

State Technical Committee



Natural Resources Conservation Service

New Jersey State Technical Committee
220 Davidson Avenue 4th Floor, Somerset, NJ 08873

Meeting Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021

Meeting Location: Microsoft TEAMS

Evan Madlinger opened the Microsoft TEAMS at 9:00 am and turned it over to NRCS State Conservationist Julie Hawkins. She welcomed everyone and thanked both employees and partners for their participation in the State Technical Committee.

Those present included:

Austin Damminger
Bianca DiazDeliz
Bill Angstadt
Brian Shilling
Bridgett Hilshey
Brittany Dobrzynski
Bruce Eklund
Cali Alexander
Cindy Roberts
Danielle Bara
David Clapp
Edwin Muniz
Elizabeth McShane
Elizabeth Freiday
Evan Madlinger
Frank Minch
Gabe Ribicoff
Gail Bartok

Gretchen Fowles
Hannah Tremblay
Janis Rega
Jeffrey Everett
Jennifer McNally
Jill Ott
Julie Hawkins
Kaitlin Farbotnik
Kara Hasko
Karen Rutberg
Katelyn Haggar
Kathy Hale
Kelly Gill
Kelly Steimle
Laura Tessieri
Lauren Finnegan
Lauren Lapczynski
Liz Thompson

Michael Flood
Michael Kent
Mitchell Mickley
Nagisa Manabe
Nancy Coles
Nancy Paolini
Nicholas Saumweber
Nicole Ciccaglione
Rebecca Watson
Robert Nyman
Rosalynd Orr
Samantha Loscalzo
Sharon Petzinger
Tairi Colon
Tara Walker
Trish Long
Zachary Nixon
Zachary Pendley



9:01 Welcome & Introductions - Julie Hawkins, NRCS

Julie had a few updates to share with the Committee. Since the last meeting, a new Chief was chosen and began their detail on May 20th. Chief Terry Cosby is a career employee, so he is familiar with the ins and outs of the agency. Since he took office, he has established three major priorities: climate change, urban agriculture, and social justice. Another update, the agency is in the process of hiring 1525 positions nationwide. four base positions are being funded by the national office. Julie sees this push as filling critical vacancies to get the agency back to the 11,000-employee mark. Positions are on the streets and being advertised for a couple of months to ensure as many applicants as possible. Lastly, USDA published a request for information from the public for input regarding their efforts to advance racial justice and equity across the department. Comments are being requested through July 15, 2021, specifically identifying barriers, opportunities, and how best to engage external stakeholders and community members.

9:04 Background/Introduction and Updates – Evan Madlinger, NRCS

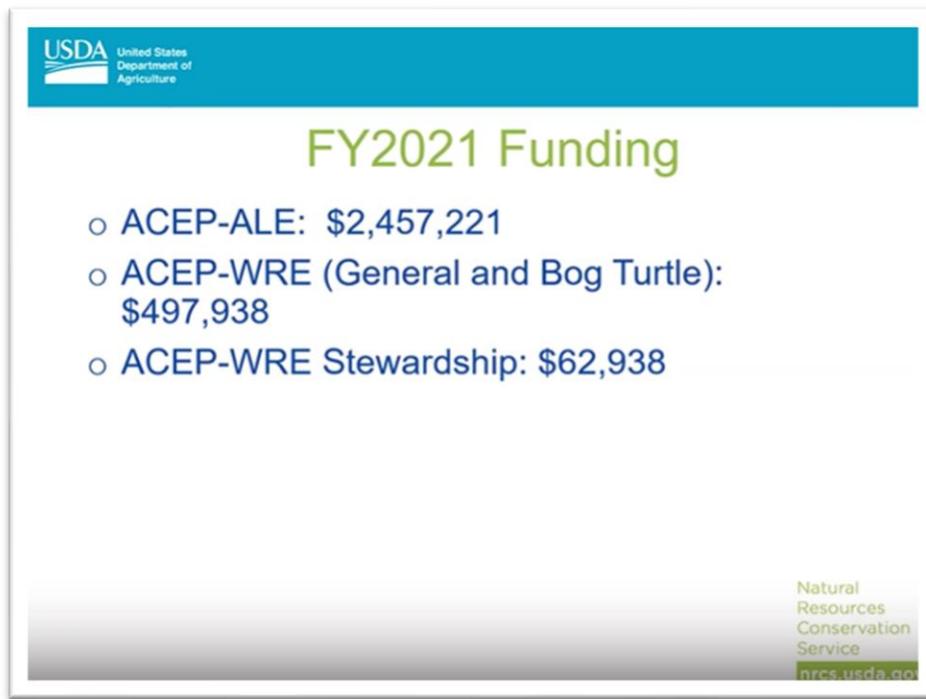
Evan wanted to introduce himself as the Acting State Resources Conservationist for Christine as she has taken a long detail at headquarters working with our Chief. Evan started as an intern and has worked as both Soil Conversationist and Biologist. He then went on to thank all the partners and employees for their continuing efforts and support, whether it is through word of mouth or technical references.

9:07 December Meeting Minutes Review and Acceptance - Evan Madlinger, NRCS

Evan shared his screen with the December 2020 Minutes and asked for any changes or revisions to anything posted from the December 2020 meeting. Nancy Coles indicated her 11:45 time stamp agency should be FSA, not NRCS. In addition, the second sentence of the first paragraph should have stated: "It is one of USDA largest conservation programs". Julie Hawkins added that the listed State Conservationist name is wrong.

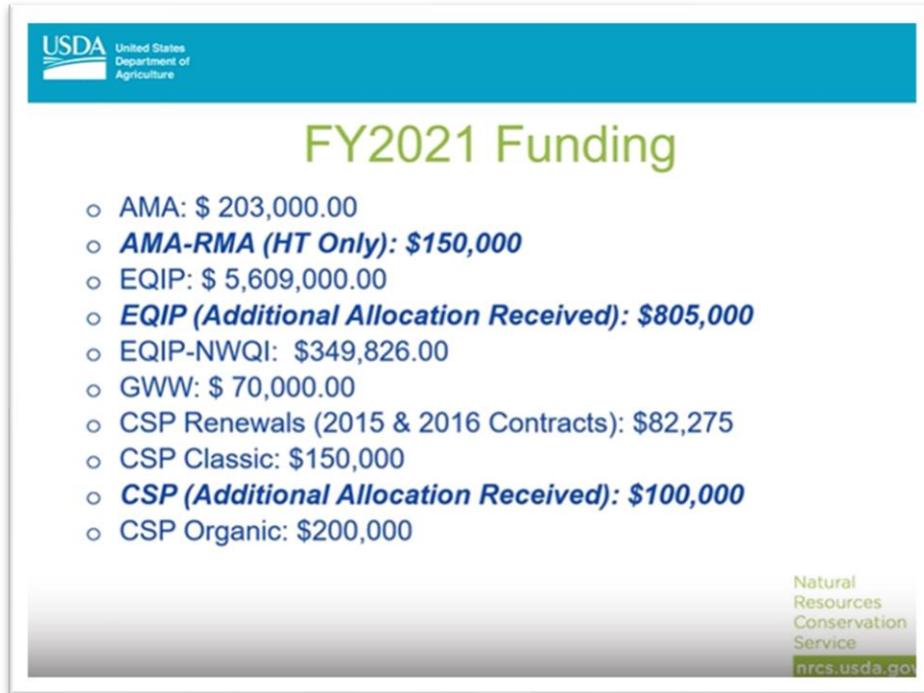
9:11 2021 Farm Bill Programs Update – Gail Bartok, NRCS

Gail started her presentation indicating she wished to cover the Fiscal Year 2021 updates to Easements and Financial Programs. Starting with easements, Gail provided a slide with the information. ACEP-ALE (Ag Land Easements) original allocations at the beginning of the year for \$2,457,221; ACEP-WRE (Wetland Reserve Easement) (specifically General and Bog Turtle) \$497,938; and ACEP-WRE Stewardship (restoration projects, maintenance, and repair on existing restoration projects) \$62,938.



The funding numbers provided indicated the amount of money we received at the beginning of the Fiscal Year. Please note that the numbers in bold indicate additional funds received in that category. AMA received \$203,000; AMA-RMA (Risk Management Agency) received an extra \$150,000 that was dedicated to High Tunnels; EQIP originally received

\$5,609,000 and then an additional allocation of \$805,000; EQIP-NWQI (National Water Quality Initiative) received \$349,826; GWW (Golden-Winged Warbler) received \$70,000. As a side note, the NWQI and GWW are specific and the funds allocated to those two specific programs cannot be used to fund any other program. If the funds for those two are not used in full, the money will need to be sent back to National. CSP Renewals of 2015 and 2016 contracts received \$82,275; CSP Classic received \$150,000; CSP received an additional \$100,000; and just recently CSP Organics received \$200,000. Again, CSP Organics must use that funding for organics only or the funds will go back to National Headquarters.



The slide features the USDA logo in the top left corner, with the text 'United States Department of Agriculture' below it. The title 'FY2021 Funding' is centered in a large green font. A bulleted list of funding amounts follows, with some items in bold. The bottom right corner contains the text 'Natural Resources Conservation Service' and the website 'nrcs.usda.gov'.

- AMA: \$ 203,000.00
- **AMA-RMA (HT Only): \$150,000**
- EQIP: \$ 5,609,000.00
- **EQIP (Additional Allocation Received): \$805,000**
- EQIP-NWQI: \$349,826.00
- GWW: \$ 70,000.00
- CSP Renewals (2015 & 2016 Contracts): \$82,275
- CSP Classic: \$150,000
- **CSP (Additional Allocation Received): \$100,000**
- CSP Organic: \$200,000

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Allocations for ACEP ALE are broken down into categories: General applications received a total of \$2,457,221. Currently, 24 acres in Salem County used \$99,000 and 43 acres in Somerset County will be using \$750,000. Those both fall short of the allocations so unfortunately money will be sent back to National Headquarters. There is an upcoming project RCPP – Black River Greenway, located in Somerset County. This project has two parts that we will be spending money on this year: 34 acres funded with \$300,000 and another 76 acres for \$435,000. Black River Greenway also has an EQIP component. Between last fiscal year and this fiscal year, Gail believes we will have spent all the money.



ACEP- ALE

General Applications (Allocation: \$2,457,221)

- Somerset County
 - \$750,000, 43 Acres
- Salem County
 - \$99,000, 24 Acres

RCPP-Black River Greenway

- Somerset County
 - \$300,000, 34 Acres
 - \$435,000, 76 Acres

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Wetland Reserve Easements allocation for fiscal year 2021 is \$497,938. The number one project currently is in Sussex County; 95 acres are funded for \$570,000. That does fall short of the allocations. There is a second project in Salem County – 116 acres that is going to need additional funds of \$1,153,000. We will be asking for more funding for both projects so that we can get that obligated this year.



ACEP-WRE

General Applications (Allocation: \$497,938)

- Salem County
 - \$1,153,000, 116 Acres
- Sussex County
 - \$570,000, 95 Acres

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EQIP Ranking Pools has a few categories that we need to spend money within, including but not limited to Source Water Protection, Beginning Farmers, and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers. The Source Water Protection category had 12 contracts selected for funding. This does not indicate that there were only 12 submitted, just that 12 were selected, for a total of \$500,000. 88 Beginning Farmer contracts were chosen for a total of \$2,500,000 and 16 contracts for Socially Disadvantaged farmers were chosen for \$250,000 in funding.

EQIP Ranking Pools

- **Source Water Protection**
 - 12 Contract - \$500k
- **Beginning Farmer**
 - 88 Contracts - \$2.5 million
- **Socially Disadvantaged**
 - 16 contracts - \$250k

In the 2018 Farm Bill, there was a provision that said we would spend 10% of our total allocations on the Source Water Protection Area. The area chosen (through State Technical Committee partners and meetings) will be the same as the previous fiscal year. Additional EQIP Ranking Pools that were highlighted by Gail included CAPS Forestry (Conservation Activity Plans) of CNMP, NMP, and Forestry. CNMP had 15 contracts funded for \$113,882; NMP had two contracts funded for \$8,432; and Forestry had 84 contracts funded for \$121,883. NJ funds usually funds all CAPS.

EQIP Ranking Pools

- **Conservation Activity Plans (CAPS) Forestry, CNMP, NMP, Other**
 - CNMP: (15) \$113,882
 - NMP: (2) \$8,432
 - Forestry: (84) \$121,883

Gail went on to explain additional ranking pools. Organics has 11 contracts chosen for total funding of \$141,514; Energy has four contracts funded for \$226,973; Aquaculture had four contracts funded for \$229,828; American Black Duck had zero interest; Bobwhite Quail had eight contracts funded for \$56,756; Golden-Winged Warbler had two contracts funded for \$11,178 with an additional signup held; Soil health had five contracts funded for \$207,194; Highly Erodible Land was a new pool for this FY. The cutoff for that pool was June 18, 2021 and zero contracts for Livestock; was selected as it helps producers that are out of compliance; \$100,000 was provided for this pool.



EQIP Ranking Pools

- **Organic: (11) \$141,514**
- **Energy: (4) \$226,973**
- **Aquaculture: (4) \$229,828**
- **American Black Duck: (0)**
- **Bobwhite Quail: (8) \$56,756**
- **Golden Winged Warbler: (2) \$11,178**
 - Additional signup held cutoff 4/30
- **Soil Health: (5) \$207,194**
- **HEL: sign up cutoff: 6/18**
 - \$100k

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The North portion of the state specifically (based on local group priorities) has four areas of interest: Forestry had seven contracts funded for \$18,186; Wildlife had 10 contracts funded for \$142,064; Livestock had 22 contracts funded for \$1,467,336, and Water Quality had eight contracts funded for \$527,045.



EQIP Ranking Pools

- **North (Forestry, Wildlife, Livestock, Water Quality)**
 - Forestry: (7) \$18,186
 - Wildlife: (10) \$142,064
 - Livestock: (22) \$1,467,336
 - Water Quality: (8) \$527,045

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The Central New Jersey area specifically has three areas of interest: Forestry/Wildlife had five contracts funded for \$446,260, Livestock had two contracts funded for \$48,654, and Local Workgroups have seven contracts funded for \$248,119.



EQIP Ranking Pools

- **Central (Forestry/Wildlife, Livestock, Local Workgroup)**
 - Forestry/Wildlife: (5) \$446,260
 - Livestock: (2) \$48,654
 - Local Workgroup: (7) \$248,119

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The South portion of the state has three areas of interest: Forestry/Wildlife with six contracts totaling \$25,204 in funding; there were zero contracts for Livestock, and there were 15 contracts funded for \$1,352,644 for the Local Workgroup. The NWQI of Upper Salem and Upper Cohansey came in with three contracts for \$166,000 and two contracts for \$165,412 respectively. Gail believes we will spend our entire allocation on these. In the past, if we had gone over the allocation, we would just use EQIP general funds to cover the difference in the water quality fund pool.



EQIP Ranking Pools

- **South (Forestry/Wildlife, Livestock, Local Workgroup)**
 - Forestry/Wildlife: (6) \$25,204
 - Livestock: (0)
 - Local Workgroup: (15) \$1,352,644
- **NWQI (Upper Salem, Upper Cohansey)**
 - Upper Salem: (3) \$166,000
 - Upper Cohansey: (2) \$165,412

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The Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA) program is currently being used by the state of New Jersey. Only 16 states are currently receiving funds through this program run through the risk management agency. The general allocation of \$203,000 was used up mostly by the 14 contracts in high tunnel, which was \$149,902. In addition, there was only one cropland contract funded for \$41,164. RMA allocations were an additional \$150,00 and those were spent solely on high tunnels.



