

National Water Quality Initiative Fact Sheet

South Dakota: Overview

Through the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering financial and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners interested in improving water quality and aquatic habitats in priority watersheds with impaired streams. The NRCS will help producers implement conservation and management practices through a systems approach to control and trap nutrient and manure runoff. Qualified producers will receive assistance for installing conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips, and terraces. For over 75 years, the NRCS has provided agricultural producers with assistance to implement voluntary conservation practices that protect natural resources while maintaining production and profits.

South Dakota Priority Watersheds

The initiative includes southern portions of Lake and Moody Counties, the northeast corner of McCook County, and a large part of Minnehaha County. They are tributaries within the Skunk Creek Watershed (Lower Big Sioux) which ultimately feed into the Big Sioux River. The Skunk Creek Watershed includes Jensen Creek (35,204 acres), Buffalo Creek (31,422 acres), Colton Creek (31,935 acres), and Willow Creek (30,282 acres).

The Lower Big Sioux River provides many uses to the surrounding area including fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, and stock irrigation, however some of the impairments facing the Big Sioux River are high amounts of Fecal Coliform and suspended solids, therefore limiting contact recreation, and impacting fish and wildlife habitat.



Streambank Protection Project - Before (L), After (R).

USDA-NRCS

The National Water Quality Initiative will work in selected watersheds to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners improve water quality and aquatic habitats in impaired streams.

The NRCS is working with private land owners to implement conservation practices such as conservation crop rotation, residue and tillage management, no till/strip till/direct seeding, cover crops, filter strips, grassed waterways, streambank protection, nutrient management, and waste storage facilities to help improve water quality.



Conservation Funding and Practices

The NRCS conservation professionals will provide technical assistance and planning tools to determine which conservation actions will provide the best results to improve water quality on your land. Nutrient management systems, erosion control, conservation tillage, pest management, and buffer systems are just some of the practices being offered as part of the National Water Quality Initiative. To help install these conservation practices, financial assistance to share in the cost of these conservation practices is available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Partnerships

The NRCS identified priority watersheds through the help of local partnerships and state water quality agencies. Partners sometimes offer financial assistance in addition to NRCS programs. The NRCS will continue to coordinate with local and state agencies, conservation districts, nongovernmental organizations, and others to implement this initiative. This strategic approach will leverage funds and provide streamlined assistance to help individual agricultural producers take needed actions to reduce the flow of sediment, nutrients, and other runoff into impaired waterways.

Producer Benefits

Water quality conservation practices benefit agricultural producers by lowering input costs and enhancing the productivity of working lands. Conservation investments are good for all Americans because well managed farms limit pollution from runoff, produce food and fiber, sustain rural economies, and provide food security to the Nation. All across the country—farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners are voluntarily taking action and putting conservation on the ground to improve water quality on millions of acres!

Public Benefits

The NRCS is proud to be involved in a nationwide effort with landowners and communities to improve and protect our water resources. The landowners and farmers participating in the initiative will receive conservation payments to work on the land in a sustainable way which provides cleaner water. In addition to the financial assistance, the land will remain productive into the future. Communities benefit by having clean waterways, safer drinking water, and healthy habitat for fish and wildlife.

How to Apply

Almost every county in the Nation has a **USDA Service Center**. To get started, make an appointment at your local office. You will need to establish eligibility and farm records for your land. The NRCS will help you complete an application while explaining which conservation practices are available in your watershed. Remember to check with your local NRCS office to see if you are located in a selected watershed. All applications for funding consideration, during fiscal year 2012, must be received by June 15, 2012.

For more Information

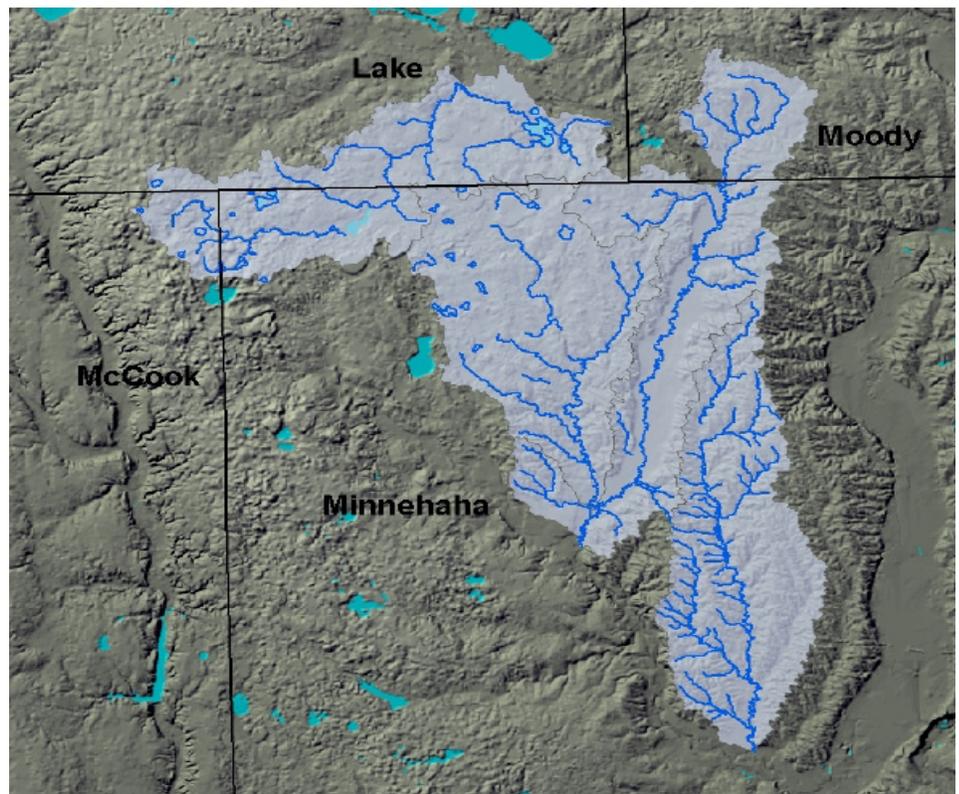
www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/NWQI.html

Flandreau Service Center
105 S. Crescent St.
Flandreau, SD 57028
605-997-2949

Salem Service Center
340 N. Nebraska St.
Salem, SD 57058
605-425-2483

Madison Service Center
123 SW 2nd St.
Madison, SD 57042
605-256-6674

Sioux Falls Service Center
2408 E. Benson Rd.
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
605-330-4515



A portion of Skunk Creek Watershed located in Lake, McCook, Moody, and Minnehaha Counties in South Dakota.

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Natural Resources Conservation Service

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