

307.31 Red River Basin Initiative

Project Name and Acronym: Red River Basin Initiative (RRBI)

Project Description/Summary

The RRBI provides dedicated funding in identified programs, includes EQIP and ACEP, for assistance to producers in approved States targeted to encourage the retention of wetlands, improve water quality, reduce flooding and improve wildlife habitat in the Red River Basin Watershed.

RRBI is governed by a board of directors, chaired by the Regional Conservationists (RCs) and composed of the State Conservationists (STCs) of included States. Adoption and modification of this guidance must be reviewed and approved through the board of directors, assisted by the initiative coordinator.

Approved or Participating States

States participating in RRBI are Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. State Conservationists (STCs) will allocate RRBI funds only within the Red River Basin Watershed boundary as shown in Map A of this appendix.

Program Contact Information

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ProTracts Requirements for EQIP

1. Account Guidance
STCs will select the “Red River Basin” account type in ProTracts for subaccounts associated with RRBI. The subaccounts must be assigned the name of “RRBI - *(project or local name if applicable)*.”
2. Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool (AERT) Guidance – Choice Lists and Matrix Data
 - **Approved Land Types to be Populated in ProTracts AERT**
States must assign the following land uses as eligible for this project (other land uses are not authorized for RRBI).

Required Land Use
Crop
Range
Pasture
Associated Agriculture Lands

- **Approved Natural Resource Concerns to be Populated in ProTracts AERT**
States must assign the following natural resource concerns for this project (other resource concerns are not authorized for RRBI).

Natural Resource Concerns
Soil Erosion – Sheet and Rill Erosion
Soil Erosion – Wind
Soil Erosion – Concentrated Flow Erosion – Ephemeral Gully Erosion
Soil Erosion – Concentrated Flow Erosion – Classic Gully Erosion
Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Food
Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Cover/Shelter
Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Habitat Continuity (Space)
Water Quality Degradation – Nutrients in Surface water
Water Quality Degradation – Excessive Sediment in Surface Water
Excess Water – Runoff, Flooding, or Ponding

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Note: No additional resource concerns may be added or used in ProTracts AERT to support this Project.

- **Approved Conservation Practices to be Populated in ProTracts AERT**

Contracts developed under RRBI must include at least one of the applicable core practices, or must complete a conservation system that supports core practices that are documented as already implemented on the land proposed for the RRBI application.

Core Practices	
Practice Name	Practice Code
Conservation Cover	327
Residue & Tillage Management – No Till	329
Cover Crop	340
Critical Area Planting	342
Residue & Tillage Management – Reduced Till	345
Dam/Diversion	348
Sediment Basin	350
Dike	356
Pond	378
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390
Riparian Forest Buffer	391
Filter Strip	393
Dam	402
Grade Stabilization Structure	410
Grassed Waterway	412
Irrigation Reservoir	436
Forage & Biomass Planting	512
Range Planting	550
Drainage Water Management	554
Streambank & Shoreline Protection	580
Open Channel (2-stage ditch)	582
Channel Bed Stabilization	584
Structure for Water Control	587
Salinity & Sodic Soil Management	610
Water & Sediment Control Basin	638
Wetland Restoration	657
Wetland Creation	658
Wetland Enhancement	659

Supporting Practices That States May Offer to Support RRBI

Supporting Practices	
Practice Name	Practice Code
Diversion*	362
Tree Shrub Site Preparation**	490
Obstruction Removal*	500
Subsurface Drain*	606
Underground Outlet*	620

* To support structural practices, if needed

** To support 391- Riparian Forest Buffer

Conservation Activity Plans That States May Offer to Support RRBI

Conservation Activity Plans	
Practice Name	Practice Code
Drainage Water Management	130

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- **AERT Practice-Resource Concern Matrix**

States will populate the approved conservation practices in the ProTracts AERT and associate all core and supporting practices with resource concerns where CPPE values are positive.

