

NEBRASKA STAC MEETING MINUTES

June 8, 2023

1:00 – 4:30 p.m.

100 Centennial Mall N. RM 397B

Lincoln, NE 68508

[YOUTUBE RECORDING LINK](#)

ATTENDEES: Brad Soncksen, Tami Nordman, Conor Ward, Brach Johnson, Cory Schmidt, Jami Thoene, Fred Stevens, Burdette Piening, Samantha Smith, Al Juhnke, Larry Hudkins, Roric Paulman, David Schroder, Kent Zimmerman, Jenny Prennosil;

VIA TEAMS: Robert Lawson, Buffalo Bruce, Curt Becker, David Potter, Ele Nugent, Steve Fairbairn, Andrew Houser, Jana Ingerson-Laws, Jennifer Swanson, John Erixson, John Hansen, Marcia Trompke, Mark Brohman, Lavaine Moore, Myles Lammers, Rich Walters, John Risetto, Elbert Traylor, Britt Weiser, Rachael Whitehair, Ritch Nelson, Katie Pekarek, Mark Porath, Wesley, March, Kalee Olson, Dustin Wilcox, David Potter, Mary Reece, Andy Bishop, Craig Romary, Dan Ruterbories;

VIA PHONE: Mike Murphy, Chandler Schmidt.

FUTURE Meetings:

- ❖ SEPTEMBER 7, 2023
- ❖ DECEMBER 7, 2023

 **WELCOME & OPENING COMMENTS:** Brad Soncksen - NRCS ASTC-Programs & Robert Lawson - NRCS State Conservationist

- Attend the Cattleman's mid-year meeting.
- Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships is currently on a detail in Iowa, so Jerry Kovarik will be the Acting.
- New position – Assistant State Conservationist for Compliance is Cory Schmidt.
- Had a special State Technical Committee about IRA & want to take the time to say "Thank You & we appreciate all the feedback".
- Great to see all the Sub-Committees working so well. Thank You again for your participation in those.

 **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS UPDATE:** Brad Soncksen - NRCS ASTC-Programs

- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) REVIEW
 - SEE SLIDES & HANDOUT attached.
 - IRA funds must be spent by September 30, 2031

- **Nebraska IRA Allocation FY2023**
 - IRA-CSP = \$4.7 million
 - IRA-EQIP = \$2.4 million
 - **EQIP-IRA**
 - **Nebraska Allocation = \$2.4 million**
 - **Applications = 280**
 - **CSP-IRA**
 - **Nebraska Allocation = \$4.7 million**
 - **Applications = 75**
 - **ACEP-IRA**
 - **Nebraska Allocation = TBD**
 - **Applications = 8 total (4 WRE and 4 ALE/GSS)**
- The IRA directs NRCS to use the additional funds specifically for **climate change mitigation**.
 - IRA funding can also be used for practices needed to *facilitate a mitigation practice*.
- NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round.
 - Producers interested in **EQIP or CSP** had to apply by **March 31, 2023**, to be considered for funding in the current cycle. Funding is provided through a competitive process.
 - **ACEP** applications for the current IRA funding cycle had to be submitted by **March 17, 2023**, for the first funding round.
 - **RCPP** funding opportunity announced May 19, 2023, which includes IRA funds for fiscal year 2023. Proposals must be received by August 18, 2023.
- FY24 Implementation in NE
 - **Potential Policy Modifications**
 - Revise payment caps (remove all caps or raise caps)
 - Increase payment rates (max all at 75%/90% or practice/scenario specific increases)
 - Consider revising application, ranking and obligation deadlines.
 - Revise policy on restricting applications for management practices that an applicant has previously implemented unless the applicant will achieve a higher level of conservation benefit. (i.e. allow new applications for cover crops and no-till even when the producer has previously applied these practices.)
 - Remove some of the “low priority” criteria. (i.e. current cover crop criteria that requires that a new resource concern must be addressed to avoid “low priority” designation)
 - Staffing considerations

- **CONSERVATION COLLABORATION AGREEMENTS (CCA)**
 - Received 28 application requesting \$13 million
 - \$1.5 million available
 - Applications have been ranked and presented to Leadership.
- **PARTNERSHIPS FOR CLIMATE SMART COMMODITIES**
 - Finalized Agreements can be found at:
www.usda.gov/climate-solutions/climate-smart-commodities
 - Active Partnership Projects in Nebraska
 - 10
 - Iconoclast Industries, LLC
 - Iowa Soybean Association
 - Millborn Seeds Inc
 - National Association of Conservation Districts
 - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (for Farmers For Soil Health)
 - National Sorghum Producers Association
 - South Dakota State University
 - The Meridian Institute
 - The Western Sugar Cooperative
 - Truterra LLC
 - 22 Major Commodities
 - 44 Projects
- **RCPP REVIEW**
 - **SEE SLIDES & HANDOUT attached.**
 - **The Notice of Funding Opportunity can be found on Grants.gov (www.grants.gov), Funding Opportunity: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-RCPP-23-NOFO0001304, CFDA 10.932**
 - Applicants can email questions about this notice to the RCPP inbox at: rcpp@usda.gov The RCPP website also provides current information about the program.
- **EQIP REVIEW**
 - **SEE SLIDES & HANDOUT attached.**
 - Fund Pools for FY23
 - FY23 Allocations
 - **FA Initial Allocation = \$23,957,000.00**
 - **Additional from April funds assessment = \$2,000,000.00**
 - FY23 Practices & Obligations
 - Total Active EQIP Contracts – June 2023
 - Total Active Contracts = 2,767
 - Total Contract Acres = 1.1 million
 - Obligated funds = \$91.4 million

- **Organic Transition Initiative**

- The EQIP-OTI provides funding to support producers transitioning to organic production by providing financial assistance (FA) and technical assistance (TA) to implement conservation practices that support organic production.
- The OTI supports USDA's objective of developing diverse and equitable food systems while encouraging climate-smart agriculture by focusing funds on transitioning producers to organic production.
- OTI is a separate initiative than the National Organic Initiative (NOI). NOI will still be offered in EQIP.
- Contract Development and Requirements
 - EQIP-OTI contracts must include the Organic Management (823) conservation practice.
 - Organic Management (823) and supporting land management practices may receive up to five separate payments. Refer to 440 CPM § 530.406(B)(4).
 - Practices or activities that directly support practice code 823 may be included in the contract and receive payment.
 - While EQIP allows contracts to last up to 10 years, Nebraska is encouraging to limit the schedule of operations for OTI contracts to the shortest period to support organic transition.
 - Note: While organic transitioning can occur within three years or less, additional years may be needed.
 - Applicants may choose to transition their entire operation or a part of their operation.
 - Producers will self-certify their eligibility for participation in OTI by identifying their operation as transitioning to become certified using form NRCS-CPA-1200 under item 4(d). If selected for participation, the producer must meet the standards of each classification.

- **CSP REVIEW**

- **SEE SLIDES & HANDOUT attached.**

- **ACEP REVIEW**

- **SEE SLIDES & HANDOUT attached.**
- IRA Funding pending.
- **Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE)**
 - Applications = 21, Acres = 5,590
 - Estimated Requested funding: \$20,313,085.00
 - 13 have cancelled or found ineligible
 - Offers accepted = 8, Acres = 1,225
 - Estimated funding needed: \$4,428,440.00
 - 3 easements closed and restored
 - 5 easements pending closing

- **LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS**

- **Completed end of March**

- See Slides in handout or website for the FY23 Local Workgroup Recommendations.

- **LOCAL WORK GROUP AGENDA ITEMS:**

- Priority Resource Concerns
 - Fund Pools - Ranking Tools – Screening Tools
 - Practice Payment Schedule
 - Local issues
-



WATER QUALITY SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE: Katie Pekarek, UNL –

- Roric Paulman & Myself are co-chairs
 - Last meeting made some recommendations on each areas of the NWQI's.
 - Source Water Protection Working Group within the Sub-Committee has been created during the last sub-committee meeting.
 - Help to implement the IRA funds.
 - Britt Weiser is leading this.
 - Source Water Protection Coordinator being hired through NDEE – Lower Platte South NRD.
 - Please join us for the Water Quality Subcommittee meeting
 - **WHEN: Friday, June 16, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CST)**
 - **WHERE:** Nebraska Dept. of Environment and Energy - 023 NDEE building 245 Fallbrook Blvd, Lincoln, NE
 - *Irrigation wells are a big concern that we are taking a look at.*
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SMALL SCALE FARM AND URBAN AG: Brach Johnson- NRCS –

- Accomplishments since last State Technical Committee Meeting
 - Practices update:
 - Modified practices.
 - Mico Irrigation
 - Composting
 - Diversion
 - French Drain
 - Requested new interim practice:
 - Small Footprint Greenhouse for Seed Starters
-

Q: What is your furthest West?

A: Scottsbluff & Chadron

FSA REVIEW: Lavaine Moore - FSA Programs Specialist

○ **CRP Update:**

- Continuous Signup 59
 - FY23 Deadlines
 - July 31, 2023
 - August 7, 2023
 - September 8, 2023
 - September 29, 2023
- Signups that require National Office Ranking Process:
 - SU59, Migratory Birds, Butterflies & Pollinator SAFE (KS, NE & OK)
 - SU60 General CRP
 - SU205 Grassland CRP
- Migratory Bird SAFE
 - 4th Signup started January 3 – March 17, 2023
 - Southwestern NE Ranking Cluster
 - Central Table NE Ranking Cluster
 - Rainwater Basin NE Ranking Cluster
 - May 25, 2023 DAFP Announced Acceptable Offers
 - NE
 - Submitted – 24
 - Accepted – 13
 - KS
 - Submitted –
 - Accepted –
 - OK
 - Submitted –
 - Accepted –
- General Signup 60
 - Signup Date
 - February 27 through April 7, 2023
 - 625 Offers Submitted
 - 28,720.49 Acres Offered
 - Big drop about 40,000 from the years prior
 - Waiting on DAFP to announce signup results.
 - Deadlines
 - April 7, 2023
 - August 11, 2023
 - September 30, 2023
- Grasslands CRP Signup 205
 - Signup Period: April 17, 2023 – May 26, 2023 (Register deadline - June 2, 2023)
 - Offers Submitted: 2,065
 - Acres Offered: 764,576.4

- Waiting on DAFP (National Office) to announce signup results.
- EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM (ECP) UPDATE
 - Current Counties Approved for ECP in 2023
 - Cherry/Thomas Counties – Bovee Fire = 10/2/2022
 - Nuckolls County = 10/23/2022 Wildfire
 - Custer County = 4/12/2023 - 4/13/2023 – Wildfire
 - Garfield County = 4/11/2023 – Lowry Wildfire
 - Blaine County = 4/7/2023 – Del Porto Wildfire
 - Cherry County = 4/11/2023 – McCann Wildfire
 - Blaine County = 4/12 – 4/13 – Cooksley Fire, Melbourne Fire, Pleasant Valley Fire

NOTE: Wildfires in Cherry, Thomas and Nuckolls County that occurred in October 2022, signups have ended.

The remaining counties in April, Custer County is the only county that started signup. Remaining counties have all been approved, signups will start soon or have already started.

The following link will allow you to access lots of reports that pertain to CRP, such as previous signup acres etc: [Conservation Reserve Program Statistics \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/conservation-reserve-program/statistics)

Another great option may be to look at an CRP option that doesn't have the seeding requirements that a CP42 does compared to a CP2.

