

Cleaner Water, Better Life

National Water Quality Initiative in Idaho



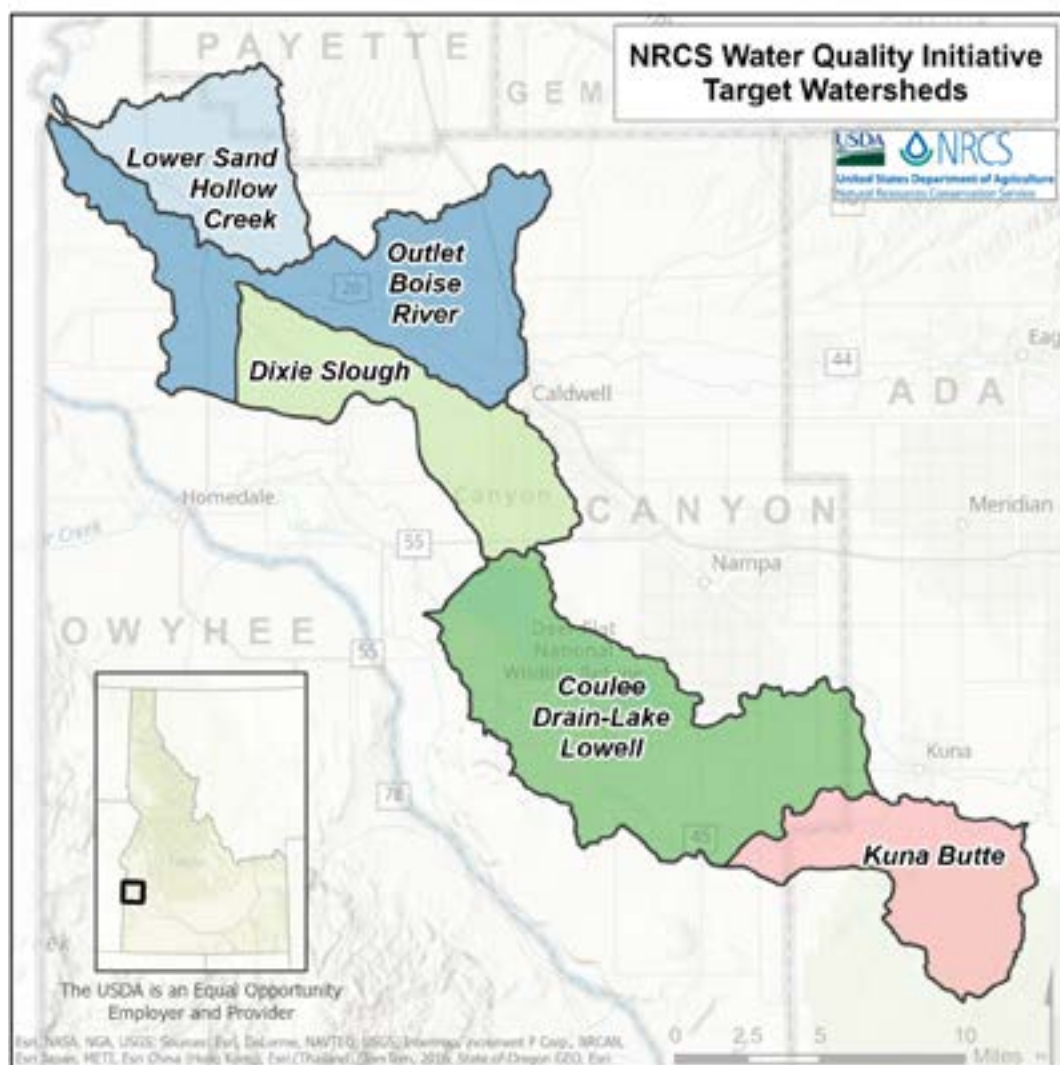
What Is It?

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) utilizes the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) to help agricultural producers in priority watersheds apply conservation measures that contribute to cleaner water and more efficient water use.

NWQI helps producers use the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to adopt conservation practices that improve water quality and quantity, such as:

- improving soil nutrient management,
- planting cover crops,
- using conservation cropping systems,
- irrigation water management,
- establishing filter strips, and
- monitoring water quality.

NRCS worked with state water quality agencies and other partners to select NWQI watersheds. In Idaho, those watersheds are the Lower Sand Hollow, the Dixie Slough, Coulee Drain-Lake Lowell, Kuna Butte and the Outlet Boise River. Additionally, there are a number of watersheds in the Planning Phase, preparing for landowners within the watersheds to be eligible to participate. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and our local partners also provide assistance with planning, additional dollars and assistance for conservation, along with outreach to farmers and ranchers.



Continued on reverse



Through NWQI, these partnerships are growing and offering a model for collaborative work in other watersheds.

In Idaho, NRCS accepts application for EQIP-funded projects such as NWQI, throughout the year. Those application are then considered during the next available funding cycle. Contact your local USDA Service Center for more information.

To qualify, each NWQI watershed or SWPA must:

1) Have a multi-year implementation plan documenting projected activity and funding needs for the proposed project time frame. Defining multi-year projects with implementation timelines is valuable because it demonstrates continued commitment to NWQI priorities and invites greater support and assistance from partners.

2) Have a watershed/SWPA plan or assessment that informs the project implementation needs. If watersheds/SWPAs are identified as a priority but there is not an assessment(s) or plan(s) that meet NRCS guidance, they may be proposed as planning watersheds/SWPAs.

Funding is available for the Planning Phase for updating implementation plans to the required hydrologic unit code (HUC)12 level.

What Is EQIP?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against increasing weather volatility.

This voluntary conservation programs helps producers make conservation work for them. Together, NRCS and producers invest in solutions that conserve natural resources for the future while also improving agricultural operations.

How To Apply

- Visit your local USDA Service Center to apply or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted
- NRCS will help eligible producers develop an EQIP plan of operations, which will become the basis of the EQIP contract.
- EQIP applications will be ranked based on a number of factors, including the environmental benefits and cost effectiveness of the proposal.

For more information visit your local USDA Service Center or www.nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill .

To find your local USDA Service Center, visit
<http://offices.usda.gov> .

