



United States Department of Agriculture

# Tennessee NRCS Programs



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# Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Update

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# 2023 ACEP funding

**WRE-General** available state wide  
*(Wetland Reserve Easements)*

- **\$4,065,451**

**ACEP-ALE** available state wide  
*(Agricultural Land Easements)*

- **\$600,000**

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# ACEP FY23 Program Applications

- **The ACEP FY23 initial sign up period had a cut-off date of November 3, 2022.**
- **Due to low response, a 2<sup>nd</sup> ACEP signup was announced on January 10, 2023 with a cut-off date of February 10, 2023.**


# **ACEP FY23 Program Applications-cont.** *as of February 13, 2023*

- **New-10**
- **Deferrals from previous year-5**
- **Total applications-15**
- **Still a few in the works**

Since the signup ended February 10, 2023, Field offices have until February 24, 2023 to get ACEP application documents submitted.

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# AWMA/GARC

- **The FY23 Area Wide Market Analysis (AWMA) and the Geographical Area Rate Cap was approved on January 3, 2023**
  - **The FY23 AWMA/GARC has been posted to the TN NRCS website**
- 
- A decorative graphic of thin, curved lines representing grass or reeds is located on the left side of the slide, extending from the bottom towards the middle.

**Mississippi River  
Batture Land**







Portions of Lake and  
Dyer Counties behind  
Main River Levee.  
Lauderdale, Tipton &  
Shelby, areas of  
Mississippi River  
Flood Plain within  
100 year flood zone.

# Tennessee Regions FY23 ACEP-WRE AWMA Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC)


## Payment Rate Per Acre



\*Easement acreages below and above AWMA limits require an independent appraisal.

	Open Land	Other Land	Woodland
 <b>Mississippi Batture</b>	*20-750 acres \$3,500	\$1,050	\$2,400
 <b>Market Area 1</b>	*20-600 acres \$4,000	\$1,050	\$2,400
 <b>Market Area 2</b>	*20-600 acres \$3,600	\$1,050	\$2,400
 <b>Market Area 3</b>	*20-500 acres \$4,650	\$1,050	\$2,400
 <b>Market Area 4</b>	*20-200 acres \$3,900	\$1,050	\$2,400
 <b>Market Area 5</b>	*20-150 acres \$4,900	\$1,050	\$2,400



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The GARC Map is used to create a basis for the purchase of conservation easements through the ACEP-WRE by placing a value per acre in different geographical areas of the state.

An Area Wide Market Analysis (AWMA) is conducted by a private certified appraiser. The appraiser gathers data from property sales over the last 12 months on properties that fit the categories listed on the map. Once the data is collected, the appraiser summarizes the data to calculate an average value for each geographical area. Tennessee has decided to provide compensation based on the 95 percent of the average value, then round down to the nearest \$50.00.



# Easement Compensation Considerations

- Currently Tennessee uses the Geographical Area Rate Cap (GARC) to calculate compensation for easement purchases
- There are eight states that border Tennessee, four states use the GARC method and four states use individual appraisals for easement purchases, some of these states use a combination of methods depending on county location
- Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi and Alabama use GARC for easement purchase
- Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia use individual appraisals for easement purchase

## Question for consideration

**Do you think Tennessee should consider using individual appraisals for some or all of easement purchases?**



# CSP Report

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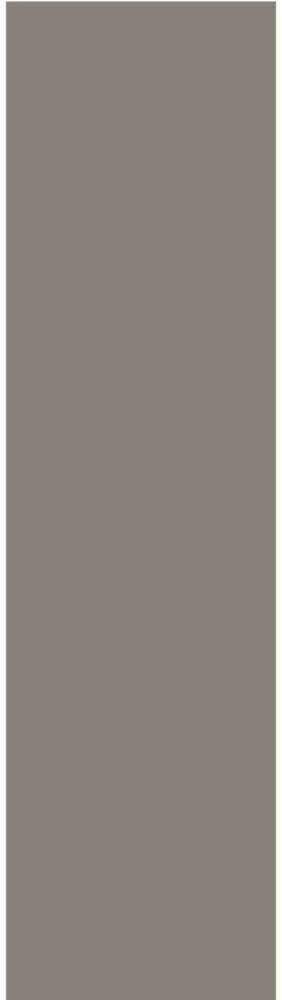
CSP Classic: \$11,800,000.00

CSP MRBI:

