



# Program Updates – Sept 14, 2021

## Keith Kloubec- ASTC-Programs

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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# TOPICS

**Program Delivery & 2021 Updates**

**FY 2022 Information**

**Discussion Items**



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)-

**WORK IN  
PROGRESS**

- **UPDATE FY2021**

- Over 2000 applications
- 666 of contracts to date
- \$24.5M obligated to date out of \$27.4M (89%)
- Program Targets- EQIP



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## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)- Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC)

- **Several Changes in 2021**
- **Piloted in Western Drought States in 2021**
- **Currently being worked on for 2022 Nationally – more changes**
- **More to come.....**





## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)- Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF)

- **MN: 1 of 10 pilot states for 2021**
- **\$1M received- Limited practices and resource concerns.**
- **Focused on greenhouse gases and socially disadvantage producers**
- **Piloted in 3 Customer Service Teams and Tribal Applications**



## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)- Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

### Competitive in 2021

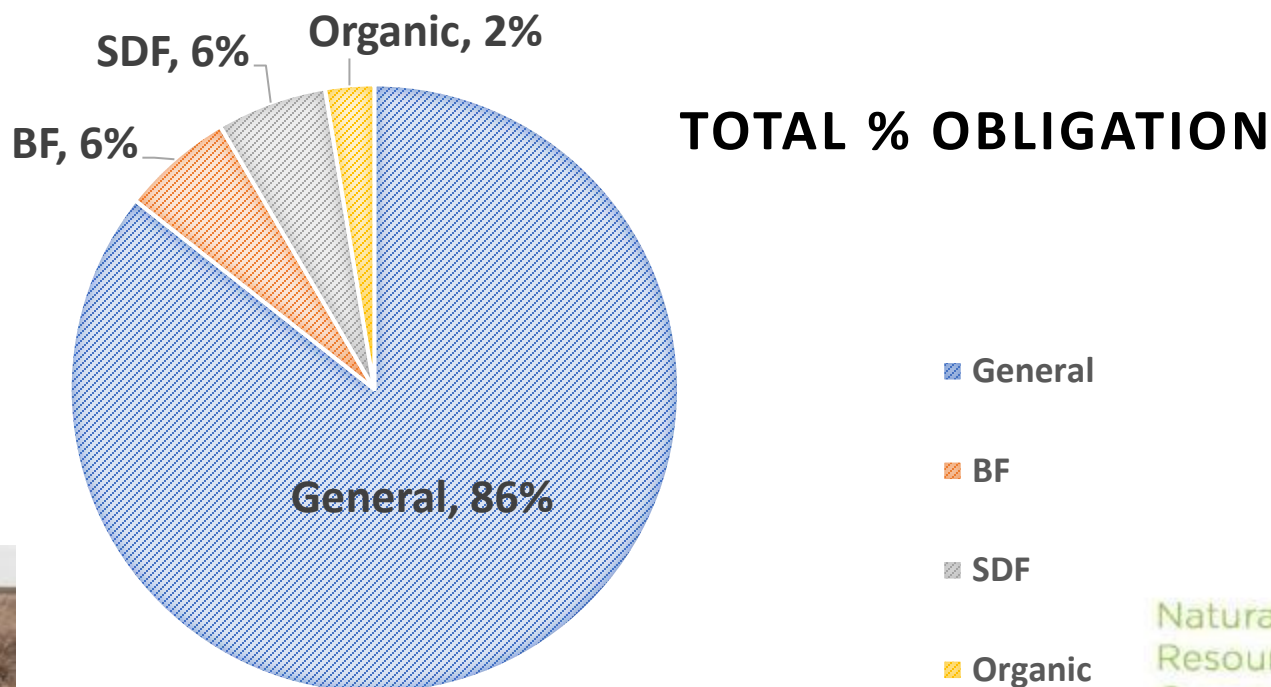
- **Classic – 9 proposal involved MN**
  - Submitted evaluations late August
- **On Farm Trails - 5 proposals involved MN**
  - Submitted evaluations early August



# Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – 2021

Total Obligation: \$17.8 million

- CSP Renewals-70 contracts- 846 applications (8% funded)
- CSP Classic-128 contracts- 2,117 applications (6% funded)



BF=Beginning Farmer; SDF=Social Disadvantage Farmer

# Top #5 CSP Activities Planned

## AGRICULTURAL FUND POOLS

### (1) **Pest Management Conservation System(CP595)**

E595B-Reduce risk of pesticides in water and air by utilizing IPM PAMS techniques