PARTNER UPDATES:

- Mark Brohman - I was going to let folks know this Saturday we will have a Prairie Discovery Day at Dicken Prairie SW of Unadilla, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00p.m. Experts to present for plants, birds, and insects.

WRAP UP AND REVIEW OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Will continue to help & work with FSA on the drought conditions.
- Open period for RCPP funding opportunities, so please reach out if you have any questions.
- If you have any further Agenda items, please feel free to share that with Tami or Brad.
- Thanks for coming.

Discussion Q & A:

EQIP Application & Ranking Cutoff Dates (November 18, 2023)

- How do you get the application cutoff date in November? There is now way in Western NE that we can make that cutoff date. – Roric



LOCAL WORK GROUPS:

- Polled 50 people in our local area in Lincoln County & not a single person has ever been to a Local Work Group, so how do we get this information to people to go? – Roric
 - Farmers are just not aware or know what they truly are, we need their voices better heard! - Rachael Whitehair
 - Is there a way to email out a calendar with all the dates? Does Joanna place them anywhere other than on the website?
 - Rural Radio Network - Free Service that we could send them & they could get it out.
 - Really need our producers to get into them so that we can get more of their opinions on how to use the money.
 - February/March next year is the required dates to have the next LWG meetings, however they can have one at any time throughout the year.
 - Need to find a new way to reach people.
 - Good ways to partner with some of these groups who can get the word out about all these LWG.
 - Innovation Campus Network – Can we do a report with them?
- Will anything be done in the drought emergency area? Eastern part of NE is in a drought, is there something that can be done right away. Is any of the IRA funds available to be used right away.
 - Not specifically with IRA, but there are some practices that could benefit the drought. We also do have disaster funds that can be used but not sure they will be available right away.
 - Worst drought since 1955, NE cattlemen need help with water tanks now. Young cows are being slaughtered too young. Not getting help getting money into livestock wells or tanks. Many have regenerated the dams & had to dig out last winter because they were dry, including all the spring fed dams are dried up. Livestock sector is being devastated, once you sell that factory you don't replace it for three years. **The livestock sector needs help desperately.**
 - Do you anticipate any more signup periods for the Climate Smart agreements or is it a one & done thing? New application period in the upcoming years?
 - Do not know, might be more information on the website.
 - There was only one initial announcement & then there were two additional funding announcements after that.
 - CLIMATE SMART - On the 13 million for the 1.3 is there anything particular that stuck out to you that there was so much for the 1.5 million?
 - Lots of high interest, being able to tap into some of them & target specifically. Some just didn't fit the criteria.
 - What clarifies as in a disaster category?
 - Usually the state declares it: Flood, drought, tornado, wildfires, anything we can declare as a disaster.
 - Thanks for the earlier comments about getting water wells for the livestock.
 - Haying & feeding for livestock as been in high discussion.
 - CRP Q&A:
 - Blue corn because of drought, so if we could get the word out of how important ECP is going to be in the future. Take a look of the drought monitor map.
 - Seeding requirements – very expensive to get, the cost that we had to bare to put in new CRP in March & yet do not have a cost-share payment. Cost Share is about \$100-150 per acre. He believes the tremendous cost of it just doesn't make sense, but there needs to be more give & take.

A: Lavaine said we do need to get together with Rob, acting SED, & Leadership group to talk through these concerning questions.

- There is a procedure that if the seed isn't available or is gets so costly because of the drought they can take it to the county committees & they can pay your the additional cost-share. If receipts come in & over the 50%, they can look that to see why. Just go through your local county & they can look at through a case by case basis.
- IS there any kind of provision to be able to waive requirements when seeding conditions are not appropriate? If there is no moisture there, seed is just a waste of time & money.
 - We did go into national office for management activites, where you have to do some inner seeding, they gave us the county committees approval to extend it with a one year waiver.
- Another great option may be to look at an CRP option that doesn't have the seeding requirements that a CP42 does compared to a CP2.
 - Biggest concern there if you would be accepted under CRP General.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List ^[1] FY2023



Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ^[2] (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)	E345A	Reduced tillage to reduce soil erosion
			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 ⁽²⁾ (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 ^[2] (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) ^[3]		
Energy, Combustion, and Electricity Efficiency	372	Combustion System Improvement (number)	None Available	
	374	Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation (number)*		
			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)*		
Wetlands	657	Wetland Restoration (acres)*	None Available	
Rice	449	Irrigation Water Management (acres) ^[4]	E449B	Alternated Wetting and Drying (AWD) of rice fields

NOTES:

In addition to the designated CSAF conservation activities listed, conservation practices which facilitate the management or the function of a CSAF activity but does not achieve the desired effects on its own (and may not have a quantifiable benefit), may be planned as applicable. Examples: Tree-Shrub Establishment (612) may need facilitating practices such as site prep (490) or access control (472). Conservation Crop Rotation (328) may need facilitating practices such as pest management conservation system (595), cover crops (340), or irrigation water management (449). Waste Separation Facility (632) may need facilitating practices such as waste transfer (634) or roofs and covers (367). Prescribed grazing (528) may need facilitating practices such as watering facility (614), stream crossing (578), fence (382), or livestock shelter structure (576).

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.

- [1] Unless otherwise noted, listed practices have quantifiable carbon sequestration and/or GHG reduction methodologies described in COMET-Planner (www.comet-planner.com). New practices will be added as science progresses and scientifically defensible quantification methodologies are identified to accompany existing and new NRCS conservation practice standards.
- [2] The included Conservation Practice Standard links provide national information. Please consult the NRCS office at your local USDA Service Center for any local and state level criteria. Visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find contact information for your local office.
- [3] Effective Oct 1, 2022, Land Reclamation, Currently Mined Land (544) was archived and has been removed from this mitigation list, the practice was combined into Land Reclamation, Abandoned Mined Land (543). See NHCP Notice 172 for more information.
- [4] Conservation Practice Standards Irrigation Water Management (449) and Pumping Plant (533) are not GHG mitigation practice standards. The only atmospheric-beneficial applications are with Enhancement Activities E533C, E533D, and E449B or when 449 is implemented as part of an alternated wetting and drying (AWD) system in rice fields.



NRCS Conservation Programs and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)



Overview

The IRA provides USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with \$19.5 billion in additional funds over five years for its existing conservation programs, including the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#), [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#) and the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#).

The IRA directs NRCS to use these additional funds specifically for climate change mitigation, activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon storage like:

- ♦ Reduced-Till and No-Till
- ♦ Nutrient Management
- ♦ Prescribed Grazing
- ♦ Tree/Shrub Establishment
- ♦ Wetland Restoration

Through this funding, NRCS is seeking to both benefit the climate, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and the producer, by improving access to programs and providing financial and technical assistance to improve their farm, ranch, urban operation or forest land.

NRCS Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities

For a list of NRCS climate-smart mitigation activities, eligible for IRA funding in fiscal year 2023, see: nrcs.usda.gov/mitigation-activities.pdf, or scan the code. Not all Climate-Smart Practices are available in Nebraska.



How to Apply

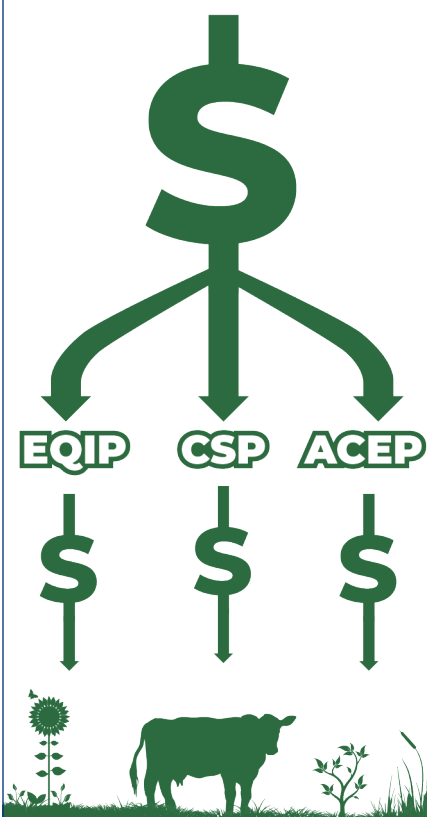
NRCS Nebraska accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round. Interested applicants should submit an application to be considered for the current funding cycle. Application sign-up ranking dates may be found here: nrcs.usda.gov/ranking-dates. Funding is provided through a competitive process and provides the opportunity to address unmet demand from producers who have previously sought funding for climate-smart conservation activities. If a producer applies after the ranking date, NRCS will automatically consider their application during future funding cycles and will contact them for any changes that need to be considered.

Improving Access

Every producer has a part to play when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, regardless of the size or type of operation. Whether you are a new or an existing NRCS client, we encourage you to apply. We want to make sure you have access to our programs and get all the assistance for which you are eligible.

Contact NRCS at: farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)



Climate-smart mitigation activities, e.g.

Cover Crops
Reduced-Till and No Till
Nutrient Management
Prescribed Grazing
Tree/Shrub Establishment
Wetland Restoration



Core Climate-Smart Practices and Facilitating Practices Eligible for IRA Funding in Nebraska

IRA funds will help farmers and ranchers implement "core" conservation practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase storage of carbon. In addition to the "Core" Climate-Smart conservation practices that are eligible to receive IRA funds, there are "Facilitating Practices" that work with the core practices to

mitigate the impacts of climate change. The following table below shows the eligible core practices and their associate facilitating practice(s) approved for IRA funds in Nebraska. Work with your local NRCS field office to see what practices best suit your operation.

Core Climate-Smart Practice	Approved Facilitating Practices
Alley Cropping	Tree/Shrub Site Preparation
Conservation Cover	Herbaceous Weed Control, Fence, Access Control
Contour Buffer Strips	Herbaceous Weed Control, Contour Farming
Critical Area Planting	Herbaceous Weed Control, Fence, Access Control, Mulch
Anaerobic Digester	Waste Transfer, Pumping Plant, Waste Storage Facility
Combustion System Improvement	Pumping Plant
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation	Tree/Shrub Site Preparation, Fence, Microirrigation, Access Control, Mulch
Field Border	Herbaceous Weed Control, Contour Farming
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	Herbaceous Weed Control, Fence, Access Control
Riparian Forest Buffer	Tree/Shrub Site Prep, Fence, Microirrigation, Access Control, Mulch
Filter Strips	Herbaceous Weed Control, Fence, Access Control
Grassed Waterway	Critical Area Planting, Grade Stabilization Structure, Subsurface Drain
Wildlife Planting	Herbaceous Weed Control, Fence, Access Control
Hedgerow Planting	Tree/Shrub Site Prep, Fence, Access Control
Pasture and Hay Planting	Herbaceous Weed Control, Fence, Access Control
Prescribed Grazing	Brush Mgmt, Herbaceous Weed Treatment, Prescribed Burning, Fence, Livestock Pipeline, Pumping Plant, Heavy Use Area Protection, Livestock Shelter Structure, Stream Crossing, Pest Mgmt Conservation System, Watering Facility, Water Well, Annual Forages for Grazing Systems
Range Planting	Herbaceous Weed Control, Fence, Access Control
Vegetative Barriers	Herbaceous Weed Control
Herbaceous Wind Barriers	Herbaceous Weed Control
Tree/Shrub Establishment	Microirrigation, Mulch, Tree/Shrub Site Prep
Waste Separation Facility	Waste Transfer, Pumping Plant, Waste Storage Facility
Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt.	Fence, Access Control
Wetland Restoration	Brush Mgmt, Herbaceous Weed Control, Conservation Cover, Dike, Fence, Land Clearing, Access Control, Range Seeding, Structure for Water Control, Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
Conservation Crop Rotation, Residue Mgmt-Notill, Cover Crops, Energy Efficient Ag Operation, Mulching, Stripcropping, Nutrient Mgmt, Forest Stand Improvement, Energy Efficient Lighting System, and Energy Efficient Building Envelope	None



