

# NEBRASKA STAC MEETING MINUTES

September 7, 2023

1:00 – 3:30 p.m.

100 Centennial Mall N. RM 397B

Lincoln, NE 68508

[YOUTUBE RECORDING LINK](#)

**ATTENDEES:** Brad Soncksen, Rob Lawson, Tami Nordman, Conor Ward, Jami Thoene, Fred Stevens, Jerald Kovarik, Burdette Piening, Buffalo Bruce, Samantha Smith, Kent Zimmerman, Elbert Traylor, Jessica Russell, Noah Hovorka, Kole Pederson, David Schroeter, Dan Ruterbories;

**VIA TEAMS:** Charles Bailey, Andy Bishop, Jolene Bopp, Debbie Borg, Timothy Buskirk, Chandler Schmidt, Curt Becker, Dean Edson, Dustin Wilcox, Ele Nugent, Jana Ingwersen-Laws, Jennifer Swanson, Kalee Olson, Kelsi Wehrman, Wesley March, Mark Brohman, Lavaine Moore, Jennifer Prenosil, Rich Walters, John Risetto, Shelly Kelly, Sara Starostka, Carlos Villarreal, Britt Weiser, Rachael Whitehair, John Hansen Bryce Puck Crystal Powers, Will Inselman, Roger Yerdon;

---

## FUTURE Meetings:

- ❖ DECEMBER 7, 2023
- ❖ MARCH 7, 2024
- ❖ JUNE 13, 2024
- ❖ SEPTEMBER 5, 2024
- ❖ DECEMBER 5, 2024



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

- Agenda Review
  - Personnel updates
    - Jami Thoene new outreach coordinator out of the State Office.
    - Brach Johnson has shifted to Urban Small Scale Conservationist
    - Bryan Sh, DC replacing Mark in the Lower Platte North
    - JoAnna Pope is on detail for NHQ & we have Jolene Bopp acting right now from Iowa
    - Jerald Kovoriak is acting for Neil Dominy while he is acting STC in Iowa.
    - Intern job announcements will be coming open in Mid-October.
  - IRA FA was fully used for this Fiscal Year.
-



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

- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) REVIEW
  - **SEE SLIDES & HANDOUT attached.**
  - Began Fiscal Year 2023
  - 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 = 52**
      - **ACEP-IRA**
        - **Nebraska Allocation = \$300,000.00**
        - **Applications = 8**
  - 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
- **CSP REVIEW**
  - **SEE SLIDES attached.**
  - **CSP NEBRASKA**
    - **Total Active CSP Contracts – August 2023**
      - Contracts = 1,651
      - Contract Acres = 2.6 million
      - Obligated funds = \$112 million
- **ACEP REVIEW**
  - **SEE SLIDES attached.**
  - **FY23 ACEP-NE**
    - 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
    - **30 Years of NRCS Easement Programs Review**
      - **Program Website:**  
[Nebraska Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#)  
[| Natural Resources Conservation Service \(usda.gov\)](#)
  - **FY2024 ACEP-WRE Compensation**
    - Will use appraisals again in FY2024 to determine Fair Market Value (FMV) statewide.
    - 5% reduction of FMV for retained use value.
    - Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC)
    - NTE \$12,970 for irrigated cropland
    - NTE \$9,320 for all other land uses
  - Applications taken year-round.
  - FY24 application cut-off proposed for November 17, 2023.
  - This is for WRE, WRE-WREP, ALE and ALE-GSS.
- **Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE)**
  - 3 easements closed and restored
  - 5 easements pending closing
- **EQUIP REVIEW**
  - **SEE SLIDES attached.**
  - Fund Pools for FY23
  - FY23 Allocations
    - **FA Initial Allocation = \$31.5 Million**
      - EQUIP General = \$29.1 million (Includes NWQI & OTI)

- EQIP-NWQI = \$1.7 million
  - EQIP-OTI = \$ 139,000
  - EQIP IRA = \$2.4 million
- FY2023 Applications and Contracts
  - EQIP General = 3,600 Contracts = 932 (379,000 ac.)
  - EQIP-IRA = 280 Contracts = 111 (33,000 ac.)
- FY23 Practices & Obligations
- Total Active EQIP Contracts – September 2023
  - Total Active Contracts = 2,754
  - Total Contract Acres = 1.1 million
  - Obligated funds = \$92.0 million
- FY2024 Fund Pools
  - Mandatory Distribution
    - Statewide Fund Pools
- **EQIP-CONSERVAITON INCENTIVE CONTRACTS (CIC)**
  - See Slides.
- **SOURCE WATER PROTECTION**
  - FY 24 Review Protection Practices
  - FY24 Wildlife Practices
- **LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS**
  - **Completed end of March**
    - See Slides attached or via website for the FY23 Local Workgroup Recommendations & the actions taken on them.
- **CONSERVAITON INNOVATION GRANTS (CIG)**
  - **Applications are being accepted now through October 30, 2023.**
  - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of \$65 million through two funding opportunities for new tools, approaches, practices and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands through the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program.
  - Of this funding, \$25 million will be delivered through the Inflation Reduction Act.
  - Two separate CIG funding opportunities are now available on grants.gov
    - \$50 million through CIG On-Farm Trials
    - \$15 million through CIG Classic
  - For CIG On-Farm Trials, this year's funding priorities are:
    - Irrigation water management technologies
    - Nutrient management
    - Feeding management and enteric methane reduction
    - Grazing lands
    - Soil health demonstration trials
    - **USDA-NRCS-NHQ-CIGOFT-23-NOFO0001312**
    - [View Opportunity | GRANTS.GOV](#)



- **CIG Classic**
    - For CIG Classic, this year's funding priorities are:
      - Forestry
      - Habitat conservation and restoration for wildlife and invertebrates
      - Managing agricultural lands to improve local water quality
      - Energy conservation
      - Economics
      - Strengthening conservation through indigenous knowledge
    - USDA-NRCS-NHQ-CIGCLASSIC-23-NOFO0001311
- 

## **RCPP & INITIATIVES PROJECTS UPDATE** – Fred Stevens, NRCS Programs Specialist

- (SEE SLIDES FOR MORE INFORMATION)
- Farm Bill (FB) 14 RCPP Projects
  - Papillion Creek Site WP-1 Dam #1712
    - Status: Final Design & Construction Planned 2024
    - Expires: 8/31/2023
    - One-Year/No-Cost Extension Requested to 8/31/2024
  - Divots in the Pivots #1564
    - Expires: 9/30/23 as a Successful Project!
- FB18 RCPP Projects
  - Resilient Futures for NE Soils #1966
  - Cropland Cover for Soil Health & Wildlife #2135
  - Ogallala Aquifer & Platte River Recovery #2271
  - Nebraska Forest Restoration Partnership (NFRP) #2173
    - PLEASE ENCOURAGE LANDOWNER PARTICIPATION
  - Platte & Playa Wetland Protection #2434
  - Building Ranch Resiliency #2406
  - Life From Soil – The Ranch Sustainability & Viability Network #2752
- FY23 – NEW RCPP 18 Proposals/Timeline
  - Highlights
    - \$500M Total (Classic and AFA Projects Combined)
      - \$225 IRA + \$275 FB18
    - \$50M set-aside for AFA's with Tribal Entities
    - Proposal/Project Maximum increased to \$25M
    - No Limit on AFA Projects (previous years # of Classic Projects = AFA Projects)
  - Timeline:
    - August 18 - Proposals Due
    - September – State Reviews
    - October/November – National Reviews
    - December – Selections Announced
  - We received 2 AFA Application “Nebraska is listed as partner State”

- We received 3 Classics Applications “Nebraska is the lead State
  - WaterSMART Program
    - Middle Republican NRD Update
    - Upper Republican NRD Update
    - Information about the EQIP WaterSMART Initiative at the National NRCS Landscape Initiatives website:
      - <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/initiatives/>
  - NWQI – National Water Quality Initiative
    - Implementation Areas
      - Bazile Creek Ground Water Management Area
        - NRD’s
          - Lower Elkhorn
          - Lower Niobrara
          - Lewis & Clark
          - Upper Elkhorn
        - 26 Contract = \$1,071,948.26 Obligated
      - Turkey Creek – LOWER BIG BLUE NRD
        - 13 Contracts = \$620,087.00
      - Big Sandy Creek – LITTLE BLUE NRD
        - 1 Contract = \$17,424.00
      - Wahoo Creek – LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD
        - Renewed their plan & working on recruiting producer interest & working with partners.
      - BOW CREEK – LEWIS & CLARK NRD
        - Planning phase
        - Developing the plan
        - Recruiting producer interest & working with partners.
- 



## **FSA REVIEW:** Lavaine Moore - FSA Programs Specialist

- **CPA & Wildlife, Water Quality & Air Quality Zones:**
  - Notice CRP-1003 provided FSA and Partners an opportunity to review/modify CPAs for next General SU (Program Year 2024).
  - Under General Signup a producer must meet land eligibility. For a producer to meet land eligibility the land must meet one of the following:
    - Erodibility – Have a weighted average Erodibility Index (EI) of 8 or greater
    - Expiring CRP – be currently enrolled in CRP the last year of the contract that is set to expire on 09/30 of the current year
    - CPA’s – be located within an approved State CPA
  - 2018 Farm Bill allowed States to reevaluate each year the CPA’s and Zones keeping the following in mind:
    - Recent Updated Environmental Index (EI) calculations

- New estimates for wind and water erosion are more granular than previous signups
- The designated areas shall achieve the desired wildlife, water quality or air quality objectives
- Ensure the minimum land eligibility requirements around erosion are met
- The following was considered by the group when deciding on areas to include, remove or add:
  - Erodibility Benefits Index (EBI)
    - EI Scores changed with new erosion tool
  - Bird Habitat- Grassland bird Species (western meadowlark, dickcissel, greater prairie chicken and sharp-tail grouse.
    - Wanted to increase and/or retain grasslands in areas that will provide the most benefits to grassland species.
  - Water Quality Based & Water Impairments
    - Impaired waters were viewed using NDEE maps, overlapped water quality CPA's and wildlife CPA's where possible to make the most impact
  - Locations of Expiring CRP
    - Contracts that will expire in 2025-2027
  - Avoided areas with heavy irrigation
    - Only pay dryland rates
      - Exception: Platte Republican CREP (pay irrigated rates)
- Comparison previous CPA vs Proposed CPA
  - Northwest Prior CPA/Zones
    - **Recommended CPA:**
      - We wanted to retain the areas within the current CPA boundary with heavy CRP expirations, but the edge of Box Butte are more likely grassland in nature.
  - Southwest Prior CPA/Zones
    - **Recommended CPA:**
      - Greeley and Howard counties are removed from the proposed CPA areas. This area does not contain a large amount of expiring CRP. These acres would be more beneficial added elsewhere in the state.
      - Northern Webster was removed from proposed CPA due to being heavily irrigated land, which landowners typically do not enroll into CRP. There were not many expiring CRP acres in this area.
      - Southwestern Hitchcock was removed from proposed CPA the low amount of any expiring CRP acres. There are many other continuous CRP options for this area.
    - Northeast Prior CPA/Zones

- **Recommended CPA:**

- Pierce County will be increased. The increased area had many clusters of expiring CRP. This area also has a large grassland bird occurrence. Capturing more of this county would cover more of the impaired waters of Bazile Creek.
- The entire county of Thurston will be in proposed area. There were many clusters of expiring CRP. The area has a large grassland bird occurrence. Tribal lands will also be within the proposed CPA.

- Southeast Prior CPA/Zones

- **Recommended CPA:**

- Gage County CPA is being expanded to include many clusters of expiring CRP. It will also capture more of the tributaries leading into the Big Blue River watershed.
- Adding Southwestern Otoe County to proposed CPA. This area has many clusters of expiring CRP. There has been a large decrease in CRP enrollment in this area.

