

# Montana Focused Conservation



## Montana's Focused Conservation Is -

### Locally Led:

Typically, conservation districts convene local working groups with NRCS support to gather input from farmers, ranchers, conservation partners and other members of the community to develop a vision for their county.

### Partner-Centric:

NRCS works with local, state, federal, and tribal partners and with nongovernmental organizations to strategically focus agency investments on the highest-priority resource needs in Montana.

### Cost Effective:

By collaborating with partners, NRCS leverages additional funding sources from other groups to make the most effective use of limited federal conservation dollars. Leveraging funds increases the total conservation investment and provides an economic stimulus to local and regional economies.

### Focused and Targeted:

Instead of funding conservation projects on a scattered, farm-by-farm approach, NRCS targets its investments in very specific areas to achieve clearly defined natural resource goals as identified by local partners. This approach harnesses the power of multiple landowners in one area undertaking similar conservation projects to achieve a regional or landscape-scale result.

### Results-Oriented:

The focused approach emphasizes planning with the end result in mind. NRCS staff

work with local partners to set measurable goals and to track and achieve meaningful conservation results.

## How It Works

Focused Conservation begins with goals identified in county-level Long Range Plans. NRCS then develops Targeted Implementation Plans to guide on-the-ground implementation.

TIPs explain:

- How natural resource goals will be met
- Which conservation systems will best address resource concerns
- How partnerships will be leveraged
- How outcomes will be measured

## Funding

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is the agency's most commonly used program to address private lands conservation needs. Beginning in FY2020, general EQIP funding and funding for special projects in Montana will be directed to the highest-ranking Targeted Implementation Plans. NRCS will commit funds to TIPs for the duration of the plans, usually two to three years. Montana landowners will still be able to participate in national priorities as they have in the past.

## Local Working Groups

Each year, conservation districts will convene local working groups with NRCS support to gather input from farmers, ranchers, partners and others to develop or renew long range plans. NRCS will complete Targeted Implementation plans based on local input and other data gathered. EQIP funds will be awarded to the highest ranking TIPs.

### Goal

Focus NRCS conservation investments in targeted areas to achieve clearly defined natural resource goals on a broader landscape as identified by local landowners and partners through the locally led process.

### Who We Are

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with farmers, ranchers, forestland owners and tribes to address natural resource challenges on private land. NRCS offers financial and technical assistance to help people help the land.