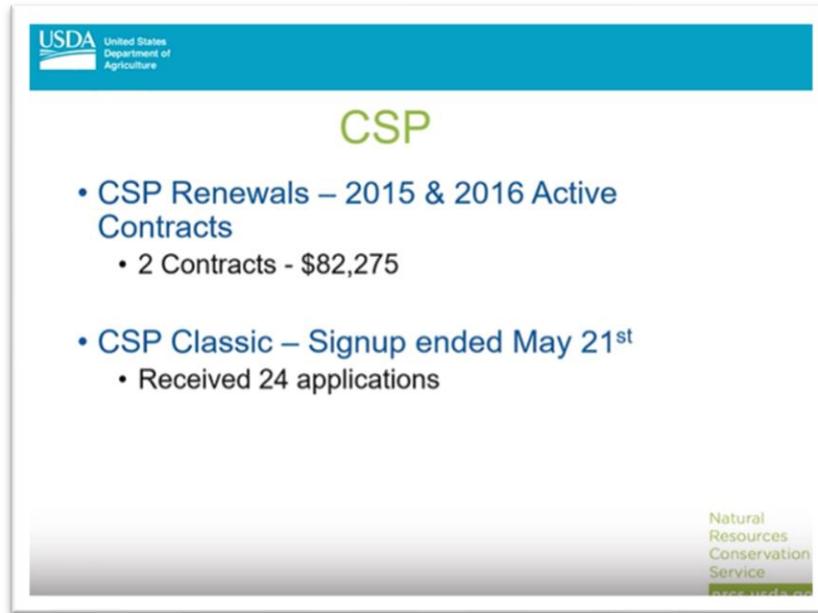
AMA Ranking Pools

- **AMA General Allocation \$203k**
- **High Tunnel: (14) \$149,902**
- **Cropland: (1) \$41,164**
 - Cover crop, drip irrigation, pollinator
- **AMA-RMA Allocation \$150k**
- **High Tunnel: (11)**

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Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) had allowed renewals from 2015 and 2016 contracts. Two contract holders

decided to move forward with those renewals. Classic signup ended on May 21, 2021, and we received a total of 24 applications. The hope is to spend CSP Classic and CSP Organic funds on those 24 applications.



9:21 Request for questions from Evan.

He also asked that everyone please communicate their name and organization in the chat so that participants will get credit for attending.

9:23 Farm Service Agency Program – Nancy Coles, FSA

Nancy shared her screen and provided her usual status report that she brings with her to each meeting and wanted to point out some changes to Conservation Reserve Programs (CRP). First, in April 2021, they stopped having FSA approve contracts so that changes could be implemented. Some of the changes were dramatic, others not so much. For instance, there was an adjustment to the soil rental rates. Soil productivity index was .5 to 1.0 (50%, 75%, and 100%). Now they range from 50% up through 150%. FSA increased their 1-time 10% inflation adjustment for the lifetime of the contract, on top of those soil productivity indexes.

The General CRP signup window has been extended and will be closing July 23, 2021, and these contracts would go into effect October 1, 2021. The Continuous CRP signup deadline is August 6, 2021, and these contracts would be for re-enrolled or a combination of re-enrolled and new acres. If the contract is for brand new acres, a producer can sign up till September 30 and would become effective the first month after approval by the county committee.

Big News! On June 14th it was announced that The SAFE program is going back to how it used to be, where you could sign up any time, would not have to compete with any other offers. All previous general safe practices have now been rolled over to continuing programs. They are no longer split on the report between General and Continuous. The SAFE Signup Incentive Payments (SIP) and Practice Incentive Payments (PIP) have been authorized for new land enrolled into SAFE practices. In addition, a Per Acre Climate-Smart Incentive rate was initiated. This rate is based on the practice they are using within SAFE and three types of covers: woody biomass, a combination of grass and lagoon, and grass only. If the producer is putting in woody biomass, the rate is 10%; grass and lagoon 5%; grass only 3%. There is also a per acre annual water quality rental incentive that has been authorized for SAFE. That comes in the form of payment based on the incentive of practices that are being put in. The policy for all continuous signups, the 55 practices except CP12 (wildlife food plot), are eligible for practice incentive payments. Prior to June 14 when they rolled out the new changes, the practice incentive payment was 20%. If an offer was accepted on or after June 14, the PIP rate is 50% (40% paid by at certification of installation of the practice by FSA. Five years later the remaining 10% will be paid to the contract holder).

In other news, The Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers "CLEAR 30" program is making a come-back. Originally in the pilot program, New Jersey was not included as the focus was on the 12 states near the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay. The program has now expanded to include all states and as such are eligible to do 30-year contracts. However, there is a limited group of contract holders that are eligible for this contract: they have to be in CRP currently, their practice has to

be labeled as continuous CRP or have a CREP contract, AND if the contract is expiring September 30, 2021, they can offer the acres into CLEAR 30. With that, there would be a 30-year rental payment with a 27.5% rental rate enhancement on top of that. There would also be a 20% water quality incentive and could use the Per Acre Climate-Smart Incentive rate. Also, on-site monitoring and technical assistance through the term. Maintenance payments for the practices could receive up to 75% of the rate for doing the maintenance. Sign up period for "CLEAR 30" is open from June 14 through August 6, 2021. There are fact sheets available for this program. If you are interested please contact Nancy Coles, FSA, directly.

Conservation Program Status Report (06/29/21) –

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
New Jersey Conservation Practices (Acres)**

Conservation Practice	Signup Type	Practice Description	Practice Acres
CP5A	Continuous	Field Windbreak Establishment	0.90
CP42	Continuous	Pollinator Habitat	13.72
CP8A	Continuous CREP	Grass Waterways	158.87
CP15A	Continuous CREP	Establishment of Permanent Vegetative Cover (Contour Grass Strips)	0.56
CP21	Continuous CREP	Filter Strips	259.43
CP22	Continuous CREP	Riparian Buffer	271.05
CP38B-9	Continuous SAFE	Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife	1.70
CP38E-1	Continuous SAFE	Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes	338.15
CP38E-2	Continuous SAFE	Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses	395.04
CP38C-3	Continuous SAFE	Tree Plantings (Softwood)	51.00
CP38E-4D	Continuous SAFE	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	61.38
CP38E-10	Continuous SAFE	Vegetative Cover – Grass - Already Established <i>(Practice Was Available Before 03/14/11)</i>	64.03
CP38E-12	Continuous SAFE	Wildlife Food Plot	2.20
CP38E-25	Continuous SAFE	Rare and Declining Habitat	54.81
CP38E-33	Continuous SAFE	Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds	4.50
CP42	General	Pollinator Habitat	6.70
CP87A	Grasslands	Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes - Livestock	153.70
State Total			1837.74

Signup Type	Acres	Acreage Percentage
Continuous	14.62	0.8%
Continuous CREP	689.91	37.5%
Continuous SAFE	972.81	52.9%
General	6.70	0.4%
Grasslands	153.70	8.4%

Number of Contracts 324 Number of Farms 186 Average Rental Rate \$90.50/ac

The chart above gives an overview of the current conservation practice listing (and code) with active acres to date. The chart is formatted where continuous contracts are at the top, followed by CREP, SAFE, General, and CRP Grasslands at the bottom. In total there are 1,837.74 acres accounted for on the books. However, with the new initiatives and signups, there is plenty of room to grow. There are a total of 324 contracts, 186 farms, with an average rental rate of \$90.50 per acre. Signup type continuous has 14.62 acres, approximately 0.8% of the total; continuous CREP has 689.91 acres, approximately 37.5%; continuous SAFE has 972.71 acres, approximately 52.9%; general has 6.7 acres, approximately .4%; and grasslands has 153.7 acres, approximately 8.4%.

Expiring Acres (next 5-years)

Date	Acres	Contracts	Farms
09/30/2021	169.50	26	21
09/30/2022	328.17	56	43
09/30/2023	130.42	25	18
09/30/2024	55.19	11	11
09/30/2025	183.88	31	21

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) –

Number of Contracts 246 Average Rental Rate \$150.66/ac
Number of Farms 145

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) –

Number of Contracts 79
Number of Farms 66

NJ SAFE - Development of Landscape Scale Agricultural Heritage and Habitat Conservation Plans (NJAS) – Contract Acres 211.28 ac

NJ SAFE - Grassland Habitat Restoration and Management (CWF) – Contract Acres 449.94 ac

NJ SAFE - Raritan-Piedmont Wildlife Habitat Partnership (RPWHP) Implementation of Grassland Conservation Plan – Contract Acres 311.59 ac

CRP Grassland -

Number of Contracts 4 Number of Farms 3 Average Rental Rate \$18.87/ac

FY2021 CRP Payments Issued – \$177,227**Active GRP Contracts and Easements –**

Program Year	GRP Contracts	GRP Contract Acres	GRP Easements	GRP Easement Acres
2004			1	18.90
2011	3	46.50		
2012	1	15.50		
Program Totals	4	62.00	1	18.90

GRP Contract Expirations -

2021	2026	2027
2 (27.30 ac)	1 (19.20 ac)	1 (15.50 ac)

FY2021 GRP Payments Issued – \$605

Nancy provided an additional chart that outlines the 5 year projection of expiring contracts, acres, and farms. By the end of FY21, there will be 26 contracts, 21 farms, with a total of 169.50 acres that will expire; FY22 will have 56 contracts, 43 farms, and 328.17 acres expiring; FY23 will have 25 contracts, 18 farms, and 130.42 acres expiring; FY24 will have 11 contracts, 11 farms, and 55.19 acres expiring; FY25 will have 31 contracts, 21 farms, and 183.88 acres expiring.

She then went over a few key figures about current conservation practices for specific programs. Conservation Reserve

Enhancement Program (CREP) has a total of 246 contracts, 145 farms, with an average rental rate of \$150.66 per acre; State Acres of Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) has a total of 79 contracts and 66 farms. However, there is no rental rate given, only total acres per practice: Development of Landscape Scale Agriculture Heritage and Habitat Conservation Plans (NJAS) has 211.28 acres; Grassland Habitat Restoration and Management (CWF) has 449.94 acres; Raritan-Piedmont Wildlife Habitat Partnership (RPWHP) Implementation of Grassland Conservation Plan has 311.59 acres. CRP Grasslands has a total of four contracts, three farms, with an average rental rate of \$18.87 per acre. As a note, these CRP Grasslands are permanent and located within the Hunterdon County area. NRCS currently holds one permanent easement stemming back from a 2003 farm bill that covers 18.9 acres. There are additional rental contracts within GRP that were administered by both NRCS and FSA: three contracts started in 2011 for 46.5 acres and one contract started in 2012 for 15.5 acres.

Nancy also provided a five-year projection of expiring contracts and acres within the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP): FY21 has two contracts with 27.30 acres expiring; FY26 has one contract with 19.2 acres expiring, and FY27 has one contract with 15.5 acres expiring. FY21 CRP Payments issued have totaled \$177,227 (with expectations of this number going up because of the signup incentives) and GRP Payments have totaled \$605.

Question/Comments:

- Brittany from Audubon asked for the location of the fact sheets for the new initiatives.
- Edwin asked with increasing UrbanAg nationwide, do you expect FSA to have an initiative with this program?
 - Nancy indicated that the CRP program is for cropland only so that would probably not work in urban ag.
- Edwin then asked what about other programs that FSA offers.
 - Nancy says in conservation programs, probably not, but there are loan programs in the agency and there have been some programs based on products being grown (like vegetables).

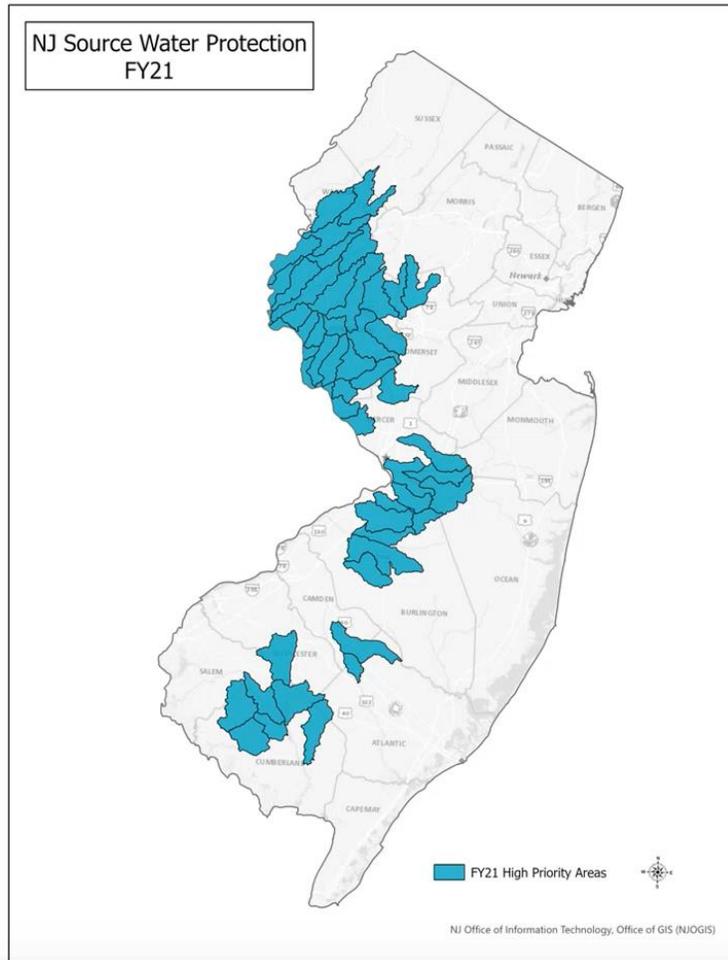
9:46 Update on Source Water Protection and the National Water Quality Initiative – Evan Madlinger, NRCS; Kathy Hale – NJWSA; Laura Tessieri – NJRC&D

Evan began his presentation by going over Source Water Protection (SWP). This was created in the 2018 farm bill. 10% of Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation funding will be directed toward source water protection, an incredible total of \$4 billion in the next 10 years, nationwide. NRCS will be reaching out to water utilities, with the help of the State Technical Committee, to identify priority areas in each state. This program will provide additional incentives to producers and farmers. Evan provided a list of practices that benefit from source water protection, as seen below.

Core Practices	Code
Waste Storage Facility	313
Animal Mortality Facility	316
Composting Facility	317
Conservation Cover	327
Conservation Crop Rotation	328
Contour Farming	330
Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crops	331
Contour Buffer Strips	332
Critical Area Planting	342
Waste Facility Closure	360
Field Border	386
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390
Riparian Forest Buffer	391
Filter Strip	393
Grade Stabilization Structure	410
Grassed Waterway	412
Access Control	472
Prescribed Grazing	528
Drainage Water Management	554
Heavy Use Area Protection	561
Trails and Walkways	575
Nutrient Management	590
Terrace	600
Vegetative Barrier	601
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612
Waste Treatment	629
Waste Recycling	633
Waste Transfer	634
Vegetated Treatment Area	635
Water and Sediment Control Basin	638

Supporting Practices	Code
Agrichemical Handling Facility	309
Alley Cropping	311
Sediment Basin	350
Diversion	362
Roofs and Covers	367
Silvopasture Establishment	381
Fence	382
Hedgerow Planting	422
Lined Waterway or Outlet	468
Mulching	484
Forage and Biomass Planting	512
Livestock Pipeline	516
Roof Runoff Structure	558
Access Road	560
Spring Development	574
Stream Crossing	578
Stripcropping	585
Structure for Water Control	587
Cross Wind Trap Strips	589C
Integrated Pest Management	595
Herbaceous Wind Barriers	603
Watering Facility	614
Underground Outlet	620
Water Well	642

Evan provided a map to remind the team of where the current watersheds (HUC 12) are located within the state. By working with a lot of the partners in the State Technical Committee, the team was able to identify high-priority areas. In Northern New Jersey the focus was on surface water, anything over 1 million gallons, 20% or greater agriculture, less than 80% forest (and all were impaired). Southern New Jersey focused on groundwater, used NJDEP wellhead protection, 20% or greater agriculture, less than 80% forest. There were a lot more watersheds chosen but National directed us to keep the list down, so we used the criteria of being at or below 20% total acres.