- **CRP UPDATE**

- Continuous Signup 59

- SU59 Clear30
- SU59 Platte Republican CREP
- SU59 Farmable Wetlands
- SU59 Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI)
- FY23 Results
  - Total Offers
    - 1,211
  - Practice Acres
    - 37,815

- Signups that require National Office Ranking Process:

- SU59, Migratory Birds, Butterflies & Pollinator SAFE (KS, NE & OK)
  - Offers Submitted
    - 24
  - Accepted Offers
    - 13
- SU60 General CRP
  - Offers Submitted = 989
  - Offered Acres = 61,358
  - Offers Accepted = 862
  - Accepted Acres = 58,960

- SU205 Grassland CRP
  - Total Offers
    - 1,118
  - Practice Acres
    - 381,850
- 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



## **PARTNER UPDATES:**

- Samantha – NE Dept. of Ag
  - Climate Assessment Response Committee
    - Met in July
- Dan – Lower Platte
  - Soil Health Program
  - Watershed Phase 2 Programs are in place & trying to get watershed plans renewed.
- Timothy Buskirk
  - Submitted
- John Hansen
  - Update on Congressional
    - Farm Bill additional funding for staffing for NRCS & FSA.



## **WRAP UP AND REVIEW OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Retirement of Brad Soncksen
  - Will be having a get together here at the Federal Building in Room 397 on October 27, 2023 @ 2:00 p.m.
- Keep an eye on the cutoff dates coming up.

# 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.

## 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](https://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.

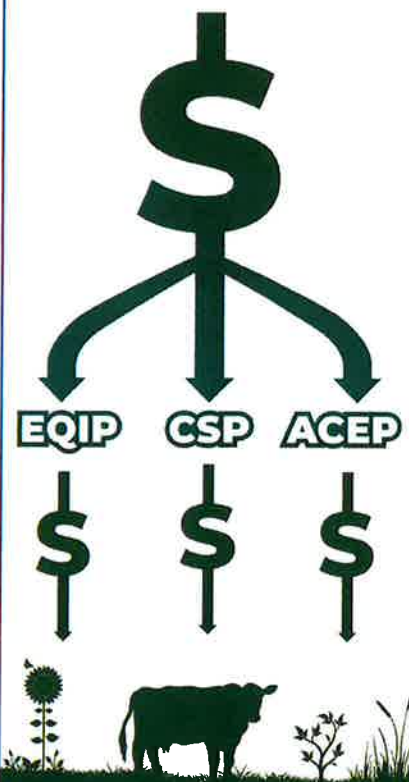
Contact NRCS at: [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).

### 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](https://nrcs.usda.gov/mitigation-activities.pdf), or scan the code. Not all Climate-Smart Practices are available in Nebraska.



## 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  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service**

[nrcs.usda.gov/Nebraska](https://nrcs.usda.gov/Nebraska)



United States Department of Agriculture

# Conservation Programs

## *FY2023 Programs Update IRA, CSP, ACEP, EQIP*



Brad Soncksen, ASTC/Programs

[brad.soncksen@usda.gov](mailto:brad.soncksen@usda.gov)

[www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov)

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





# NRCS, Climate and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)

# 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](https://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> <b>Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List<sup>[1]</sup> FY2023</b> </div>				
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			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. Proposal deadline was 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 = 52
- **ACEP-IRA**
  - Nebraska Allocation = \$300,000
  - Applications = 8 total (4 WRE and 4 ALE/GSS)

# FY2024 IRA Implementation in Nebraska

## Policy Modifications

- Increased all payment caps
- Increase payment rates 10% on all CSAF practices
- Consistency for all programs application, ranking and obligation deadlines.
- Revised policy to allow more flexibility when considering applications for management practices that an applicant has previously implemented when a resource concern still exists.
- Revised “low priority” criteria to line up with the management practices flexibilities. (i.e. revises criteria requiring that a “new” resource concern must be addressed to avoid “low priority” designation)
- Staffing considerations



United States Department of Agriculture

# Conservation Stewardship Program



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



# 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 = \$14.9 million
- CSP Organic = \$200,000
- CSP Renewal = \$10.9 million
- CSP IRA = \$5.3 million
- CSP-Grassland Conservation Initiative = \$130,000

- FY2023 Applications and Contracts

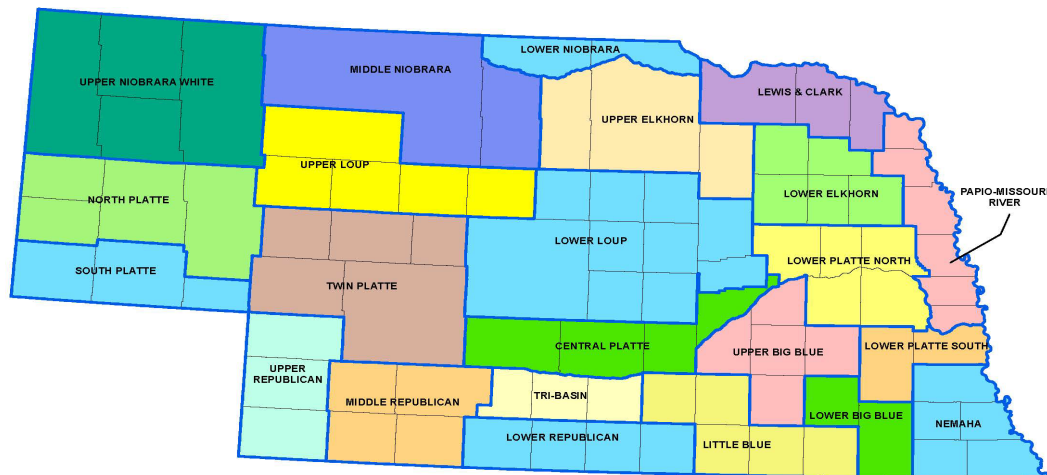
- Classic = 964                      Contracts = 158 (315,000 ac.)
- Renewal = 381                      Contracts = 104 (305,199 ac.)
- CSP-IRA = 52                      Contracts = 52 (140,000 ac.)
- GCI = 46                              Contracts = 39 (1,453 ac.)

# Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

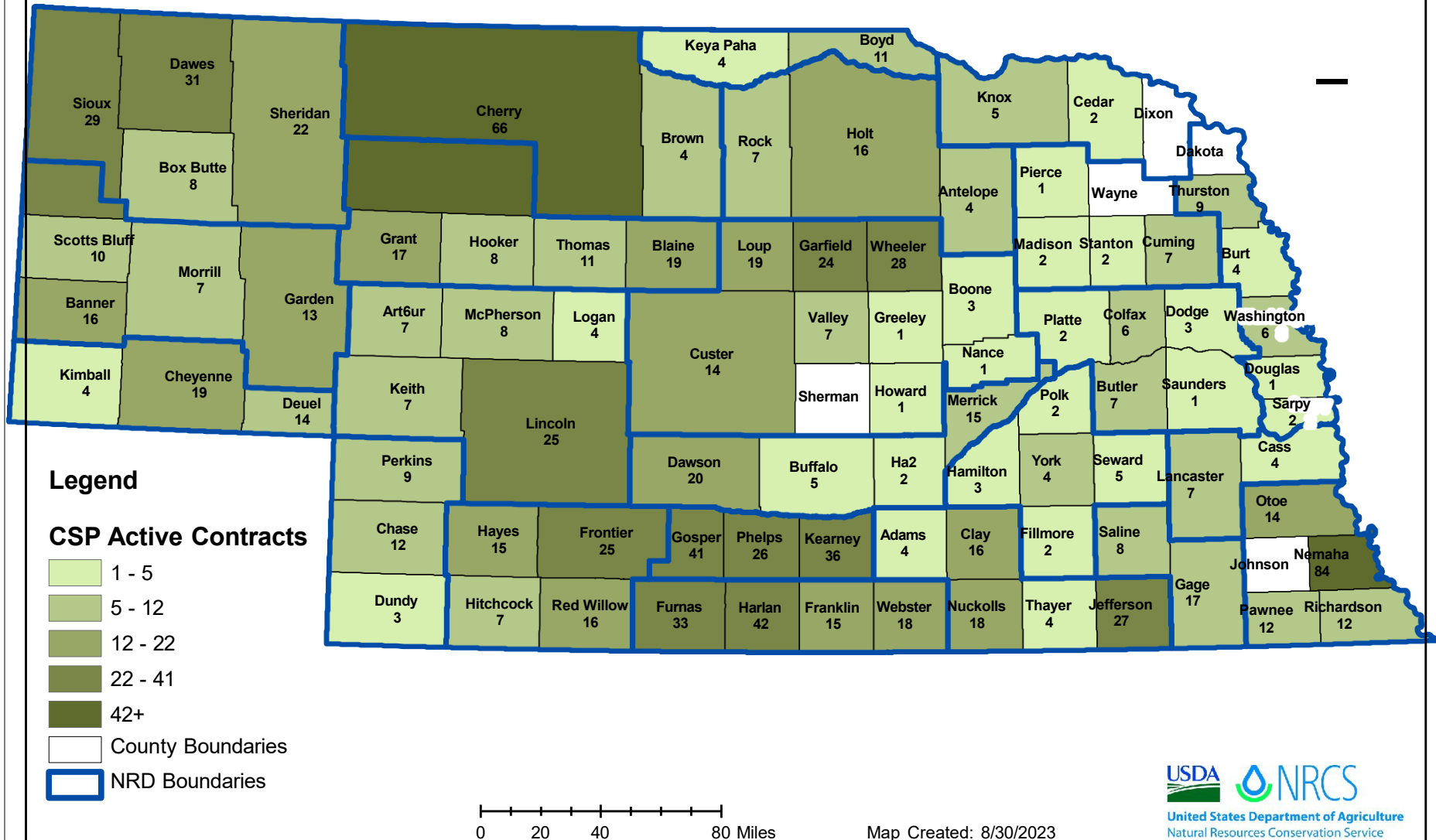
- Total Active CSP Contracts – August 2023
  - Contracts = 1,651
  - Contract Acres = 2.6 million
  - Obligated funds = \$112 million

# Conservation Stewardship Program - Nebraska

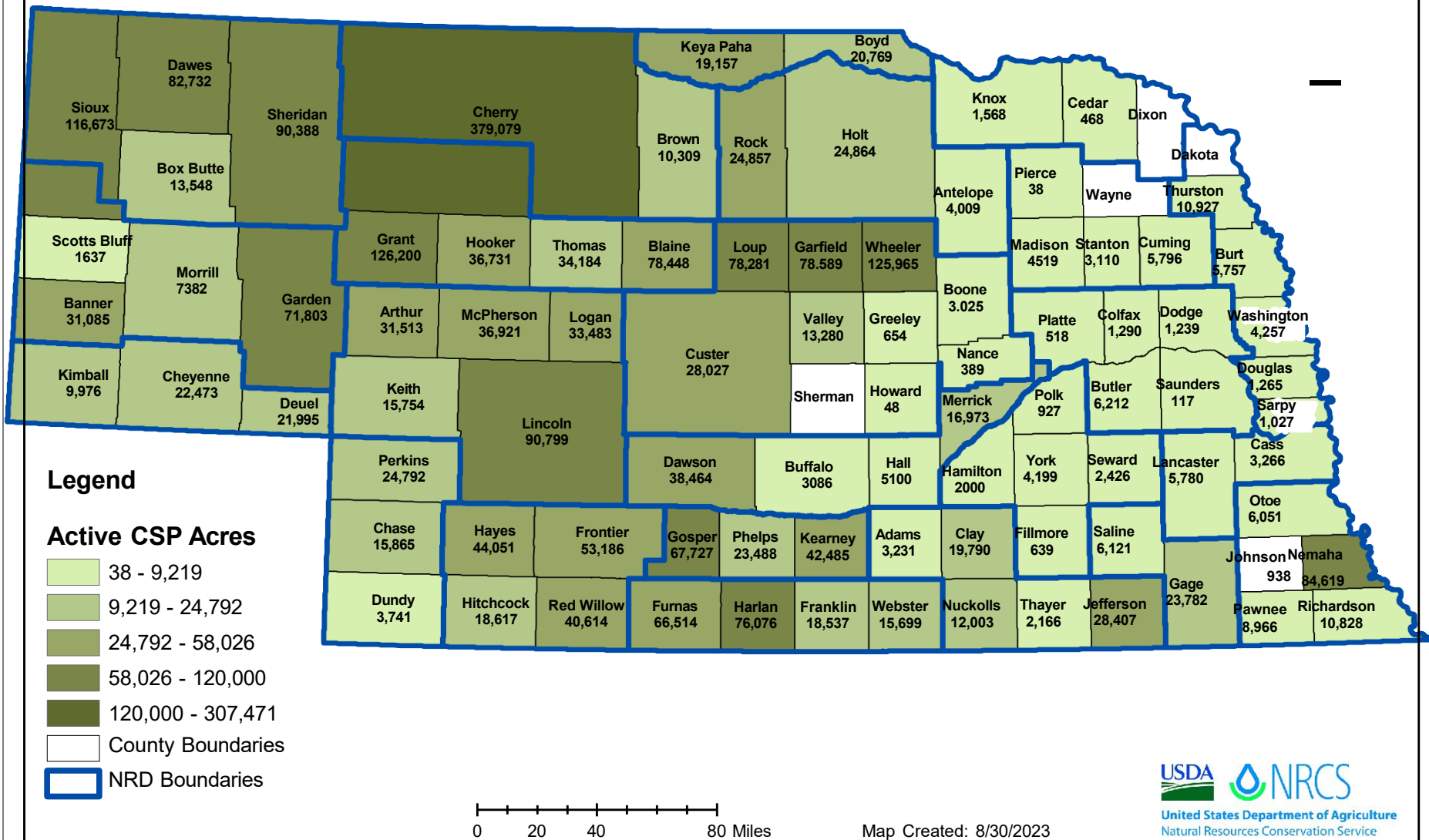
- FY2023 CSP Fund Pools
  - 23 fund pools aligned with DC administrative boundaries
  - Results:
    - Better distribution of contracts across the state



## Nebraska Active CSP Contracts by County



## Nebraska Active CSP Acres by County



# Most Popular CSP Activities in 2023

## 1. Cover crops

Cover crops to reduce erosion

Intensive cover cropping to increase soil health

Cover crop to minimize soil compaction.

