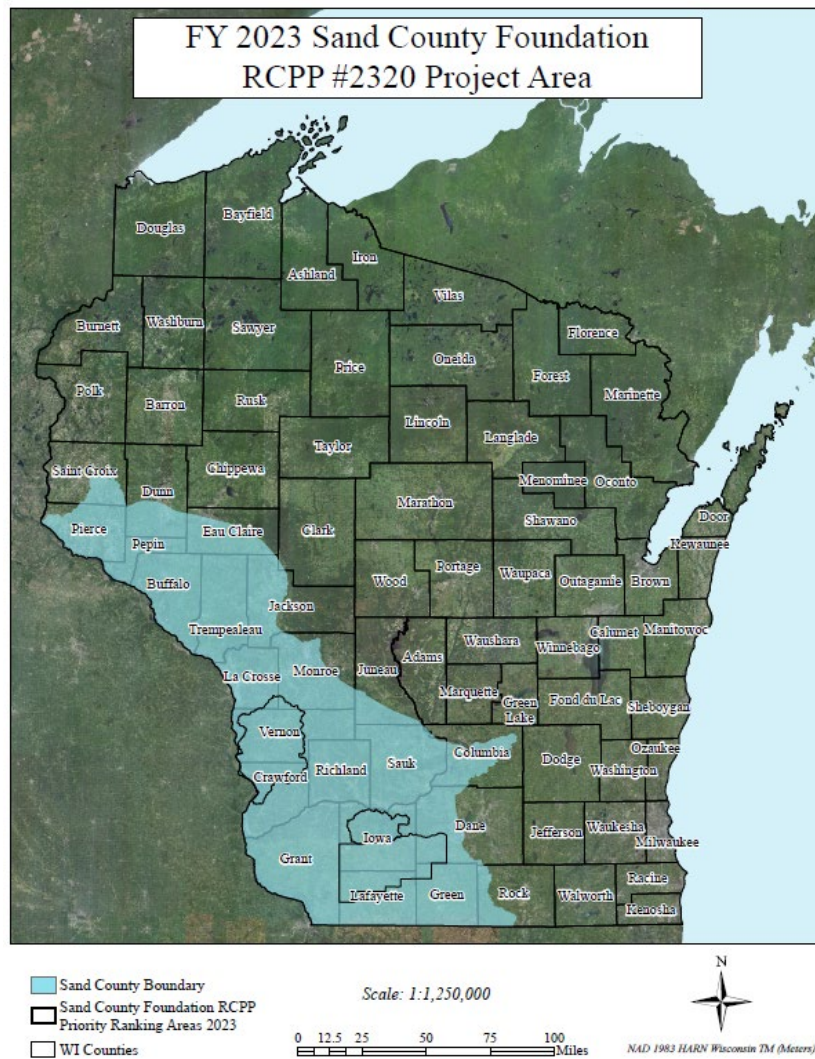


# Sand County Foundation (SCF): Grasslands and Oak Savannas for Water and Wildlife– 2018 FB RCPP Project #2320 (CCA)

## Project Description/Summary:

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partnership that leverages capabilities and resources, targets assistance where it is most needed, cooperatively engages project partners, and works collaboratively with agriculture producers, forest land managers, and Tribes. This project focuses on the driftless area and will increase terrestrial habitat to benefit grassland birds and pollinators, reduce nutrient and sediment loss from vulnerable lands, improve the economic well-being for farmers and rural communities, and extend NRCS resources to historically underserved producers. This project will focus exclusively on perennial solutions and include transitioning sensitive cropland to permanent and productive vegetation. Activities will restore degraded grasslands and oak savannas, support prescribed grazing systems, promote agroforestry and prairie strips, and control invasive species.

## Approved project scope, Driftless Area of Wisconsin:



The blue polygon is the overall RCPP area and green polygons are priority, covered further down or in the workload prioritization tool.

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### Eligible Land Management and Rental Producer Contract Land Uses:

Crop, Forest, Pasture, and Associated Ag Land

### Eligible Resource Concern Categories:

Long Term Protection of Land, Terrestrial Habitat and Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss

### Eligible Land Management and Rental Practices:

The Schedule of Operations must include at least one of the applicable core practices, or must be completing a conservation system that supports core practices that are documented as already implemented on the land proposed in the application and identified in the CART assessment as historical or observed practices.

Practice Code and Name	Core Practices Identified
106 Forest Management Plans 5/ 6/	
110 Grazing Management Plans 5/	
159 Grazing Design and Implementation 5/	
165 Forest Management Design and Implementation Activity 5/ 6/	
311 Alley Cropping	Core
314 Brush Management	
315 Herbaceous Weed Treatment	
327 Conservation Cover 4/	Core
328 Conservation Crop Rotation 7/	
332 Contour Buffer Strips 4/	Core
338 Prescribed Burning 2/	
381 Silvopasture	Core
382 Fence	
384 Woody Residue Treatment 1/ 2/	
386 Field Border 4/	Core
391 Riparian Forested Buffer	Core
393 Filter Strips 4/	Core
394 Firebreak	
420 Wildlife Habitat Planting	Core
472 Access Control	
484 Mulching	
490 Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	
512 Pasture and Hayland Planting	
516 Livestock Pipeline	
528 Prescribed Grazing	Core
533 Pumping Plant	
560 Access Road	
561 Heavy Use Protection	
574 Spring Development	
575 Animal Trails and Walkways	

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578 Stream Crossing	
606 Subsurface Drain	
612 Tree/Shrub Establishment	Core
614 Watering Facility	
620 Underground Outlet	
642 Water Well	
643 Rare and Declining Habitat 6/	Core
645 Upland Wildlife Management 3/	
647 Early Successional Habitat Development and Management	
654 Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment	
655 Forest Trails and Landings	
666 Forest Stand Improvement 6/	Core
RFRN Rental	

1/ CPS 384 may be planned in order to facilitate planting of the site, typically for oak savanna restoration.