At this point, the team is ready to start on the outreach portion of source water protection. We want to get out there and get word circulating to generate interest. On July 16th there is a scheduled meeting between NRCS and NJ Water Supply Advisory Council. During this meeting, source-water protection efforts will be discussed as well as how the members may be able to help with the outreach. We will provide a new fact sheet for that meeting and see if partners can help with the outreach. Kent Barr and Steve Domber from NJDEP, have been a huge help in the entire process. The fact sheet can be seen below. A big thank you to Lauren Finnegan and Gail Bartok for helping put the fact sheet together that highlights practices and providing a map.

Increased Financial Assistance for Source Water Protection



Working lands can be key to protecting clean drinking water We can help!

Agriculture is a vital part of our infrastructure and so is water. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is working to prioritize land and water conservation practices on private working lands. These practices provide many benefits, including protecting public and private drinking water supplies.

Farmers and landowners in any of the priority watersheds shown on the map may be eligible to receive increased financial assistance from the following Farm Bill conservation programs:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

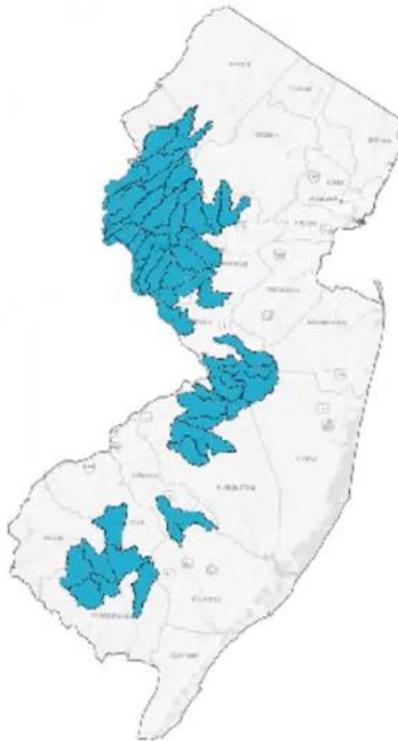
NRCS NJ is providing 10 percent of Farm Bill program funding for this initiative and is now accepting SWP applications.

Eligible conservation practices may address groundwater or surface water protection, or both. A list of eligible practices is listed to the right.

Farmers who implement these conservation practices within the priority watersheds can receive increased payment rates, up to 90% of practice costs.

NRCS field office staff can assist in determining if your application is eligible for SWP priority area financial assistance.

To view an interactive version of this map, use the following link, <http://ow.ty/Spow50FkOIT>.



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Financial and Technical Assistance

Increased payment rates are available for the following SWP practices:

- Core**
- Waste Storage Facility
 - Animal Mortality Facility
 - Composting Facility
 - Conservation Cover
 - Conservation Crop Rotation
 - Contour Farming
 - Contour Orchard & Other Perennial Crops
 - Contour Buffer Strips Critical Area Planting
 - Waste Facility Closure
 - Field Border
 - Riparian Herbaceous Cover
 - Riparian Forest Buffer
 - Filter Strip
 - Grade Stabilization Structure
 - Grassed Waterway
 - Access Control
 - Prescribed Grazing
 - Drainage Water Management
 - Heavy Use Area Protection
 - Trails & Walkways
- Supporting**
- Nutrient Management
 - Agrichemical Handling Facility
 - Alley Cropping
 - Sediment Basin
 - Diversion
 - Roofs & Covers Silvopasture
 - Establishment Fence
 - Hedgerow Planting
 - Lined Waterway or Outlet
 - Mulching
 - Forage & Biomass Planting
 - Livestock Pipeline
 - Roof Runoff Structure
 - Access Road
 - Spring Development
 - Stream Crossing
 - Strip Cropping
 - Structure for Water Control
 - Cross Winds Trap Strips
 - Integrated Pest Management
 - Herbaceous Wind Barriers
 - Watering Facility
 - Underground Outlet
 - Water Well

The next topic Evan brought to the table was the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI). This is where NRCS works with partners to identify priority watersheds. Once a plan has been approved, NRCS can provide funding for a watershed plan. There is also dedicated funding specifically for farmers and forest landowners in those priority watersheds. As an overview, two watersheds in the state of New Jersey have been around for a very long time: Upper Salem River and Upper Cohansey River. NRCS has been funding projects throughout those areas for the past few years as they had watershed plans in place already. NRCS will continue to fund this through FY22 through NWQI.

National Water Quality Initiative



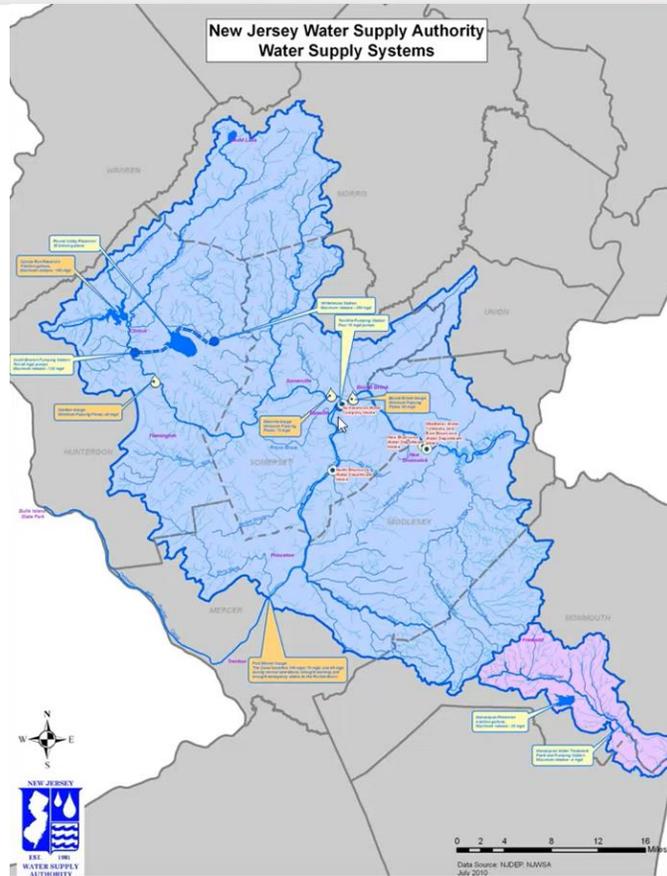
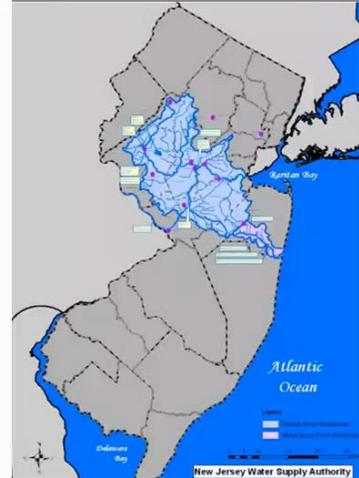
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Breaking News! There are two new watersheds: Mulhockaway-Spruce Run in Hunterdon county and Lower Musconetcong on the Hunterdon/Warren county border. NJ NRCS has allocated \$30,000 for both watersheds. We will be partnering with NJWSA (for Mulhockaway-Spruce Run) and NJ RC&D (for Lower Musconetcong) on these projects and will pursue dedicated funding for private landowners once plans are complete.

Kathy Hale with New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) began her presentation with the topic overview of Spruce Run Reservoir Watersheds. NJWSA is an independent state authority, originally created as part of NJDEP but spun off as an independent authority in 1981. They were created to manage drinking water supplies in Central New Jersey including three reservoirs and the 65-mile Delaware and Raritan Canal. The main role is to manage the water supply infrastructure but in 1999 they developed the watershed unit and worked with a variety of stakeholders in source water areas to design and implement watershed restoration projects, which include stormwater management, river-friendly programs, and land stewardship. NJWSA has dedicated funds (portion funded by water rate) as well as grants to offset the cost. Kathy provided a map of the areas they are currently working on Spruce Run Reservoir (natural streamflow with 11 billion gallons), Round Valley Reservoir (pumped storage of 55 billion gallons), Delaware and Raritan Canal (with 100 million gallons per day), and the Manasquan Reservoir (pumped storage of 4 billion gallons).

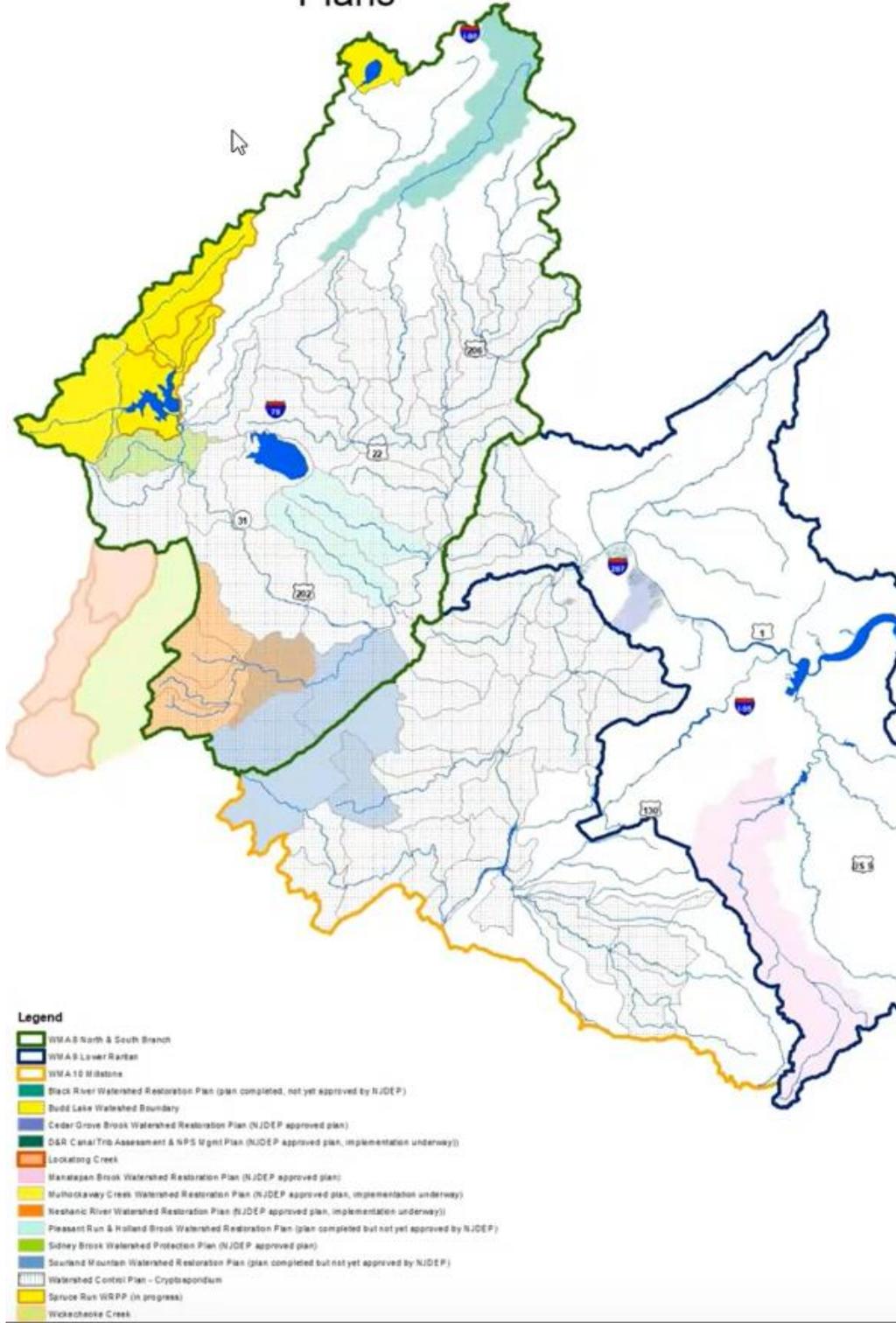
New Jersey Water Supply Authority

- Spruce Run Reservoir - natural stream flow - 11BG
- Round Valley Reservoir - pumped storage - 55BG
- Delaware & Raritan Canal -100MG/day
Delaware & Raritan System serves 1.8+ million people in central New Jersey
- Manasquan Reservoir - pumped storage - 4BG
Manasquan System serves 300,000 people in Monmouth County

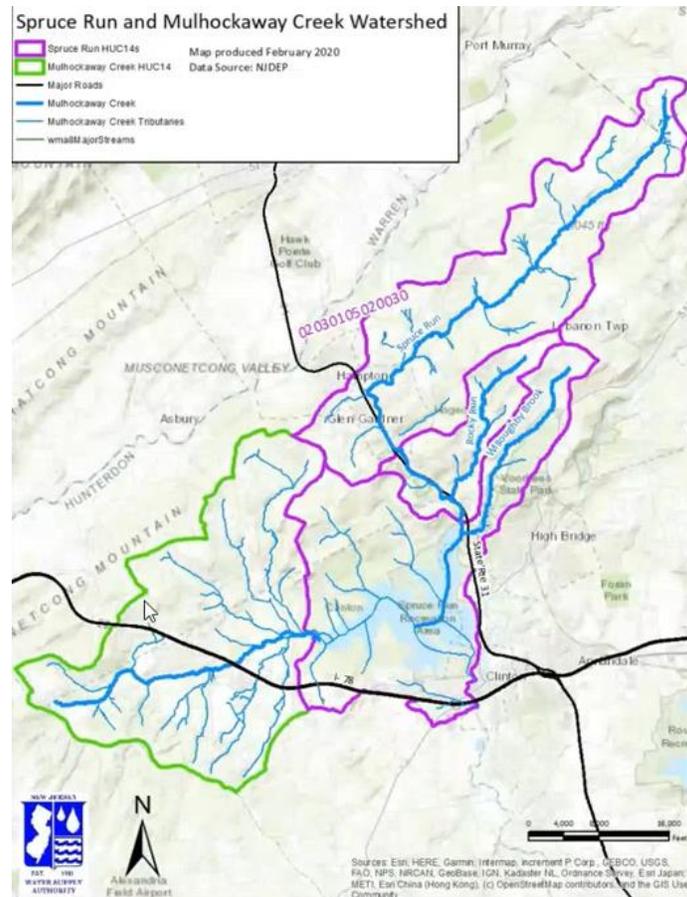


For many years, DEP focused their watershed restoration planning instead of implantation in our source water area. Recently we started working with NJ American Water Company to complete a control plan. In the map below the areas highlighted in color are those that have watershed restoration plans.

Watershed Restoration and Protection Plans



Spruce Run Reservoir is the 3rd largest reservoir in the state and is part of the Raritan Water Supply system fed by two streams: Spruce Run and Mulhockaway. In the last several years the reservoir has experienced repeated and prolonged harmful algae blooms. While we don't have specific information about what causes these harmful blooms, we do know that nutrient inputs and other pollutants do have an impact on their occurrence. A complete restoration plan has not yet been finished for the three main HUCs that drain into the Spruce Run Reservoir. However, there is a 2007 Mulhockaway Creek Restoration Plan, highlighted in green in the chart below. This plan focused on bacteria rather than nutrients and sediment. In 2020 DEP issued a request for proposals for the watershed restoration of planning with a focus on reducing the incidences of HAB in the state. We received funding to do a plan for the three main watersheds and to update the Mulhockaway plan. We will be working with Rutgers Resources Program to help us complete the plan.



A Watershed and Restoration Protection plan is defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency and we will be doing a nine-minimum element watershed plan. The requirements for this type of plan include watershed characterization, municipal assessment, pollutant loading analysis, and required reductions, internal phosphorus load for a reservoir, field reconnaissance, WRPP, effectiveness plan, outreach plan, and project committee. There will be additional focus based on which conservation practices are being used. NRCS is providing some of the funding for the plans to help meet the NWQI requirements. This will help secure funding in the future.

Laura Tessieri from North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) indicated that they have been working in the Lower Musconetcong and Musconetcong watershed for many years. They are a non-profit group that was founded in the late 1980s and are dedicated to meeting community needs through conservation. When the Lower Musconetcong was chosen as a National Water Quality Initiative Watershed, it was a natural fit and they wanted to try and have a better plan in place and to recognize all the planning that is currently ongoing.