## 2. Prescribed grazing

Use of body condition scoring

Improved grazing through monitoring

Maintain quantity and quality of forage .

## 3. Irrigation water management

Advanced automated IWM3.

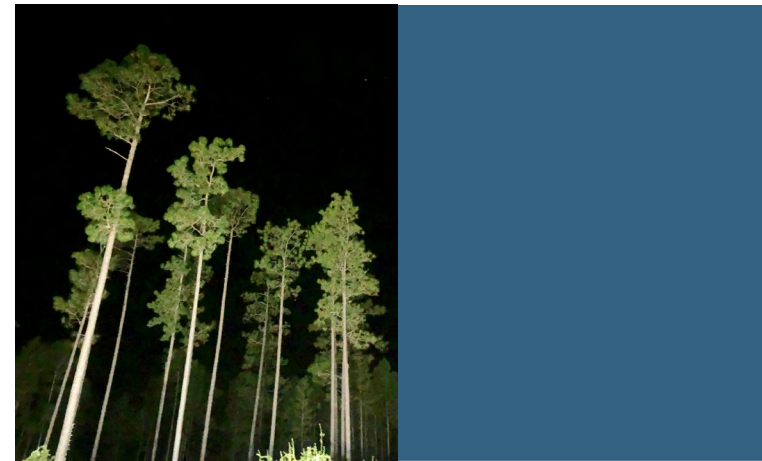
# Most Popular CSP Activities in 2023

4. **Nutrient management**  
Improved nutrient uptake efficiency  
Reduce risks of nutrient loss using precision tech.
5. **Pest management**  
Eliminate chemicals to increase dung beetles  
Reduce pesticides in water using precision appl.  
Reduce pesticides by utilizing PAMS techniques
6. **Forage harvest management**  
Use measures to allow species to flush/escape  
Forage testing for improved quality





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-IRA = \$300,000
- ACEP-WRE/WRP Stewardship Funds - \$554,631
  - These funds are for maintenance and repairs of existing WRE and WRP easements.

# 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

# FY2024 ACEP Compensation

## FY2024 ACEP-WRE Compensation

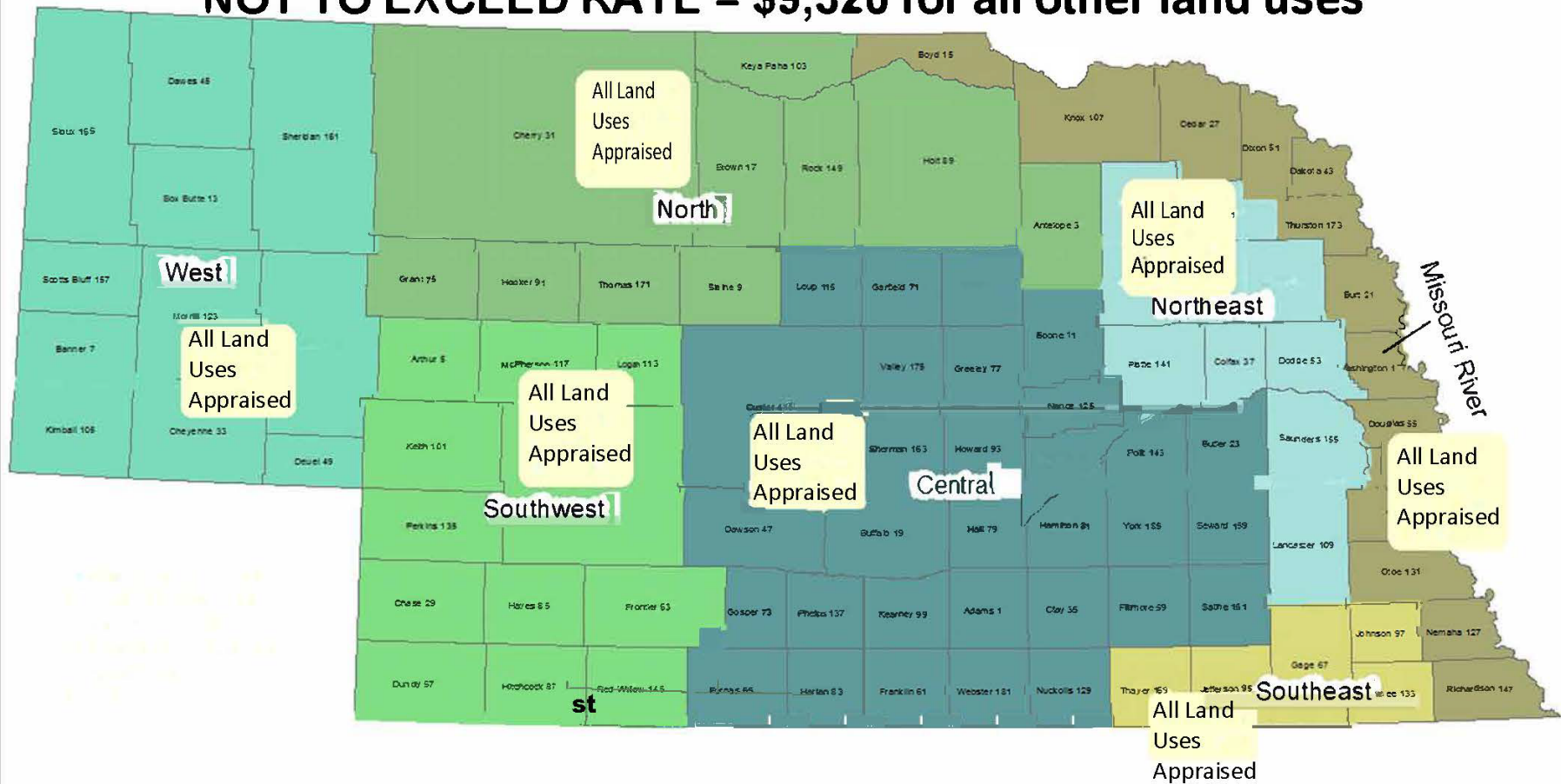
- Will use appraisals again in FY2024 to determine Fair Market Value (FMV) statewide.
- 5% reduction of FMV for retained use value
- Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC)
  - NTE \$12,970 for irrigated cropland
  - NTE \$9,320 for all other land uses



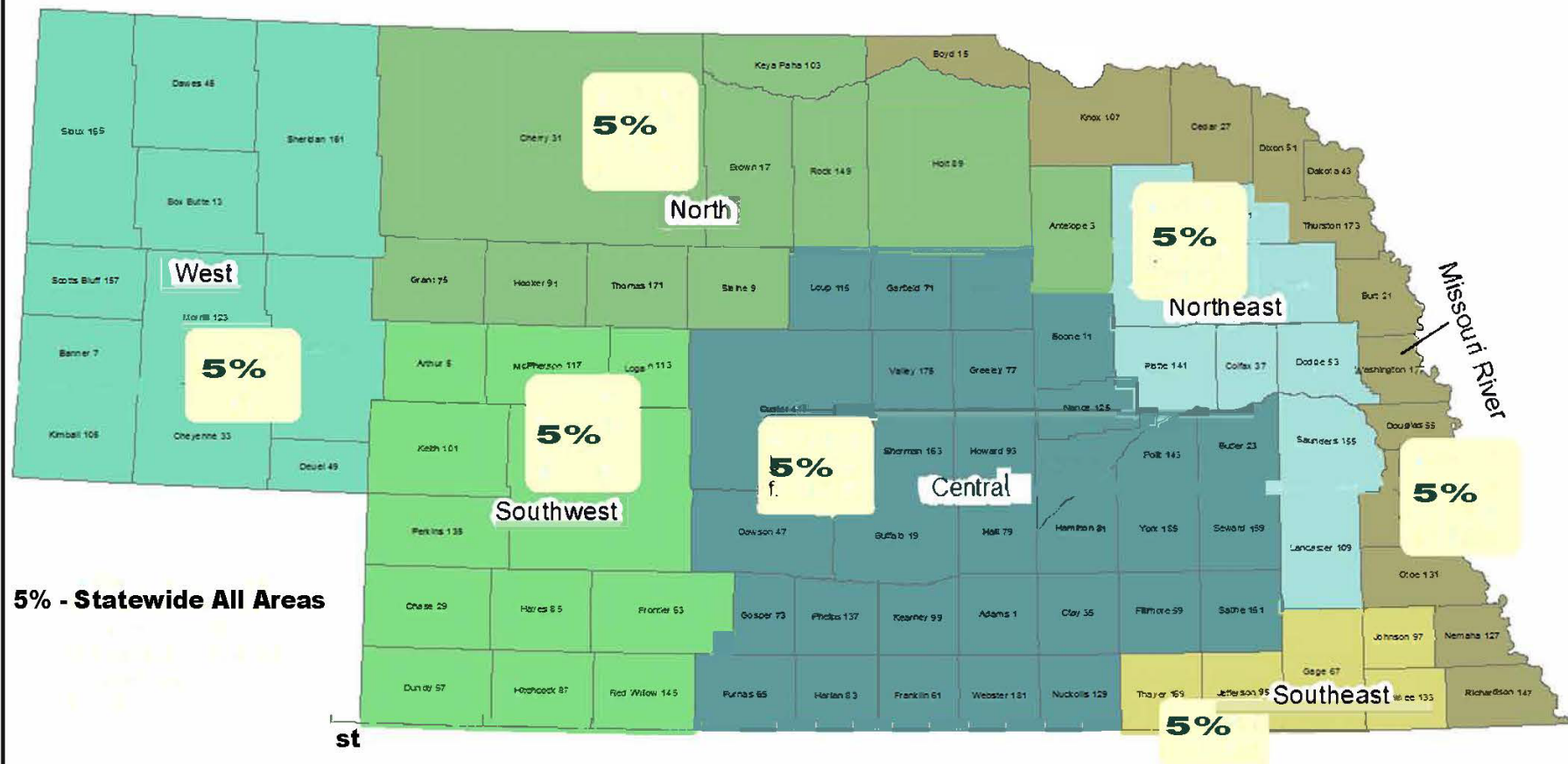
# Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARC's) for FY 2024

## Nebraska Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE)

**NOT to EXCEED RATE = \$12,970 for Irrigated Cropland**  
**NOT TO EXCEED RATE = \$9,320 for all other land uses**



# Nebraska Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetlands Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE) Reduction of Fair Market Value (FMV) to determine GARC's



Percent value reduction in rights retained by the landowner.  
Data Source: Completed yellowbook appraisals.

# FY2024 ACEP - Nebraska

- Applications taken year-round.
- FY24 application cut-off proposed for November 17, 2023.
- This is for WRE, WRE-WREP, ALE and ALE-GSS.



