

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Improving Forest Health for Wildlife

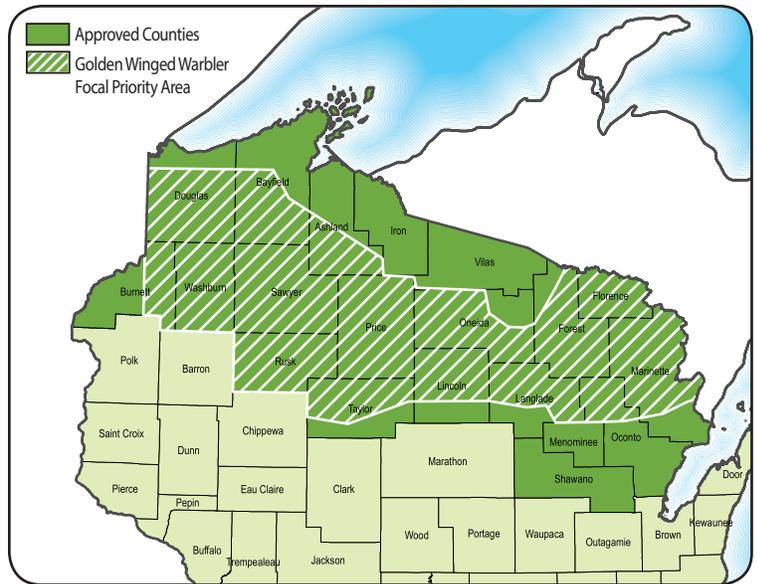
The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a special effort to build young forest habitat in twenty Northern Wisconsin counties (see map inset). The Natural Resources Conservation Service, in close partnership with the American Bird Conservancy and other key partners, have teamed up to provide planning assistance and funding to offset landowner costs through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for projects that target the Golden-Winged Warbler and also benefit Ruffed Grouse, Woodcock, and White-tailed Deer.

Through RCPP-EQIP, NRCS and partners will help with projects that benefit wildlife, particularly the Golden-Winged Warbler. This forest dependent bird is in decline and benefits from the creation or improvement of young forest habitat. Landowners with extensive areas of alder growing along wetland areas or who have large blocks of even-aged aspen have the best opportunities to create young forest habitat. Young forest habitat improvements most commonly involve shearing alder stand and managing aspen stands for a mix of age classes. The creation of forest openings within those stands provides excellent habitat for a diverse mix of wildlife, including more wildlife edge, increased cover diversity, and additional wildlife food sources.

To get started, contact your local NRCS office or Callie Bertsch, ABC Habitat Coordinator, at (715) 362-5941 x107 or CBertsch@abcbirds.org. Forest owners with an existing forest management plan in place will be a high priority for funding. Technical assistance for forest plan development is also available.

This RCPP project is built through the efforts of many northern Wisconsin partners for conservation. The goals are to increase the quantity and improve the quality of young forests. Wisconsin RCPP partners include the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, American Bird Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, Wisconsin County Forests Association, Ruffed Grouse Society, Wildlife Management Institute, and other organizations.

Additional information about EQIP and RCPP, including an application form and the location of your local NRCS office, may be found at www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov.



The Regional Conservation Partnership Program focuses on restoring habitat for the Golden Winged Warbler (top left), and also benefits other wildlife species like the American Woodcock (top right), the Ruffed Grouse (bottom left), and the White-tailed Deer (bottom right, credit: Flickr/jsjgeology). Focus on the Golden Winged Warbler is important because Wisconsin has 22% of the global breeding population. Golden Winged Warblers need open areas, with young stands of aspen or alder to thrive.