The map below shows the HUC12 for the Lower Musconetcong and you will notice that it contains the border of Warren and Hunterdon counties and as such has two field offices servicing the area. There is plenty of agriculture within this HUC12 towards the northern area and then becomes more forest as you move downstream.



There is a portion of the HUC12 that has an existing Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan in place, Hampton to Bloomsbury, stemming back to 2012. This plan is a subsection of the nine-minimum element watershed plan Kathy Hale discussed earlier. This opportunity has given the RC&D team a chance to update that plan as well as extend it to the confluence. The Musconetcong Watershed Association has been a valued partner in these efforts and has gone out and done sampling and has extensive data that is vital for this plan. This area was nationally recognized as Partnership Wild & Scenic Designations through the MRMC (Musconetcong River Management Council that is made up of local government representatives as well as non-government representatives). Some past and present work that is being done in Priority Areas for Water Quality include the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation NJDEP Water Quality Restoration Grants, and NRCS Source Water Protection.

10:08 Urban AG - payment scenarios/standards – Lauren Lapczynski and Kaitlin Farbotnik, NRCS

Kaitlin Farbotnik began their section with just an overview of what they would like to discuss, which is Urban Ag Payment Scenarios & Standards. Lauren Lapczynski was the first to present. First, she defined payment schedules, which is the tool that we use to determine the estimated cost that it takes to install one of our practices that meets our specifications and standards. They then use that to determine the payment rates they provide for their programs in place of using bills. These programs do not have cost-sharing. New Jersey is part of a larger-scale system for development. We do not develop our scenarios; we use the national and regional payment schedules. New Jersey has three representatives that cover programs, agronomics, and engineering. Lauren wanted to point out that components are created on a national level and are used in determining the scenarios.

Background



NJ is in the Mid-Atlantic Payment Schedules Region

The Mid-Atlantic is made up of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware

The New Jersey representatives include:

- Lauren Lapczynski, Easement Specialist
- Kaitlin Farbotnik, Conservation Agronomist and Grazing Specialist
- Nigel Woodfork, Field Engineer, North Jersey



Important to distinguish between components and scenarios

- Components are the individual items and prices that make up the scenario
- A scenario is a representation of typical costs associated with a practice method, a collection of components

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Lauren provided an example of how the scenarios are built up. Items that are considered when building the scenario for cover crop, would have different components that include equipment installation, general labor, and seeding mixes. This is how costs are figured out. Next, the payment rate is determined based on a percentage of the estimated total cost, once run through a scenario. We do not pay the full cost, only a percentage.

Example: Cover Crop – 1 Acre or Less

Scenario Unit: Acres

Scenario Typical Size: 0.3

Scenario Total Cost: \$81.10

Scenario Cost/Unit: \$324.39

Cost Details:

Component Name	ID	Description	Unit	Cost	QTY	Total
Equipment Installation						
Walk-behind Rototiller	2723	8 hp walk-behind rototiller, one-day rental	Day	\$169.84	0.25	\$42.46
Labor						
General Labor	231	Labor performed using basic tools such as power tool, shovels, and other tools that do not require extensive training. Ex. pipe layer, herder, concrete placement, materials spreader, flagger, etc.	Hours	\$26.65	1	\$26.65
Materials						
Annual Grasses, Legumes or Forbs	2732	A mix of annual grasses, legumes and/or forbs, mostly introduced but may be native. Used for temporary cover or cover crops. Includes material and shipping.	Acres	\$47.95	0.25	\$11.99

Practice scenarios for EQIP, CSP, and AMA can be found in Section II of the eFOTG.

The cost shown in the practice detail reports (shown above) are the full estimated costs. Costs are further adjusted to specified percentages of the estimated full cost and adjusted further for priority practices.

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With the new Farm Bill comes a push for more urban agriculture. One of the challenges we face is right now we are basing our scenarios on a “typical” installation, which means larger scale and conventional operations. This limits our ability to offer incentives and outreach to producers that don’t fit the typical scale. One of the major limiting factors is economy of scale (both individual scenarios at that level as well as the individual components). Another concern would be infrastructure as most think they have access to the infrastructure but because it is urban ag, that is not the case. Items like electricity and water can be very costly and/or may not be available in those areas. The third area of concern is the fact that NRCS does not have the know-how as this is all new. We are reaching out to our producers to close that knowledge gap. Edwin has joined the urban ag team to ensure we have all the resources necessary and to gather feedback for us.



United States Department of Agriculture

Urban Ag Challenges



- **Economy of scale is much different**
 - Smaller amounts being ordered
 - Specialized labor in urban areas are more costly than in rural areas. Additional infrastructure concerns
 - Additional town or city ordinances require unique and more costly methods of implementation
 - Urban farms lack access to specialized, or even normal equipment
- **NRCS knowledge is lacking**
 - Unique problems are not understood at all levels of NRCS
 - Unique problems require unique solutions and out of the box thinking



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Kaitlin Farbotnik started her presentation with a slide of Component and Scenario Requests that she put together as examples of three major areas of focus this year. In the first scenario, Kaitlin referenced the example Lauren L presented with a cover crop of 1 acre or less. When the numbers were worked through the scenario, the seed cost looked to be about \$12.00 and with NRCS covering a high percentage. However, often seed must be purchased in bulk and will have shipping costs on top of the product cost, resulting in a higher than expected rate. A new component for small acreage seed was submitted and denied but we will continue trying to get more components added to bring that cost to a more reasonable level. The second scenario was based on pollinators, specific solarization for herbaceous weed control. The main point of this was so that people could use solarization instead of muricide in areas where we don’t want to till. This request was also denied on the grounds of the carbon footprint, but we were advised to try this scenario under a different category (pest management), which would require a pest management plan.

Question:

- Nagisa Manabe asked for clarification on solarization. Is solarization worse for the soil than tilling?
 - Kaitlin said that she felt additional education would be needed for a better understanding.

- Nagisa referenced a specific farm that she works with that currently has solarization and the soil testing has come back good.
- Kaitlin thinks that is good information to have as evidence/backup and said she knows of other states that currently have solarization. This will be added to the FY23 agenda.

The last component we worked on was contaminated soils in high tunnels. NJ is unique compared to other states as we have a waiver that allows us to install a barrier in the high tunnel (if the area is very contaminated, especially in urban ag) instead of digging the soil and laying the bed on top of that barrier. A new request was submitted that would have allowed us to build on raised beds with the barrier underneath but that was denied (lumber cost in the scenario was almost as much as the high tunnel itself).



Components and Scenario Requests

Cover Crop – Small Acreage Seeding Rate

- Inaccurate estimations for small acreage (<.3 acres)
- New component for small acreage seed was submitted and denied.

Herbaceous Weed Control – Solarization

- Scenario requested to assist in the implementation of pollinator plantings
- Request was denied for the carbon footprint

High Tunnel – Contaminated Soils

- New scenario for contaminated soils was submitted.
- Request was denied because raised beds require its own standard



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There is a new interim standard currently being worked on by the NJ team and National. It was released within the past month, it is still in draft form, and the information presented here is preliminary. The availability would be FY22. One positive aspect of this standard allows for the installation of raised beds without the high tunnel on top of it. Three scenarios are being proposed: raised bed with no frame, raised bed with a frame, and raised bed with a barrier and no frame. We have requested an additional scenario be added to the proposal – raised bed with a barrier and frame.

Proposed Interim Standard - DRAFT

Managing Above Ground Cropping Systems (812)

- Team from NJ including Evan Madlinger, Kaitlin Farbotnik, Rosalynd Orr, and Edwin Muniz has reviewed and commented on proposed standard language
- Standard will address growing in raised beds but puts sideboards on other types of agriculture
- Three scenarios currently proposed:
 - Raised bed with no frame
 - Raised bed with a frame
 - Raised bed with a barrier (no frame)
 - NJ requesting raised bed with a barrier AND frame



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Proposed Interim Standard - DRAFT

DEFINITION: Managing the production of agricultural crops to reduce environmental and safety risks where natural soils are not suitable for use.

PURPOSE

- Reduce sheet, rill, and wind erosion and excessive sediment in surface waters
- Reduce concentration of salts or other chemicals in the soil that limit the desired use
- Reduce field operation-induced particulate emissions
- Reduce the release of heavy metals and other pollutants to prevent contamination of surface waters
- Improve soil health and maintain or increase organic matter content
- Reduce energy use



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The proposed interim standard will be Managing Above Ground Cropping Systems under code 812. This will be used mainly for raised beds, but it does not include other types of agriculture like rooftop gardening, container agriculture (nurseries), vertical farming indoors, and aquaculture systems in general.

Question:

- Brittany asked, as it stands right now, can you have raised beds without a barrier in high tunnels?
 - Kaitlin says the standard says you can have a raised bed up to 12 inches and a barrier. However, there is no payment scenario to pay for the barrier and to pay for the clean fill. No way to financially incentivize that.

10:27 Local Work Group Questionnaire Discussion – Nick Saumweber, NRCS

The purpose of the local workgroup is to inform NRCS in terms of what they are looking to fund in different areas. Given COVID times, this year we developed a questionnaire instead of face-to-face meetings. The questionnaire allows respondents to solicit feedback for consideration to the State Technical Committee. Topics covered include but are not limited to; program delivery, priority conservation needs, and general questions. We are looking for respondents that fall into these categories: producers and clients (both current and previous), partners, and employees. This should take anywhere between 10 and 25 minutes, depending on which category you fall into. There is a skip feature to the questions if you don't know the answer, don't have enough information, or are not interested responding.



Purpose

To allow NRCS-NJ to solicit feedback for the State Technical Committee

- **Program Delivery**
 - EQIP
 - AMA
 - CSP
 - RCPP
- **Priority Conservation Needs**
 - Practices
 - Priority areas
 - Resource concerns
- **General**
 - Awareness of services
 - Procedures relating to contract management
 - Other feedback



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Who Should Respond?

- **Producers/Clients**
 - Farmers
 - Forestland owners
 - Program participants
 - Non-program participants
- **Partners**
 - State Technical Committee Members
 - Conservation partners
 - Conservation districts
 - Other partners
- **Employees**
 - Field Office employees
 - Support staff
 - State Office employees
 - Partner employees



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At the time of this presentation, some data has been collected. Of 56 responses, it has taken respondents an average of 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire and included producers, districts, NRCS partner employees, state technical committee members, NRCS employees, and conservation partners. The questionnaire will run until July 9th, 2021.



Data So Far

- **Average time spent on responses**
 - 20 mins
- **56 responses**
 - 18 Producers
 - 9 Districts
 - 5 NRCS Partner Employees
 - 6 State Technical Committee Members
 - 12 NRCS Employees
 - 6 Conservation Partners



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10:40 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – Nick Saumweber, NRCS

Just a few updates to the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to start with: On April 26, 2021, the team at National Headquarters announced funding proposals that were submitted. Demand outweighed the funding available. 180 proposals were submitted requesting a total of \$850 million. Of the 180 proposals, only 85 were chosen and funded for \$330 million. Three New Jersey proposals were selected as part of the 180 and those three totaled \$1.67 million: Salem River Bog Turtle Protection and Restoration (NJ Audubon), Protecting Source Water in the Raritan System (NJ Water Supply Authority), and Northern NJ Small Farm Food Link Conservation Project (Urban Agriculture Cooperative).



RCPP Awards Announced

April 26th, 2021

- **Demand far outstripped funding**
 - 180 proposals
 - \$850 million
 - Only \$330 million available
 - 85 proposals selected for funding
- **3 New Jersey proposals selected, totaling \$1.67 million**
 - **Salem River Bog Turtle Protection and Restoration**
 - New Jersey Audubon
 - **Protecting Source Water in the Raritan System**
 - New Jersey Water Supply Authority
 - **Northern NJ Small Farm Food Link Conservation Project**
 - Urban Agriculture Cooperative



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Salem River Bog Turtle Protection and Restoration is sponsored by NJ Audubon and was given \$710,000 in funding with 70% in the form of financial assistance paid to farmers (\$497,000). The goal of this project is to improve habitat value and connectivity for Bog Turtles in Salem River Watershed via Land Management Activities (similar to our financial assistance programs like EQIP) and two-US-Held Easements that will be purchased in the Salem River Watershed area.

Salem River Bog Turtle Protection and Restoration

- **New Jersey Audubon**
- **\$710,000**
 - \$497,000 in Financial Assistance
- **Improve habitat value and connectivity for Bog Turtles in Salem River Watershed**
 - Land Management Activities
 - US-Held Easements



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Protecting Source Water in the Raritan System is being sponsored by NJ Water Supply Authority and was given \$608,571 in funding with \$468,600 in financial assistance. The goal of this project is to protect and improve water quality within the Raritan Basin Water Supply System via Land Management (producer contracts) and Entity Held Easements (NRCS will provide some of the purchasing funding that will be matched by the partners).

Protecting Source Water in the Raritan System

- **New Jersey Water Supply Authority**
- **\$608,571**
 - \$468,600 in Financial Assistance
- **Protect and improve water quality within the Raritan Basin Water Supply System**
 - Land Management
 - Entity Held Easements



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Northern NJ Small Farm Food Link Conservation Project is the last chosen proposal for funding. This is sponsored by Urban Agriculture Cooperative and was given \$355,000 in funding with \$248,500 in financial assistance. The goal of this project is to improve the urban agriculture farm resource base in the Newark area and north to address food insecurities

and expand food links through Land Management as well as help inform NRCS payment rates for conservation practices on urban farms.



Northern NJ Small Farm Food Link Conservation Project

- **Urban Agriculture Cooperative**
- **\$355,000**
 - \$248,500 in Financial Assistance
- **Improve urban agriculture farm resource base in Newark and north to address food insecurity and expand food links**
 - Land Management
 - Help inform NRCS payment rates for conservation practices on urban farms



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Next Steps

- **Development of Programmatic Partnership Agreements (PPA)**
 - PPA serves as budget and overarching document that guides project
 - Doesn't obligate funding
 - Sets timelines
 - Clarifies deliverables
- **Development of Supplemental Agreements (SA)**
 - Mechanism for partners to request TA money
 - Developed after PPA



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We are currently in the "Next Steps" phase of the agreements. In this phase, we are working on the development of a programmatic partnership agreement (PPA). It is essentially a budget but does not obligate funding and does set deadlines and clarifies deliverables. As explained earlier, within each proposal is financial assistance covering 70% that goes into producers' hands. The other 30% is split up for both NRCS as well as the partner to cover technical assistance as well as other aspects like outreach, project management, or clarifying the outcome of a project. Once the PPA has

been completed the Development of Supplemental Agreements (SA) can begin. These supplemental agreements are a mechanism for partners to request technical assistance money. The deadline for PPA is July 14, 2021. Once completed, they will be sent to Julie for review and concurrence and then it will go to the National Review Team.



Next Steps (continued)

- **Sign-ups for new RCPP projects will be announced in FY 2022**
 - Exact date will depend on when ranking and software functionality is ready
 - Land Management activities will be contracted through NRCS standard processes
- **Development of fact sheet for outreach and educational purposes**



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There will be a new signup announced for FY22, sometime after September, and the date will be determined based on when the ranking and software functionality is ready. Unlike our traditional EQIP and AMA contracts that are managed through a software program, these RCPP programs will be managed through the Conservation Desktop (CD). Training will be required for the new program. We also want to develop a fact sheet for outreach and educational purposes. We have already created fact sheets and summaries for the current, active RCPP contracts that we can share with partners and constituents. We want the fact sheets to include information about the new projects that are in the developmental stages, as well. We are very excited to have three programs chosen for funding this upcoming fiscal year as we haven't had any chosen the in past two years.

10:49 State Tech Guide Committee/Standard Updates – Evan Madlinger and Betsy McShane, NRCS

Evan started by mentioning that here in New Jersey we did not have a State Technical Guide prior to him taking this role. We wanted to set up a committee comprised of Evan, Hilary Trotman, and Edwin Muniz and they will oversee the NJ Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). This committee is new, and the first meeting is set for a date in July of this year. State technical leads will still be an integral part of the process and those people will remain the same. The committee will just oversee the specific details. Nancy Paolini will remain the content manager. One beneficial change to the CPS standards is the ability to approve them in-house and will not need external input. There will still be times when input is needed but having the option to approve without that streamlines this process. There will be changes to the eFOTG on both the state and national levels so please watch for those.