Mississippi River Basin Initiative : \$1,429,247.00

CSP Classic Organic: \$200,000.00

CST8: Renewal: \$2,750,000.00



# Upcoming CSP Trainings:

## March 2023:

March 1<sup>st</sup> – Area 1 (in person)

March 8<sup>th</sup> – Area 2 (in person)

March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Area 3 (in person)

March 8<sup>th</sup> – Area 4 (**teams meeting**)

**Ranking pools to be released March 3, 2023**



# FY23 CSP Timeline

## Timeline:

- March 3, 2023 - All FY22 CSP Classic/CSP-RCPP Area ranking pools will be released for field offices to begin ranking applications
- **MARCH 23, 2023 - FY 23 CSP Classic application deadline**
- March 31, 2023 - FY 23 Renewal application deadline
- **June 23, 2023 - CSP Classic Ranking deadline**
- **September 8, 2023: FY23 CSP Classic obligation deadline**



# FY23 Renewal Status

## Final Obligations:

50 Contracts

\$1,465,709.00

7,305 Acres Contracted

## NIPF Obligations:

9 Contracts

\$401,710.00

1,953.1 Acres Contracted

## HU Participants:

9 Contracts

\$189,203.00

759.6 Acres Contracted

# EQIP Report

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# EQIP FY2023





# EQIP FY23 Information

- EQIP 2023 news release went out: August 24, 2022
- FY23 Cutoff: November 18, 2022
  - 2,925 applications as of 2/13/2023
- March 3, 2023 – Ranking deadline for all EQIP, RCPP EQIP, and EQIP-CIC fund pools.
- June 2, 2023 – Obligation deadline for all EQIP, RCPP EQIP, and EQIP-CIC applications.
  
- Reminder- Applications are accepted year round. Collected and ranked at cutoffs



# Administration Priorities

- State Conservationists are required to address the Administration's Priorities related to Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF), racial justice, and social equity. Also, urban agriculture whenever practical.
- State decision to incorporate these priorities through-
  - Focal ranking questions and categories
  - Urban Pool added in FY2023
  - Focus on geospatial layers
  - Re-aligned fund pools (added Climate Smart to ranking pool names)

# Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry



- Added the below question to BFR, Wildlife, and Forestry fund pools
  - Applications implementing a CSAF practice will receive additional ranking points
- “Will one or more of the following Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry Mitigation Practices be implemented? (327, 328, 329, 332, 340, 342, 345, 374, 380, 386, 390, 391, 393, 412, 420, 422, 449, 484, 512, 528, 585, 590, 612, 632, 645, 657, 666, 670, 672)

\*closer look at these practices later

# Racial Justice and Social Equity



- Continued use of the Strikeforce and Socially Disadvantaged fund pools
- Utilizing a LILA half & 10 (Food Desert): layer for added ranking points when applicable (High Tunnel And Socially Disadvantaged fund pools)
  - Low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than 1/2 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.



# Urban Agriculture

- Offering Urban practice scenarios across nearly all fund pools
- Utilizing LILA half & 10 as a consistent boundary to give applications within Food Deserts increased ranking incentives.
- Ranking question within High Tunnel and Socially Disadvantaged fund pools (geospatially answered)

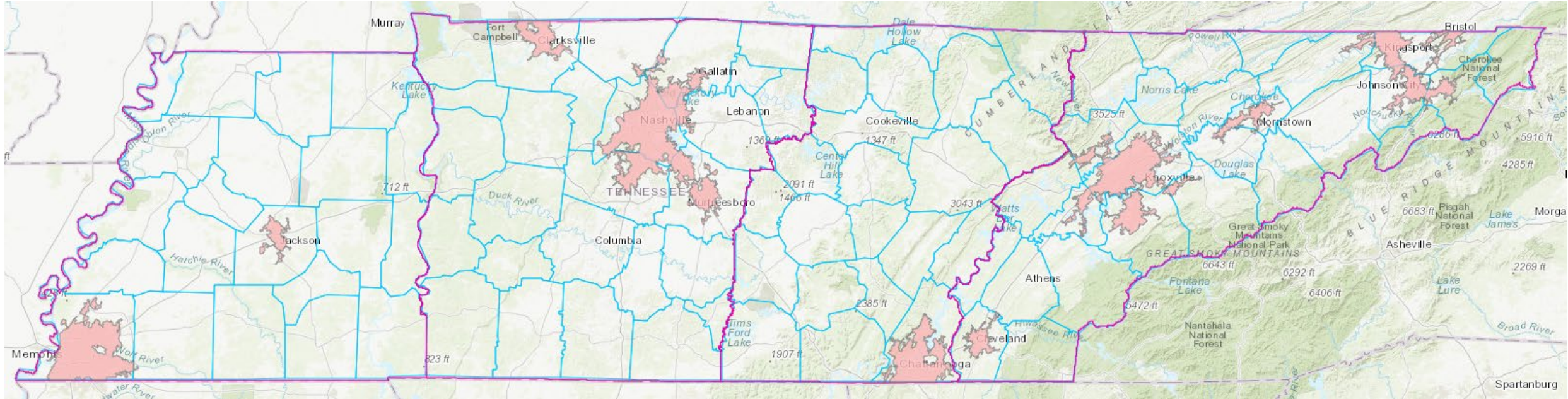
Question	Answer Choices
Will the high tunnel system be installed in an area designated as a food desert (Low Income Low Accessibility Half & 10 (LILA)? Geospatial	Yes, Located inside Food Desert Otherwise