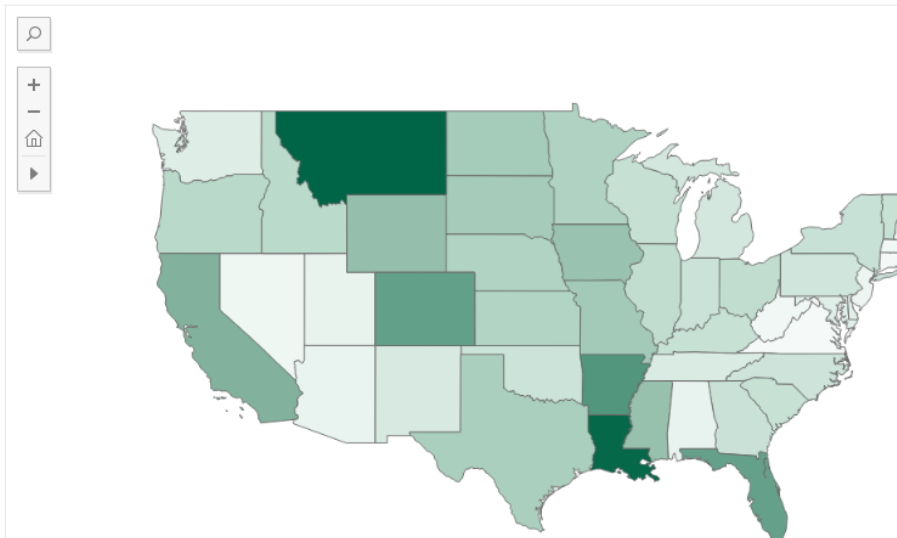
# 30 Years of NRCS Easement Programs

## 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:

Select Map Area:



### Data Filters

Conservation Purpose Filter

Program Filter

Closing Fiscal Year Filter

Easement Type

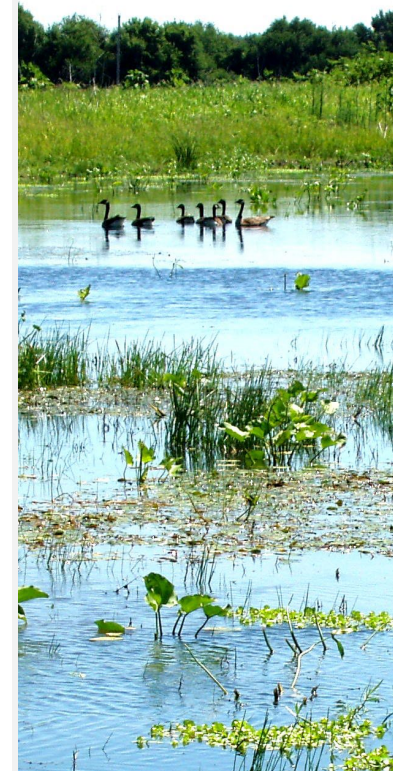
### State Drilldown

Select a State

### Color Legend

59 338,455

## Nationwide



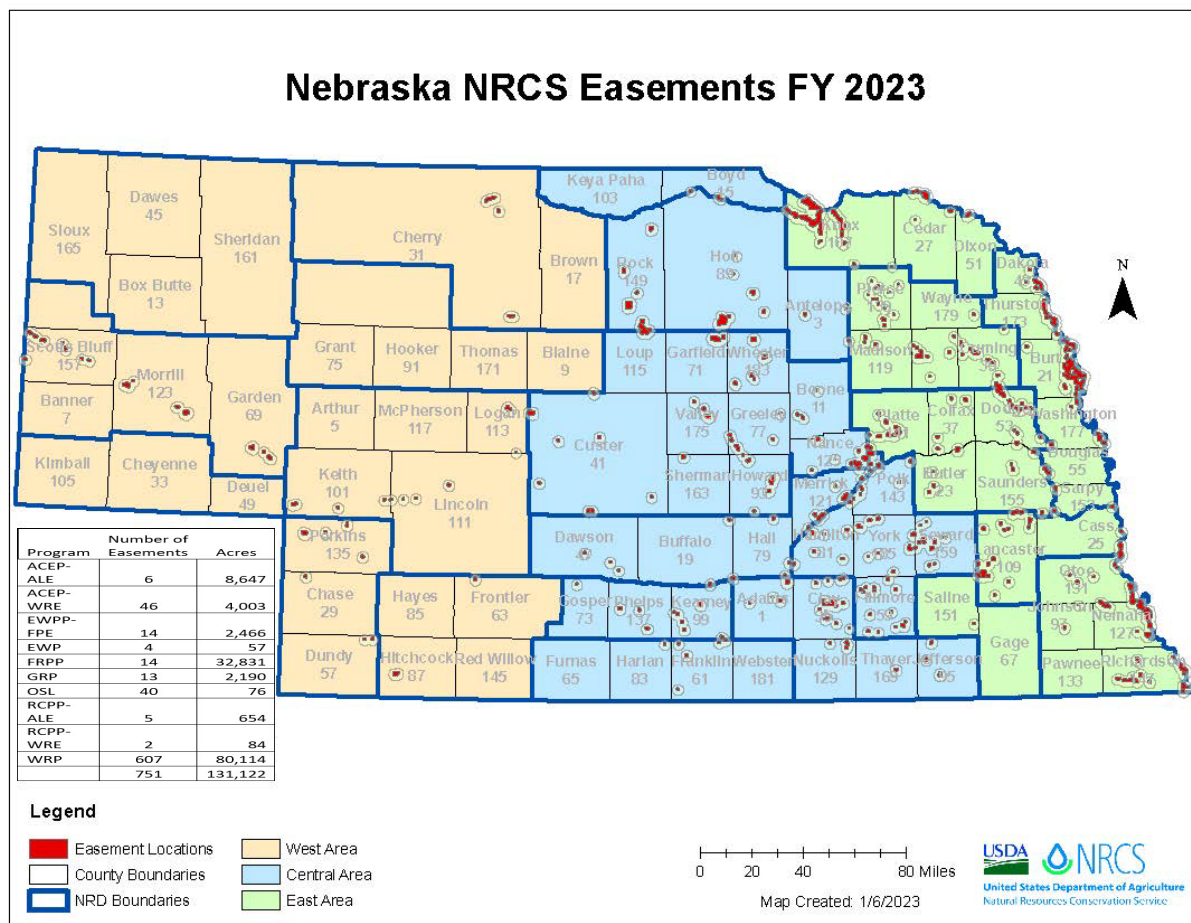
Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)

[Easement Program Data | Farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov/easement-program-data)



# 30 Years of NRCS Easement Programs



## Nebraska



**745 easements**

**130,777.24 acres**

**Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service**

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)





# ACEP Programmatic Requirements



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

## Webpage Updates



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)

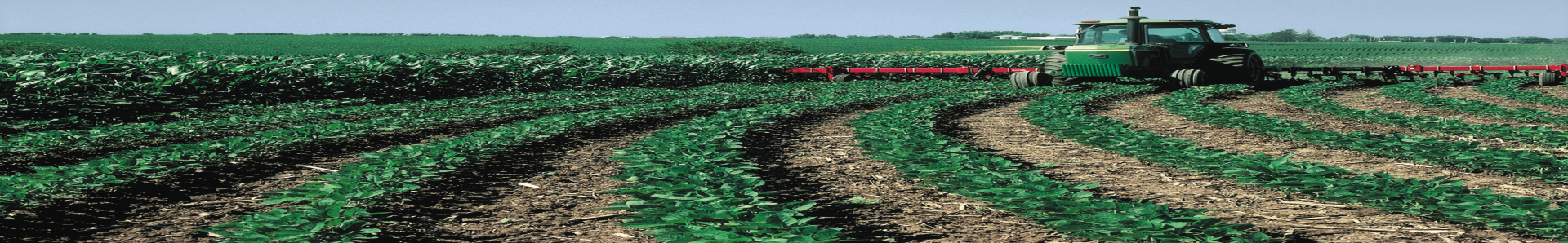






United States Department of Agriculture

# Environmental Quality Incentives Program



## Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Nebraska

- **FY2023 Allocations (Total = \$31.5 million)**
  - EQIP General = \$29.1 million (Includes NWQI & OTI)
    - EQIP-NWQI = \$1.7 million
    - EQIP-OTI = \$ 139,000
  - EQIP IRA = \$2.4 million
- **FY2023 Applications and Contracts**
  - EQIP General = 3,600      Contracts = 932 (379,000 ac.)
  - EQIP-IRA = 280      Contracts = 111 (33,000 ac.)

## FY2023 EQIP Allocations

### FA Allocation = \$31,500,000

- Urban and Small-Scale Agriculture (formerly High Tunnel) = \$505,000
- Wildlife Initiative (10%) = \$643,000 (10% includes WIN, GPGL and Quail WLFW initiative)
- Great Plains Grassland Initiative = \$1,400,000
- Quail WLFW Initiative = \$300,000
- Historically Underserved (10%) = \$2,300,000
- EQIP Organic Transition = \$124,000
- AFO's = \$265,000
- Conservation Activity Plans = \$200,000
- Organic = \$7,000
- Tribal = \$438,000
- Sandhills Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) = \$100,000



## FY2023 EQIP Allocations

### FA Initial Allocation = \$31,500,000

- Disaster = \$1,500,000
- Source Water Protection (10%) = \$2,400,000
- EQIP-CIC (5%) = \$1,200,000
- Inefficient Energy = \$55,000

**Balance left to distribute to Local Fund Pools = \$11,267,000**

### **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 expires 9/30/22, No request for FY23)
- NWQI = \$1,700,000
  - Bazile Creek (LCNRD, LENRD, UENRD) = \$1,072,000
  - Big Sandy (LBNRD) = \$17,000
  - Turkey Creek (LBBNRD) = \$620,000

## FY23 EQIP-Top 25 Practices

Practice	Count	Obligation	Percent
340 -Cover Crop	590	\$3,032,425	10%
528 -Prescribed Grazing	349	\$2,898,865	9%
314 -Brush Management	527	\$2,543,696	8%
442 -Sprinkler System	64	\$2,407,299	8%
533 -Pumping Plant	311	\$2,290,896	7%
382 -Fence	289	\$1,631,927	5%
441 -Irrigation System, Microirrigation	58	\$1,597,103	5%
614 -Watering Facility	349	\$1,496,422	5%
516 -Livestock Pipeline	195	\$1,294,248	4%
449 -Irrigation Water Management	476	\$1,139,236	4%
590 -Nutrient Management	136	\$1,106,826	4%
328 -Conservation Crop Rotation	208	\$1,064,583	3%
642 -Water Well	208	\$969,656	3%
600 -Terrace	107	\$858,501	3%
595 -Pest Management Conservation System	105	\$738,296	2%
325 -High Tunnel System	58	\$734,478	2%
620 -Underground Outlet	83	\$700,355	2%
430 -Irrigation Pipeline	80	\$633,206	2%
512 -Pasture and Hay Planting	55	\$604,920	2%
645 -Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	92	\$416,081	1%
327 -Conservation Cover	59	\$308,358	1%
338 -Prescribed Burning	92	\$292,880	1%
484 -Mulching	111	\$276,947	1%
561 -Heavy Use Area Protection	70	\$194,691	1%
380 -Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation	146	\$179,679	1%

# Planned and Applied 2014 – 2028 Top 25 Practices

Practice	Count	Obligation	Percent
340 -Cover Crop	6,018	\$30,845,189	12%
516 -Livestock Pipeline	2,405	\$18,122,099	7%
442 -Sprinkler System	477	\$16,662,959	7%
314 -Brush Management	3,385	\$15,238,023	6%
328 -Conservation Crop Rotation	2,821	\$14,295,466	6%
533 -Pumping Plant	2,308	\$12,736,780	5%
441 -Irrigation System, Microirrigation	315	\$12,731,670	5%
382 -Fence	2,757	\$12,331,249	5%
614 -Watering Facility	4,123	\$12,215,061	5%
600 -Terrace	1,780	\$12,054,798	5%
449 -Irrigation Water Management	5,357	\$10,817,443	4%
528 -Prescribed Grazing	1,348	\$8,501,039	3%
620 -Underground Outlet	1,331	\$8,206,600	3%
642 -Water Well	1,600	\$6,470,233	3%
590 -Nutrient Management	947	\$5,412,737	2%
313 -Waste Storage Facility	60	\$4,381,791	2%
430 -Irrigation Pipeline	583	\$3,546,773	1%
512 -Pasture and Hay Planting	412	\$3,154,491	1%
442 -Irrigation System, Sprinkler	87	\$3,001,929	1%
666 -Forest Stand Improvement	257	\$2,610,797	1%
338 -Prescribed Burning	723	\$2,080,714	1%
412 -Grassed Waterway	342	\$1,677,053	1%
645 -Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	340	\$1,620,604	1%
484 -Mulching	711	\$1,594,253	1%
325 -High Tunnel System	191	\$1,559,812	1%

# Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Nebraska

- Total Active EQIP Contracts – September 2023
  - Total Active Contracts = 2,754
  - Total Contract Acres = 1.1 million
  - Obligated funds = \$92.0 million



# EQIP Fund Pools FY2024

# 2024 Mandatory Distribution

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

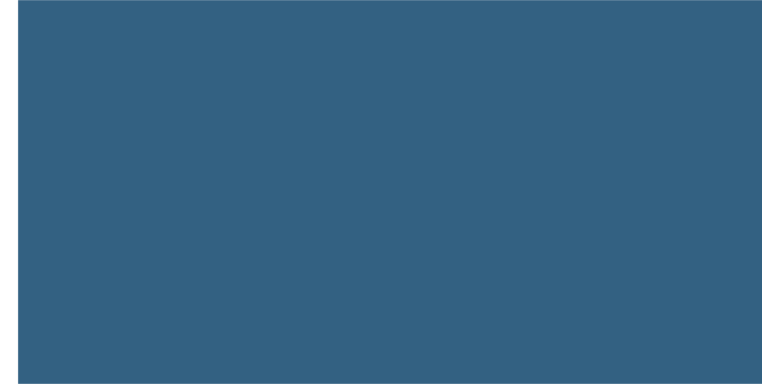


# FY2024 STATEWIDE FUND POOLS

- 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



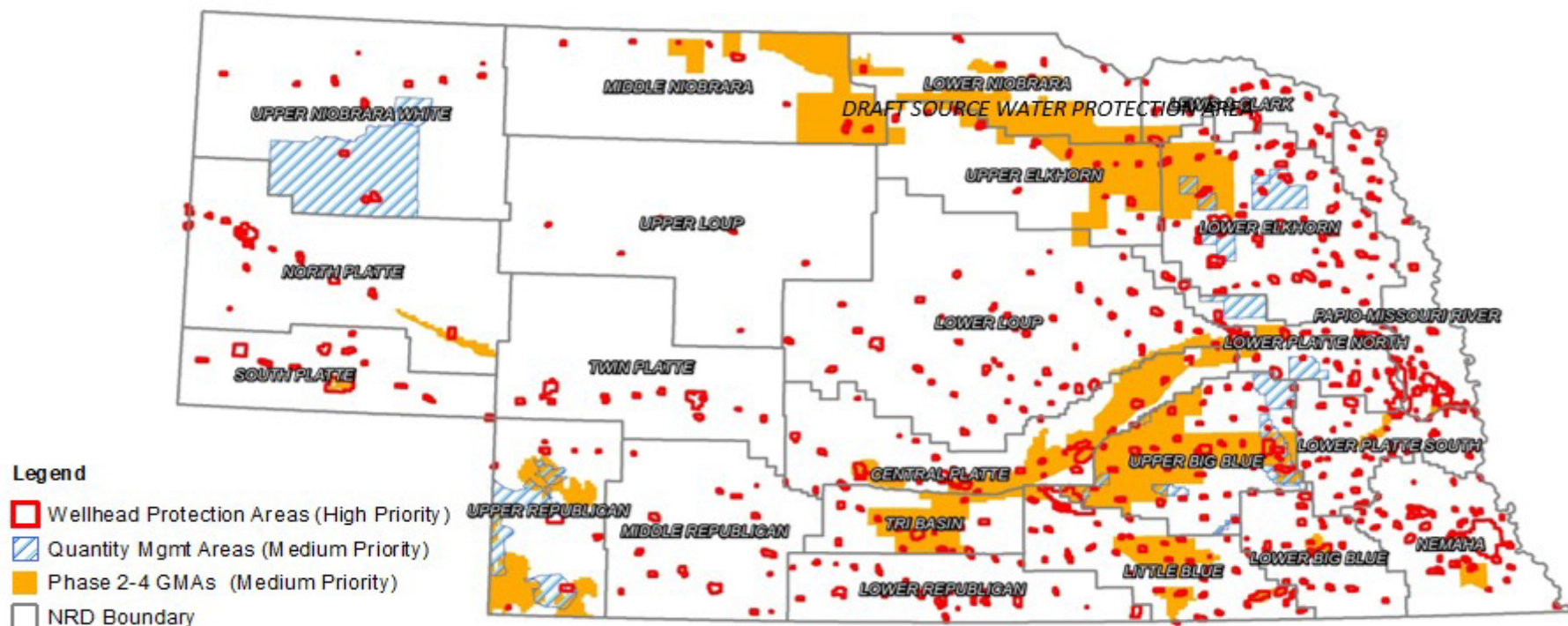
United States Department of Agriculture



# Source Water Protection

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

# FY20 – FY24 Source Water Protection



The Phase 2-4 and Quantity Management Areas that intersect a Wellhead Protection Area are medium priority.

Total Medium & High Priority Areas: 8,006,050 acres

## FY2024 Source Water Protection Practices (Wp)

- Conservation Cover
- Conservation Crop Rotation
- Contour Buffer Strips
- Cover Crop
- Critical Area Planting
- Well Decommissioning
- Groundwater Testing
- Field Border
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Filter Strip
- Grassed Waterway
- Irrigation Pipeline
- Irrigation System, Microirrigation
- Sprinkler System
- Irrigation Water Management
- Pasture and Hay Planting
- Range Planting
- Nutrient Management
- Pest Management
- Vegetated Treatment Area
- Constructed Wetland
- Wetland Restoration
- Wetland Enhancement

## FY2024 Wildlife Practices

### ○ Count towards 10% wildlife requirement

- 327 - Conservation Cover
- 390 - Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- 391 - Riparian Forest Buffer
- 395 – Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
- 396 – Aquatic Organism Passage
- 420 – Wildlife Habitat Planting
- 422 – Hedgerow Planting
- 472 – Access Control
- 580 – Streambank and Shoreline Protection
- 644 – Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 646 – Shallow Water Development and Mgt
- 647 – Early Successional Habitat Development and Mgt
- 649 – Structures for Wildlife
- 657 – Wetland Restoration
- 658 – Wetland Creation
- 659 - Wetland Enhancement





United States Department of Agriculture



# EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts



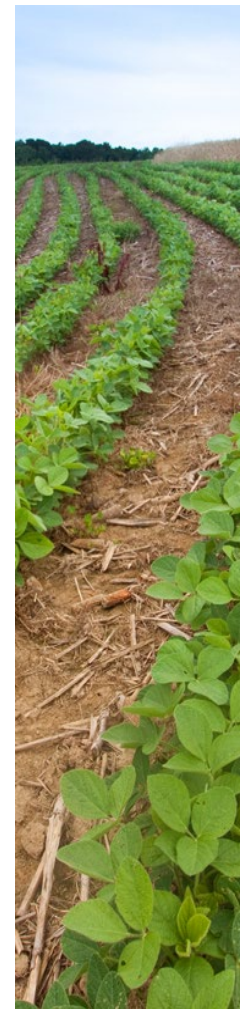
Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)



# EQIP CIC – Nebraska FY2024

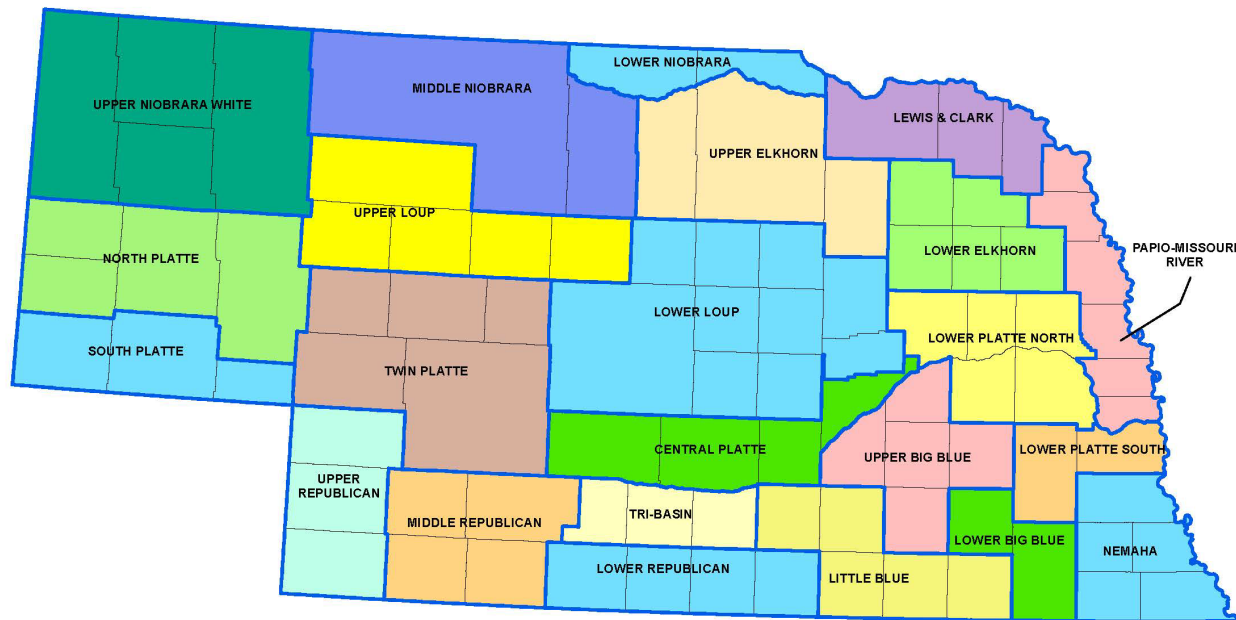
- **Goal:** Help producers address priority resource concerns on part of their operation as a “steppingstone” to achieving sustainable stewardship on their entire operation
- **Outcomes:**
  - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
  - Enhance carbon sequestration
  - Due to positive experiences under EQIP CIC, some participants go on to pursue further conservation benefits on their entire operation through applying for CSP
- **Land Use:** Crop, Pasture, Range, Forest
- **Priority Resource Concern:** “Soil Quality Limitations”, “Degraded Plant condition”, “Water Quality and Quantity”



# EQIP CIC – Nebraska FY2024 Incentive Practices

- 328 – Conservation Crop Rotation
- 329 – Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
- 338 - Prescribed Burning
- 340 – Cover Crop
- 449 - Irrigation Water Management
- 511 – Forage Harvest Management
- 528 – Prescribed Grazing
- 590 – Nutrient Management
- 595 – Pest Management Conservation System
- 645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 647 – Early Successional Habitat Development and Management
- 808 – Soil Carbon Amendment
- 216- Soil Health Testing

# 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: Request is not approved for FY24.** This is outside State level authority. Recommend that this request be made during comment periods for the FY2024 Farm Bill. A similar concept could be done under EQIP – CIC. Training will be provided.