E595A-Reduce risk of pesticides in surface water by utilizing precision application techniques

### (2) **Nutrient Management(CP590)**

E590B-Reduce risks of nutrient loss to surface water by utilizing precision agriculture technologies

E590A-Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses

### (3) **Cover Crop (CP340)**

E340H-Cover crop to suppress excessive weed pressures and break pest cycles

### (4) **Conservation Crop Rotation(CP328)**

E328D-Leave standing grain crops unharvested to benefit wildlife

### (5) **Conservation Cover (CP327)**

E327B-Establish Monarch Butterfly Habitat





# Top #5 CSP Activities Planned

## NON-INDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FOREST FUND POOLS

### (1) **Forest Stand Improvement (CP666)**

E6660-Snags, den trees, and coarse woody debris for wildlife habitat

E666I-Crop tree management for mast production

E666F-Reduce forest stand density to create open stand structure

### (2) **Tree/shrub Planting (CP612)**

E612G-Tree/shrub planting for wildlife food

E612C-Establishing tree/shrub to restore native plant communities

E612E-Cultural Plantings

### (3) **Conservation Cover (CP327)**

E327A-Conservation Cover for pollinators and beneficial insects

### (4) **Brush Management (CP314)**

E314A-Brush management to improve wildlife habitat

### (5) **Structures for Wildlife (CP649)**



## FY2021 CSP-GCI (Grassland Conservation Initiative)

- 6 contracts obligated in MN for total of \$23,520
- 261 acres
- Conservation Activity: To maintain grassland habitat for 5 years



## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

### Farm Bill 2014

- **Several projects expired (RCPP-CSP & RCPP-EQIP)**

### Farm Bill 2018

- **RCPP Land Management (LM) Producer Contracts**
- **New systems new processes - RCPP LM**
  - Manual obligation
  - Manual payments and modification being developed



## Farm Bill 2018 RCPP Renewal Agreements Activated

### **Project #2129: MN Dept of Ag- Ag Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)**

- Will seek to further public/private partnerships to expand the reach of conservation delivery
- Promote whole-farm conservation by making certification a linchpin in receiving new government incentives and encouraging participation in pollutant credit trading
- Project covers entire state

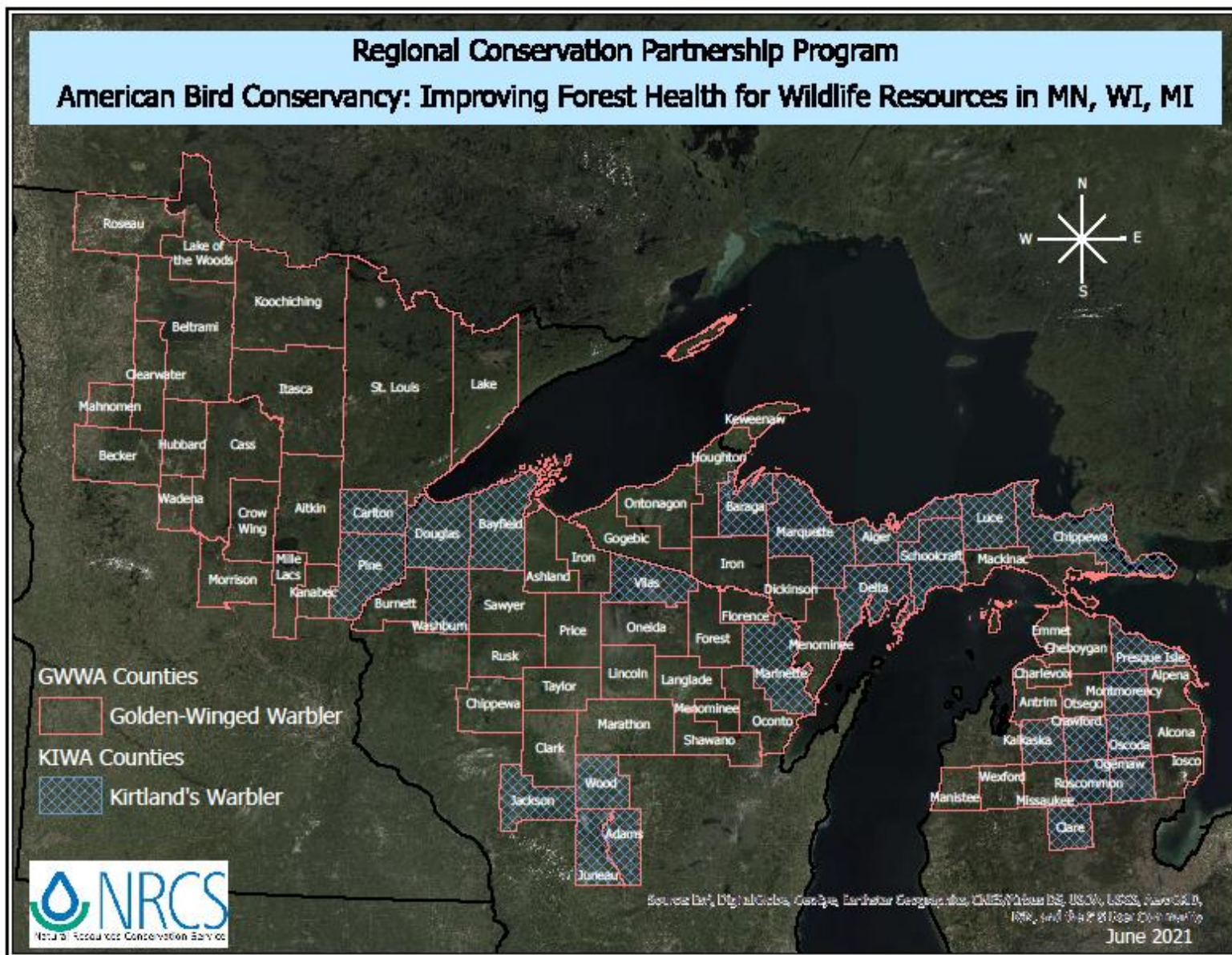
### **Project #2245: American Bird Conservancy (ABC): Improving Forest Health for Wildlife Resources in MN, WI, MI**