State Tech Guide Committee

- Had not been established in NJ
- Comprised of the State Resource Conservationist, State Conservation Engineer, and the State Soil Scientist
- Will oversee the NJ Field Office Technical Guide
- First meeting set for July

If anyone has any interest in a Field Office Technical Guide Demo, please let Evan know.
Website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/fotg> .

Elizabeth (Betsy) indicated that before the creation of the State Technical Guide Committee, subcommittees were created from this State Technical Committee to review some of our standards. At the present time, Betsy is working on five standards with committee members and the goal is to avoid changes to the standards while the field offices are actively planning and contracting. These five standards will be added to the Field Office Technical Guide as of October 1, 2021 and will be ready and available to help contracting for FY22. The five practices she has been working on are herbaceous weed treatment (315), prescribed burnings (338), riparian forest buffer (391), bivalve aquaculture gear and biofouling control (400), and tree/shrub site preparation (490). All documents pertaining to the current standard reviews can be found on a shared Google drive accessible to committee members. Within each standard folder you can find the NJ standard, the National standard, related implantation requirement sheets, and the NJ proposed updated standard in word format for editing purposes. You can also find some basic information about what goes into updating the standards here on this shared drive as well, including fact sheets that outline what changes can be made within our state, where the guidelines come from, and a PowerPoint that explains the whole process. If anyone would like to join in and make some comments or edits, please leave a note in the chat box and Betsy will give the proper permissions to do so.

10:57 NCPPP - Re-invigorating Conservation Planning – Evan Madlinger, NRCS; and Frank Minch, NJDA

Re-invigorating conservation planning is underway. This is very focused on NRCS's relationship with our soil conservation districts. This came out back in February, presented by NRCS and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) at their meeting, and the effort here is targeting the re-invigorating NRCS/SCD partnership.

NCPP-Re-invigorating Conservation Planning

- February -NRCS and SCD presented at NACD
- Effort targeting re-invigorating NRCS/SCD partnership
- Getting NJ SCDs back in Agriculture
- Plan has been developed, final version due July 15th

Frank Minch, the Executive Secretary of the State Soil Conversation Committee in the NJ Department of Agriculture, jumped into the conversation to provide more detail and understanding. One thing Frank has been working on is getting the State Soil Conversation Committee back to more agricultural activities. There has been a strong need for technical assistance, forcing the focus not so much on re-invigorating the conservation planning (that is more of a National header), as much as it is starting fresh again or returning to where districts were originally before the 1970's deviation away from agriculture. Below is a list of the partner planning members made up of a diverse group of district managers, NRCS employees, and members from the State Association of Conservation Districts. The plan is far along as several meetings have occurred and are looking to review the summary comments received from NACD and NRC to finalize the plan.

NCPP-Re-invigorating Conservation Planning-Team

- **Evan Madlinger-NRCS**
- **Frank Minch-NJDA**
- **Maria Collazo-NRCS**
- **Nicholas Saumweber-NRCS**
- **Louise Davis-NJACD**
- **Lily Mehl-NJACD**
- **Mike Kent-Cape Atlantic SCD**
- **Christine Raabe-Ocean SCD**
- **Sandra Meyers-Upper Delaware SCD**
- **Rosalynd Orr-NRCS**
- **Nancy Paolini-NRCS**

Since the 1970's we have been relying on 251 funding, which is a reference to the soil erosion and sediment regulatory control program. A lot of money was generated by permit fees at that time; the building industry was a hot commodity. Since then though, things have calmed down and a disconnect emerged between what the districts were primarily focused on and what NRCS was doing. Some areas where we have run into issues include: the process to become a certified planner becoming longer, the need for education for NRCS and SCD staff and supervisors, the need for education SCD supervisors, and access to the training and tools.



Challenges Identified

- **SCD reliance on 251 funding**
- **Long process to become Certified Planner**
- **Educating NRCS and SCD staff**
- **Educating SCD supervisors**
- **Access to training and tools**

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11:10 Soil Health Activities - Kaitlin Farbotnik, NRCS

First Kaitlin went over what is currently in process. The Cropland Chapter is in phase two. It is not complete, but they are close! Within the Cropland Chapter is the Baseline Inventory Group, the Resource Inventory Group, and the Social Trends Group. The Baseline Inventory Group finished up phase two ahead of schedule. The Social Trends group is developing a survey that is meant to help understand the perceived opportunities for soil health implantation and identify some of the barriers that might be preventing soil health. The Resources Inventory Group has been working diligently the past few months with their next meeting scheduled for July 13. Once the Resources Inventory Group is finished, all three groups will meet to discuss overlaps to further narrow down the proposed focus areas. Once those areas are identified all participating members will meet to gear up for Phase three, including the Sub/Urban chapter as well as the Forest Chapter.

Soil Health Strategic Plan Updates

- **Cropland Chapter is in Phase 2!**
- Baseline Inventory, led by Bill Angstadt and Rosalynd Orr, has been wrapped up for awhile
- Social Trends, led by Bridgett Hilshey, will be developing a survey to understand the perceived opportunities for soil health implementation.
- Resources Inventory's next meeting will be on July 13 @ 9:00.
- Once Resource's Inventory wraps up all three groups will meet to discuss overlaps to further narrow down the proposed focus areas.
- **Sub/Urban Chapter – Stephanie Murphy**
- **Forest Chapter – Brittney Dobrzynski**



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There are new soil health efforts for grazing on the agenda. NJ will be adopting an interim practice - Annual Forages for Grazing Systems (810). Additionally, Kaitlin will be asking for volunteers to help find a way to develop some guidance to pay for infrastructure to grazing cropland and cover crops. The one area she would like to explore is if we can pay for some of that infrastructure (we just need the guidance on when and where). Once this small group identifies a couple of items, they will then meet with the programs team to see what they can help with via EQIP and CSP. We can potentially get guidance for FY22.

New Soil Health Efforts for Grazing

- **NJ will be adopting Annual Forages for Grazing Systems (810)**
- **Will be looking at grazing cover crops and developing guidance for when and how to use financial assistance for producers interested in grazing cover crops**
 - Producers can already graze cover crops through EQIP
 - Group will be focused on marrying grazing of cover crops with financial assistance for infrastructure needed to graze cover crops
 - Looking at both EQIP and CSP options
 - Potential for FY22 implementation



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Question:

- Bill asked Kaitlin where are we at with soil health CSP certification?
 - Kaitlin indicated the training for that already happened. She doesn't have the details but will follow up with the appropriate party to find out what the next step will be.
- Bill continued to say with the new funding that was approved, to be ready for the September October timeframe, soil health assessments for the new pool of funding for Carbon Farming, he needs TSP's.
 - Four people that are TSP's and one that will be a TSP for New Jersey attended the training. We should have them ready to go for that timeframe.

11:20 Partner Report – USFWS – Beth Freiday, USFWS

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is the USFWS's Habitat Restoration for Private Landowners. They define that differently than NRCS as they include county and township government in the list of private landowners and they don't have an AGI income limitation. Intentionally designed to be a flexible program. Right now, they are working on updating their five year strategic plan, starting in FY22, and have asked for feedback now during this meeting or after via email, phone, meetings, etc. The main goal is to support the partners in New Jersey to achieve habitat goals for federal trust resources. Their focus is primarily federal trust resources (migratory birds, migratory fish, at-risk species, and candidate species for federal listing). In addition, they also can aid with plant material as well as machinery like excavators, tractors, ATVs, and they can train people to use the machines safely. This is not a fully inclusive list; if something comes up that opens the door to a new partner or a new area of focus, they are open to discussing.

There are two levels of planning: regional and state (taking the state plan and step that down from regional priorities: coastal resilience, at-risk species recovery, aquatic connectivity like dam removal, and connecting people with nature including the urban initiatives). There are five parts to the regional plan: conserving habitat, broadening and strengthening partnerships, improving information sharing, enhancing the workforce, and increased accountability of monitoring (how successful are we at the projects we are doing together). Beth provided a focal areas map, taken from national. The plan is to include more of the northern highlands (as we had been previously limited by watersheds) and Delaware Water Gap (this is considered Federal land and they don't work much in that capacity).



One side note - allocation of funding happens annually and changes each year. In addition to the technical assistance, they can do bigger projects called Cooperative Agreements starting at \$20,000 and going up from there. If you have something that you feel is eligible for the partner's program, send it to Beth so they can sample it. For example, with the RCPP for Bog Turtle, they will be doing a cooperative agreement with NJ Audubon to complement that work and provide additional funding for the work.

11:30 Partner Report – SADC – David Clapp, NJDA

Jeff Everett, Deputy Executive Director has been spearheading the soil protection standard. The SADC's largest activities are acquiring and managing farmland preservation easements. To date in New Jersey, there are 2700 easements and they cover more than 240,000 acres. Today's presentation will discuss the draft soil protection standards. If these standards are approved, they would only apply to the farms where they hold an easement. These standards will provide clarity to the previously acknowledged lack thereof by interpreting the existing easement to make it more understandable for farmers. They have identified the framework where each preserved farm will be allocated up to 8% of the premises or 6 acres (whichever is greater) as a permanent soil disturbance (that means large cuts and fills, placing permanent buildings, or doing permanent hardscapes or pavement). If a farm has less than 8% or 6 acres, they would be compliant with the easement. Soil disturbance is almost always a variable and a degree of reversibility associated with disturbances on farms. As a result, they developed Best Management Practices (BMP) that would allow the farm to go over that permanent disturbance allocation. The chart provided has items highlighted in red at the top; those are the items they were considering permanent soil disturbances. As you move down the list the color changes to orange and then to yellow, indicating different types of disturbances that have a draft of Best Management Practices. If you were following the yellow category (increased reversibility), the land uses do not count towards the disturbance limitation. If you were following the orange category (activities where there are cuts and fills or placement of material on top of the soil - more intensive disturbances), you would get an additional 5% disturbance on the premise. One key point: none of the farmers are required to follow any of the BMPs listed IF they stay under that 8%- or 6 acre disturbance limit. However, if they wanted to exceed that or if they want to follow what we consider to be Best Management Practices, they can follow the ones on the chart.

Soil Disturbance Land Use Chart

Degree of Reversibility ↓		Land Uses	Soil Effects Classifications
	SOIL PROTECTION STANDARDS - GENERAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut/fill activities (includes stormwater basins) Permanent buildings/structures Permanent travel lanes Permanent livestock training areas Permanent parking and storage areas/hardscape 	Permanent Soil Disturbance ("Red" Category)
SOIL PROTECTION STANDARDS - BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-permanent travel lanes Semi-permanent livestock training areas Semi-permanent parking and storage areas Agricultural water impoundments Soil stockpiles 	Semi-Permanent Soil Disturbance ("Orange" Category)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geotextiles and geomembranes Temporary structures Temporary travel lanes Temporary livestock training areas Temporary parking and storage areas Ground-mounted solar energy facilities 	Temporary Soil Disturbance ("Yellow" Category)	
	SOIL PROTECTION STANDARDS - GENERAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cropland and pastureland Woodland Wetlands and streams 	Soil Protection ("Green" Category)

In April they went to the public requesting unofficial/informal public comments on the BMPs they developed as well as the soil disturbance limits (the 8% or 6 acres with 5% additional for BMP disturbances). That request closed on June 18 and they are now summarizing and incorporating comments into the BMPs. From there the next step would be to develop

rehabilitation standards (that would allow farmers to take their disturbances, rehabilitate them back into crop production, and that would remove them from the limit), draft formal rules to compliment the BMPs, post them to the NJ Register for a formal comment period, and then publish the final rules.

Current Status and Next Steps

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Home > News > Popular Topics

Popular Topics

Soil Protection Standards

Draft Soil Protection Standards Memo, April 19, 2021 - Request for Comment (EDE)

Draft Land Uses Chart (EDE)

Draft Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Agricultural Water Impoundments BMP (EDE)

Geotextiles and Geomembranes BMP (EDE)

Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Facilities BMP (EDE)

Semi-Permanent Livestock Training Areas BMP (EDE)

Semi-Permanent Parking and Storage Areas BMP (EDE)

Semi-Permanent Travel Lanes BMP (EDE)

Soil Stockpiling BMP (EDE)

Temporary Livestock Training Areas BMP (EDE)

Temporary Parking and Storage Areas BMP (EDE)

Temporary Structures BMP (EDE)

Temporary Travel Lanes BMP (EDE)

Draft Soil Protection Standards Presentation (PowerPoint Presentation)

NJ County Planners Association Presentation April 30, 2021 Presentation (PowerPoint Presentation)

Committee Meetings

DRAFT Soil Protection Standards Presentations:

- February, 25, 2021 (PowerPoint Presentation)
- January 28, 2021 (PowerPoint Presentation)
- October 22, 2020 (PowerPoint Presentation)
- February 27, 2020 (PowerPoint Presentation)
- January 23, 2020 (PowerPoint Presentation)
- June, July, and September 2019 (PowerPoint Presentation)

- Developed draft BMP documents for yellow and orange land use categories
- Requested informal comments on the BMP's and percentages by 6/18/2021*
- Summarize and incorporate comments as appropriate
- Developing rehabilitation standards
- Drafting formal rules to compliment BMP's
- Post to NJ Register for formal comment period
- Publish Rules

*Informal comments can still be submitted for consideration. Public comments are also accepted during SADC meetings.

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/news/populartopics/>

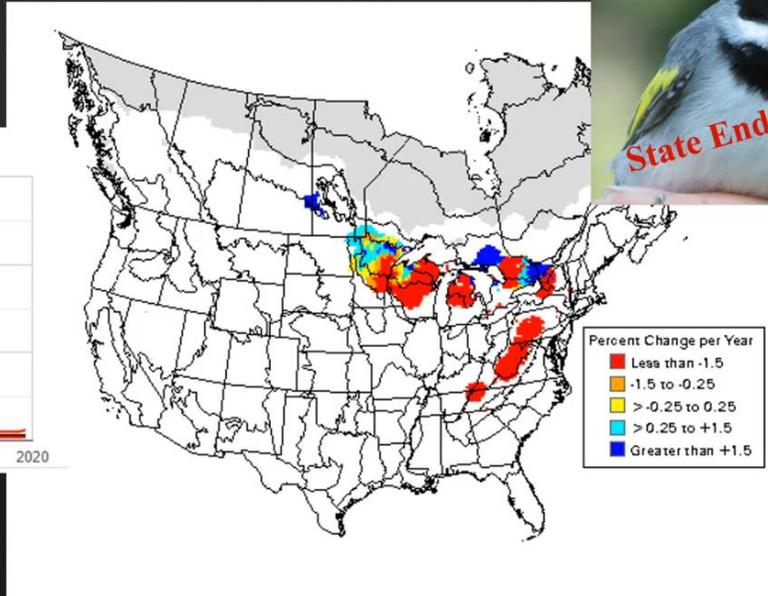
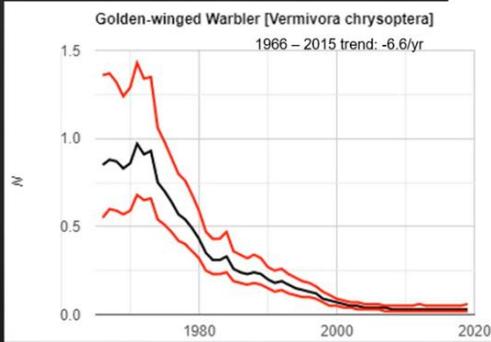
11:40 Partner Report - NJDFW – ENSP – Gretchen Fowles and Sharon Petzinger, NJDFW

Sharon is from the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Nongame Species Program and she will be presenting the reason NRCS has allocated \$70,000 for a single species: The Golden-Winged Warbler (GWW). The Golden-Winged Warbler is considered an umbrella species meaning if you create or protect the habitat of The Golden-Winged Warbler many other species benefit from that as well. This bird has been petitioned for federal listing and is on the IUCN red list as near threatened. The drastic decline of the Appalachian region is one of the reasons for the near-threatened status for the bird as their habitat is disappearing. As a result, the number of breeding birds has also declined.

