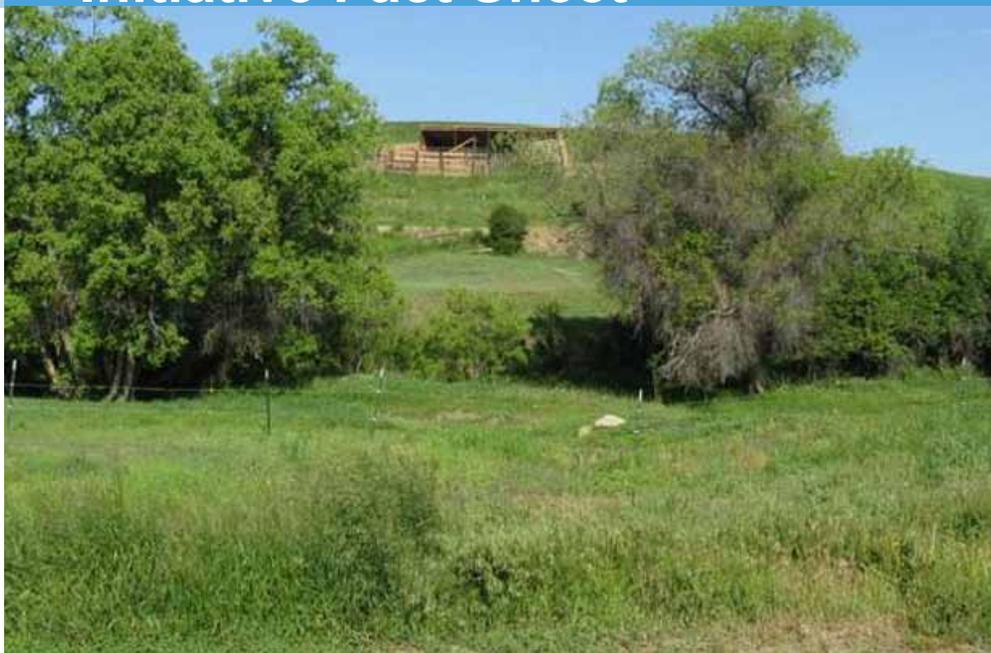


# National Water Quality Initiative Fact Sheet

## Montana Overview

Through the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers interested in improving water quality and aquatic habitats in priority watersheds with impaired streams. 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.

For more than 75 years, NRCS has provided agricultural producers with assistance to implement voluntary conservation practices that protect natural resources while maintaining production and profits.



*An animal feeding operation was located on this site near a stream. To restore the site, the feeding operation was moved and the site was restored.*

Photo: USDA NRCS

## Montana

### Priority Watersheds

Rosebud Creek and Limestone Creek watersheds in Stillwater County were selected for the National Water Quality Initiative. Both watersheds were selected because of the potential impacts agriculture may have on water quality in these watersheds. Montana's rivers and streams are valuable resources for agriculture, recreation, municipal drinking water and industry.

The Montana Water Quality Act requires the state to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for all water bodies within the state. TMDL is the maximum amount of impairment a water body can receive and still meet state water quality standards. Objectives of TMDLs are to quantify water quality issues and develop alternatives to improve and maintain water quality standards in Montana's streams, lakes and rivers. Both Rosebud Creek and Limestone Creek are listed in the Montana Water Quality Integrated Report (303d list) for impaired streams.

## Conservation Funding and Practices

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, and pest management are just

*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.*

some of the practices being offered. 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

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. 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 and ranchers are voluntarily taking action and putting conservation on the ground to improve water quality on millions of acres!

## Public Benefits

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

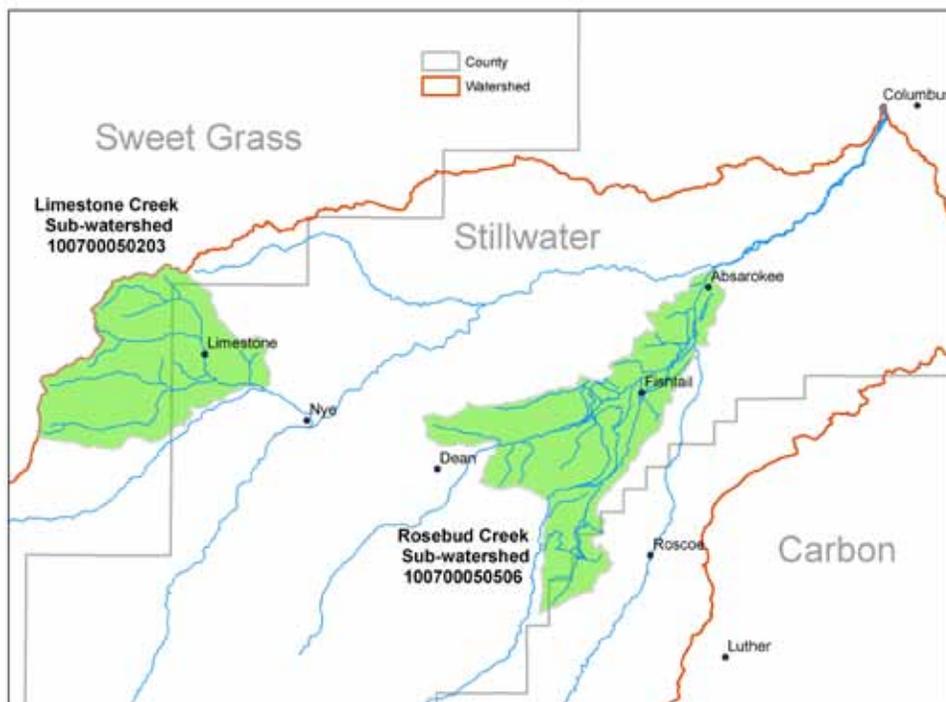
Almost every county in the Nation has a [USDA Service Center](#). To get started, make an appointment at your local NRCS office in Stillwater County. You will need to establish eligibility and farm records for your land. NRCS will help you complete an application while explaining which conservation practices are available in your watershed. All applications for funding consideration during fiscal year 2012 must be received by June 15, 2012.

## For more Information

USDA - NRCS, Montana  
10 East Babcock Street, Room 443  
Bozeman, MT 59715  
406-587-6811  
[www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov)

USDA-NRCS, Stillwater County  
334 N. 9th Avenue  
Columbus, MT 59019  
406-322-5359 ext. 3

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*The Limestone and Rosebud watersheds are located in Stillwater County, Montana. Both watersheds were selected to be part of the National Water Quality Initiative because of the potential impacts agriculture may be having on water quality.*