truterra--*Signed June 2023***
- **Technical Service Provider Network--*Signed July 2023***

Pending:

Soil Science Society of America