

Red River Basin Initiative (RRBI)

Background & Purpose

The Red River Basin, located in parts of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, has lost significant amounts of native prairie and wetlands and continues to experience ~~frequent severe~~ flooding. That flooding has also resulted in loss of wildlife habitat and increased water quality concerns.

Severe flooding has plagued the RRB for more than 20 years. Rapid snowmelt has resulted in significant erosion, impairing water quality. Rapidly moving water often flows over the river's banks, destroying wildlife habitat and adversely impacting existing conservation practices designed to control the water's flow and improve water quality.

As a result, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) created the Red River Basin Initiative (RRBI) to resolve these natural resource issues. RRBI, covering 25 million acres in three states, is located in the mid-continent Prairie Pothole Region, a critical migratory wildlife pathway.

How does the RRBI work?

NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to help landowners apply and implement conservation practices to reduce flooding impacts, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat in the Red River Basin. NRCS and its partners-- local, state, and federal agencies and organizations--will develop strategies to focus conservation efforts in locally-identified and selected priority landscapes.

GovDelivery Sign-up for Red River Basin Initiative

Goals

RRBI's objectives are to improve water quality, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat and retain floodwaters. NRCS expects in the next five years to assist over 200 eligible landowners and farm and ranch operators in the Red River Basin with financial and technical conservation program assistance. NRCS and partner organizations will cooperate in the planning or implementation of conservation projects and easements to retain 250,000 acre/feet in the Basin. Individual land operators and partners will help achieve conservation objectives to:

- Assist in providing improved water quality and improved water retention on 100 new WRP easements in the Basin
- Improve wildlife and waterfowl habitat on 10,000 acres
- Provide technical assistance and financial assistance by enrolling 20,000 acres in Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program plans to reduce excessive soil erosion in priority sub-basins
- Assist 20 Watershed Districts and Water Resource Districts in development, promotion and implementation of water management plans in their Districts
- Increase water retention through implementation of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota's Soil Health Plans in the Red River Basin

Conservation Funding and Practices

NRCS conservation professionals help eligible landowners develop conservation plans for their land. Landowners select the conservation practices and apply for financial and technical assistance through the RRBI to implement the practices. These practices usually are designed to restore wetlands and provide habitat for migrating birds and local wildlife.

Field Tools, Tool webinars and ArcGIS Tools

[RRBDIN Water Quality Decision Support Application](#)

[RRBDIN Project Planning Tool](#)

[Red River Basin Decision Information Network \(RRBDIN\)](#)

[Interactive Flood Planning Map / Flood Forecast Display Tool](#)

[NOAA Advanced Hydrologic Prediction System](#)

[MN Geo LiDAR](#)

[U of M Conservation Applications of LiDAR](#)

Non-government Partners

[International Waters Institute](#)

[Red River Basin Commission](#)

[Red River Retention Authority](#)

[University of Minnesota CES](#)

[North Dakota State University CES](#)

[South Dakota State University CES](#)

Government Partners

[Red River Watershed Management](#)

[Red River Joint Water Resource District](#)

[International Red River Board](#)

[US Geological Survey](#)

[National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration](#)

[Minnesota Department of Natural Resources](#)

[Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources](#)

[North Dakota State Water Commission](#)

[North Dakota Game and Fish](#)

[South Dakota Game Fish and Parks](#)

[US Fish and Wildlife Service](#)

[US Army Corps of Engineers](#)

Technical Papers, Reports and Briefings:

[Impacts of Subsurface Agricultural Drainage on Watershed Peak Flows Briefing Paper #1](#)

[Water Mgt Options for Subsurface Drainage Briefing Paper 2](#)

[Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group Technical Paper No. 11](#)

[Soil Health Unlock the Secrets in the Soil](#)

[Drainage Water Management](#)

[Flood Damage Reduction Workgroup BTSAC](#)

[Red River Basin Commission Reports](#)