Golden-winged Warbler

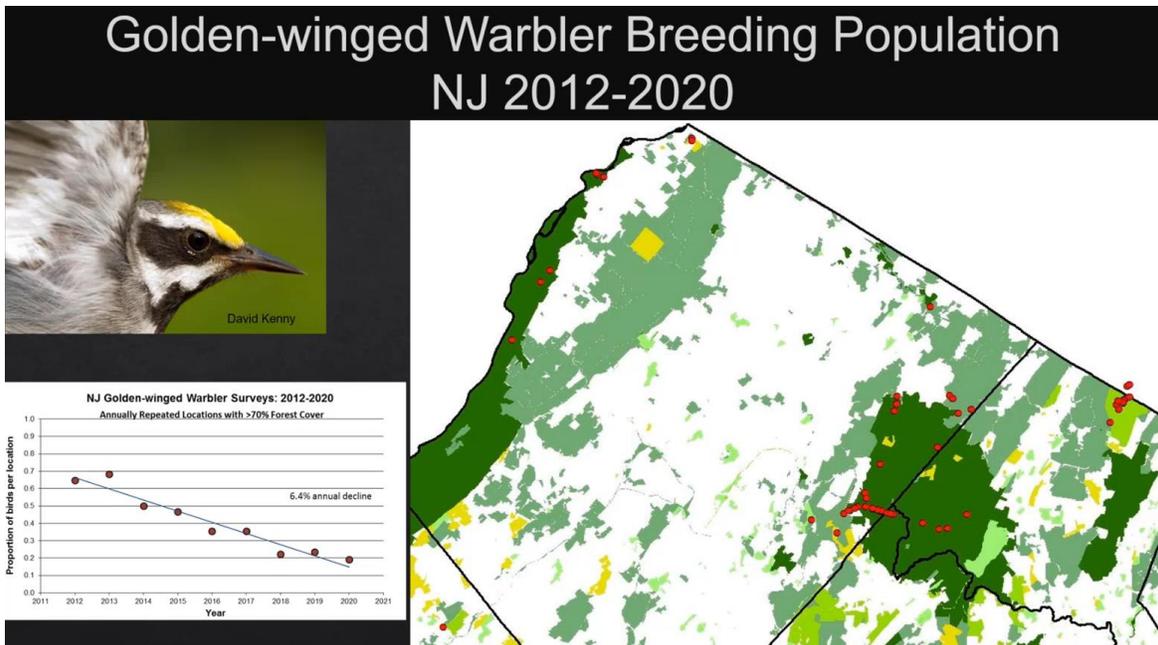


Breeding Bird Survey Trend Analyses
Appalachian Mountains Region



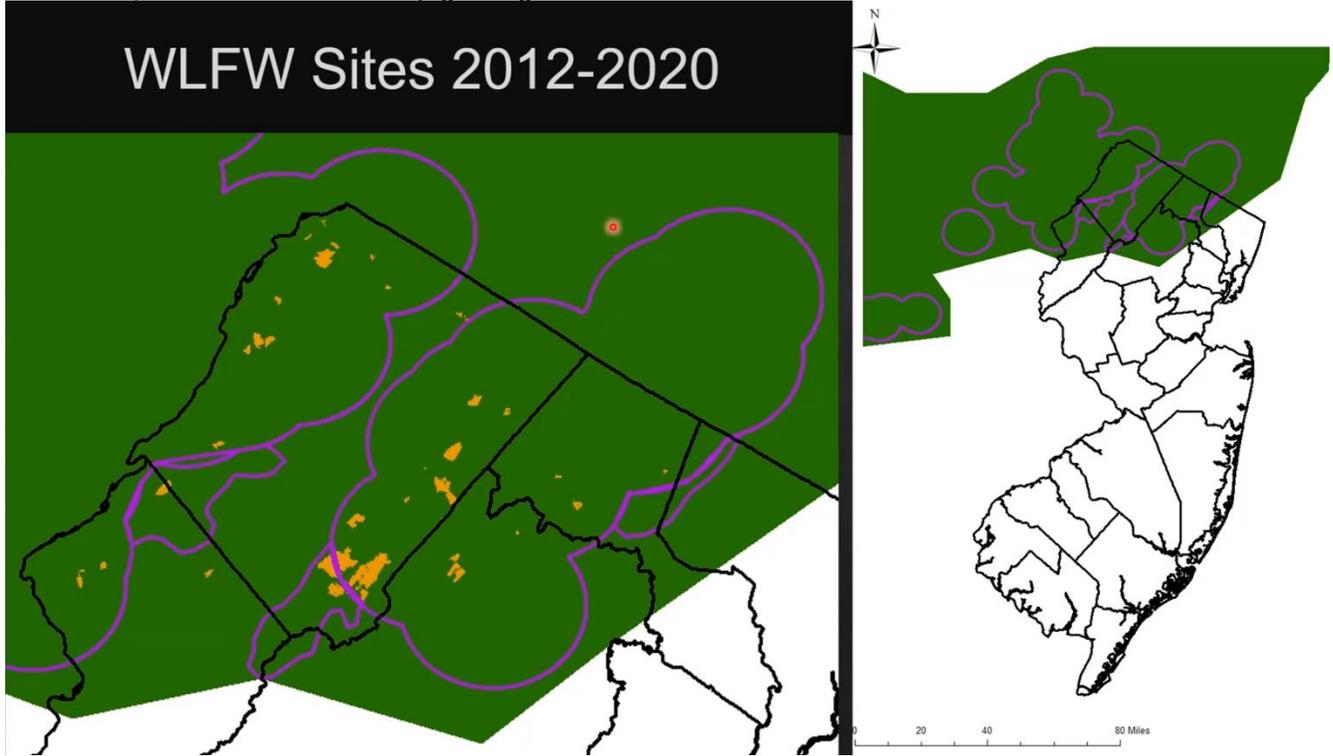
Breeding Bird Survey Results, Trend Map (1966-2015)

The Golden-Winged Warbler is one of New Jersey's most endangered songbirds and has been identified as part of 107 local species in the New Jersey State Action Plan. Last year there were only 14 likely breeding pairs detected in NJ. This year's preliminary data shows fewer pairs than that. According to population modeling, there's an 80% chance of extrication within the next 10 years if nothing changes. The chart below highlights the areas of the Golden-Winged Warbler and the red dots indicate the distribution of the GWW between the years 2012 to 2020. The smaller graph on the left shows an annual 6.4% decline of the bird in NJ.



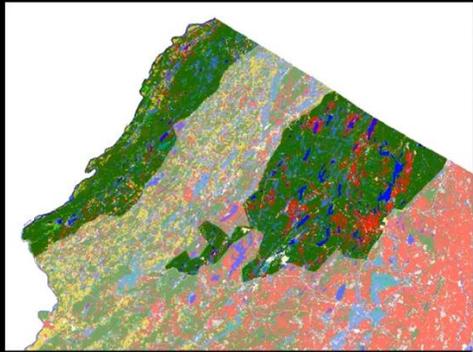
The Working Lands for Wildlife program (WLFW) The green area on the map below is eligible land for the program for private landowners, the purple outlines are the focal areas, and the orange represents the actual properties that are

enrolled. There are over 50 sites through approximately 36 landowners enrolled in the program which covers about 500 acres of habitat, but those numbers keep growing.



When looking at breeding habitats for the GWW they are trying to find areas within forested landscapes. That area must contain 70% or higher forest cover with patches of dense, herbaceous areas for nesting. They also need shrubs for foraging as well as white oak trees for both foraging and song perches. These vegetation characteristics (hedges, grasses, shrubs, etc..) can only occur when you have enough sunlight hitting the forest floor, such as open-canopy forests. Currently, an open-canopy forest is defined as 50% canopy cover but for the Golden-Wing Warbler, that number is less than 40%. In Northern New Jersey there is more than 82% closed canopy, less than .8% old growth, less than 11% multi-age/semi-open oak, and 8% open/young forest.

Northern NJ Forests: Now



Based on 2015 LULC



<0.8% old growth



<11% multi-age/semi-open oak

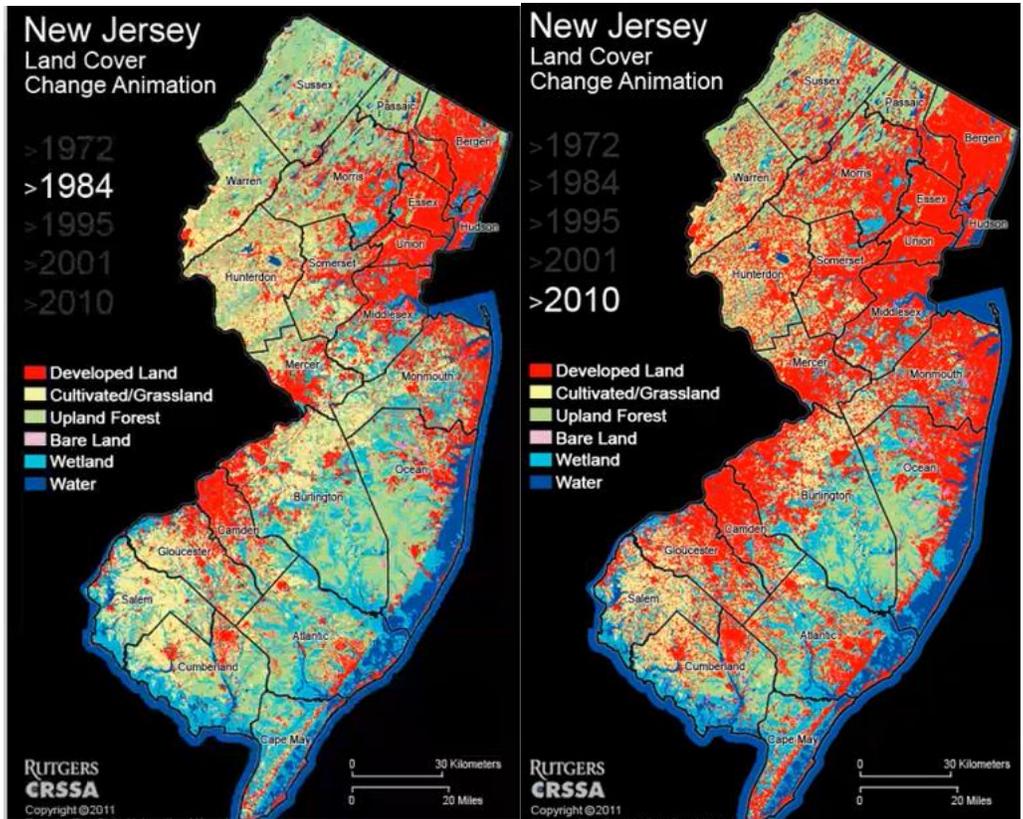


8% open/young



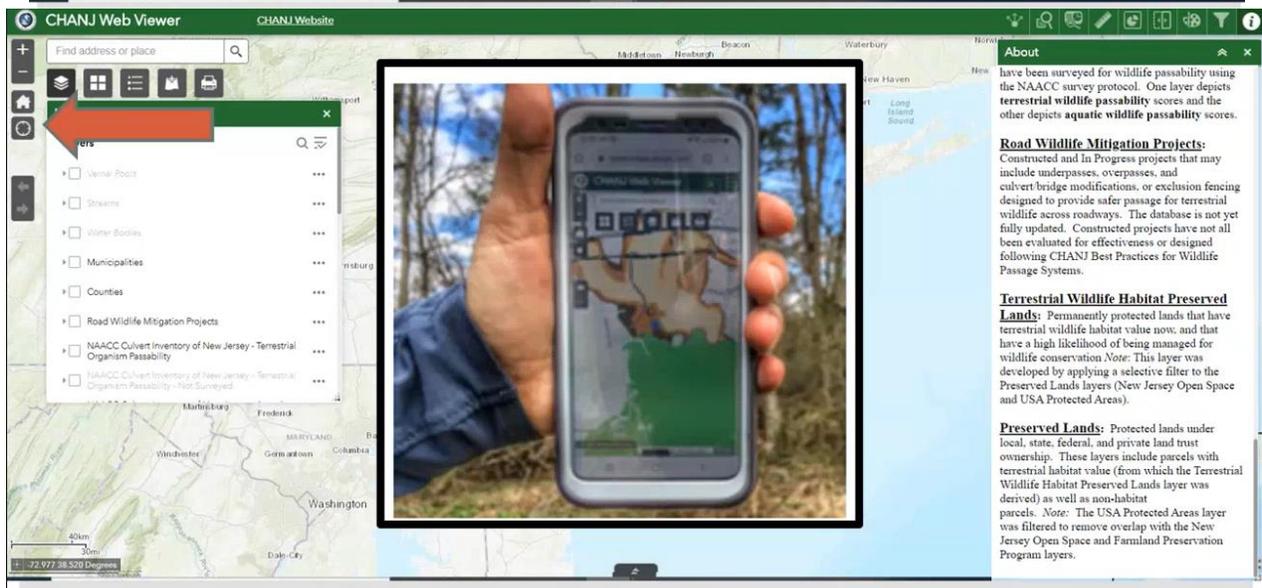
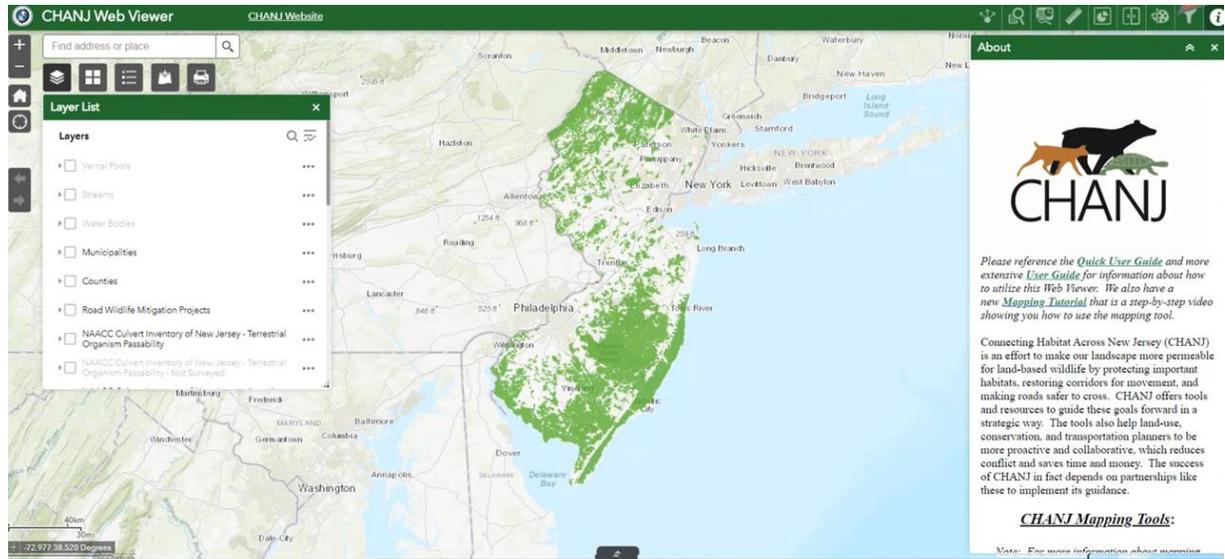
>82% closed canopy mature oak with northern hardwoods

From 2014 to 2020, the NJDFW conducted surveys and identified 105 different bird species were using managed WLFW-GWWA sites during the breeding season. Birds like whippoorwill (whose species numbers are declining) as well as black-billed cuckoos, woodcock, blue-winged warblers, and wood thrush are just some of the declining birds observed. When possible, they prefer to do pre-treatment bird surveys with each managed site having a control point of shrubby wetlands. In open-canopy type settings, the average number of bird species is 11 with 4.2 of them being rare and declining. When opening the canopy, it is not considered a "clear cut"; they cut down all except for about 12-15 trees per acre and target the largest and healthiest trees to be retained. Within three months of opening the canopy, the average number of bird species increased to 18.9 with 6.8 of those considered rare and declining. After four full growing seasons, the average number of birds is 21.6 with 9.4 of those being of concern. In addition, there was an increase of native shade-tolerant vegetation towering overhead, native sedges, grasslands, grasses, wildflowers, blackberries, and all different types of birds using the site, most of which would not have if the management had not been done. After an additional two or three growing seasons, a golden-winged warbler should arrive.