- Goal is to restore the population of the Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA) by supporting and creating high quality breeding habitat
- Expanded to include young jack pine management to increase Kirtland's Warbler (KIWA) habitat



## Regional Conservation Partnership Program

### American Bird Conservancy: Improving Forest Health for Wildlife Resources in MN, WI, MI



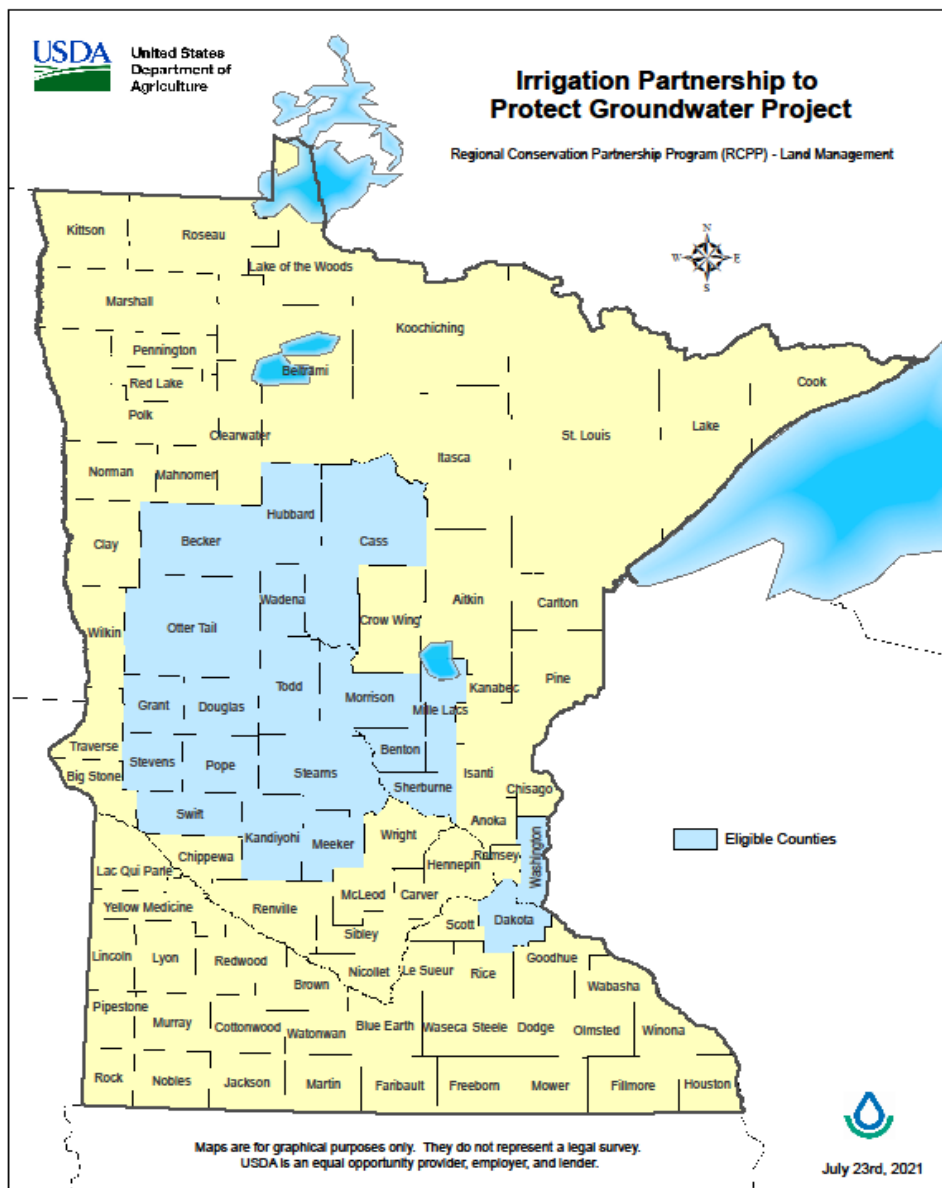
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## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) FY2021 Classic Agreement