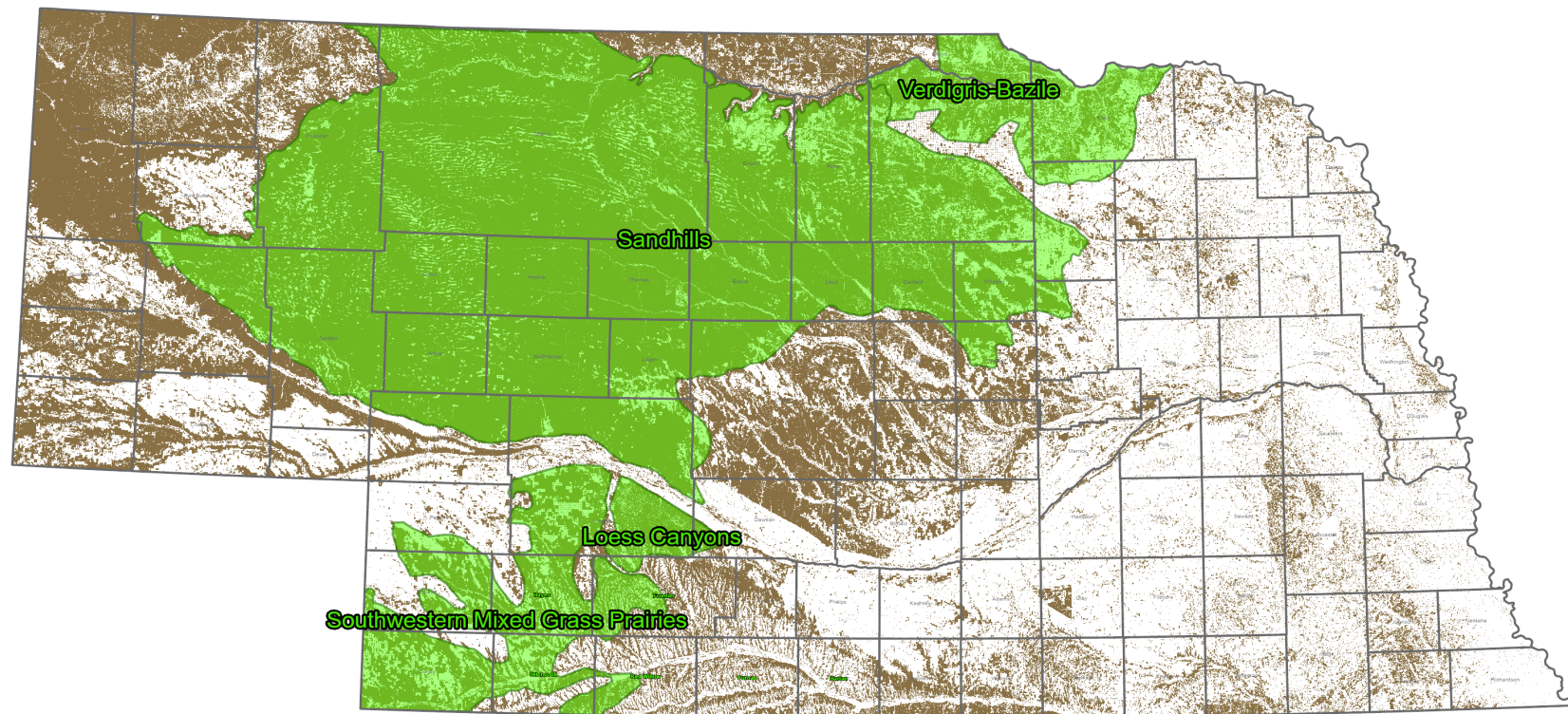
# Local Workgroup Recommendations

## • 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: Approved.** Area will be added to GPGL Loess Canyon focal area for FY24.

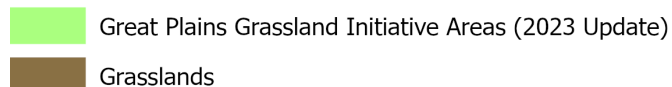


## Nebraska Great Plains Grassland Initiative (GPGI)



**United States Department of Agriculture**

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



# 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: Approved.** These practices will be considered for any wildfire initiatives in FY2024.

# Local Workgroup Recommendations

## • Practices and Scenario Requests

- **Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)**
- **LWG request (FY24):** Recommendation to add a scenario to 315 Herbaceous weed management-multi year control of annual invasive grasses.
- **Action: Approved.** NE Policy waiver was approved by NHQ to allow multiple treatments of 315 to be applied for identified difficult to control species.

# 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. Subsequently it is significantly more expensive per acre (\$43 - \$61 per acre plus application of est. \$20).
- **Action: Complete.** Added Scenario 91 “Multi-Year Invasive Annual Grass Control” to FY24 Payment Schedule

# 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: Approved.** Criteria revised to allow payment for up to 3-years and is payable on all contract acres beginning the year the new crop is first planted. A new annual crop must be planted on at least 1/3 of the acres the first year. If a perennial crop is being added to the rotation, it must be maintained for at least 3-years.

# 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: Approved.** 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. The DC is working with the NRD and Extension to develop a scenario and recommended payment rate.
  - **Action:** Under review for FY2025 practice payment schedule.



# 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: Approved.** Payment scenarios will be added for FY24

# Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **Irrigation Water Management (449)**
- **LWG request (FY24):** It is 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: Request is not approved for FY24.** Doesn't meet CP449 practice standards and specifications.

# Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practices and Scenario Requests**
  - **Prescribed Grazing (528)**
    - **LWG request (FY24):** Add scenario for <3 pastures.
    - **Action: Approved.** A single 528 Prescribed Grazing scenario is being added to encompass the majority of operations regardless of size, # pastures, etc. 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 livestockshelter standard so that used or other available materials may be considered in the 576 specifications.** (ULNRD, TPNRD, UNWNRD)
- **Action: Scenario was revised in FY23 to include payment for “new” drill stem and allows for “used” drill stem if specifications are met.**

# 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 GPGL areas).
- **Action: Approved.** 595 may be included outside of GPGL focal areas, as long as 595 criteria will be met i.e. removal of all seed bearing trees.

# 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: Approved.** Adopted payment scenario #56



# 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: Approved.** 810 Annual Forages for Grazing Systems – Scenario 28 “Annual Forages to Defer Grazing on Rangelands with FI” was added to the FY24 payment schedule.

# Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **LWG request (FY24):** Recommendation 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: Approved.** Guidance and training will be provided to staff in FY2024

# 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: Approved.** Nebraska practice standard will be revised to lower the buffer down to "10% not to exceed 10 lbs". This aligns with policy in adjoining States. Training will be provided in 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. Technology is currently in the trial phase.

# 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: Request is not approved.** Pivot wheels are not a component of the NRCS design criteria for sprinkler systems.

# Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Practice and Scenario requests**

- **LWG request (FY24):** Add Pumping Plant (533), Flow Meter (587), and No-Till (329) practices to the SWP fund pool eligible practice list. This would align our local, state, and RCPP practice lists and streamline CD/CART planning processes.
- **Action:** CP533 and CP587 are currently applicable practices for the SWP CART ranking in FY23. CP329 will be considered for inclusion in FY24. All three of these practices are included on the SWP (Wp) payment schedule. Additional training will be provided to clarify how practices and resource concern assessment works in CART ranking.



# 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:** Variable rate scenarios are currently available. Training will be provided to staff. Payment rates will be reviewed.

# 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 native grassland composition. Training will be provided to staff in FY24.

# 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.

# FY2023 Local Workgroup Recommendations

- **Request for payment rate adjustments**

- Various requests to increase or decrease FY24 payment rates for multiple practices.
- **Action: Payment rate adjustments completed for FY2024. All CSAF practices increased an additional 10% , NTE 75%, after adjustments for increased component costs due to inflation.**

- **Request for Payment Caps**

- Various requests to increase payment caps in FY24.
- **Action: Approved.** All payment caps will be increased in FY24 to account for increased component prices and the increased payment rates for CSAF practices.

# FY2023 Local Workgroup Recommendations

## EQIP application and ranking cutoff dates

- Multiple Recommendations
- **Action: Establish November 17, 2023 as the application cutoff date for all EQIP, CSP and ACEP with ranking deadlines beginning in January 2023**





United States Department of Agriculture

# Delivering Results for Agriculture and Conservation

## Conservation Innovation Grants



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)



# Conservation Innovation Grants

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the **availability of \$65 million through two funding opportunities** for new tools, approaches, practices and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands through the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program.
- Of this funding, \$25 million will be delivered through the Inflation Reduction Act.
- Two separate CIG funding opportunities are now available on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
  - **\$50 million through CIG On-Farm Trials**
  - **\$15 million through CIG Classic**



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)

# CIG On-Farm Trials

For CIG On-Farm Trials, this year's funding priorities are:

- Irrigation water management technologies
- Nutrient management
- Feeding management and enteric methane reduction
- Grazing lands
- Soil health demonstration trials

**USDA-NRCS-NHQ-CIGOFT-23-NOFO00001312**

[View Opportunity | GRANTS.GOV](https://www.grants.gov/)



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)

# CIG Classic



For CIG Classic, this year's funding priorities are:

- Forestry
- Habitat conservation and restoration for wildlife and invertebrates
- Managing agricultural lands to improve local water quality
- Energy conservation
- Economics
- Strengthening conservation through indigenous knowledge

**USDA-NRCS-NHQ-CIGCLASSIC-23-NOFO0001311**

[View Opportunity | GRANTS.GOV](#)



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)

# Conservation Innovation Grants

- Strong consideration will be given to proposals that include Historically Underserved entities and individuals.
- This opportunity is open to all domestic non-federal entities and individuals based in the United States for projects carried out in the U.S.
- **Applications are being accepted now through October 30, 2023.**

## Information and Funding Announcements:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)





QUESTIONS?

# RCPP & Initiatives Projects



# FB14 RCPP Projects

# Papillion Creek Site WP-1 Dam #1712

RCPP Type: CCA – Prairie Grasslands  
PL-566 Flood Control

Lead Partner: PMRNRD

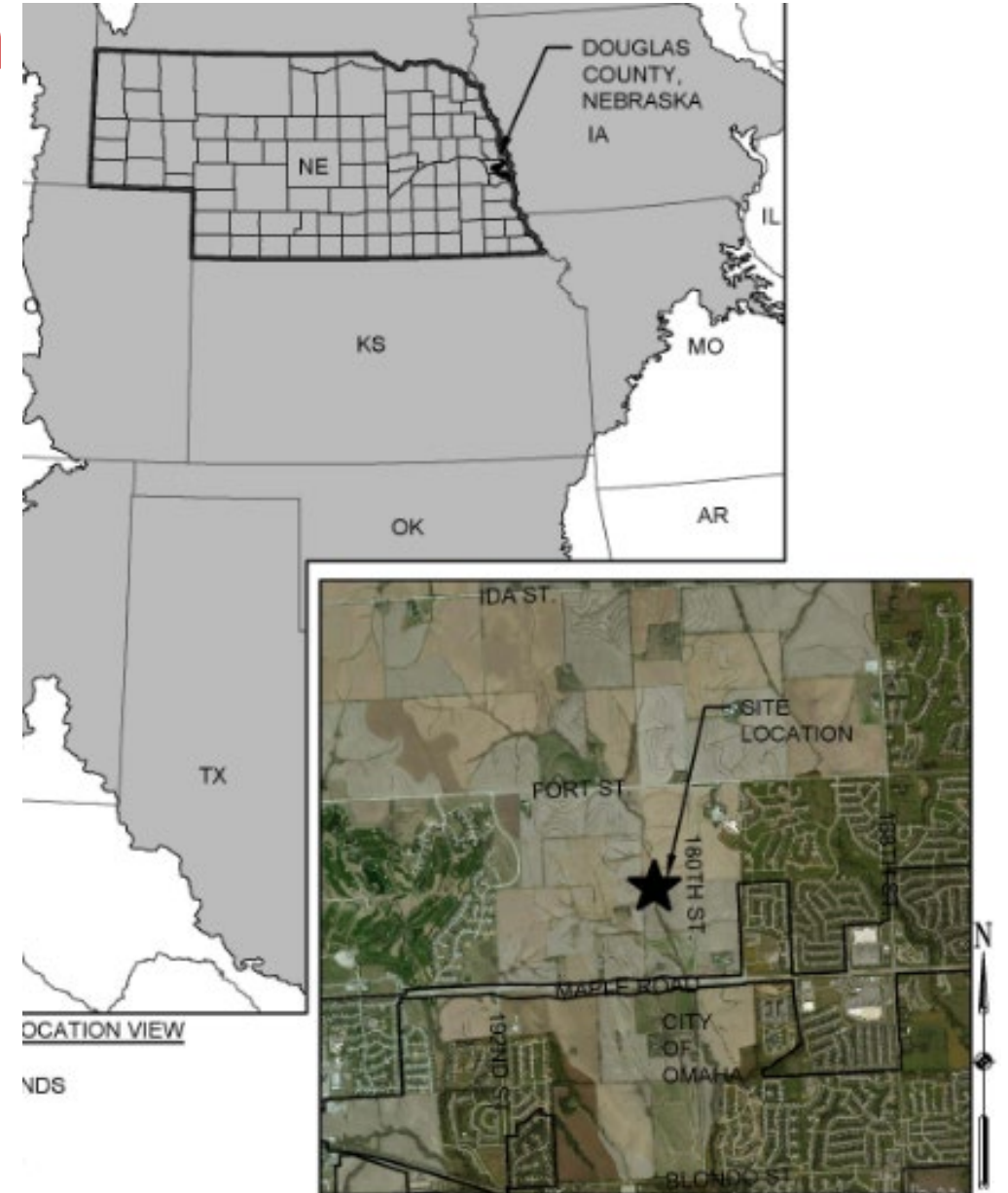
RCPP Funding: \$4.46M  
(\$2.2M FA, \$686K NRCS TA, \$1.5M Partner TA)

Partner Contribution: \$9.3M

Status: Final Design & Construction Planned 2024

Expires: 8/31/2023

One-Year/No-Cost Extension Requested to 8/31/2024



# Divots in the Pivots #1564

RCPP Type: CCA – Prairie Grasslands

Lead Partner: UBB NRD

\$1,863,999 (\$1.5M FA, \$372K NRCS TA)  
Partner Contribution – \$1.89 M

Partnership:  
Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Valmont  
Irrigation, TBNRD, Cropmetrics, LBNRD, UNL,  
NGPC, USFWS, NARD, Lindsay Corp, DU,  
Reinke Corp

Expires: 9/30/23 as a Successful Project!