One of the main questions that drive this program of change was: “how can we integrate/promote habitat connectivity considerations (regarding) land and transportation planning”. As they explored this idea it was found that they were lacking some fundamental tools to get started on thoughtfully addressing the issue and as a result, they formed CHANJ – Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey. CHANJ consists of two main products – mapping tool (that identifies habitat cores and corridors) and guidance documents (offers recommendations for how to protect, manage, and restore those habitats). You can find the mapping tool or download the layers for specific data via the GIS web service. The guidance document is digitally linked to the mapping. The guide offers tools and resources for land protection, habitat management and restoration, and mitigation of road barriers.

Just a quick review of the guidance document. There are five chapters within the document: intro (which gives the rationale for developing the project), mapping (methodology used to create the different mapping layers), connectivity assessment (evaluating landscape connectivity metrics over time and on different scales), guidance (relates to habitat management and road mitigation, prioritizing actions, state and local resources, and BMPs for road crossing structures for different species guild), and finally Action Teams (to better coordinate). There are appendices that list the protocol used within for ease of reference.



The website is their one-stop shop for CHANJ and can be found at www.chanj.nj.gov. The pictures above are screenshots of the CHANJ Web Viewer, an interactive map available to the public and is available on smartphones. The first picture shows a map with the information icon engaged (this can be found on the top right corner as an "i". This is the tutorial and guides for the usage of the map). The second screenshot shows the mirror me icon engaged (this selection will recognize your real-time location and give a map of your surrounding area). Gretchen then went over a few different features on the web viewer including popups that bring you to a specific area of the guidance document, as well as cores and corridors, road segments, steppingstones, preserved lands, culvert inventories, and road wildlife mitigation projects.



Benefits of CHANJ

- Provides a common vision of NJ's connectivity puzzle
- Usable at local and statewide scales
- Enables more proactive and collaborative planning



Question:

- Julie asked: culvert assessment question – any size culvert or is there a minimum size?
 - Gretchen says the culvert assessments can be done on any size.
- Beth asked: culvert assessment map indicated a lot of blank areas in southern New Jersey.
 - Gretchen says more assessments are still being completed.

12:05 Partner Report - Rutgers Cooperative Extension – Brian Schilling, NJRCE

Brian began by thanking the NRCS team that came for a visit a few weeks ago in New Brunswick. The Rutgers's Experimentation Station manages close to 1200 acres of research farms across the state. The recent visit with NRCS had two objectives: Rutgers would like to model their best conservation practices on their research farms, and they would also like to partner up in areas of outreach, research, educational outreach, demonstration, practices, and technologies that are established or emerging. There has been a decline in interest and investment in the Experimentation Station and as a result, some of the farms are getting old and outdated. In the last four years, there has been special interest funding available that has been used for research for these types of farms.

One of the top priorities for RCE is the Experimentation Station (and that encompasses topics to the likes of climate-friendly agriculture, resource steward conservation amid climate change, and soil health conservation practices, just to name a few). They are working with the state to rebuild capacity in forestry as historically they have had a deeper engagement within. Human wildlife interaction within the agricultural industry is either the number one or number two most pressing issue identified by the industry. Invasive species that cause economic harm, like the eastern spotted lanternfly, as well as potential disease factors like ticks and mosquitos, is also a top-ranking issue. There has been an urging of more focus on ticks recently as the number of species coming into the state has increased and can cause problems for humans, livestock, and other domestic animals. Another area of focus is coastal resource management. With over wash, inundation, migration of fish and threats to some barrier islands, there is a demand for sound science. Lastly, ensuring continuity in and strengthening of the integrated pest and integrated crop management programs is an extremely important focus.

12:16 Partner Report - North Jersey RC&D – Christian Bench and Bridgett Hilshey, NJRC&D

Bridgett started her presentation with an update to their Conservation and Innovation Grants (CIG). NRCS offers CIG's and has two competitions: national (with a CIG Classic and on-farm trials) and state. NJ RC&D was awarded a national

grant for on-farm trials, very prestigious and a great opportunity. Over the past year, they have been looking at innovative strategies for cover crop termination and management. By using a combination of soil samples, field assessments, farm data, farm interviews (and with the assistance of partners), they can compare the environmental, economic, and social impacts of three different experimental treatments: planting greens, roller crimping, and grazing cover crop.

Innovative Strategies for Cover Crop Termination

PROJECT AIM

Using a combination of soil samples and field assessments, farm data, and farmer interviews, NJRC&D and partners will compare environmental, economic, and social impacts of three experimental treatments:

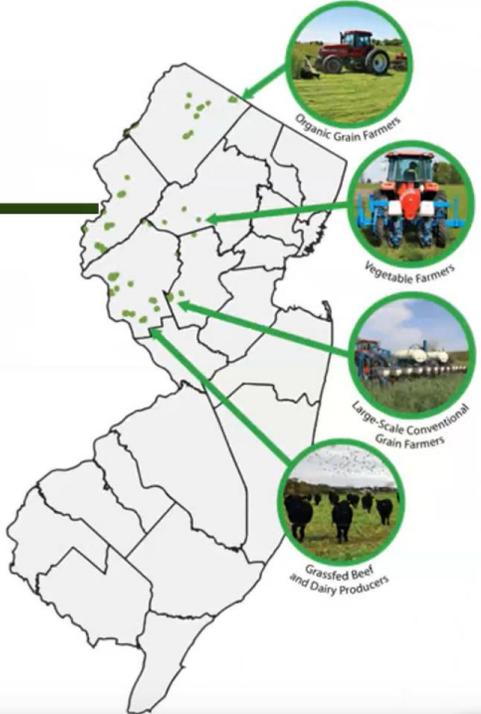


A brief overview of their project: they are comparing traditional methods of killing cover crops and planting cash crops (when cover crops are killed using tillage and killed using herbicide before planting) to the three treatment practices. Last year they advertised the program and garnered the interest of 50 farms, 25 of which enrolled in the project for a total of 1500 acres. One aspect of the project that is a great selling point is NJ RC&D purchases the equipment the farmers need to implement the practices that they are testing, such as row cleaners, disc openers, GPS systems, and fences. Farmers were then given a 77-page research manual to record relevant data and asked to participate in a survey.

PREPARING FOR RESEARCH TRIAL

25 Farms Enrolled in the Project

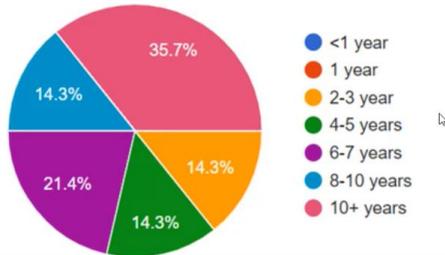
- Farms in five counties
- Focus on both commodity and specialty crops
- Includes some of Northern New Jersey's largest and most influential farmers
- Over 1500 acres of treatment fields



COLLECTING RESEARCH DATA

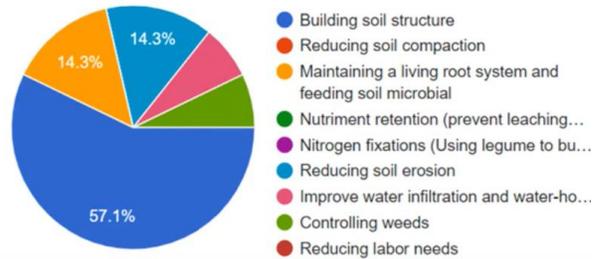
Cover Crop Management Use History (survey)

How many years of experience do you have with cover crops?



Perceptions of Cover Crops (survey)

What is your primary motivation for using cover crop?



Some of the things RC&D is seeing out in the field: dry planting conditions (trouble getting into the soil), planter mounted roller crimpers were disappointing (farmers couldn't wait the required time to ensure successful crimping, farmers that waited until late May turned out to be too early but early June was successful), and planters went through thick residue while resulting in good crop emergence.

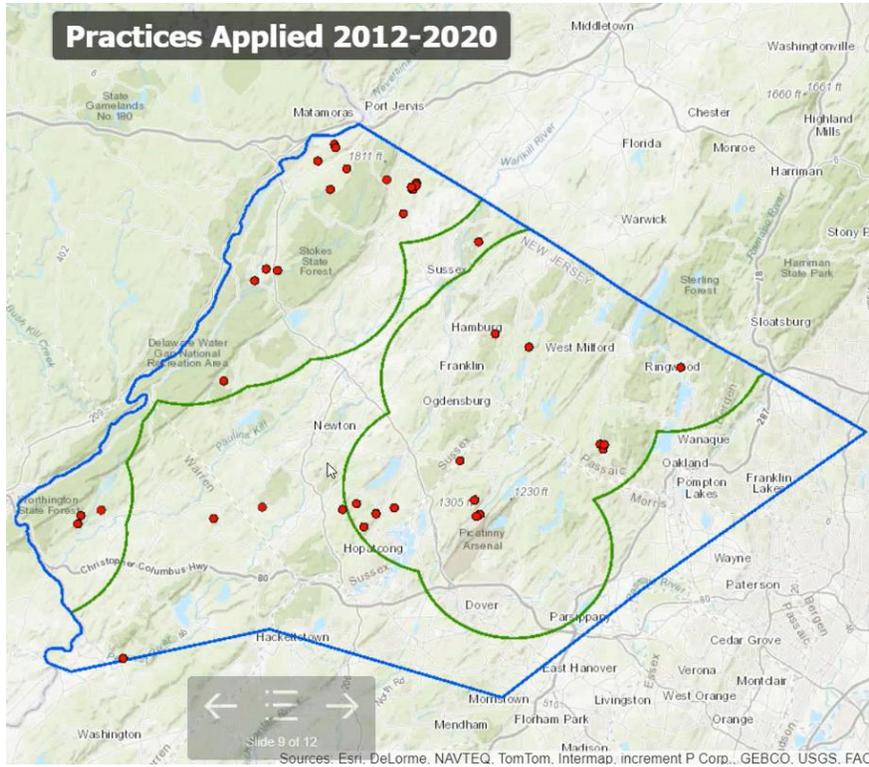
What are we seeing in the field...

CONTROL AND TREATMENT VERY DIFFERENT

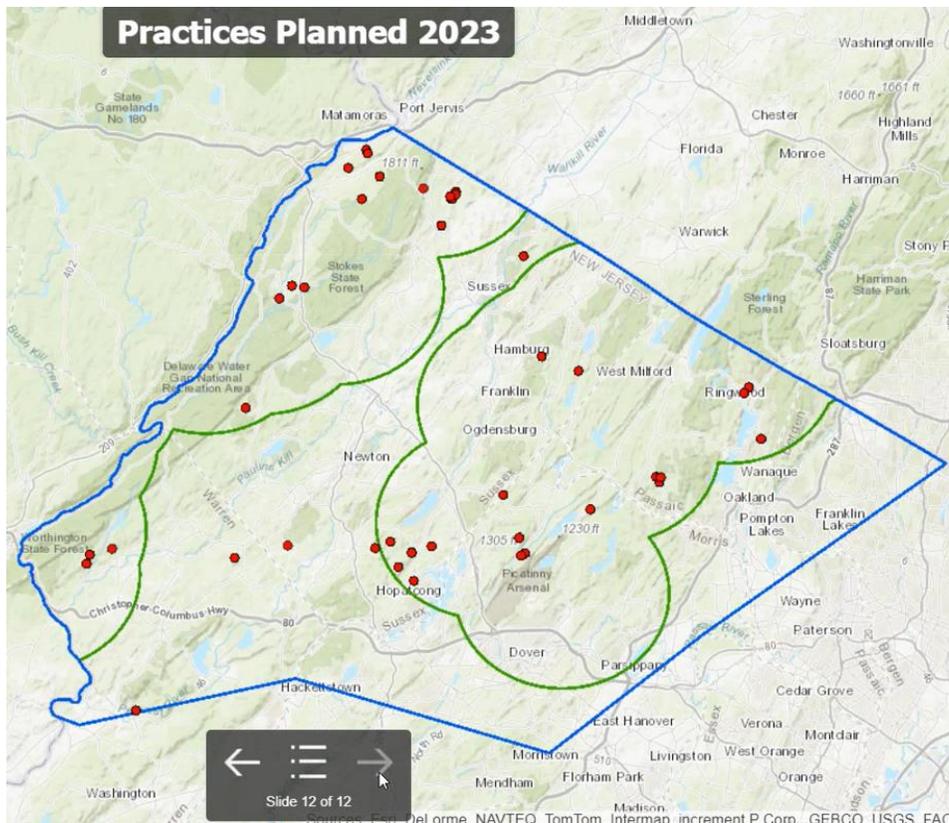


12:28 Practice Map – Trish Long, NRCS

Trish shared an online map of New Jersey that traced the boundary of the work area NRCS has done concerning conservation practices for The Golden-Winged Warbler. Each slide showed where practices were applied (via a red dot) during specific timeframes starting in 2012. The map below shows the cumulative locations for areas between the years 2012 and 2020.

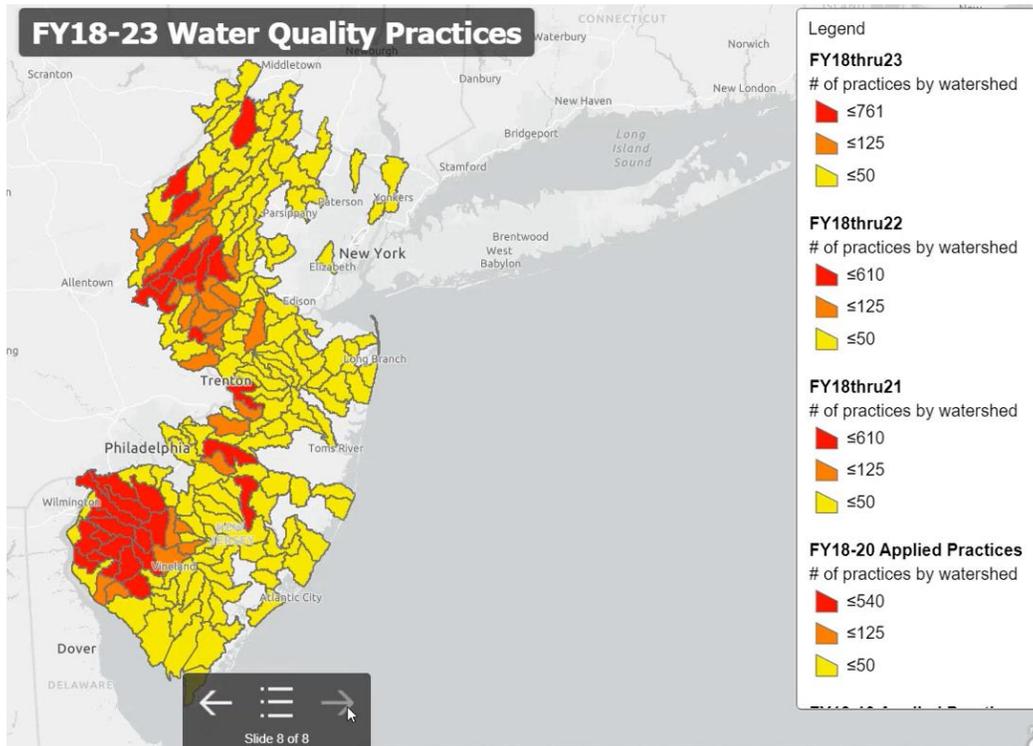


NRCS will continue its work and has planned practices for the next three years. The map below shows the cumulative locations.