- **1 New FY2021 Classic Agreement Approved**
- **Lead Partner- MN Dept of Agriculture**
- **Project #2365 – Irrigation Partnerships to Protect Groundwater**
- **Project covers more then 75% of the irrigated acreage in Minnesota**
- **First sign up planned for CY2022**



Counties Include:

- Cass
- Becker
- Benton
- Dakota
- Douglas
- Grant
- Hubbard
- Kandiyohi
- Meeker
- Mille Lacs
- Morrison
- Otter Tail
- Pope
- Sherburne
- Stearns
- Stevens
- Swift
- Todd
- Wadena
- Washington





# Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

## #2365 – Irrigation Partnerships to Protect Groundwater

### Project Goals / Objectives

1. Reduce degradation of groundwater quality and quantity, protect drinking water sources and reduce energy use while improving the resilience and profitability of irrigated farms
2. Identify economic factors influenced by the incorporation of BMPs
3. Implement BMP's on approximately 120 irrigation systems
4. Build technical capacity by providing training to SWCD and NRCS staff
5. Enroll 30 producers in a farm business management program to track and analyze farm economic performance

## Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- 2021 - 3 ACEP Wetland Reserve Enhancement (WRE) approved, 2 moving through the obligation process. 1 cancelled
- 2021 -Emergency Watershed Protection Program- Floodplain Easement Program (EWPP-FWP)- 1 awaiting appraisal
- 2021- Water Bank- 2 contracts obligated (196.6 acres)
- 2020 update: 3 ACEP WRE – moving toward closing
- Federal Contracts & Monitoring



# FY 2022

## Information and Discussion Items:

- **RCPP 2022**
- **Local Work Group Priorities**
- **ACEP Easement Compensation**
- **FY 2022 Program Items**





# FY22 RCPP Classic Competition

- **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) is in agency clearance**
- **NFO is expected late-September / October**
- **Up to \$200 million available nationwide**



## Locally Led

- Series of Locally Led Trainings for NRCS and SWCD staff
- Revised LWG Data Collection