Nebraska

Natural
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nrcs.usda.gov/Nebraska



United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Programs

FY2023 Programs Update
State Technical Committee Mtg
June 2023



Brad Soncksen, ASTC/Programs

brad.soncksen@usda.gov
www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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NRCS, Climate and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

Natural
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Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

- Signed into law by President Biden in August 2022
- The IRA provides NRCS with \$19.5 billion in **additional** funds for its **existing** conservation programs:
 - \$8.45 billion Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - \$4.95 billion Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
 - \$3.25 billion Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - \$1.4 billion Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
 - \$1 billion Conservation Technical Assistance
- **The IRA does not create any new programs** – it gives NRCS additional funds to **expand its existing climate efforts** and satisfy unmet demand
- IRA funds begin in **fiscal year 2023**; all IRA funds must be spent by **September 30, 2031**
- **Nebraska IRA Allocation FY2023**
 - IRA-CSP = \$4.7 million
 - IRA-EQIP = \$2.4 million



The IRA Focuses on Mitigation

- The IRA directs NRCS to use the additional funds specifically for **climate change mitigation**.
- Mitigation activities ***reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon storage***.
- FY23 list of **NRCS climate-smart mitigation activities**:
nrcs.usda.gov/mitigation-activities.pdf
- NRCS is continually evaluating mitigation activities and IRA implementation approach and will update them as appropriate.
 - [Federal Register notice](#) (Nov. 21, 2022)

<div> United States Department of Agriculture </div> <div> Natural Resources Conservation Service </div> <div> Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List^[1] FY2023 </div> <div> </div>				
Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ⁽²⁾ (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Soil Health			B000BF1	Buffer Bundle#1*
			B000CL24	Cropland soil health management system*
			B000CL25	Climate smart advanced soil health*
	327	Conservation Cover (acres)	E327A	Conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects
			E327B	Establish monarch butterfly habitat
			E328A	Resource conserving crop rotation
	328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)	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
	332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)	E329E	No till to reduce energy
				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
			E340E	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)	E345A	Reduced tillage to reduce soil erosion
			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
	412	Grassed Waterways (acres)	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
			E386F	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
	484	Mulching (acres)	E412A	Enhance a grassed waterway
			E484A	Mulching to improve soil health
			E484B	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch
	585	Stripcropping (acres)	E484C	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch
	603	Vegetative Barriers (feet)		
	603	Herbaceous Wind Barriers (feet)		
				None Available

Facilitating Practices Enable Mitigation

- IRA funding can also be used for practices needed to ***facilitate a mitigation practice***.
- Here are some examples of conservation systems that include mitigation practices and the practices that may be needed to facilitate them.



Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

Tree Shrub Site Preparation (490)

Mulching (484)

Microirrigation (441)

Pasture and Hay Planting (512)

Access Control (472)

Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)

Waste Separation Facility (632)

Waste Transfer (634)

Pumping Plant (533)

Prescribed Grazing (528)

Watering Facility (614)

Stream Crossing (578)

Fence (382)

Livestock Pipeline (516)

Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)

Access Control (472)

Fence (382)

Applying for Programs in FY23

- NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round.
- Producers interested in **EQIP** or **CSP** had to apply by **March 31, 2023**, to be considered for funding in the current cycle. Funding is provided through a competitive process.
- **ACEP** applications for the current IRA funding cycle had to be submitted by **March 17, 2023**, for the first funding round.
- **RCPP** funding opportunity announced May 19, 2023, which includes IRA funds for fiscal year 2023. Proposals must be received by August 18, 2023.



FY2023 IRA Implementation in Nebraska

- **EQIP-IRA**
 - Nebraska Allocation = \$2.4 million
 - Applications = 280
- **CSP-IRA**
 - Nebraska Allocation = \$4.7 million
 - Applications = 75
- **ACEP-IRA**
 - Nebraska Allocation = TBD
 - Applications = 8 total (4 WRE and 4 ALE/GSS)

FY2024 IRA Implementation in Nebraska

Potential Policy Modifications

- Revise payment caps (remove all caps or raise caps)
- Increase payment rates (max all at 75%/90% or practice/scenario specific increases)
- Consider revising application, ranking and obligation deadlines.
- Revise policy on restricting applications for management practices that an applicant has previously implemented unless the applicant will achieve a higher level of conservation benefit. (i.e. allow new applications for cover crops and no-till even when the producer has previously applied these practices.)
- Remove some of the “low priority” criteria. (i.e. current cover crop criteria that requires that a new resource concern must be addressed to avoid “low priority” designation)
- Staffing considerations

Conservation Collaboration Agreements (CCA)

- **Received 28 application requesting \$13 million**
- **\$1.5 million available**
- **Applications have been ranked and presented to Leadership**

Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities

Finalized Agreements can be found at:

www.usda.gov/climate-solutions/climate-smart-commodities

Then Project Dashboard



Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities Finalized Agreements

To learn more about active Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities projects, please view the project dashboard link below.

Project Dashboard

Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities



Active Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Projects

Expanding Climate-Smart Commodity Markets



53

States & Territories

41

Projects

53

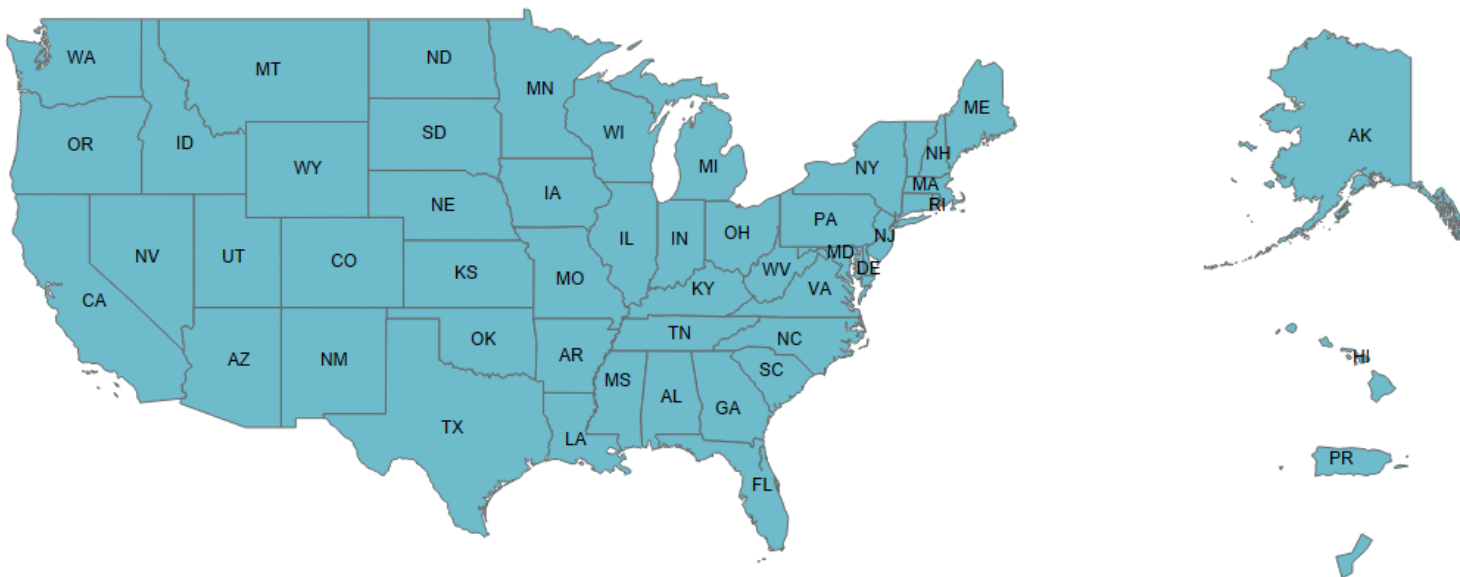
Major Commodities

105

Practices

Click on a state to filter the map or use the drop-down menu

(All) ▼





United States Department of Agriculture

Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities



Active Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Projects
Expanding Climate-Smart Commodity Markets



1

States & Territories

10

Projects

22

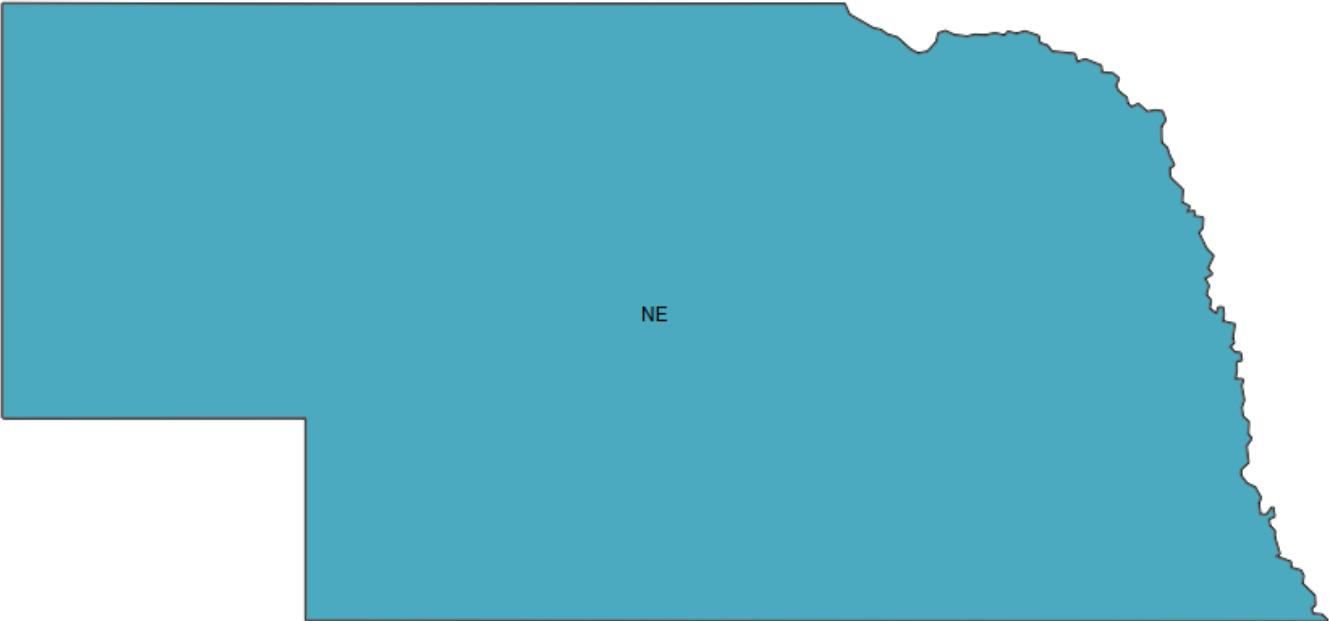
Major Commodities

44

Practices

Click on a state to filter the map or use the drop-down menu

NE



Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities

Nebraska's 10 Finalized Projects are:

Iconoclast Industries, LLC

Iowa Soybean Association

Millborn Seeds Inc

National Association of Conservation Districts



Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (for
Farmers For Soil Health)**

National Sorghum Producers Association

South Dakota State University

The Meridian Institute

The Western Sugar Cooperative

Truterra LLC



Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities

**For more information on projects, scroll over
“Lead Partner” and click on See Details.**

**Here you can find a link for Project Enrollment, Full
Description of Project, Marketing Highlights, and
Available Practices to name a few.**

Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities



Active Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities

Expanding Climate-Smart Commodity Markets

[Download PDF](#)

Iowa Soybean Association

Link to Project Enrollment Opportunities: <https://www.theoutcomesfund.com/>

Short Summary: Expands markets for climate-smart corn, soybeans, sugar beets, and wheat in IL, IN, IA, KS, NE, ND, OH, WI, and monitoring of climate-smart practices.

