

WHO IS THE NRCS?

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the federal agency that works with private landowners to help them protect their natural resources and keep the watersheds healthy. The agency emphasizes voluntary, science-based assistance, partnerships, and cooperative problem solving at the community level.

Over one-third of Michigan's privately owned land is made up of farms. Thus, NRCS conservationists spend much of their time working with farmers and ranchers. The agency also works in close cooperation with local conservation districts and other community leaders.

NRCS brings landowners needed technical and financial tools to plan and fund conservation practices and projects to protect the natural resources found throughout a watershed.



For more information, contact your local USDA Service Center listed in the telephone directory under Federal Government Agencies or at <http://www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov>

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USDA FARM CONSERVATION PROGRAMS



Michigan



WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

The landscape is made up of many interconnected basins, or watersheds, allowing water to run to the lowest point – a stream, a river, a lake, or ocean. As water travels to the lowest point it crosses farm fields, forests, suburban lawns, and city streets – or it may seep into the soil and travel as ground water. Everyone lives in a watershed and shares resources and resource concerns with those in their watershed community. Some of these concerns include flood and drought prevention, erosion and sediment control, water quality, water conservation, wildlife habitat, wetland restoration, recreation, and rural development.

USDA CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through this voluntary program, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on their farmland.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

WHIP encourages the voluntary establishment of high-quality wildlife habitat on private lands. While some NRCS programs are specifically designed for agricultural lands, WHIP offers technical and financial help for all private landowners and some local units of government who wish to plan and develop upland, wetland, riparian, or aquatic habitat on their property.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

FRPP helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. This program assists states, tribes, local governments, and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting land conversion to non-agricultural uses.

Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)

RC&D assists communities in caring for and protecting their natural resources in a way that will improve the area's economy, environment, and living standards. It provides a way for community members to initiate, sponsor, plan, and implement projects that will make their area a better place to live.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

WRP restores wetlands from land that has been drained for farming. The objectives of this program are to purchase conservation easements from willing sellers, restore and protect wetlands in agricultural settings, and assist landowners with the restoration of wetland hydrology and wildlife habitat.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

EWP provides technical and financial assistance for watersheds ravaged by natural disasters. This program provides funding for work such as clearing debris from clogged waterways, restoring vegetation, and stabilizing riverbanks.

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

CTA provides technical assistance to help landowners to plan and carry out conservation practices. NRCS staff work with land users and communities to provide resource solutions throughout the watershed. CTA provides the science-based technical assistance needed to create long-term resource solutions at the local level.