

Source Water Protection (SWP) High Priority Areas

NRCS Idaho



What is it?

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) utilizes the Source Water Protection High Priority Areas Initiative to help agricultural producers in priority watersheds apply conservation practices that includes a wide variety of actions and activities aimed at safeguarding, maintaining, or improving the quality and/or quantity of sources of drinking water and their contributing areas.

Source Water Protection High Priority Areas incentivizes producers to adopt conservation practices that improve water quality and quantity, by dedicating at least 10 percent of the total funds available for conservation programs to be used for source water protection each year and offering higher payments rates than the general Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) offers for select practices such as:

- nutrient management,
- planting cover crops, and
- irrigation water management.

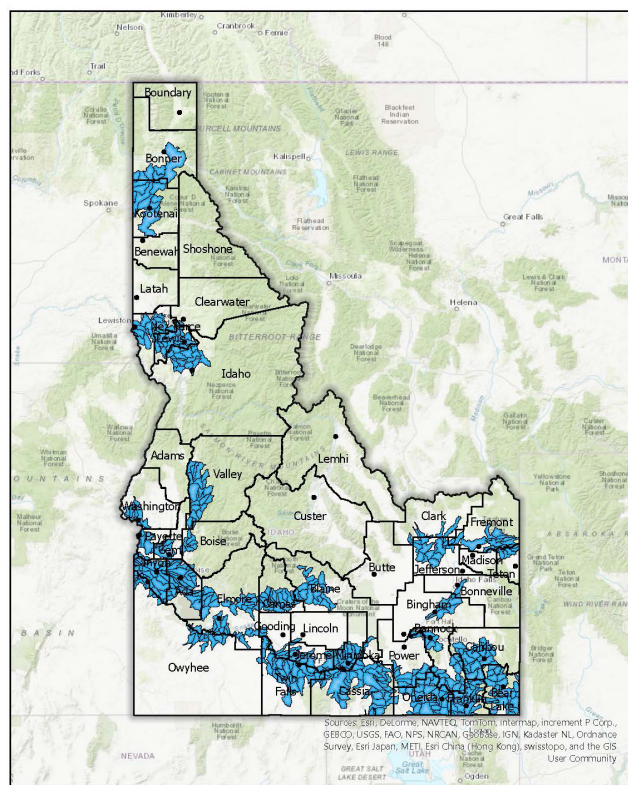
NRCS-Idaho worked with state water quality agencies and other partners to select high priority areas for source water protection. In Idaho, these areas (watersheds) are where public sources of drinking water, both ground and surface water, are identified by the State of Idaho as impaired by sediment, nutrient loadings, and pathogens in surface water as well as high nitrates and decreasing aquifer levels in ground water.

The high priority area designations offer an opportunity to individual producers for implementing conservation practices that address resource concerns on their land that also benefit water quality and/or quantity, soil health, etc. NRCS-Idaho is authorized to revisit the designations annually and make changes if necessary. To determine if you are in and eligible for the Source Water Protection High Priority Areas Initiative to implement qualifying conservation practices (see table on reverse), contact your local USDA Service Center for more information or [visit our website](#).

How do I find out if my property is in a SWP High Priority Area?

Go to the interactive map and zoom into your location [ID FY 23 Source Water Protection Priority Area Viewer](#) and click on the map within a watershed to get more information.

Idaho Source Water Protection Priority Areas FY23



Idaho

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Which conservation practices are eligible in SWP High Priority Areas?

The approved list of conservation practices for SWP Priority Areas beginning in Fiscal Year 2023 are:

309-Agrichemical Handling Facility	590-Nutrient Management
313-Waste Storage Facility	595-Pest Management
328-Conservation Crop Rotation	634-Waste Transfer
340-Cover Crop	635-Vegetated Treatment Area
350-Sediment Basin	638-Water and Sediment Control Basin
351-Well Decommissioning	650-Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation
380-Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	356-Constructed Wetland
390-Riparian Herbaceous Cover	657-Wetland Restoration
393-Filter Strip	658-Wetland Creation
449-Irrigation Water Management	659-Wetland Enhancement

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 several factors, including the environmental benefits and cost effectiveness of the proposal.