3. AERT Guidance – Ranking Criteria Questions

The total ranking points associated with the project are distributed in AERT and approved ranking questions are as follows:

AERT Level	Maximum Points	Point Percentage
National Ranking Questions	250	25%
State Ranking Questions	400	40%
Local Ranking Questions	250	25%
Efficiency Score	100	10%
Total points for this initiative:	1,000	100%

National Ranking Criteria Requirements

National ranking questions are established in ProTracts by National Headquarters.

State Ranking Criteria Requirements

State ranking questions are established by the board of directors and entered into ProTracts by States.

To support this project, States must enter all the following State-level questions and points in ProTracts AERT for each approved subaccount.

State Ranking Questions

Question Number	Question	Points
1	Is the program application to support the development of a conservation activity plan (CAP)? If answer is "Yes," do not answer any other State-level questions. If answer is "No," proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	400
2	Will a structural conservation practice be installed that creates temporary controlled (gated) storage? Includes practices 402, 356, 554, 582, 410, 378, 436, 350, 657, 658, 659, 587, 638 and 348	200
3	Will a structural conservation practice be installed that creates temporary uncontrolled (ungated) storage AND practice is located outside of the early water zone? (See map B below for location of early water zone.) (Note: structural practice with ungated storage that is located in early water zone receives no points). Includes practices 402, 356, 554, 582, 410, 378, 350, 657, 658, 659, 587, 638 and 348	100
4	Will nonstructural practices be implemented which will reduce runoff from offered acres? Includes practices 327, 329, 340, 342, 345, 390, 391, 393, 412, 512, 550, and 610.	30
5	Will this application utilize the new adoption of Drainage Water Management (554) and structure for water control (587)?	30
6	Will conservation practices in the application address at least two of the following resource concerns: water quantity—excess floodwater, water quality, or soil quality?	20
7	Will the treatment you intend to implement result in wetlands being created, restored or enhanced?	20
	Total Points	400

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Local Ranking Criteria Requirements

Local ranking questions are approved and entered into ProTracts at the State level.

Screening Criteria

Applications within the RRBI will be screened and assigned **High, Medium, or Low** priority status in ProTracts based on the State-specific criteria below as captured on “NATIONAL SCREENING CRITERIA WORKSHEET” on the following page. High-priority applications must be ranked and approved for funding before any medium-priority application are ranked or funded. Low-priority applications may only be ranked and approved for funding after medium-priority applications.

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**NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Red River Basin Initiative (RRBI)
NATIONAL SCREENING CRITERIA WORKSHEET**

A screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible EQIP application.

Instructions:
This screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible producer applying for EQIP through the RRBI fund pool. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis; however, application periods are established for purposes of evaluation, ranking, and funding decisions.
Completion of this worksheet and documentation does not constitute agreement to provide EQIP program benefits or approval of a program contract. The original screening worksheet should be filed with the applicant case file or EQIP program file and unless the application is determined to be ineligible, the screening priority (high, medium, and low) must be recorded in ProTracts application priority. Upon request, a copy of any completed screening worksheet may be provided to the applicant.

Detailed Screening Criteria Worksheet – Complete for Each Eligible EQIP Applicant

Applicant Name:		County:	
Application No: (OPTIONAL)		Field Office:	
Evaluator Name:		Date:	

Priority Determination for ProTracts – Select One:

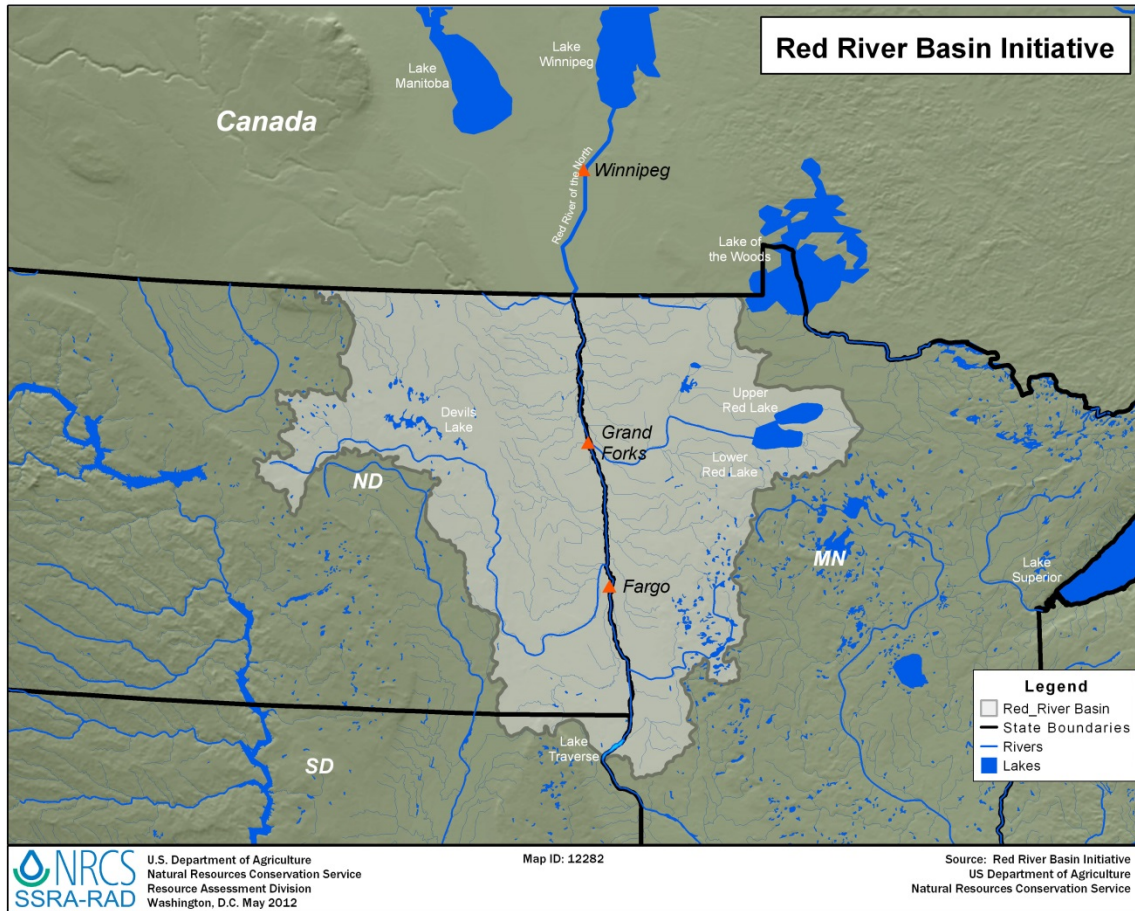
<p><u>High-Priority Category:</u> The application is for a Drainage Water Management, Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) (130); Or The application includes at least one of the following conservation practices, for the purpose of water retention: (348 (Dam/Diversion), 356 (Dike), 402 (Dam), 554 (Drainage Water Management), or 587 (Structure for Water Control).</p>	<p>High Priority Status in ProTracts</p>
<p><u>Medium-Priority Category:</u> The application includes at least one of the following conservation practices: 350 (Sediment Basin), 378 (Pond), 410 (Grade Stabilization Structure), 412 (Grassed Waterway), 436 (Irrigation Reservoir), 582 (Open Channel), 657 (Wetland Restoration), 658 (Wetland Creation), or 659 (Wetland Enhancement)</p>	<p>Medium Priority Status in ProTracts</p>
<p><u>Low-Priority Category:</u> The application includes at least one of the following conservation practices: 327 (Conservation Cover), 329 (Residue and Tillage Management-NoTill), 340 (Cover Crop), 342 (Critical Area Planting), 345 (Residue and Tillage Management-Reduced Tillage), 390 (Riparian Herbaceous Cover), 391 (Riparian Forest Buffer), 393 (Filter Strip), 512 (Forage & Biomass Planting), 550 (Range Planting), 580 (Streambank & Shoreline Protection), 584 (Channel Bed Stabilization), or 610 (Salinity & Sodic Soil Management).</p>	<p>Low Priority Status in ProTracts</p>

The priority determination of high, medium, or low must be recorded in ProTracts application priority for this applicant.

D.C. Approval:		Date Approved:	
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Map A - RRBI:



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Map B – RRBI Early Water Zone Location Map for EQIP Ranking