## Goal:

Restoration of Wetlands by enrolling in ACEP-ALE  
& ACEP-WRE \$1.1M and upgrading Irrigation to  
VRI with EQIP)

## The Project Accomplishments

ALE – 4 Agreements (5 Parcels closed) 492.76 ac  
WRE - 2 Agreements (2 Parcels closed) 83.76 ac

## Total EQIP Contracts: 7

EQIP FA - \$101,059.10 obligated

441 – Micro-Irrigation		49 ac
442 – VRI	1 no	131 ac
449 – IWM		625.2 ac X 3 years
533 – Pumping Plant	1 no	

# FB18 RCPP Projects

# Resilient Futures for Nebraska Soils #1966

**RCPP Type: Classic - State/Multi-State**

Lead Partner: The Nature Conservancy

**\$4.3M**

(\$3.1M FA, \$221K NRCS TA, \$1.1M Partner TA)

Revised: \$3.6M FA, \$800K NRCS TA, \$0.00 Partner TA

Partner Contribution: \$3.5M

Partnership:

Cargill, McDonald's

UBB NRD, CPNRD

Expires: 4/23/2026

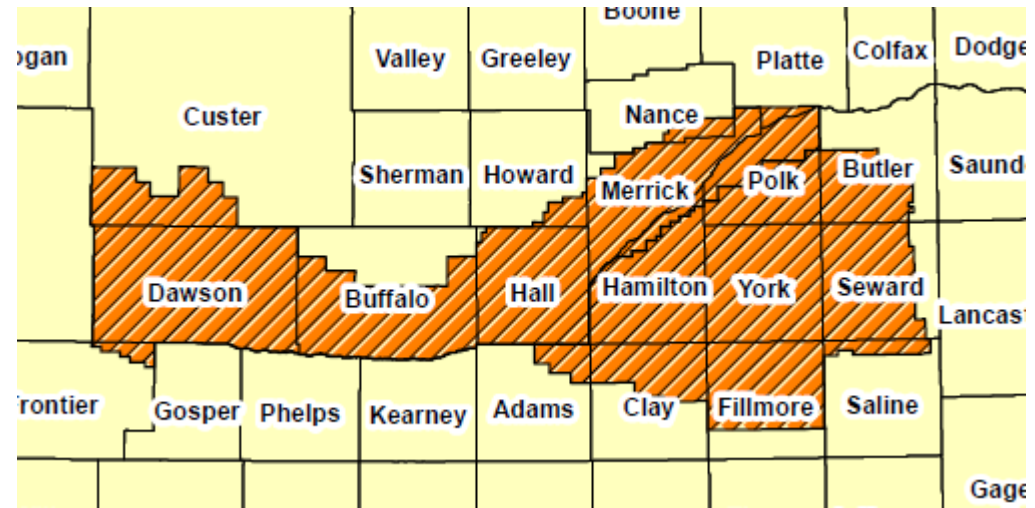
## The Goals:

Enroll 100,000 acres over 5 years

Store 150,000 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>

Prevent 375,000 tons of soil erosion

Link producers to Carbon Credits (ESMC)



## **Success to Date:**

### FA Obligations:

FY21 Obligations: \$545,571.00

20 LMR Contracts

FY22 Obligations: \$567,625.00

23 LMR Contracts

FY23 Obligations: \$833,943.00

22 LMR Contracts

Payments: \$374,556.99

Carbon Market Participants – 11 producers    2,500+ acres

### 2021-2023\* Practices:

328\* – Small Grain/Perennial

681.6 acres

329\* – Residue Mgt/No-Till

9,649.5 acres

340 – Cover Crop

43,704.1 acres

\* Final 2023 Data Forthcoming



# Resilient Futures for Nebraska Soils #1966

Buffalo County Cover Crop



Merrick County Cover Crop





# Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife #2135

RCPPT Type: Classic Renewal - State/Multi-State

Lead Partner: NGPC

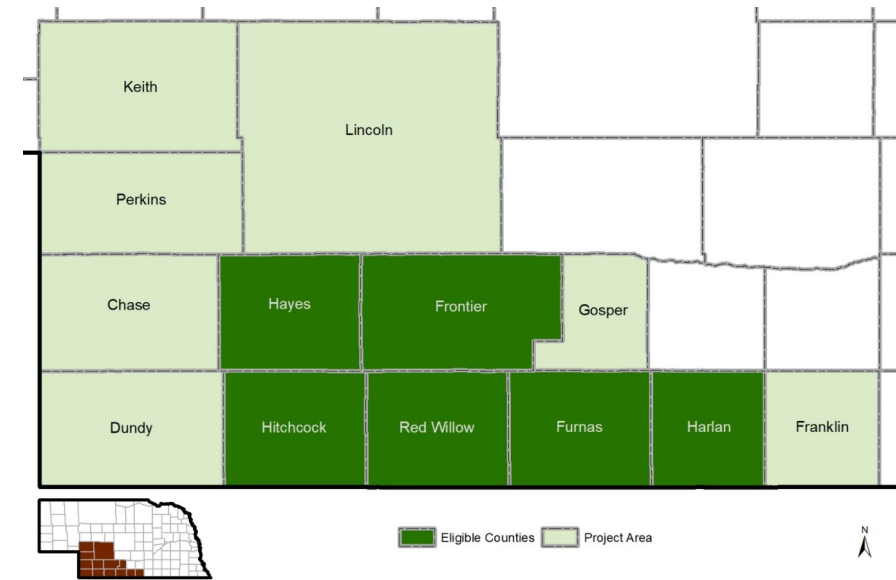
\$700,000

(\$490K FA, \$112K NRCS TA, \$96K Partner TA)

Expires: 1/29/2026

## The Goals:

Plant 7,000 acres multi-species cover crop,  
allowing grazing to max 75% - leaving 25% for  
wildlife



## **Success to Date:**

### Obligations:

FY22 Obligations: \$126,562.00 13 LMR Contracts

FY23 Obligations: \$ 86,783.00 6 LMR Contracts

Payments: \$101,699.84

### Practices:

340 – Cover Crop 2,594.1 acres

472 – Access Control 2,594.1 acres

## Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife #2135



Heather Francis, a Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist III out of Imperial, is standing in a spring-seeded cover crop in Furnas County. She is holding common sunflower, one of the 12 species planted into the mix.

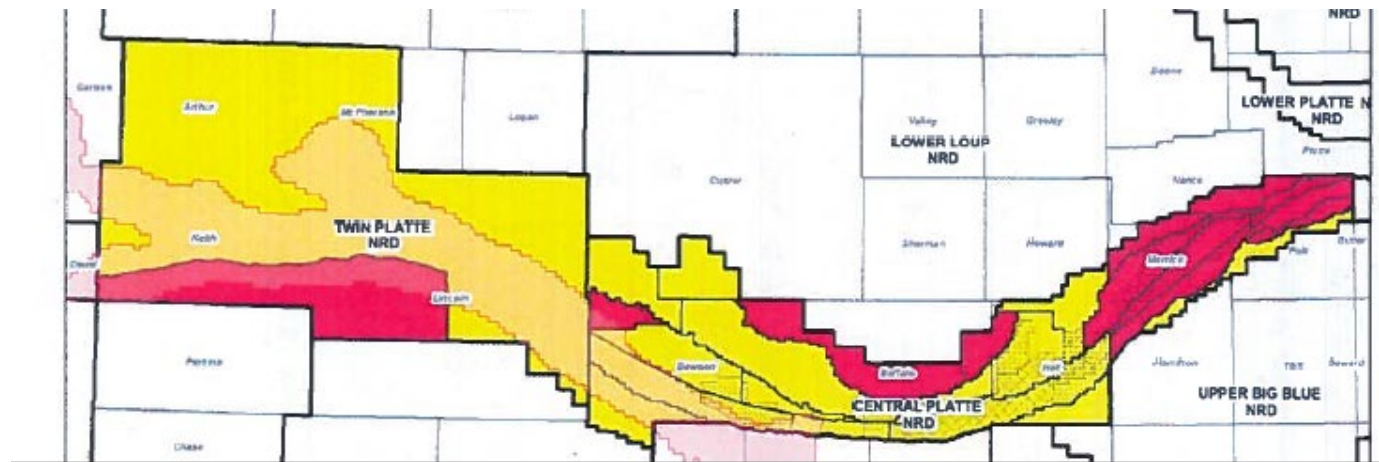


Sarah Ashbrook, a Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist II located out of Hayes Center, with her cover crop plant identification book. Sarah assisted NRCS and partners with cover crop monitoring on the site.



# Ogallala Aquifer and Platte River Recovery #2271

RCPP Type: Classic Renewal - State/Multi-State



Lead Partner: CPNRD

\$2.7 million  
(\$1.7 million FA, \$924,545 NRCS TA)

Partnership:  
TPNRD, Thirty Mile Irrigation District, Southside Canal,  
Cozad Ditch Co.

Expires: 1/26/2027

## The Goals:

Continue reduction of water consumption and depletions by converting irrigated to dryland or efficient irrigation methods and technologies.

## **Success to Date**

### Obligations:

FY23 Obligations: \$529,058.00

11 LMR Contracts

### Practices:

328 – Irr to Dry  
442 – Sprinkler  
430 – Pipeline  
533 – Pumping Plant  
587 – Structure for WC  
441 – Drip Systems  
449 – IWM  
590 – Nutrient Mgmt  
329 – Residue Mgt  
340 – Cover Crop

# Nebraska Forest Restoration Partnership (NFRP) #2173

RCPP Type: AFA State/Multi-State

Lead Partner: UNL-Nebraska Forest Service

\$4.5M (\$3.2M FA (NFS), \$225K NRCS TA,  
\$1.2M Partner TA)

Partner Contribution: \$6.2M

Partnership:

Natural Resource Districts, NGPC

Expires: 2025

Success to Date:

~32 NFRP Producer Applications/Contracts

## The Goals:

Restore 5% Oak/Cottonwood Forests

Renovate 5% declining windbreaks

Recover 10% lost windbreak cover

Increase landowner's knowledge of tree management



Encourage  
Landowner  
Participation!