Full Description:

Midwest Climate-Smart Commodity Program

This project will build markets and provide funding to farmers via outcome-based contracts for the reduction and removal of carbon from the atmosphere. The remaining project funding will support farmer enrollment assistance, carbon quantification, technical assistance support, measurement, outreach and enrollment. Monitoring for this project is planned to include remote sensing, field inspections, farmer operational record keeping, and track both nitrous oxide (N₂O) emission reductions and soil carbon sequestration separately at the field level. The project also plans to be supported by dedicated conservation agronomist technical assistance.

Lead Partner: Iowa Soybean Association

Other Major Partners: PepsiCo**, Cargill**, Renewable Energy Group**, Ingredion**, Target**, JBS**, Coca-Cola**, FarmRaise, Rural

Primary States Expected: IL, IN, IA, KS, NE, ND, OH, WI, SD, MO, MI, MN

Major Commodities: Corn, Soybeans, Wheat, Sugar Beets

Approximate Funding Ceiling: \$95,000,000



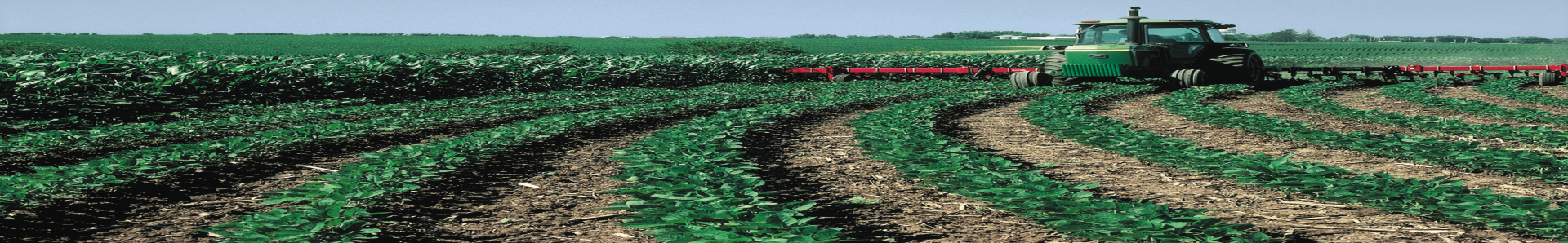
The Notice of Funding Opportunity can be found on Grants.gov (www.grants.gov), Funding Opportunity: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-RCPP-23-NOFO0001304, CFDA 10.932

Applicants can email questions about this notice to the RCPP inbox at: rcpp@usda.gov The RCPP website also provides current information about the program.



United States Department of Agriculture

Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2018 Farm Bill Funding: \$9.1 Billion
 - \$1.75 Billion for FY19
 - \$1.75 Billion for FY20
 - \$1.8 Billion for FY21
 - \$1.85 Billion for FY22
 - \$2.025 Billion for FY23



2023 Mandatory Distribution

- Source Water Protection = 10%
- Wildlife Initiative = 10%
- Historically Underserved = 10%
- EQIP-CIC = 5%
- Livestock = 50%



Nebraska EQIP Fund Pools FY2023

FY2023 STATEWIDE FUND POOLS

- NE Great Plains Grassland Initiative
- Working Lands for Wildlife – Sandhills
- Working Lands for Wildlife - Quail
- Urban and Small-Scale Agriculture
- Organic
- Energy
- Conservation Activity Plans
- Animal Feeding Operations
- Tribal
- Disaster

FY2023 EQIP Allocations

FA Initial Allocation = \$23,957,000

Additional from April funds assessment = \$2,000,000

- Urban and Small-Scale Agriculture (formerly High Tunnel) = \$500,000
- Wildlife Initiative (10%) = \$896,000 (10% includes WIN, GPGL and Quail WLFW initiative)
- Great Plains Grassland Initiative = \$1,200,000
- Quail WLFW Initiative = \$300,000
- Historically Underserved (10%) = \$2,396,000
- Reserve = \$600,000
- AFO's = \$1,000,000
- Conservation Activity Plans = \$200,000
- Organic = \$100,000
- Tribal = \$100,000
- Sandhills Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) = \$100,000

FY2023 EQIP Allocations

FA Initial Allocation = \$23,957,000

- Disaster = \$1,500,000
- Source Water Protection (10%) = \$2,396,000
- EQIP-CIC (5%) = \$1,200,000
- Inefficient Energy = \$25,000

Balance left to distribute to Local Fund Pools = \$9,994,000

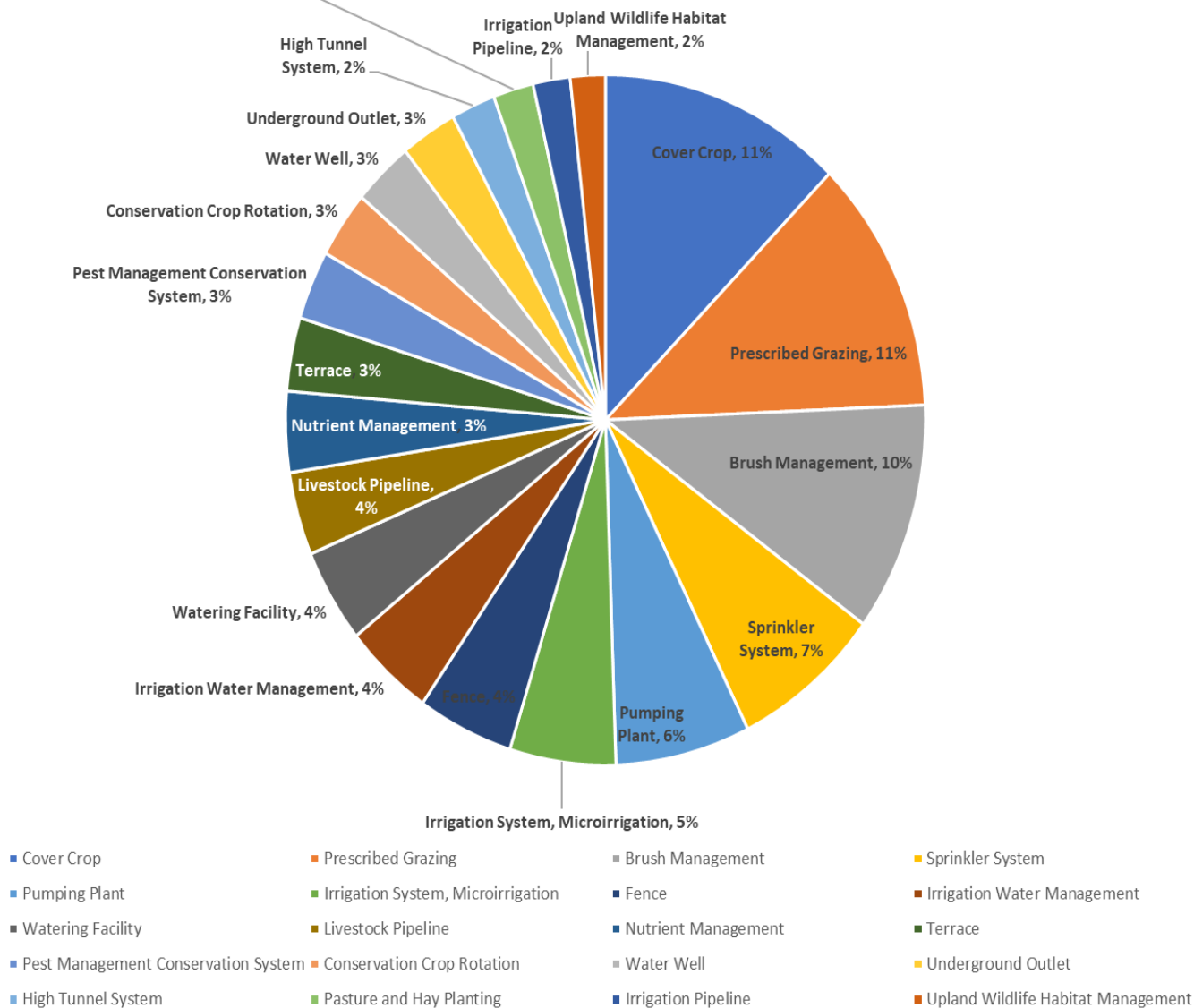
National Initiatives Allocations (NOTE: Included in FA initial allocation total)

- Joint Chiefs = \$0 (NOTE: UNW, MN, UL, NRD's – No request for FY23)
- Water Smart = \$250,000
 - URNRD = \$250,000
 - MRNRD = \$0 (Project expired 9/30/22, No request for FY23)
- NWQI = \$1,200,000
 - Bazile Creek (LCNRD, LENRD, UENRD) = \$800,000
 - Big Sandy (LBNRD) = \$200,000
 - Turkey Creek (LBBNRD) = \$200,000

FY23 EQIP-Top 25 Practices by Obligation

Practice	Obligation	Percent
Cover Crop	\$ 2,279,404.00	11%
Prescribed Grazing	\$ 2,209,177.00	11%
Brush Management	\$ 1,987,904.83	10%
Sprinkler System	\$ 1,398,868.28	7%
Pumping Plant	\$ 1,258,307.00	6%
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	\$ 988,723.00	5%
Fence	\$ 896,611.00	4%
Irrigation Water Management	\$ 839,063.00	4%
Watering Facility	\$ 815,647.00	4%
Livestock Pipeline	\$ 720,161.00	4%
Nutrient Management	\$ 697,673.00	3%
Terrace	\$ 636,781.00	3%
Pest Management Conservation System	\$ 598,397.00	3%
Conservation Crop Rotation	\$ 581,876.00	3%
Water Well	\$ 563,411.00	3%
Underground Outlet	\$ 527,263.00	3%
High Tunnel System	\$ 412,783.00	2%
Pasture and Hay Planting	\$ 375,601.46	2%
Irrigation Pipeline	\$ 345,367.48	2%
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	\$ 327,193.00	2%
Prescribed Burning	\$ 264,976.00	1%
Conservation Cover	\$ 204,113.26	1%
Grassed Waterway	\$ 134,470.00	1%
Heavy Use Area Protection	\$ 124,745.00	1%

