

Assistance to Montana's Tribal Ag Producers

Natural Resources Conservation Service, Montana



NRCS Montana focuses conservation efforts on Montana's Tribal nations and producers with staff assigned to each reservation and annual funding allocated through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Nationally, 5% of EQIP and CSP funds are required to be set aside for socially disadvantaged producers of which Tribal applications are included. Montana sets aside 10% on average for Tribal farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners. On average, socially disadvantaged producers in Montana receive more than 20% of the general EQIP funding available each year. In 2022, the most recent complete fiscal year, the EQIP funding pool for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (SDFR) was just over \$2 million. However, voluntary conservation by Tribal producers, the largest SDFR segment, exceeded that amount by nearly \$2 million totaling 22% of Montana's general EQIP allocation. In addition, agricultural producers and partners are encouraged to work with their conservation district and NRCS staff to develop a Targeted Implementation Plan that focuses on a specific natural resource concern and compete for even more funding.

The fiscal year 2022 Environmental Quality Incentives Program – Conservation Incentive Contracts were focused in Montana to support tribal producers on our seven reservations and members of the Federally recognized Little Shell Tribe, which does not have a reservation. Another initiative addressed impacts of exceptional drought in north central Montana focused on Fort Belknap Indian Community and Rocky Boy's reservation producers. Together, these targeted actions funded 26 contracts for just over \$1.3 million.

Fiscal Year	Montana EQIP General Allocation	EQIP Tribal Allocation	EQIP Tribal Funds Obligated	EQIP Tribal Contracts	EQIP General Obligated to Tribal Contracts
2019	\$12,746,954	\$1,274,695	\$2,026,773	27	16%
2020	\$17,093,000	\$1,709,300	\$4,679,867	56	27%
2021	\$16,562,000	\$1,652,000	\$3,082,738	33	19%
2022	\$18,785,000	\$2,054,448	\$4,071,200	76	22%

Fiscal Year	Montana CSP Allocation	SDFR CSP Allocation	SDFR CSP Funds Obligated	SDFR CSP Contracts	SDFR CSP Acres
2019	\$13,320,000	\$626,000	\$724,460	10	43,336
2020	\$13,650,767	\$685,064	\$618,997	8	46,923
2021 Renewal	\$9,300,000	\$465,000	\$495,433	4	57,513
2021 Classic	\$10,760,000	\$538,000	\$29,595	2	1,101
2022 Renewal	\$6,628,000	\$331,400	\$306,044	3	21,987
2022 Classic*	\$15,824,000	\$771,200	\$17,424	1	11

*There were no applications from Tribal producers or Tribes in the FY22 Classic cycle.

In addition to CSP Classic and Renewal funding, the CSP Grasslands Conservation Initiative has been an opportunity since 2019. Through this CSP initiative, four tribal contracts have been funded for an additional \$40,792 on 453 acres.

Tribal Conservation Advisory Council

The Tribal Conservation Advisory Council provides a tribal voice to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service on conservation matters that are important to Montana tribes at state and national levels to better assist tribal producers. The council is comprised of representatives from each of Montana's Federally recognized tribes and meets twice per year. The council representatives also participate in State Technical Advisory Committee meetings.

Learn More

Learn more about NRCS conservation assistance, Montana Focused Conservation, and local funding opportunities at www.nrcs.usda.gov/montana. See Outreach and Civil Rights in Montana > Montana Tribal Assistance for information about getting started and our newsletter.

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