## Local Working Group (LWG) Results

### Cropland

#### **Resource Concern Category:**

Field Sediment, Nutrient and Pathogen Loss

#### **Resource Concerns:**

Sediment Transported to Surface Water

Nutrients Transported to Surface Water

#### **Resource Concern Category:**

Wind & Water Erosion

#### **Resource Concerns:**

Sheet & Rill

Wind Erosion

#### **Resource Concern Category**

Soil Quality Limitations

#### **Resource Concerns:**

Organic Matter Depletion

Compaction



## Local Working Group (LWG) Results

### Pasture

#### **Resource Concern Category:**

Degraded Plant Condition

#### **Resource Concerns:**

Plant Productivity and Health

Plant Structure and Composition

#### **Resource Concern Category:**

Livestock Production Limitations

#### **Resource Concerns:**

Feed and Forage Balance

Inadequate livestock water- quantity, quality & distribution

#### **Resource Concern Category**

Concentrated Erosion

#### **Resource Concerns:**

Bank erosion from streams, shoreline, or water

Classic Gully



## Local Working Group (LWG) Results

### Forest

#### Resource Concern Category:

Terrestrial Habitat

#### Resource Concerns:

Terrestrial Habitat for Wildlife and Invertebrates

#### Resource Concern Category:

Degraded Plant Condition

#### Resource Concerns:

Plant Productivity and Health  
Plant Structure and Composition

#### Resource Concern Category

Pest Pressure

#### Resource Concerns:

Plant Pest Pressure





## Local Working Group (LWG) Results

### Farmstead

#### Resource Concern Category:

Storage and Handling of Pollutants

#### Resource Concerns:

Nutrient Transported to Surface Water

Nutrient Transported to Groundwater

#### Resource Concern Category:

Inefficient Engery Use

#### Resource Concerns:

Energy Efficient Equipment and Facilities

Energy Efficient Equipment Farming Practice & Field Operations

#### Resource Concern Category

Field Sediment, Nutrient and Pathogen Loss

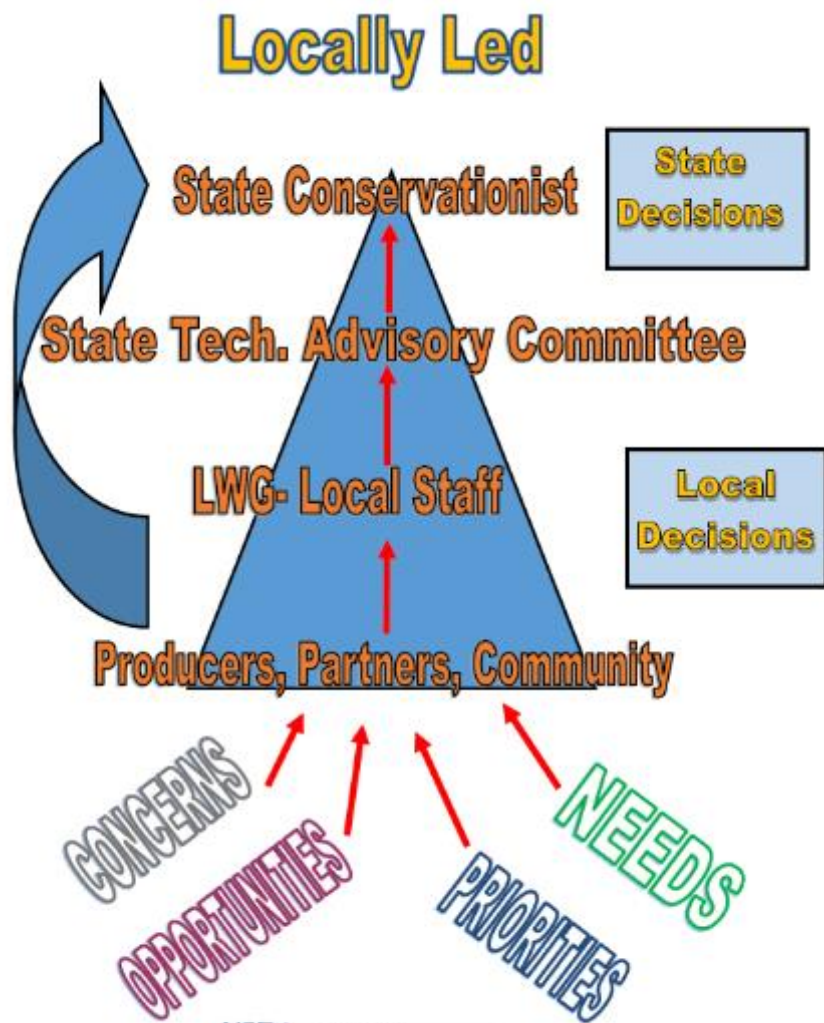
#### Resource Concerns:

Pathogens and Chemicals from Manure, Biosolids.....to Surface Water

Pathogens and Chemicals from Manure, Biosolids.....to Groundwater



## Local Working Group (LWG) Results



Discussion

Questions

Recommendations to  
State Conservationist

# Discussions for 2022 – ACEP (Joel Curran)

## **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**

### **Easement Payment Rates for 2022**

Area Wide Market Analysis

VS

Appraisals

Discussion

# Discussions for 2022 Programs

**Local Work Group**

**EQIP Payment Rates (EQIP 50/85)**

**Climate Smart Ag and Forestry**

**land use, resource concerns, targeted  
area**

**Other**



## Discussion /Questions

*USDA is an equal opportunity  
provider, employer, and lender.*

