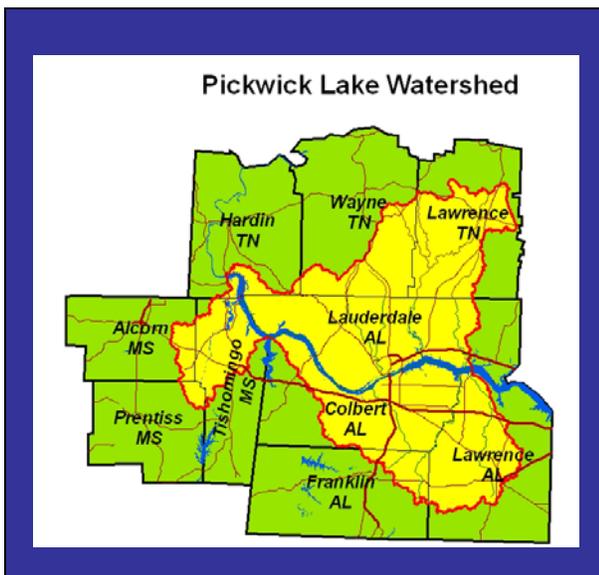


# Conservation Security Program Eligibility, Qualification, and Application Steps



**Sign up dates: February 13 – March 31, 2006**

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) application process requires completing a number of steps to determine if you meet the basic eligibility criteria and if you qualify for the program. Individuals who have an existing resource management system (RMS)-level plan with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), may have already completed a number of these steps. Check with your local NRCS office to determine which steps you need to complete.

## **Complete the Self-Assessment Workbook**

A self-assessment is required to apply for CSP. With limited funding available in this year's sign-up, only those individuals who have an outstanding conservation track record will be funded. The self-assessment workbook helps you determine your basic eligibility for CSP, and walks you through a number of steps to determine whether you qualify. Self-assessment workbooks are available at your local NRCS office, at the NRCS Informational meetings, or online at [www.al.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov) (select Programs, then Conservation Security Program).

## **Get a USDA Identification Number**

If you have worked with USDA farm programs in the past, you most likely have a USDA Identification Number (also referred to as a SCIMS number). If you do not have a number, you will need to contact your local NRCS office.

## **Gather Appropriate Records and Documentation**

Many of the questions in the self-assessment require documentation. For example, if you have pastureland, you are required to have two years of grazing records. **Page 21** of the self-assessment contains documentation examples. You will need to bring both your self-assessment and the required documentation when you meet with your local NRCS office to submit your application. You also need to bring an additional copy of **pages 5-19** of the self assessment with you to leave at the NRCS office.

## **CSP Contracts**

Each contract is tied to an agricultural operation. An operation includes all agricultural land and other lands (whether contiguous or noncontiguous), under the control of the participant that is managed as a single, cohesive unit. A "field" is the smallest part of an agricultural operation that could be offered for a Tier I contract.

## To Apply For CSP, A Producer Will:

- 1) Access the CSP self-assessment workbook either online, by picking up a hard copy at the local USDA Service Center, or by attending a public meeting.
- 2) Using the workbook, producers will:
  - Determine whether they meet the basic eligibility requirements.
  - Document their stewardship work, including conservation practices installed on the farm or ranch by land use and location.
  - Prepare a benchmark inventory documenting conservation treatments they have undertaken so far in each field or pasture.

Documentation can vary from being as simple as a pocket calendar record or as complex as a computer program printout.
- 3) Submit the completed workbook and CSP application to the Service Center during the sign-up period.
- 4) Meet with NRCS personnel to go over any additional documentation.
- 5) NRCS determines the enrollment category for which the producer qualifies.
- 6) NRCS will select the categories to be funded for CSP contracts.
- 7) Producers will be contacted if they are selected for funding.

CSP will provide for fair treatment for tenants, allowing a tenant to apply for a contract and receive CSP payments on land meeting CSP standards as long as the tenant controls the land.

### Conservation Stewardship Plan

Your information will be transmitted to the NRCS National Headquarters, where funding selections will be made. All applications in Category A will be funded first, followed by categories B, C, etc., until this year's funds for the program are depleted. You will be notified by mail once selections are made.

### Complete Your Conservation Stewardship Contract

If you are selected, you will also be contacted by your local NRCS office to finalize and sign your Conservation Stewardship Contract.

## CSP Workshop Dates

**February 23, 2006**  
**1:00 p.m.**

Lauderdale County Alabama  
Cooperative Extension  
System Office  
802 Veterans Drive  
Florence, AL 35630

**February 24, 2006**  
**9:00 a.m.**

Colbert County Board of  
Education  
1101 Highway 72 East  
Tuscumbia, AL 35674

### Alabama NRCS Offices in Pickwick Lake Watershed

Colbert County  
Phone: (256) 383-4323

Franklin County  
Phone: (256) 332-0274

Lauderdale County  
Phone: (256) 764-5833

Lawrence County  
Phone: (265) 974-1174

### For more information contact:

Bill Hughes  
State Resource Conservationist  
USDA-NRCS  
Auburn, Alabama 36830  
Phone: (334) 887-4520  
[bill.hughes@al.usda.gov](mailto:bill.hughes@al.usda.gov)

Ben Moore, Agronomist  
USDA-NRCS  
Luverne, Alabama 36049  
Phone: (334) 335-3613  
[bennie.moore@al.usda.gov](mailto:bennie.moore@al.usda.gov)

**Pickwick Lake Watershed CSP Preliminary Checklist**

Since you currently own/operate land in the Pickwick Lake Watershed, you could be eligible for the 2006 CSP. Eligibility hinges on treating soil and water quality to specific levels. It is likely you could be eligible to participate if you can answer “yes” to the following questions.

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you share in the risk of producing crops or livestock on this operation? (Landowners that only use the CASH RENT option are not eligible for this program; however, the operator could still be eligible.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Is your land in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. If you are a renter, could you show in writing that you will have control of the land for the length of the contract (5 – 10 year contracts)?   |

**For at least a portion of land that is cropped:**

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Have you been using a no-till system with crop rotation for a minimum of the past two years?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Are all areas of concentrated water flow stabilized with grassed waterways or terraces are present which have eliminated the need for grassed waterways? |

**For at least a portion of land that is currently pastured:**

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Are you following a rotational grazing management plan? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do you manage the access of livestock to water?         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Are your pasture fields free of actively eroding areas? |

**For all land to be enrolled in CSP:**

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. If you apply pesticides, do you use a schedule or a Pest Management Plan to conduct pest control activities on your cropland?                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. If you apply fertilizers, do you use a schedule or a Nutrient Management Plan to apply fertilizers, animal manure, or agricultural by-products? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Do you have records, going back at least two years, that document and support the answers provided above?                                       |

<b>Alabama County Contacts</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Colbert	256-383-4323
Franklin	256-332-0274
Lauderdale	256-764-5833
Lawrence	256-974-1174
<b>Tennessee County Contacts</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Hardin	931-961-2521
Lawrence	931-762-6913
Wayne	931 762-6913
<b>Mississippi County Contacts</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Alcorn	662-287-7223
Prentiss	662-728-9003
Tishomingo	662-728-9003

**Note: Portions of your farm or operation currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program, or Wetland Reserve Programs are not eligible acres for CSP.**

<p><b>For more CSP information, check these websites:</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp06/index.html">http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp06/index.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/">http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/</a></p>
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