2/ Cannot pay for both 338 Prescribed Burning and 384 Woody Residue Treatment to achieve the same purpose. 384 requires the woody debris to be taken off – site.

3/ 645 Upland Wildlife Management can be paired with practices 391, 420, and 612 that have a HSI.

4/ This vegetative practice requires a native species scenario, use the Prairie Strip Guidance Document

5/ CPAs and DIAs will be contracted separate from practice implementation contracts

6/ CPA 106, DIA 165, 643, and 666 are to support Oak Savanna Restoration, and the project partners have identified the applicant has a site for Oak Savanna Restoration. The CPA and DIA are written for the forest unit, but the unit must have an oak savanna restoration site.

7/ 328 Crop Rotation is only to be used as a supporting practice for 311 Alley Cropping

**Rental Activity Payments (RFRN):**

The RCPP Rental Activity Worksheet for RFRN will be completed and followed for eligible rental practices. Participants may receive up to 3 years of rental payment. Rental payments are earned the year after practice installation. Practice installation scenario may include Foregone Income, then the next year the Rental payment kicks in for up to 3 years. Eligible RFRN practices may include 420 Wildlife Habitat Planting, 332 Contour Buffer Strips, 386 Field Border, 393 Filter Strip, 512 Pasture and Hay Planting (in conjunction with 528 Prescribed Grazing according to 159 Grazing Management Design or equivalent), 311 Alley Cropping, 381 Silvopasture, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 327 Conservation Cover and 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment.

**Application Processing:**

RCPP is a stand-alone program and requires its own NRCS-1200 application separate from other NRCS FA programs. All 2018 Farm Bill (FB) RCPP applications will be continuously accepted and signup cut off dates will be publicly announced each year. For Land Management and Rental producer contracts the NRCS-1200 Application for Assistance will be marked “RCPP”. For NRCS-CPA-1200s version 03/2019 the words “2320 LMR” will be hand written near the RCPP checked box.

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### 2. This is an application to participate in the:

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) <input type="checkbox"/> CSP Renewal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) <input type="checkbox"/> EQIP <b>2320 LMR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> CSP

For NRCS-CPA-1200s version 10/2021 follow NB 300-22-8 write in box 2a “2320 Sand County Foundation RCPP”

#### a) Program enrollment type, activity type, and/or project name, as applicable:

<i>2320 Sand County Foundation RCPP</i>
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2018 FB RCPP applications will be managed through Conservation Desktop, not ProTracts. Follow additional guidance and process step documents. USDA Financial Assistance Eligibility will need to be determined manually with the Farm Service Agency’s Subsidiary Report.

#### **Workload Prioritization:**

A workload prioritization tool will be used and can be found on [www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov) under the RCPP projects page.

#### **Partner Responsibilities:**

Sand County Foundation has partnered with Valley Stewardship Network and Technical Service Providers to assist writing prescribed grazing plans. Savanna Institute is a partner to help with agroforestry practices.

Partners will be recruiting applicants and working with those applicants on conservation plans for grazing and forestry.

Someone who has not been working with the project partners may come to NRCS and apply for a CPA/DIA to get a plan developed to then come back and apply for a practice implementation contract.

#### **Ranking Criteria:**

The ranking criteria will be written to favor Historically Underserved participants, and a special emphasis on Beginning Farmers. The conversion of HEL cropland to pasture and perennial buffers will be prioritized.

Partners will recruit eligible producers addressing similar resource concerns within agriculture and conservation networks such as producer-led watershed groups and bird conservation areas. The partners may bundle applications and present them to the field offices, which will receive extra bundle points.

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Ranking Criteria in forestry will have a heavy focus on oak savanna restoration.

**Bundle** – Bundle applications will be identified by a project partner and communicated to the state RCPP Coordinator and to the Field Offices. Bundle applications receive ranking points for being a bundle identified by a partner. Applications can be for grazing, agro-forestry, prairie, or oak savanna restoration. These will have a conservation connection to similar sites in close proximity, or be of a high priority identified by the project partners.

### **RCPP-SCF Project Contacts:**

RCPP Project Coordinator: Ryan Gerlich, (608) 662-4422, ext 227, [ryan.gerlich@usda.gov](mailto:ryan.gerlich@usda.gov)

Lead Partner with Sand County Foundation: Craig Ficenec, (608) 395-8402, [cficenec@sandcountyfoundation.org](mailto:cficenec@sandcountyfoundation.org)