



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

New Hampshire State Office

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NEWS RELEASE

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NRCS Announces National Water Quality Initiative Conservation in New Hampshire

Agricultural Producers located in priority watersheds will be able to participate

Durham, New Hampshire, May 8, 2012 — State Conservationist Richard Ellsmore announced the launch of a new National Water Quality Initiative committed to improving impaired waters in three small watersheds in New Hampshire. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will manage the initiative by making funds available to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners in the selected watersheds.

“The Water Quality Initiative will further NRCS’s partnership efforts to improve water quality using voluntary actions on private lands,” Ellsmore said. “This initiative is a focused approach in areas facing significant natural resource challenges. It bolsters the positive results of landscape conservation initiatives NRCS and its partners already have underway.”

Through this effort, eligible producers in the Oyster River (Great Bay Watershed), Lower Lamprey River (Lamprey River Watershed), and the Squamscott River (Exeter River Watershed) Watersheds will invest in voluntary conservation actions to help provide cleaner water for their neighbors and communities. The selected watersheds all empty into Great Bay and were identified with help from state agencies, partners, and the NRCS State Technical Committee.

Using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS will provide technical and financial assistance to producers to install conservation practices such as cover crops and filter strips, and to make changes in management strategies to minimize nutrients and sediment entering surface waters. This federal investment can make a difference to improve water quality in these small watersheds, as well as the Great Bay. In addition to practice installation and management changes, there will be a water quality monitoring component to help measure success allowing NRCS to transfer this information to water quality projects in other areas.

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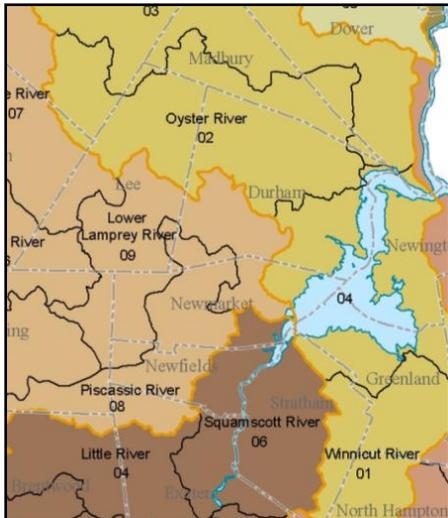
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“American farmers are good stewards of the environment, especially when they have the tools they need to protect or improve fish and wildlife habitat and water quality,” said NRCS Chief Dave White. “We look forward to collaborating with producers in key watersheds to help them have a positive impact on streams with impaired water quality.”

Located in southeast New Hampshire, the three selected watersheds encompass 46,360 acres. The initiative targets nutrients and sediment impairments. Watersheds, like these, with existing management plans and water quality monitoring programs are highly desirable as they will allow NRCS to demonstrate the impact of the initiative. EQIP funding will be used to accelerate efforts to improve water quality in the targeted waters.

NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis throughout the year; however, the ranking cut-off date for applications under this initiative is June 15, 2012. Remember to check with your local NRCS office to see if you are located in a selected watershed. This summer, NRCS will notify all applicants of the results and begin developing contracts with selected applicants.



Since 1935, NRCS’s nationwide conservation delivery system works with private landowners to put conservation on the ground based on specific, local conservation needs, while accommodating state and national interests. For more information about NRCS’s programs, initiatives, and services in New Hampshire, visit us online at www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov.

Left: Map showing the Oyster River, Lower Lamprey River, and Squamscott River Watersheds, collectively encompassing 46,360 acres

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