The next topic discussed was water quality practices. 99 practices have been identified for water quality. The series of maps shown, provide data pulled from NQH for FY18 through 2020 as well as the planned practices from 2021 through

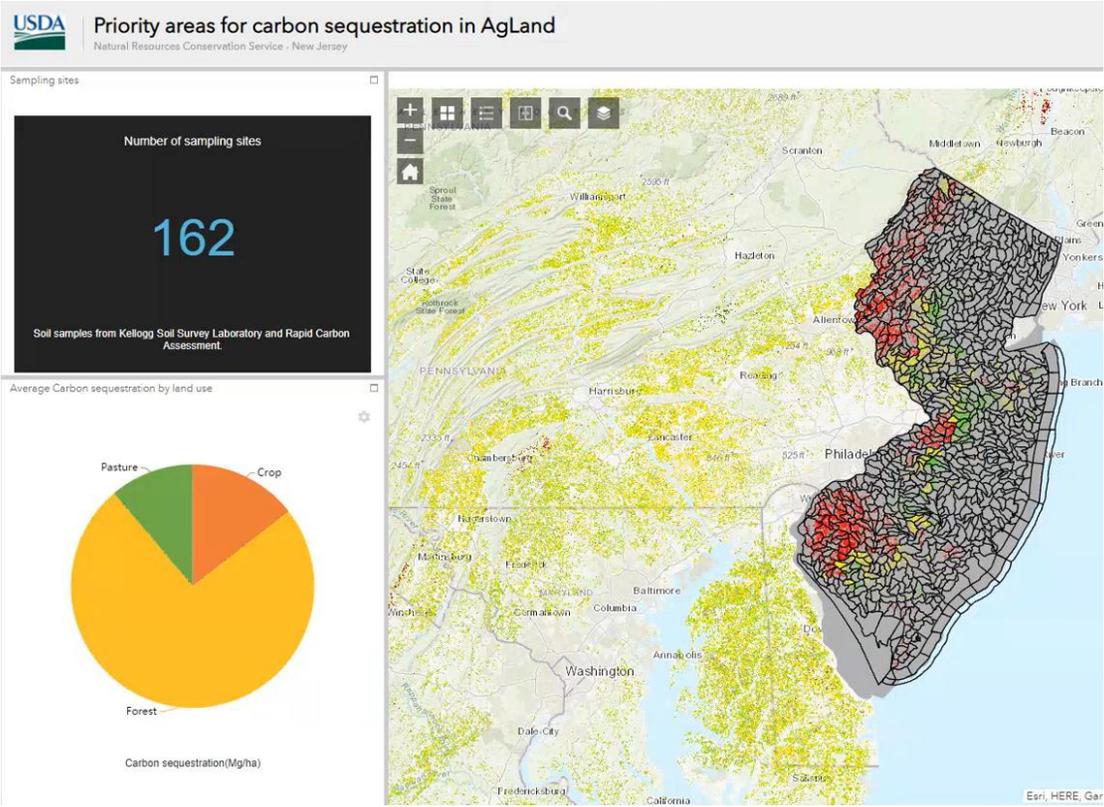
2023 cumulatively. Trish used yellow (less than 50), orange (less than 125), and red (less than 300 – except for the layer of FY22 as that has a higher threshold of 610) to specify the number of practices.



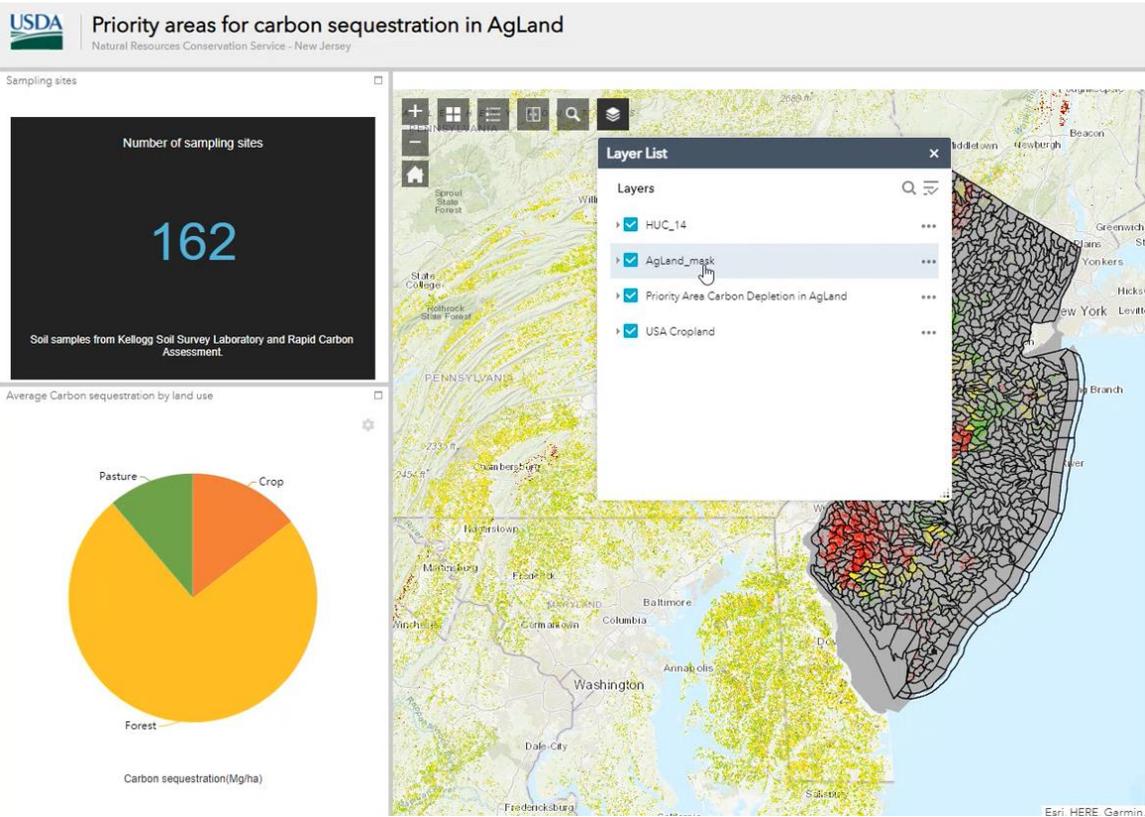
12:37 Soils Carbon Sequestration Map – Edwin Muniz, NRCS

Edwin has been working on a web application for carbon sequestration in New Jersey. The app is not available just yet as there is still some work to be completed on methodology with the help of partners (Dr. Stephanie Murphy, Dr. Daniel Gimenez, and Dr. Skye Wills). A press release will be distributed once the information is publicly available. Carbon sequestration plays an important role in climate, soil health, soil resilience, and farming sustainability with water nutrient management. The objective of many NRCS practices is to increase the soil carbon content. The success of these practices depends on us and the use of good science (ensuring the correct practices are in the right places). Edwin and the team utilized soil lab data to develop a map showing a comparison between the distribution of carbon sequestration in agricultural land and the carbon sequestration in forestland. This comparison is used to identify target areas for the implementation of conservation practices.

Edwin loaded the web application and gave a quick demonstration. He showed a map of the priority areas for carbon sequestration in AgLand and identified their sampling size of 162 sites. This information was obtained from the National Soil Survey Laboratory in Lincoln, NE. The rate of carbon sequestration is higher in the forest compared to pastureland and cropland.



The next map Edwin shared allowed for a look at different layers available to use: HUC14, AgLand mask, priority areas carbon depletion in AgLand, and USA cropland. He clicked on different options to give a demonstration of the functionality of the layers.



Question:

- Mitch asked how many samples were taken to come up with 162 sites?
 - Edwin said the sampling is inundated – each time they take a sample the information is uploaded into the app. 162 sites = 162 samples.

12:51 Open Discussion/Questions of Presenters – Evan Madlinger, NRCS

Evan presented the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) website. On the left side of the page is the link for the FOTG; that will bring you to a page where you can select any state. It takes a moment for the information to populate. On the left side of the screen is a listing of links, including sections for information on resources, planning criteria, and practice standards.

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You are Here: Home / Technical Resources / Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

Technical Resources

- ▣ Conservation Practice Standards
- ▣ Ecological Sciences
- ▣ Natural Resources Assessment
- ▣ Data, Maps & Analysis
- ▣ Tools & Applications
- ▣ Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)**
- ▣ Engineering
- ▣ Economics
- ▣ Environmental Markets & Conservation Finance

Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

What is the Field Office Technical Guide?

Technical guides are the primary scientific references for NRCS. They contain technical information about the conservation of soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources.

Technical guides used in each field office are localized so that they apply specifically to the geographic area for which they are prepared. These documents are referred to as Field Office Technical Guides (FOTGs).

What's New in FOTG?

The Ecological Sciences Division launched its fifth revised FOTG on September 19. Field offices, the guide's primary users, will find the guide's new design improves the user experience and encourages consistency in its five sections. The guide continues to allow states to add relevant information, but it is also organized to ensure its structure is consistent for all states.

Here are several major changes to FOTG:

- Instead of navigating to the FOTG by clicking on maps of states and counties, users choose a state in an alphabetical list of state names and click "submit" to reach their local FOTG. A document tree on the left side of the screen lists the five sections' contents. Document collections and search results are displayed clearly in the center of the screen.
- Section IV has undergone the most significant changes to encourage consistency in document organization.
 - For an interim period, Section IV will contain two collections called "Conservation Practices and Support Documents and Old Section IV."
 - All documents displayed in Section IV are approved for use in the state, except for those held in a sub-folder labeled Archives. Files in Archives are no longer applicable.
 - Eventually all state documents will be moved into the Conservation Practices and Support Documents and the

FOTG
a component of SmartTech
Visit Your State's FOTG



Welcome to NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

Select a state for documents.

State:

Select...

SUBMIT

About FOTG

Technical guides are the primary scientific references for NRCS. They contain technical information about the conservation of soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources.

Technical guides used in each field office are localized so that they apply specifically to the geographic area for which they are prepared. These documents are referred to as Field Office Technical Guides (FOTGs).

Appropriate parts of the Field Office Technical Guides are automated as databases, computer programs, and other electronic-based materials such as those included in these web based pages.

FOTG Sections

Section I - General Resource References

- General state maps.
- Descriptions of Major Land Resource Areas, watershed information, and links to NRCS reference manuals and handbooks.
- Links to researchers, universities, and agencies we work with.
- Conservation practice costs and agricultural laws and regulations.

Section II - Natural and Cultural Resources Information

- Detailed information about soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources.
- Cultural resources and information about protected plant and animal species.
- NRCS Soil Surveys, Hydric Soils Interpretations, Ecological Site Descriptions, Forage Suitability Groups, Cropland Production Tables, Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guides, Water Quality Guides, and other related information can be found here as it becomes available.

Section III - Resource Concerns and Planning Criteria

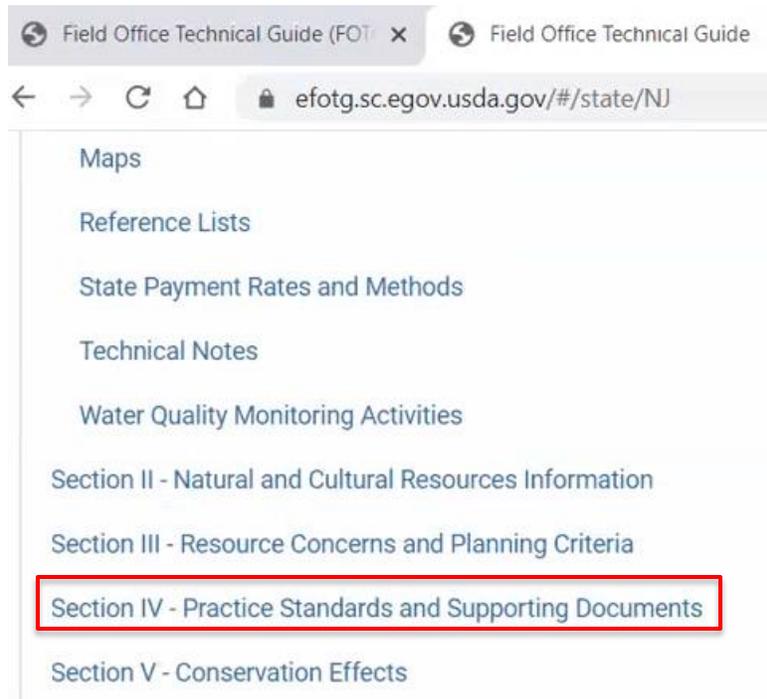
- NRCS Quality Criteria, which establish standards for resource conditions that help provide sustained use.

Section IV - Practice Standards and Supporting Documents

- NRCS Conservation Practice Standards that define the practice and where it applies. Practice specifications are detailed requirements for installing the practice in the state.

Section V - Conservation Effects

- Background information on how Conservation Practices affect each identified resource concerns in the state.



One area that is of importance and regularly referenced is the Practice Standards and Supporting Documentation, found in Section 4. That will populate a comprehensive list of all the standards and their corresponding backup. Even chose the practice of Fence as an example. The listing gives title, type of file, published date, size, and you can set other aspects like end date, subject, keywords.

Field Office Technical Guide (FOI) x Field Office Technical Guide x +

efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/NJ

Keyboard navigation instructions

- Section I - General Resource References
- Section II - Natural and Cultural Resources Information
- Section III - Resource Concerns and Planning Criteria
- Section IV - Practice Standards and Supporting Documents
 - Index
 - Conservation Practice Standards & Support Documents
 - Access Control (472)
 - Access Road (560)
 - Agrichemical Handling Facility (309)
 - Air Filtration and Scrubbing (371)
 - Alley Cropping (311)
 - Amending Soil Properties with Gypsum Products (333)
 - Amendments for the Treatment of Agricultural Waste (591)
 - Anaerobic Digester (366)
 - Animal Mortality Facility (316)
 - Anionic Polyacrylamide (PAM) Application (450)
 - Aquaculture Pond (397)
 - Aquatic Organism Passage (396)
 - Bedding (310)

Fence (382)

Documents (10)

Document Title	Type	Pub Date	End Date	Subject	Keywords	Abstract	Size (kB)	Info
382 NJ CPS Fence 2014		2014-11-1	--	--	--	--	91	
382 NJ SOW Fence 2004		2004-5-1	--	--	--	--	104	
Fence (382) Barbed Wire IR March 2021		2021-3-9	--	--	--	--	809	
Fence (382) Board Fence IR March 2021		2021-3-9	--	--	--	--	773	
Fence (382) High Tensile Electric IR March 2021		2021-3-9	--	--	--	--	837	
Fence (382) High Tensile Non-Electric IR March 2021		2021-3-9	--	--	--	--	827	
Fence (382) Woven Wire IR March 2021		2021-3-9	--	--	--	--	791	
Fence (382) Technical Reference March 2021		2021-3-9	--	--	--	--	2317	
382 NJ OM Fence 2004		2004-9-1	--	--	--	--	88	
382 NJ GD Fence-Deer Exclosure Fence 2015		2015-10-1	--	--	--	--	573	

Documents (10)

12:55 Closing Remarks, Julie Hawkins, NRCS

One update to our operations and COVID-19 update. The Whitehouse directed departments across the board to develop a “re-entry plan” and an updated workforce safety plan. Those plans are due July 19, 2021. Secretary Vilsack is also creating a new telework policy that is more flexible and more widespread. That is coming down the pike. Julie thanked all the partners and employees.

12:57 Next Meeting Date, Evan Madlinger, NRCS

December 2021 – specific date to be determined.

Question:

- Beth asked that since the next STC meeting will be taking place in December should they skip their summer field visit as well?
 - Evan said yes. We went with this format as we didn't know where we would be at with COVID-19 restrictions. Currently, we hold the STC meeting quarterly but are only required to hold two per year so bi-annual STC meetings are something we are looking to implement.

12:59 Adjourn