Presentation from the USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum 2017

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“A New Horizon: The Future of Agriculture”

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Today’s Topics

- About NRCS
  - Organizational Structure
  - Approach

- RCPP 101
  - Overview
  - RCPP Process
  - Best Practices
  - To date project numbers

- RCPP Q&A
About NRCS
• Approx. 11,000 employees, only 600 in Washington, DC area
• Network of nearly 3,000 field offices
• Conservation professionals working with farmers, ranchers, landowners, and partners
NRCS Approach

70% of land in the lower 48 states is privately owned.

NRCS combines locally-led solutions with science and research; landowner stewardships; partnerships; and proven conservation practices to produce results for agriculture and the environment.
RCPP empowers local organizations and communities to demonstrate the importance of strong public-private partnerships in delivering solutions to natural resource challenges.
Regional Conservation Partnership Program

• Provides partners the opportunity to direct NRCS Programs through a unique partnership

• Encourages innovative, locally driven conservation

• Increases investment through partner contributions to the shared conservation mission

• Reaches out to new participants for NRCS Programs
Regional Conservation Partnership Program

GRANT
RCPP Funding Process

Annual Announcement for Program Funding (APF)

Two-phase application process

1. **Pre-proposal application**
   - Partners submit projects with pre-proposal application
   - NRCS reviews and selects pre-proposals

2. **Full proposal application**
   - NRCS invites partners to submit a full proposal for selected pre-proposals
   - NRCS reviews and selects full proposals for development of an agreement and award

**Agreement (or MOU) negotiated and signed between Partner and NRCS**
Identify Programs Used in Project

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)

WATERSHED PROTECTION AND FLOOD PREVENTION ACT

Public Law 83-566
Select One of Three RCPP Funding Pools

National – 40%

State – 25%

Critical Conservation Area (CCA) - 35%
Identify Natural Resource Concerns

The project should “…achieve specific, measurable natural resource results.”

- Excess/Insufficient Water/Drought
- Water quality degradation
- Soil quality degradation
- Inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife (and invertebrates)
- Air quality impacts
- Degraded Plant Condition (specific to certain CCA only)
- Energy
- Climate Change
Successful RCPP projects demonstrate four characteristics.

• Participation
• Innovation
• Contribution
• Solutions
RCPP by the Numbers

RCPP with a quick breakdown:

- RCPP has awarded 287 agreements from FY 2014-2017

- Resource Concern most often addressed:
  - Water Quality

- Projects in all 50 States and 1 US Territory

- Most impactful projects are well defined in geographic scope, monetary ask and contributions, and have measurable, achievable outcomes.
The heart of RCPP is about empowering local project sponsors to design and deliver solutions that benefit natural resources where they live and work.

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