- High Tunnel will also have a category for Food Desert

# Urban Ranking Pool (New for FY23)



- Geospatial applicability based on below National Layer



- Applicable for all applications within the Pink boundaries
- All practices will be applicable (more than just high tunnel)

# FY 2023 Budget

Account	Allocation	
EQIP CIC Soil Quality FY23	\$ 700,000	5%
EQIP CIC - Wildlife-Terrestrial Habitat FY23	\$ 700,000	5%
MRBI FY23	\$ 2,429,536	Initiative allowance
NWQI FY23	\$ 634,600	Initiative allowance
2021 Joint Restoration Watershed Project FY23	\$ 949,667	Initiative allowance
WLFW Golden Winged Warbler FY23	\$ 21,260	Initiative allowance
Shortleaf Pine Initiative FY23	\$ 150,000	
Source Water Protection FY23	\$ 175,000	10% Nationwide target
Urban FY23	\$ 200,000	
High Tunnel FY23	\$ 900,000	
StrikeForce FY23	\$ 2,000,000	
Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher FY23	\$ 3,400,000	13% (Southeast Goal)
Beginning Farmer FY23	\$ 1,806,400	5% plus \$500,000
FY23 On-Farm Energy	\$ 500,000	
CPAs, DIAs, and CEMAs FY23	\$ 300,000	
FY23 Organic Transition	\$ 80,000	
AFO-CAFO FY23	\$ 800,000	
Climate Smart Agriculture-Soil Health	\$ 1,500,000	
Climate Smart Forestry	\$ 400,000	
Wildlife FY23- Wildlife 10%	\$ 1,500,000	
WLFW Aquatic FY23	\$ 150,000	
WLFW Terrestrial FY23	\$ 150,000	
Local Subaccounts	\$ 10,520,100	50% after statutory % reductions
	<b>\$ 30,163,063</b>	<b>ProTracts Allocation</b>

- Note: This is only the starting budget. April funds assessments and adjustment based on applications will take place throughout the year
- Reflects Chiefs Climate and Urban initiatives



# EQIP Conservation Incentive Contract

## EQIP-CIC



# EQIP CIC

- EQIP-CIC 2023 news release went out: August 24, 2022
- Application deadline to apply for EQIP- CIC: November 18, 2022
  - Follows all EQIP program deadlines
- 5-year contract
- Steppingstone between EQIP and CSP
- Focused Conservation approach
  - Focused Priority Area
  - Focused Resource Concerns
- Annual Payments and Implementation Payments for practices completed
- Must address Core Practices

# FY 23 Fund Pools

## **States determine EQIP CIC high priority area(s):**

- Whole state of TN categorized as High Priority Area (HPA):

## **Criteria Resource Concerns and Categories**

2 Priority Resource Concerns (PRC) (2 separate fund pools)

- 1) Terrestrial Habitat - Forestland, Pastureland
- 2) Soil Quality Limitation - Cropland

# Terrestrial Habitat Fund Pool

- Forestland, Pastureland
- **Core Practices** (must include at least one)
  - Prescribed Burning (338)
  - Forage Harvest Management (511)
  - Prescribed Grazing (528)
  - Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
  - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
  - Early Successional Habitat Development-Mgt (647)