FY23 EQIP Practices - Top 20 Obligations



Planned and Applied 2014 – 2028

Top 25 Practices – Obligations

Practice	Count	Amount	Obligations
Cover Crop	4632	640679.4	\$ 23,395,338.46
Livestock Pipeline	1930	10061025.4	\$ 15,445,573.18
Sprinkler System	383	31549.5	\$ 13,313,867.15
Conservation Crop Rotation	2262	88927.1	\$ 11,782,863.61
Terrace	1474	8128520.2	\$ 10,216,479.68
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	235	12831.4	\$ 9,778,032.65
Brush Management	2234	107764.2	\$ 9,748,693.33
Watering Facility	3308	37651.5	\$ 9,523,631.68
Pumping Plant	1719	1833.5	\$ 9,041,159.01
Fence	2029	7219837.5	\$ 8,854,276.17
Irrigation Water Management	4171	599997.4	\$ 8,227,341.77
Underground Outlet	1101	1856950.7	\$ 6,705,788.06
Water Well	1223	3062	\$ 4,958,182.01
Waste Storage Facility	57	62	\$ 3,824,389.78
Nutrient Management	626	173242.6	\$ 3,557,348.03
Irrigation System, Sprinkler	87	9647.2	\$ 3,001,929.05
Irrigation Pipeline	461	523604.9	\$ 2,764,352.22
Prescribed Grazing	593	125043	\$ 2,748,983.70
Pasture and Hay Planting	302	21482.5	\$ 2,144,798.28
Forest Stand Improvement	184	3739.8	\$ 1,772,369.40
Grassed Waterway	269	1028.2	\$ 1,396,931.67
Prescribed Burning	443	97327.8	\$ 1,273,119.06
Mulching	551	38040.8	\$ 1,265,119.62

FY23 EQIP-Top 25 Practices by Count

Practice	Count (Planned Items)	Amount (Units)
Cover Crop	420	69659
Brush Management	394	39434
Irrigation Water Management	346	53367
Prescribed Grazing	187	80341
Watering Facility	167	280
Pumping Plant	165	177
Fence	156	497332
Conservation Crop Rotation	112	4247
Water Well	105	115
Livestock Pipeline	97	334581
Pest Management Conservation System	87	64376
Prescribed Burning	86	15361
Terrace	81	364812
Nutrient Management	73	21055
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	67	1979
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation	60	229037
Underground Outlet	56	89919
Firebreak	53	410083
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till	51	5283
Critical Area Planting	50	100
Structure for Water Control	48	68
Irrigation Pipeline	47	48997
Heavy Use Area Protection	42	122594
Sprinkler System	40	2658
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	37	898

Planned and Applied 2014 – 2028

Top 25 Practices – Count

Practice	Count	Amount	Obligations
Cover Crop	4632	640679.4	\$ 23,395,338.46
Irrigation Water Management	4171	599997.4	\$ 8,227,341.77
Watering Facility	3308	37651.5	\$ 9,523,631.68
Conservation Crop Rotation	2262	88927.1	\$ 11,782,863.61
Brush Management	2234	107764.2	\$ 9,748,693.33
Fence	2029	7219837.5	\$ 8,854,276.17
Livestock Pipeline	1930	10061025.4	\$ 15,445,573.18
Pumping Plant	1719	1833.5	\$ 9,041,159.01
Terrace	1474	8128520.2	\$ 10,216,479.68
Water Well	1223	3062	\$ 4,958,182.01
Underground Outlet	1101	1856950.7	\$ 6,705,788.06
Critical Area Planting	789	1940.5	\$ 405,208.40
Nutrient Management	626	173242.6	\$ 3,557,348.03
Prescribed Grazing	593	125043	\$ 2,748,983.70
Structure for Water Control	584	823	\$ 767,670.68
Mulching	551	38040.8	\$ 1,265,119.62
Irrigation Pipeline	461	523604.9	\$ 2,764,352.22
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation	455	1792363.8	\$ 502,637.02
Prescribed Burning	443	97327.8	\$ 1,273,119.06
Sprinkler System	383	31549.5	\$ 13,313,867.15
Pasture and Hay Planting	302	21482.5	\$ 2,144,798.28
Grassed Waterway	269	1028.2	\$ 1,396,931.67
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till	265	49444.7	\$ 584,149.89



United States Department of Agriculture

Organic Transition Initiative



FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Organic Transition Initiative

- The EQIP-OTI provides funding to support producers transitioning to organic production by providing financial assistance (FA) and technical assistance (TA) to implement conservation practices that support organic production.
- The OTI supports USDA's objective of developing diverse and equitable food systems while encouraging climate-smart agriculture by focusing funds on transitioning producers to organic production.
- OTI is a separate initiative than the National Organic Initiative (NOI). NOI will still be offered in EQIP.
- States will receive funding based on the number of applications received.

Organic Transition Initiative

- Contract Development and Requirements
 - **EQIP-OTI contracts must include the Organic Management (823) conservation practice.**
 - Organic Management (823) and supporting land management practices may receive up to five separate payments. Refer to 440 CPM § 530.406(B)(4).
 - Practices or activities that directly support practice code 823 may be included in the contract and receive payment.
 - While EQIP allows contracts to last up to 10 years, Nebraska is encouraging to limit the schedule of operations for OTI contracts to the shortest period to support organic transition.
 - **Note:** While organic transitioning can occur within three years or less, additional years may be needed.
 - **Applicants may choose to transition their entire operation or a part of their operation.**
 - Producers will self-certify their eligibility for participation in OTI by identifying their operation as transitioning to become certified using form NRCS-CPA-1200 under item 4(d). If selected for participation, the producer must meet the standards of each classification.



Organic Transition Initiative

Contract must include at minimum 823 Organic Management

Organic Transition Initiative Practices	
Practice Code	Core Practice
823	Organic Management
Practice Code	Facilitating Practices and Activities
138	Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (CPA)
140	Transition to Organic Design (DIA)
327	Conservation Cover
328	Conservation Crop Rotation
340	Cover Crop
386	Field Border
590	Nutrient Management

Example facilitating practices.
May now include any
practice as long as it directly
supports the transition to
organic production on part or
all of the agricultural
operation

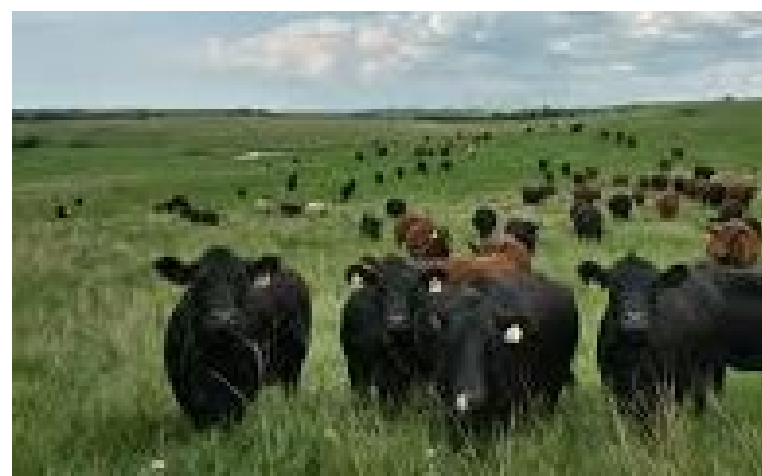
Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Nebraska

- Total Active EQIP Contracts – June 2023
 - Total Active Contracts = 2,767
 - Total Contract Acres = 1.1 million
 - Obligated funds = \$91.4 million



United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Stewardship Program



FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

2018 Farm Bill Funding:

\$700 million in FY19

\$723 million in FY20

\$750 million in FY21

\$800 million in FY22

\$1 billion in FY23



Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- FY2023 Allocations

- CSP Classic = \$11.8 Million
- CSP Organic = \$200,000
- CSP Renewal = \$10.9 Million
- CSP-Grassland Conservation Initiative = \$48,225

