



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Who We Are, What We Do

Fact Sheet - January 2013

### ***Our Mission***

Guided by the mission of helping people help the land, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) collaborates with farmers, ranchers, communities and other individuals and groups to protect natural resources on private lands. Working side by side with our partners and customers, we identify natural resource concerns, such as water quality and quantity issues, soil erosion, air quality, wetlands and wildlife habitat, and develop unique solutions for restoring and protecting these resources.

### ***Who We Are***

Our workforce consists of a diverse group of skilled natural resource professionals. With representatives in nearly every county, we have a thorough, first-hand understanding and appreciation of the challenges, limitations and special needs unique to the Texas landscape. These skills enable us to develop solutions that best match our customers' goals with the needs of the land.

### ***What We Do***

As an agency, our goal is to help landowners develop conservation plans and provide advice on the design, layout, construction, management, operation, maintenance and evaluation of voluntary conservation practices. Our activities include farmland protection, natural resource improvement, urban conservation, and local community projects to improve social, economic and environmental conditions.

NRCS also conducts soil surveys and the National Resources Inventory nationwide, to provide the basis for conservation planning activities and an accurate assessment of the land's condition.

### ***How We Do It***

NRCS provides both technical and financial assistance to landowners and managers through Farm Bill programs for the benefit of farm or ranch, watershed and community. Additional easement programs are also available to provide long-term management options.

### ***How to Get Involved***

Participation is voluntary. If you are interested in learning more about our conservation programs and services, contact your local NRCS service center. Find us online at: [www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov).

### ***Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)***

NRCS delivers technical assistance through its voluntary Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA). Through CTA, NRCS employees provide conservation options and recommendations, as well as planning and engineering assistance to farmers, ranchers, local governments and urban landowners. Although CTA does not include financial assistance, landowners may develop plans that can, in turn, serve as a springboard for future participation in NRCS conservation programs.

### ***Programs***

NRCS's natural resource conservation programs offer agricultural producers and nonindustrial private forest landowners both financial and technical assistance to voluntarily conserve natural resources on privately-owned farm and ranch lands. The following is a summary of the various conservation programs funded through the Farm Bill and other federal programs:

#### **Cost-Share Programs**

##### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

Assistance for broad spectrum of conservation practices that promote agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality.

##### **Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)**

A program of EQIP focused on water conservation and quality.

##### **Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI)**

A partnered program that uses 6% of EQIP, WHIP and CSP funds to address resource concerns in priority areas.

**Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**

Allows productive lands to remain in agricultural production under private stewardship.

**Easement and Long-Term Rental Programs**

**Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)**

Allows productive lands to remain in agricultural production under private ownership.

**Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**

Restores wetlands and wetland habitat on marginal agricultural land.

**Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)**

Assists landowners in restoring and protecting grassland, rangeland and pastureland, while maintaining viable ranching operations.

**Stewardship**

**Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

Encourages producers to embrace long-term comprehensive conservation by maintaining and improving existing practices.

**Watershed/Community Programs**

**Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)**

Undertakes emergency measures on watersheds damaged by fire, flood, and other natural calamities to prevent erosion and runoff that could endanger lives and property.