# Soil Quality Limitation Fund Pool

- Cropland
- **Core Practices** (must include at least one)
  - Cover Crop (340)
  - Forage Harvest Management (511)
  - Nutrient Management (590)
  - Soil and Source Testing For Nutrient Management (217)
  - Soil Health Testing (216)



# **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)**



# Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Sneak peak

- FY23 Will receive IRA Financial Assistance (FA)
  - IRAE (EQIP-IRA)
  - IRAS (CSP-IRA)
  - IRAA (ACEP-IRA) (If applicable)
- FY23 Will receive IRA Technical Assistance (TA) for,
  - IRAA (ACEP-IRA)
  - IRAC (CTA-IRA)
  - IRAE (EQIP-IRA)
  - IRAR (RCPP-IRA)
  - IRAS (CSP-IRA)
- TA to help prepare for future funds
- Potential Future FA funds for all above programs (Except CTA)



# Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Sneak peak

- New Signup is Required
  - Applications on file will be utilized (no need to re-apply)
  - Announcement soon-Cutoff March 23, 2023
  - This will create a new and separate program deadlines for EQIP IRA
  - Plan to keep CSP General and CSP IRA dates the same or similar (low impact)
- Cannot co-mingle general funds
  - Cannot partially approve contract with EQIP/CSP General
- IRA funds are only available for Climate Smart Practices and Enhancements
  - And any required supporting/facilitating practices
  - Same list of FY23 practices/enhancements already released
- Required to allocate 5% BFR, 5% SD, and 10% Wildlife (EQIP)
  - 5% BFR, 5% SD (CSP)



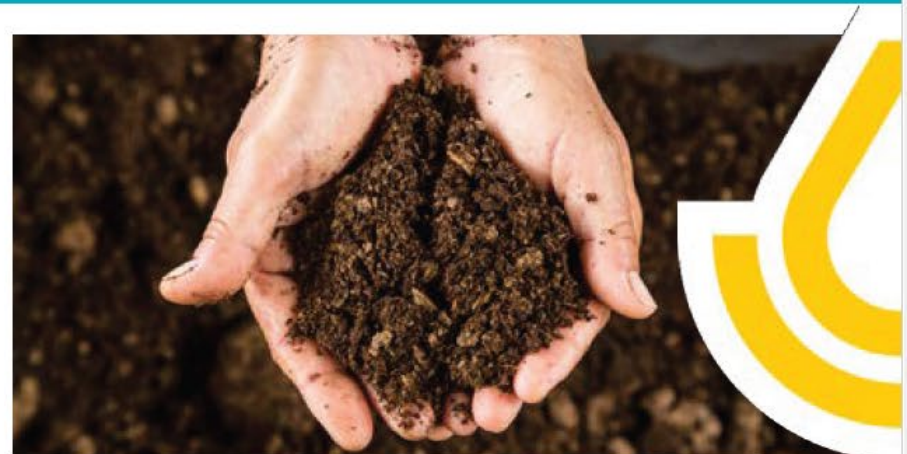
# Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Sneak peak

- Established program policy will continue to be used
- Ensuring Equity is key
- Contracts cannot extend beyond September 30, 2031
- IRA payments will count toward program-specific payment limitations
- Additional Appendix Addendum required, additional policy will be added to 530, new pre-obligation checklist, change to business tools.



Natural Resources Conservation Service

# Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List <sup>[1]</sup> FY2023



## **Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories**

- Soil Health
- Nitrogen Management
- Livestock Partnership
- Grazing and Pasture
- Agroforestry, Forestry, and Upland Wildlife Habitat
- Restoration of Disturbed Lands
- Energy, Combustion, and Electricity Efficiency
- Wetlands
- Rice (N/A TN)



Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name <sup>(2)</sup> (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Soil Health			B000BFF1	Buffer Bundle#1*
			B000CPL24	Cropland soil health management system*
			B000CPL25	Climate smart advanced soil health*
	327	Conservation Cover (acres)	E327A	Conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects
			E327B	Establish Monarch butterfly habitat
	328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)	E328A	Resource conserving crop rotation
			E328B	Improved resource conserving crop rotation
			E328E	Soil health crop rotation
			E328F	Modifications to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E328G	Crop rotation on recently converted CRP grass/legume cover for soil organic matter improvement
			E328N	Intercropping to improve soil health
			E328O	Perennial grain crop conservation rotation
	329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)	E329A	No till to reduce soil erosion
			E329B	No till to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
			E329C	No till to increase plant-available moisture
			E329D	No till system to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E329E	No till to reduce energy
	332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)	None Available	
	340	Cover Crop (acres)	E340A	Cover crop to reduce soil erosion
			E340B	Intensive cover cropping to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E340C	Use of multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E340D	Intensive orchard/vineyard floor cover cropping to increase soil health
			E340F	Cover crop to minimize soil compaction
			E340G	Cover crop to reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excess soil nutrients
			E340H	Cover crop to suppress excessive weed pressures and break pest cycles
			E340I	Using cover crops for biological strip till
			345	Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (acres)
	E345B	Reduced tillage to reduce tillage induced particulate matter		
	E345C	Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture		
	E345D	Reduced tillage to increase soil health and soil organic matter content		
	E345E	Reduced tillage to reduce energy use		
	386	Field Border (acres)	E386A	Enhanced field borders to reduce soil erosion along the edge(s) of a field
			E386B	Enhanced field borders to increase carbon storage along the edge(s) of the field
			E386C	Enhanced field borders to decrease particulate emissions along the edge(s) of the field
			E386D	Enhanced field borders to increase food for pollinators along the edge(s) of a field
			E386E	Enhanced field borders to increase wildlife food and habitat along the edge(s) of a field
	393	Filter Strips (acres)	E393A	Extend existing filter strip to reduce water quality impacts
	412	Grassed Waterways (acres)	E412A	Enhance a grassed waterway
	484	Mulching (acres)	E484A	Mulching to improve soil health
			E484B	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch
E484C			Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch	
585	Stripcropping (acres)	None Available		
601	Vegetative Barriers (feet)			
603	Herbaceous Wind Barriers (feet)			



Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name <sup>[2]</sup> (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Nitrogen Management	590	Nutrient Management (acres)	E590A	Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses
			E590B	Reduce risks of nutrient loss to surface water by utilizing precision agriculture technologies
			E590C	Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses on pasture
			E590D	Reduce risks of nutrient losses to surface and groundwater by increasing setback awareness via precision technology
Livestock Partnership	366	Anaerobic Digester (number)	None Available	
	632	Waste Separation Facility (number)*		



Grazing and Pasture	512	Pasture and Hay Planting (acres)	E512A	Cropland conversion to grass-based agriculture to reduce soil erosion
			E512B	Forage plantings that help increase organic matter in depleted soils
			E512C	Cropland conversion to grass for soil organic matter improvement
			E512D	Forage plantings that help increase organic matter in depleted soils
			E512E	Forage and biomass planting that produces feedstock for biofuels or energy production
			E512I	Establish pollinator and/or beneficial insect and/or monarch habitat
			E512J	Establish wildlife corridors to provide habitat continuity or access to water
			E512L	Diversifying forage base with interseeding forbs and legumes to increase pasture quality
			E512M	Forage plantings that improve wildlife habitat cover and shelter or structure and composition
	528	Prescribed Grazing (acres)	E528A	Maintaining quantity and quality of forage for animal health and productivity
			E528D	Grazing management for improving quantity and quality of food or cover and shelter for wildlife
			E528E	Improved grazing management for enhanced plant structure and composition for wildlife
			E528F	Stockpiling cool season forage to improve structure and composition or plant productivity and health
			E528G	Improved grazing management on pasture for plant productivity and health with monitoring activities
			E528H	Prescribed grazing to improve/maintain riparian and watershed function-elevated water temperature
			E528I	Grazing management that protects sensitive areas -surface or ground water from nutrients
			E528J	Prescribed grazing on pastureland that improves riparian and watershed function
			E528L	Prescribed grazing that improves or maintains riparian and watershed function-erosion
			E528M	Grazing management that protects sensitive areas from gully erosion
			E528O	Clipping mature forages to set back vegetative growth for improved forage quality
			E528P	Implementing Bale or Swath Grazing to increase organic matter and reduce nutrients in surface water
			E528R	Management intensive rotational grazing
			E528S	Soil Health Improvements on Pasture
	E528T	Grazing to Reduce Wildfire Risks on Forests		
	550	Range Planting (acres)	E550A	Range planting for increasing/maintaining organic matter
			E550B	Range planting for improving forage, browse, or cover for wildlife



Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name <sup>[2]</sup> (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife Habitat	311	Alley Cropping (acres)	None Available	
	342	Critical Area Planting (acres)		
	379	Forest Farming (acres)		
	380	Windbreaks/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (feet)		
	381	Silvopasture (acres)	E381A	Silvopasture to improve wildlife habitat
	390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover (acres)	E390A	Increase riparian herbaceous cover width for sediment and nutrient reduction
			E390B	Increase riparian herbaceous cover width to enhance wildlife habitat
	391	Riparian Forest Buffer (acres)	E391A	Increase riparian forest buffer width for sediment and nutrient reduction
			E391B	Increase stream shading for stream temperature reduction
			E391C	Increase riparian forest buffer width to enhance wildlife habitat
	420	Wildlife Habitat Planting (acres)*	E420A	Establish pollinator habitat*
			E420B	Establish monarch butterfly habitat*
	422	Hedgerow Planting (feet)	None Available	
	612	Tree/Shrub Establishment (acres)	E612A	Cropland conversion to trees or shrubs for long term improvement of water quality
			E612B	Planting for high carbon sequestration rate
			E612C	Establishing tree/shrub species to restore native plant communities
			E612G	Tree/shrub planting for wildlife food
	645	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (acres)	E645B	Manage existing shrub thickets to provide adequate shelter for wildlife
			E645C	Edge feathering for wildlife cover
	666	Forest Stand Improvement (acres)*	E666A	Maintaining and improving forest soil quality*
			E666D	Forest management to enhance understory vegetation*
			E666E	Reduce height of the forest understory to limit wildfire risk*
			E666F	Reduce forest stand density to create open stand structure*
E666H			Increase on-site carbon storage*	
E666I			Crop tree management for mast production*	
E666J			Facilitating oak forest regeneration*	
E666K			Creating structural diversity with patch openings*	
E666L			Forest Stand Improvement to rehabilitate degraded hardwood stands*	
E666P			Summer roosting habitat for native forest-dwelling bat species*	
E666R			Forest songbird habitat maintenance*	
E666S			Facilitating longleaf pine regeneration and establishment*	



Restoration of Disturbed Lands	453	Land Reclamation, Landslide Treatment (acres)	None Available	
	543	Land Reclamation, Abandoned Mined Land (acres) <sup>[3]</sup>	None Available	
Energy, Combustion, and Electricity Efficiency	372	Combustion System Improvement (number)	None Available	
	374	Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation (number)*	None Available	
			E533C	Install VFDs on pumps[4] *
			E533D	Complete pumping plant evaluation for energy savings[4] *
	672	Energy Efficient Building Envelope (number)*	None Available	
	670	Energy Efficient Lighting System (number)*	None Available	
Wetlands	657	Wetland Restoration (acres)*	None Available	
Rice	449	Irrigation Water Management (acres) <sup>[4]</sup>	E449B	Alternated Wetting and Drying (AWD) of rice fields

Activities highlighted have been added to the list in FY23.

\*Noted activities are added to the list as “provisional.” These practices, associated enhancements, and bundles are being added under the premise that they may provide benefits, and a quantification methodology will be evaluated during the fiscal year. Practices may be removed from the mitigation practice list in a subsequent fiscal year if quantification is not possible.

# Planned IRA Ranking Pools –EQIP IRA



- Beginning Farmer/Rancher- Required 5%
- Socially Disadvantaged-Required 5%
- Wildlife 10%
  
- IRA Area pools (1 pool for each of the 4 Areas)
  - Categories by land use-
    - Cropland
    - Pasture
    - Forest
    - Urban
  
  - Associated Ag Land, Farmstead, and other land will be eligible in all categories
  - Categories allow for separate ranking questions, distribution of funds by category

# Planned IRA Ranking Pools –CSP IRA



- Beginning Farmer/Rancher- Required 5%
- Socially Disadvantaged-Required 5%
- IRA Area pools (1 pool for each of the 4 Areas)  
Similar to:
  - CSP Classic
  - Agland, NIPF Ranking Pools

<b>LAND USES</b>	
	<b>Included</b>
Crop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Forest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Range	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pasture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Farmstead	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Developed Land	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Rural Land	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associated Ag Land	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>





# What can you do as State Technical Committee?

- Provide feedback on ranking pool structure
- Provide input on distribution of funds between categories
- **Most Importantly**
  - Help spread the word
  - Help promote applications
  - **Application cutoff March 23, 2023**

# QUESTIONS



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