- FY2023 Applications

- Classic = 964
- Renewal = 381
- GCI = 46

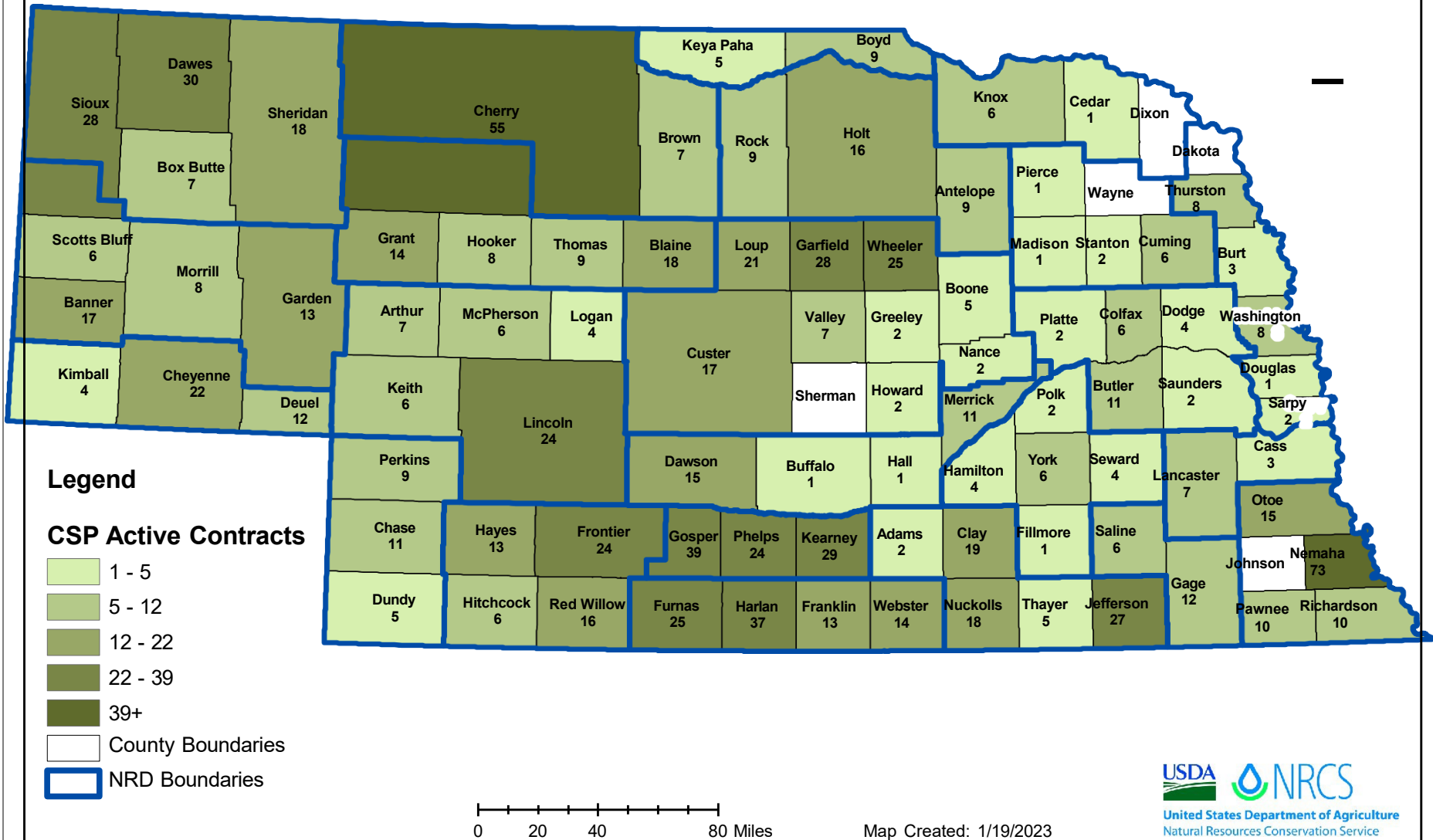
- FY2023 Contracts

- Renewal = 104

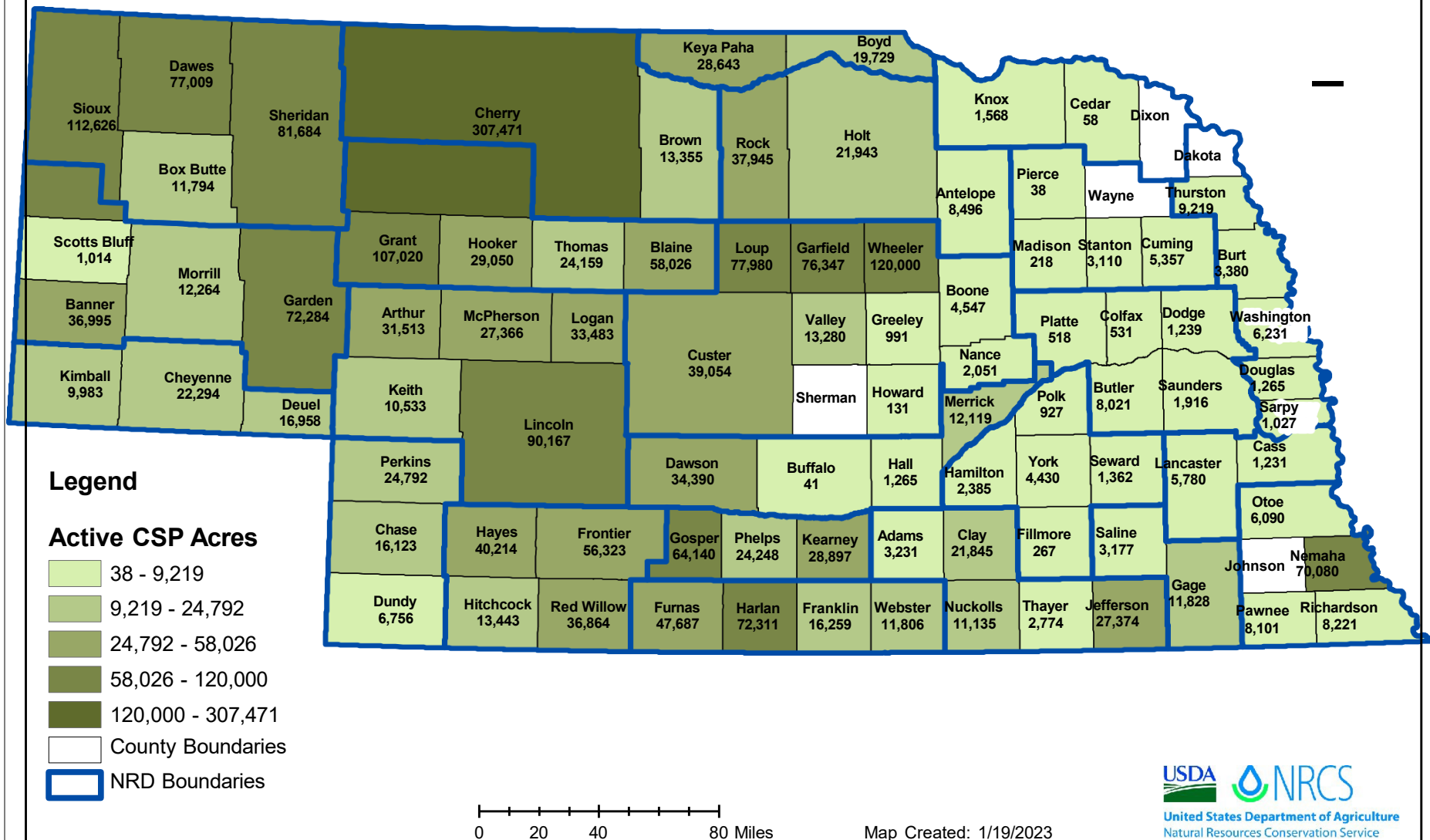
Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

- Total Active CSP Contracts – June 2023
 - Contracts = 1,552
 - Contract Acres = 2.4 million
 - Obligated funds = \$99.8 million

Nebraska Active CSP Contracts by County

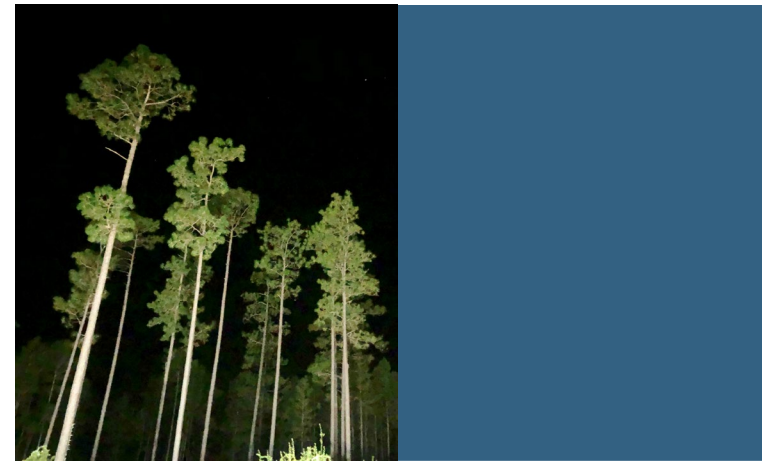


Nebraska Active CSP Acres by County





United States Department of Agriculture



Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

FY2023 ACEP - Nebraska

Fiscal Year Allocation of Funds

- ACEP-WRE - \$2,014,067
- ACEP-ALE - \$652,477
- ACEP-WRE/WRP Stewardship Funds - \$554,631
 - These funds are for maintenance and repairs of existing WRE and WRP easements.
- IRA funding pending for Nebraska

FY2023 ACEP - Nebraska

- Eligible Applications
 - WRE Applications = 9, Acres = 1,389
 - Estimated funding needed: \$6,717,204
 - ALE Applications = 4, Acres = 8,969
 - Estimated funding needed: \$2,891,700

FY2023 EWPP-FPE - Nebraska

Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE)

- Applications = 21, Acres = 5,590
- Estimated Requested funding: \$20,313,085
- 13 have cancelled or found ineligible
- Offers accepted = 8, Acres = 1,225
- Estimated funding needed: \$4,428,440
- 3 easements closed and restored
- 5 easements pending closing



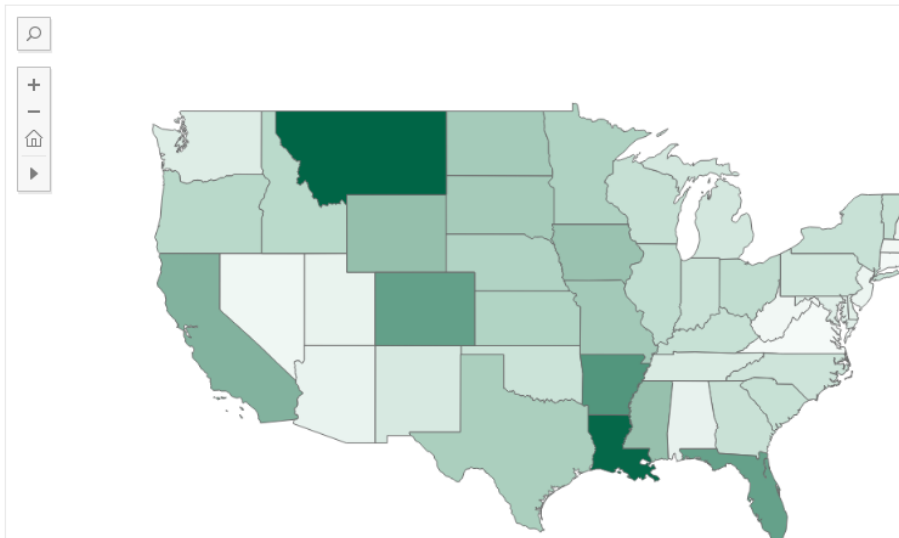
30 Years of NRCS Easement Programs

Easements Overview Map

Use the measure selector dropdown to customize what is visualized on the map. Select a map area to choose an area to focus the map on. Selecting a state to drilldown to will filter the map and go down to the county level.

Select Measure: Acres

Select Map Area: Contiguous U.S.



Data Filters

Conservation Purpose Filter

(All)

Program Filter

(All)

Closing Fiscal Year Filter

(All)

Easement Type

Closed Easements

State Drilldown

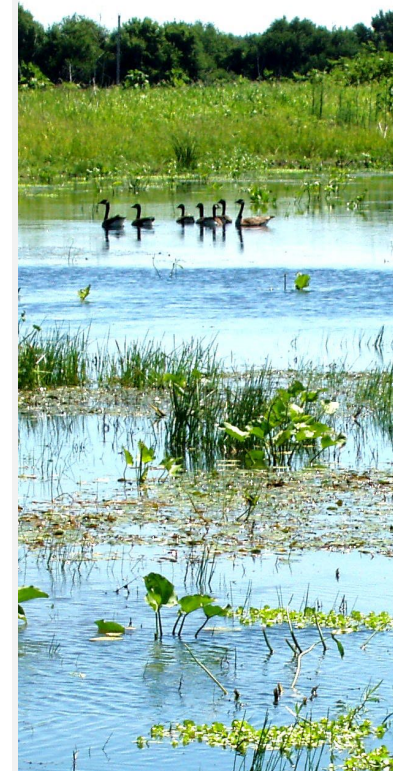
Select a State

National

Color Legend

59 338,455

Nationwide



Natural
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Service

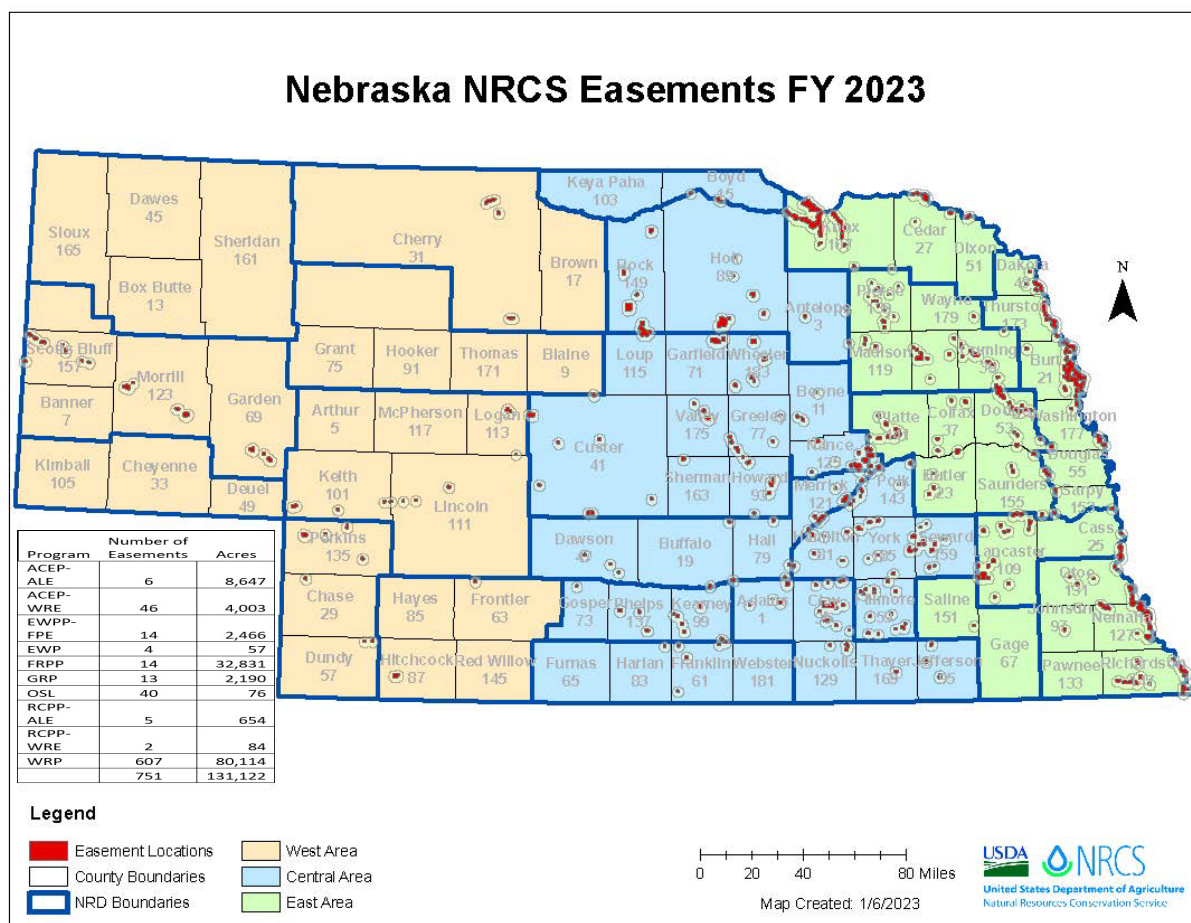
nrcs.usda.gov/

[Easement Program Data | Farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov)





30 Years of NRCS Easement Programs



Nebraska



745 easements

130,777.24 acres

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/





United States Department of Agriculture

ACEP Programmatic Requirements



[Nebraska Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\) | Natural Resources Conservation Service \(usda.gov\)](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/acep)

Webpage Updates

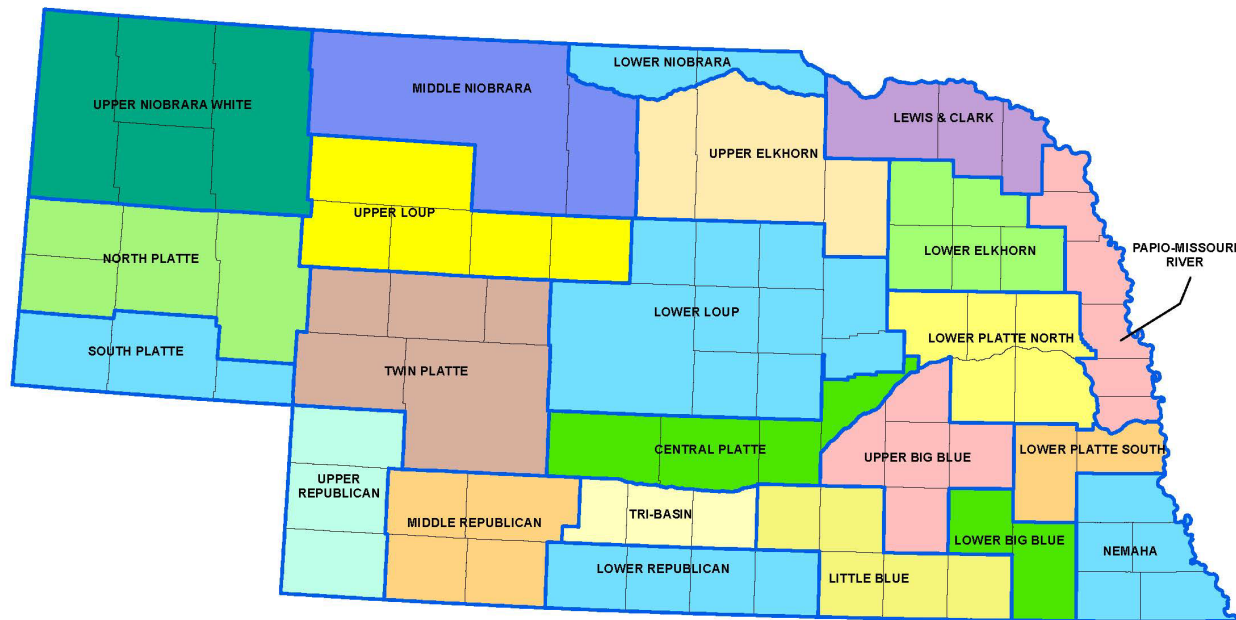


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FY2023 LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS



LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS

- Meetings completed in February/March 2023
- *LOCAL WORK GROUP AGENDA ITEMS:*
 - Priority Resource Concerns
 - Fund Pools - Ranking Tools – Screening Tools
 - Practice Payment Schedule
 - Local issues

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Program/Initiative Requests**

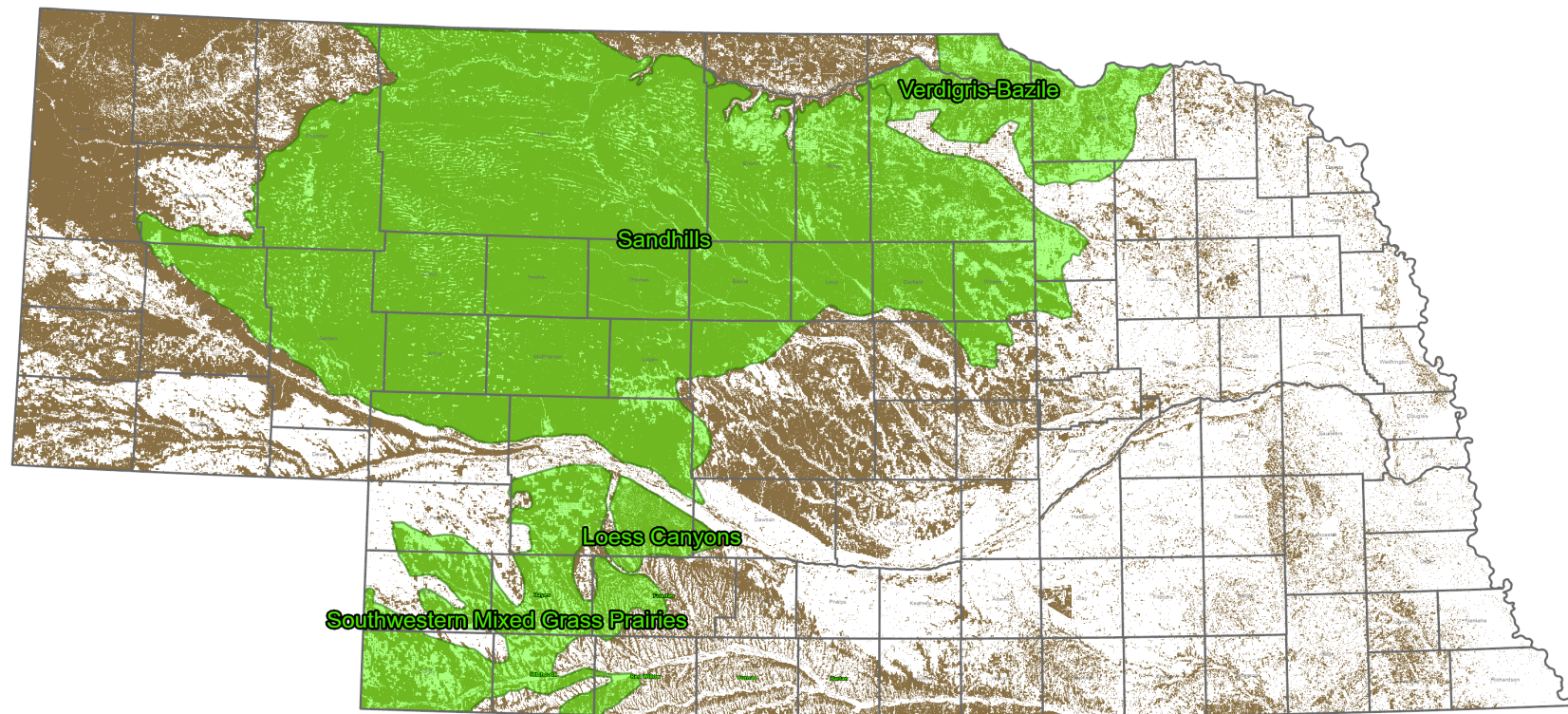
- **LWG request (FY24):** The recommendation was made to provide a short-term “set aside” program, similar to the idling of acres laid out in the 1980’s PIK program. Contracts could be 1-2 years and focus on the underperforming and low yielding acres in a field. Annual payment on a per acre basis would be made, simple, low maintenance cover would be planted to meet wildlife objectives. This could potentially be a short-term CRP contract, or something planned through EQIP CIC.
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Program/Initiative Requests

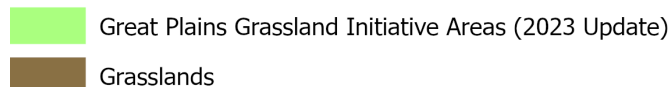
- **LWG request (FY24):** LWG requests the GPGL area in the Loess Canyons be expanded 2 more miles to the east, so it covers the area south of Cozad. This would help greatly with the large area burns and lumping projects together, but a large area south of Cozad is not included in the GPGL boundary at this time.(CPNRD)
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Nebraska Great Plains Grassland Initiative (GPGI)



United States Department of Agriculture

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Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Program/Initiative Requests

- **LWG request (FY24):** Consider including a broader range of eligible practices in any future Wildfire Initiatives – specifically tree belt renovations and tree/shrub plantings.
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practices and Scenario Requests

- **Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)**
- **NRCS-ECS request (FY24):** add a scenario from the regional/national list for 315 that would provide a higher per acre payment rate than the current scenario 1 (chemical ground, which is \$21.59/ac.). Field offices in the Panhandle have landowners that are interested in utilizing the new herbicide for cheatgrass control in rangeland (Rejuvra- TM). This herbicide is a long lasting pre-emergent that provides multi-season control. Subsequentially it is significantly more expensive per acre (\$43 - \$61 per acre plus application of est. \$20).
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practices and Scenario Requests**
 - **Conservation Crop Rotation (328)**
 - **LWG request (FY24):** Recommend changing scenario to pay on all acres in the rotation. Or we need to increase the payment rate to make it more enticing.
 - **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **LWG request (FY24):** Include 338 Prescribed Burning on the Climate Smart Core/Facilitating Practices list to allow for inclusion in Inflation Reduction Act Funding. 338 can be a facilitating practice under the 528 Prescribed Grazing core practice. Prescribed fire is an important tool for habitat management and used to reduce wildfire impacts and improve resiliency related to climate change impacts.
- **Action:** Follow up with additional training. 338 Prescribed Burning can currently be used as a facilitating practice to 528 Prescribed Grazing.

Local Workgroup Recommendations

• Practices and Scenario Requests

- **Cover Crop (340)**
- **LWG request (FY24):** Would like to see a cover crop 340 scenario for inter-seeding the seeding rate would need to decrease some. I am currently working with the NRD and Extension for a rate that would work.
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario Requests**
 - **Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (380)**
 - **LWG request (FY24):** Add scenario for 380 (potted and hand planting scenario)
 - **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **Irrigation Water Management (449)**
- **LWG request (FY24):** The group recommended that changes to the IWM scenarios be made to allow technology that allows for soil moisture to be monitored by means other than soil moisture probes, such as ground penetrating radar or other methods that do not require soil moisture probes.
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practices and Scenario Requests**

- **Prescribed Grazing (528)**
- **LWG request (FY24):** Add scenario for <3 pastures.
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **Livestock Shelter Structure (576)**
- **LWG request (FY24):** A recommendation to evaluate the livestock shelter (576) standard so that used or other available materials may be considered to make it more feasible to install in areas of high risk of cedar invasion. Recommendations were made regarding Livestock Shelter Structures In lieu of Windbreaks using trees especially in areas of high risk of invasion. Discussion on the engineering requirements for the Livestock Shelter Structure are impossible to meet. **A recommendation to evaluate the livestock shelter standard so that used or other available materials may be considered in the 576 specifications.** (ULNRD, TPNRD, UNWNRD)
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**
 - **LWG request (FY24):** Allow for Pest Management Conservation Systems (595), (PAMS) approach to be available for all brush management applications (i.e., outside GPGI areas).
 - **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**
 - **Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities (643)**
 - **LWG request (FY24):** Recommend adopting practice (643) Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities with a scenario for beaver analog structures as a cost sharable practice. Recommended payment rate would be \$10 - \$15 per foot.
 - **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**
 - **Annual Forages for Grazing Systems (810)**
 - **NRCS-ECS request (FY24):** Develop new scenario with forgone income (FI). Needed for purpose to incentivize people to utilize prescribed burning since one of the top reasons producers say they can not do it is because they have no place to go with their cows to grow the fine fuel on their rangeland.
 - **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **LWG request (FY24):** We recommend on SSUA. NRCS wants to treat resource concerns for the good of all not just pay large amounts to individuals. Many times, produce only for personal use.
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**
 - **LWG request (FY24):** It was recommended that the 40# that producers are allowed to be over when implementing nutrient management be taken out so that if they don't meet our recommendations they wouldn't get paid for their nutrient management.
 - **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **LWG request (FY24):** For Animal Feeding Operations, add lagoon sensor for especially when combined with irrigation probes to make good effluent application decisions and best practices decisions.
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **LWG request (FY24):** Provide an incentive on low pressure pivot wheels upgrades especially when pivot encounters a restored wetland that is under a USDA programs. Incentive can be used for water quality/quantity tied to wetland recovery.
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **LWG request (FY24):** Add to cover more cost of variable rate irrigation to change speed by degree & create accurate zones by mapping the field w/ soil sled.
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **LWG request (FY24):** Fire inclusion needs to be included in existing scenarios to support native grassland composition. Current scenario leaves fragmented grasslands and complicates management leading to invasive cool season grasses, lower productivity and reduced fish and wildlife benefits.
- **Action:** Follow up with training. 338 Prescribed Burning can currently be used in conjunction with these practices to support.

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**
 - **LWG request (FY24):** Add incentives for Soil Carbon credits, application of Humic can increase carbon and organic matter.
 - **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Request for payment rate and Payment Cap adjustments**
 - **LWG request for FY24:** Various requests to increase, decrease or maintain FY24 payment rates and caps for Cover Crops, Nutrient Management, Wells, Pumping Plants, High Tunnel System, Livestock Pipeline, Conservation Crop Rotation.
 - **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Request for payment rate and Payment Cap adjustments**
 - **LWG request (FY24):** Recommend changing the \$100,000 per practice payment limit for AFO's. It seems lopsided that a pit barn is limited to \$100,000, but a bedded pack barn can get up to \$200,000. In addition to that all the construction cost increased. c. Recommend adding wording as such – any combination of practices for barns specifically be capped at \$200,000 and the caps would be entered manually in Protracts.(LENRD)
- **Action:** Under review for FY24

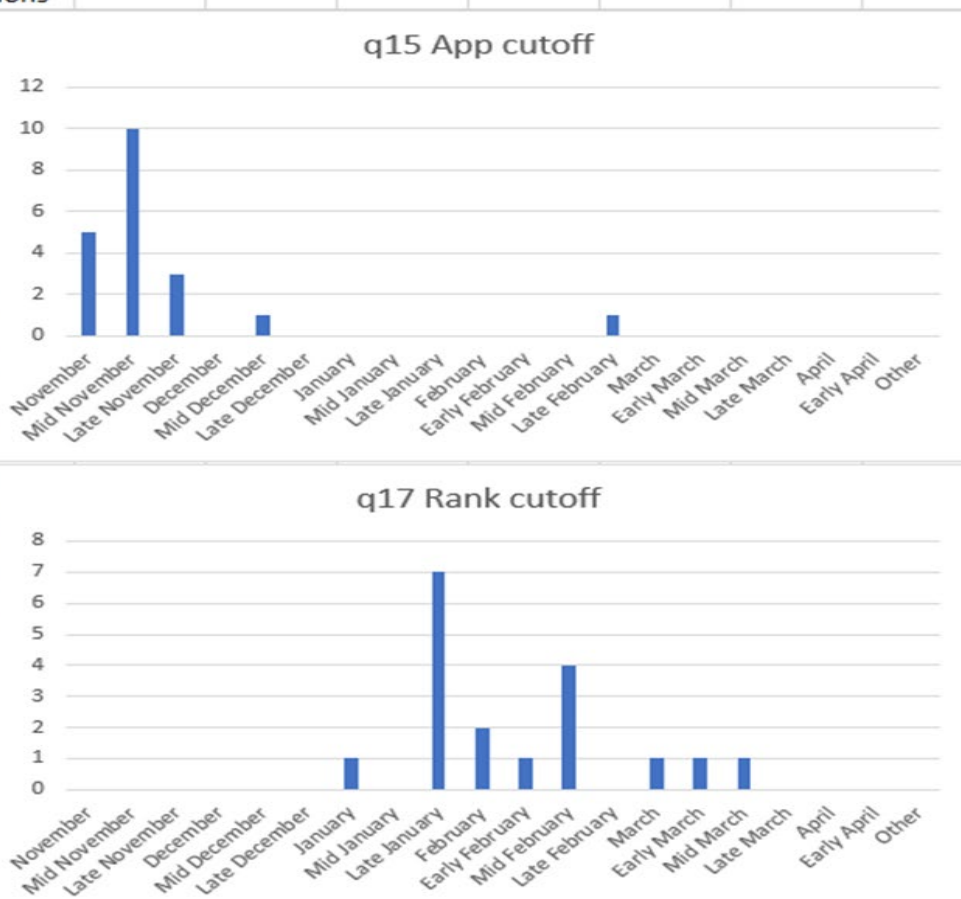
Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Request for payment rate and Payment Cap adjustments**
 - **NRCS-ECS request (FY24):** Recommend removing the ceilings from waste storage (313) and Roof and covers (367) due to the increased cost of construction not being reflected in the payment scenarios. We have had producers with good projects turn down EQIP money because of the increased costs.
 - **Action:** Under review for FY24

Local Workgroup Recommendations

EQIP application and ranking cutoff dates

	q15 App cutoff	Answer Options	q17 Rank cutoff	Answer Options
November	5	1	0	1
Mid November	10	2	0	2
Late November	3	3	0	3
December	0	4	0	4
Mid December	1	5	0	5
Late December	0	6	0	6
January	0	7	1	7
Mid January	0	8	0	8
Late January	0	9	7	9
February	0	10	2	10
Early February	0	11	1	11
Mid February	0	12	4	12
Late February	1	13	0	13
March	0	14	1	14
Early March	0	15	1	15
Mid March	0	16	1	16
Late March	0	17	0	17
April	0	18	0	18
Early April	0	19	0	19
Other	0	20	0	20
Total	20		18	





QUESTIONS?



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Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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State Technical Committee June Updates

**Farm
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CRP Update

❖ Continuous Signups:

- SU59 CLEAR30
- SU59 Platte Republican CREP
- SU59 Farmable Wetlands
- SU59 Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI)

Continuous Signup 59

Continuous CRP Deadlines

The following are the FY 2023 continuous CRP deadlines.

Date	Action
July 31, 2023	Deadline for producers to submit an offer for re-enrolled land or combination new and re-enrolled land for continuous CRP signup 59.
August 7, 2023	Deadline for producers to request a conservation plan from NRCS. County Office deadline to enter the status in COLS as “Submit for Plan” for continuous CRP signup 59. Note: FSA must provide offers to NRCS within 5 workdays of receiving the submitted offer from the producer.
September 8, 2023	Deadline for NRCS/TSP to complete the conservation plan, sign and obtain signatures of all signatories on CRP-1, and return the conservation plan to FSA.
September 29, 2023	Deadline for COC or CED to approve CRP-1’s and load CRP-1 approvals in COLS. Note: There is no authority to approve CRP-1 after September 29, 2023, for offers that include re-enrolled land for continuous CRP signup 59.

CRP Update

❖ Signups that require National Office Ranking Process:

- SU59, Migratory Birds, Butterflies & Pollinator SAFE (KS, NE & OK)
- SU60 General CRP
- SU205 Grassland CRP

Migratory Bird SAFE – (Multi State SAFE)

4th Signup - January 3, 2023 - March 17, 2023

Nebraska						
Southwestern Nebraska Ranking Cluster						
Banner	Chase	Cheyenne	Deuel	Dundy	Frontier	Garden
Hayes	Hitchcock	Keith	Kimball	Lincoln	Perkins	
Central Table Nebraska Ranking Cluster						
Buffalo	Custer	Dawson	Logan	Sherman	Valley	
Rainwater Basin Nebraska Ranking Cluster						
Butler	Clay	Franklin	Gosper	Hall	Hamilton	Harlan
Kearney	Adams	Nuckolls	Filmore	Phelps	Polk	Thayer
Saline	Seward	York	Webster			

Migratory Bird SAFE – 4th Signup

May 25, 2023, DAFP announced Acceptable Offers

Nebraska:

Offers Submitted: 24

Accepted Offers = 13

Kansas:

Offers Submitted: 120

Accepted Offers = 60

Oklahoma:

Offers Submitted: 15

Accepted Offers = 7

General Signup 60

Signup Period: February 27, 2023 – April 7, 2023

Offers Submitted = 625

Acres Offered = 28,720.49

Waiting on DAFP (National Office) to announce signup results.

Dates	Deadlines
April 7, 2023	Deadline for producer to submit offer
August 11, 2023	NRCS/TSP deadline to return completed/signed Conservation Plan to FSA
September 29, 2023	CRP-1's approved and loaded into COLS by FSA

Grasslands CRP Signup 205

Signup Period: April 17, 2023 – May 26, 2023
(Register deadline - June 2, 2023)

Offers Submitted: 2,065

Acres Offered: 764,576.4

**Waiting on DAFP (National Office) to announce
signup results.**

Current Counties Approved for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) in 2023

- Cherry/Thomas Counties – Bovee Fire = 10/2/2022
- Nuckolls County = 10/23/2022 Wildfire
- Custer County = 4/12/2023 - 4/13/2023 – Wildfire
- Garfield County = 4/11/2023 – Lowry Wildfire
- Blaine County = 4/7/2023 – Del Porto Wildfire
- Cherry County = 4/11/2023 – McCann Wildfire
- Blaine County = 4/12 – 4/13 – Cooksley Fire, Melbourne Fire, Pleasant Valley Fire

NOTE: Wildfires in Cherry, Thomas and Nuckolls County that occurred in October 2022, signups have ended.

The remaining counties in April, Custer County is the only county that started signup. Remaining counties have all been approved, signups will start soon or have already started.