## Forest Stand Improvement (w NGPC)

666 - Forest Stand Improvement

382 – Fence

## Windbreak Project (w NRDs)

380 - Windbreak Establishment

650 - Windbreak Renovation

490 – Tree Site Prep

612 – Tree Establishment

484 – Mulching

382 - Fence

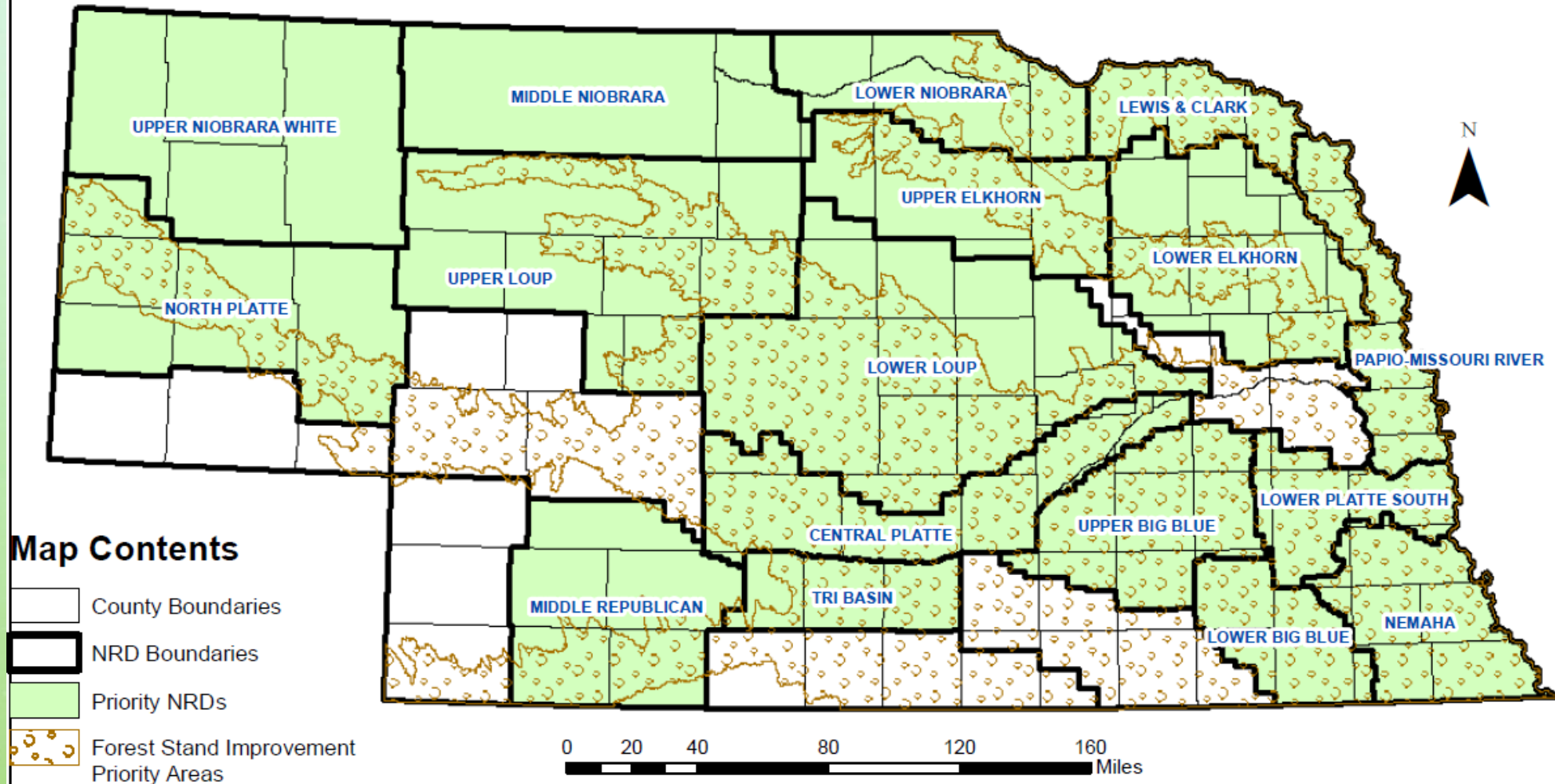
441 - Irrigation

315 – Herb' Weed Treatment

**Continuous Signups Being Accepted for Both Projects**

# Nebraska Forest Restoration Project - 2173

## Project Area --- Statewide



### Forest Stand Improvement Priority Regions:

- Blue River Basin
- Elkhorn River Basin
- Loup River Basin
- Missouri River Basin
- Nemaha River Basin
- Platte River Basin
- Republican River Basin



## Forest Stand Improvement

Expect NRCS Payment Rate for applicable scenario(s)!

## Windbreak Establishment and Renovation

Expect up to 75% payment rate with NRD and NFRP (RCPP) combined!

# Platte and Playa Wetland Protection #2434

**RCPP Type: Classic - State/Multi-State**

Lead Partner: Ducks Unlimited

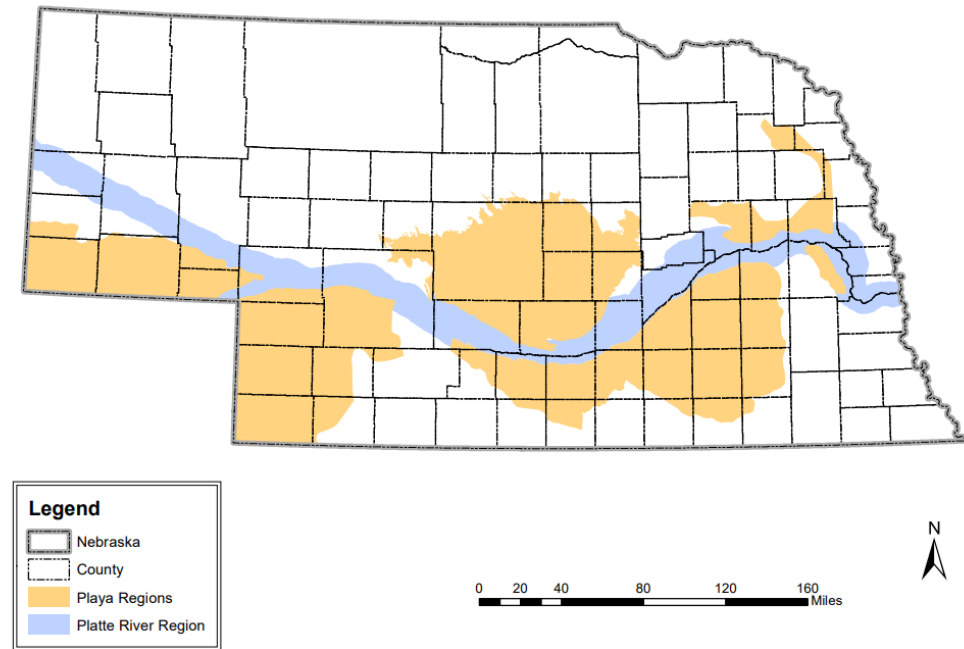
\$1.3M

\$962K FA, \$223K Partner TA, \$189K NRCS TA  
Partner Contribution: \$1.4M

Partnership:

TPNRD, RWBJV, LBNRD, TBNRD, UBBNRD,  
Platte River Basin Environments, Inc

Expires: 12/31/2027



## The Goals:

640 ac Entity-Held Easements:

Restoration – crop-able wetland (unlike WRE)

Conservation Land – Non-development easement for  
land adjacent to playa wetlands (wetland on site not  
required)

150 acres of protected wetland and restored wetlands

Increased shorebird & waterfowl within 6.2 miles of  
easements.



# Building Ranch Resiliency

## RCPP Project #2406

Classic – Lead State SD

PPA: 2022 - 2026

Lead Partner: World Wildlife Fund

RCPP Funds: \$1,428,571

FA= \$1,000,000 (NE = \$492,544.70)

Partner TA-I = \$20,000 TA-E=\$110,000

NRCS TA = \$298,571 (NE \$119,428)

FY23 LMR Obligations – In Progress

Expectation – Producers enrolled in WWF RSVP  
(Ranching Sustainability and Viability Plan)

### Goal:

Improve plant condition on 100,000 ac on 40 ranches for 10 years (NRCS contract term for infrastructure):

- ☐ Improving grazing management on at least: 35,000 ac;
- ☐ 5,000 ac of enhanced habitat for wildlife;
- ☐ 50 mi of fence replaced with wildlife-friendly fence;
- ☐ 10 mi of new livestock pipe;
- ☐ 1,400 ln ft of mesic restoration structures;
- ☐ 100 ac of cedar removal; and
- ☐ Seeding 1,200 acres of marginal cropland to grass

# Building Ranch Resiliency - #2406 Project Boundary Map



**Project Includes  
Eligible Grasslands in:**

South Dakota

Nebraska

# Life From Soil – The Ranch Sustainability and Viability Network

## RCPP Project #2752

AFA – Lead State MT

Starting Fall 2023 - 2028

**Lead Partner: World Wildlife Fund**

RCPP Funds: \$2,857,143

FA= \$2,000,000

P TA-I = \$514,000 TA-E=\$200,000

NRCS TA = \$142,000 (NE: \$28,571)

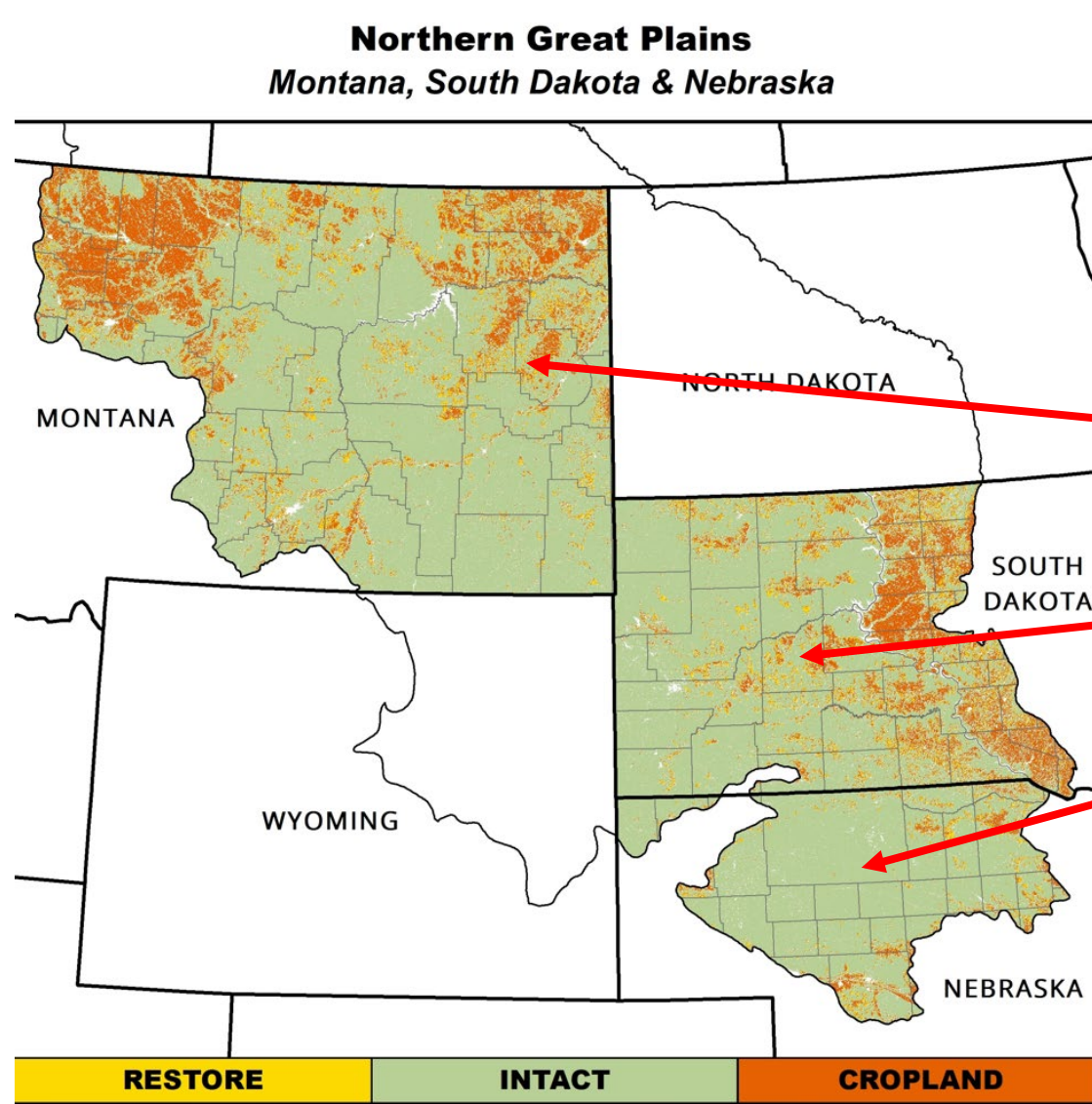
**Expectation – Producers enrolled in WWF RSVP (Ranching Sustainability and Viability Plan)**

### Goal:

Improve the ecological function of over 500,000 acres of grasslands by 2027. This will contribute to RSVP programmatic goal to improve 1 million acres by 2025. Ranchers agree to zero conversion of their grasslands for ten years, as well as developing and implementing a written grazing management plan; completing trainings on grazing management, monitoring, and other topics; participating in on-ranch ecological monitoring.



# Life From Soil – The Ranch Sustainability and Viability Network – #2752 Project Boundary Map



**Project Includes  
Eligible Grasslands in:**

Montana

South Dakota

Nebraska

# **FY23 – New RCPP18 Proposals / Timeline**

## **Highlights:**

**\$500M Total (Classic and AFA Projects Combined)**

**\$225 IRA + \$275 FB18**

**\$50M set-aside for AFA's with Tribal Entities**

**Proposal/Project Maximum increased to \$25M**

**No Limit on AFA Projects (previous years # of Classic Projects = AFA Projects)**

## **Timeline:**

**August 18 - Proposals Due**

**September – State Reviews**

**October/November – National Reviews**

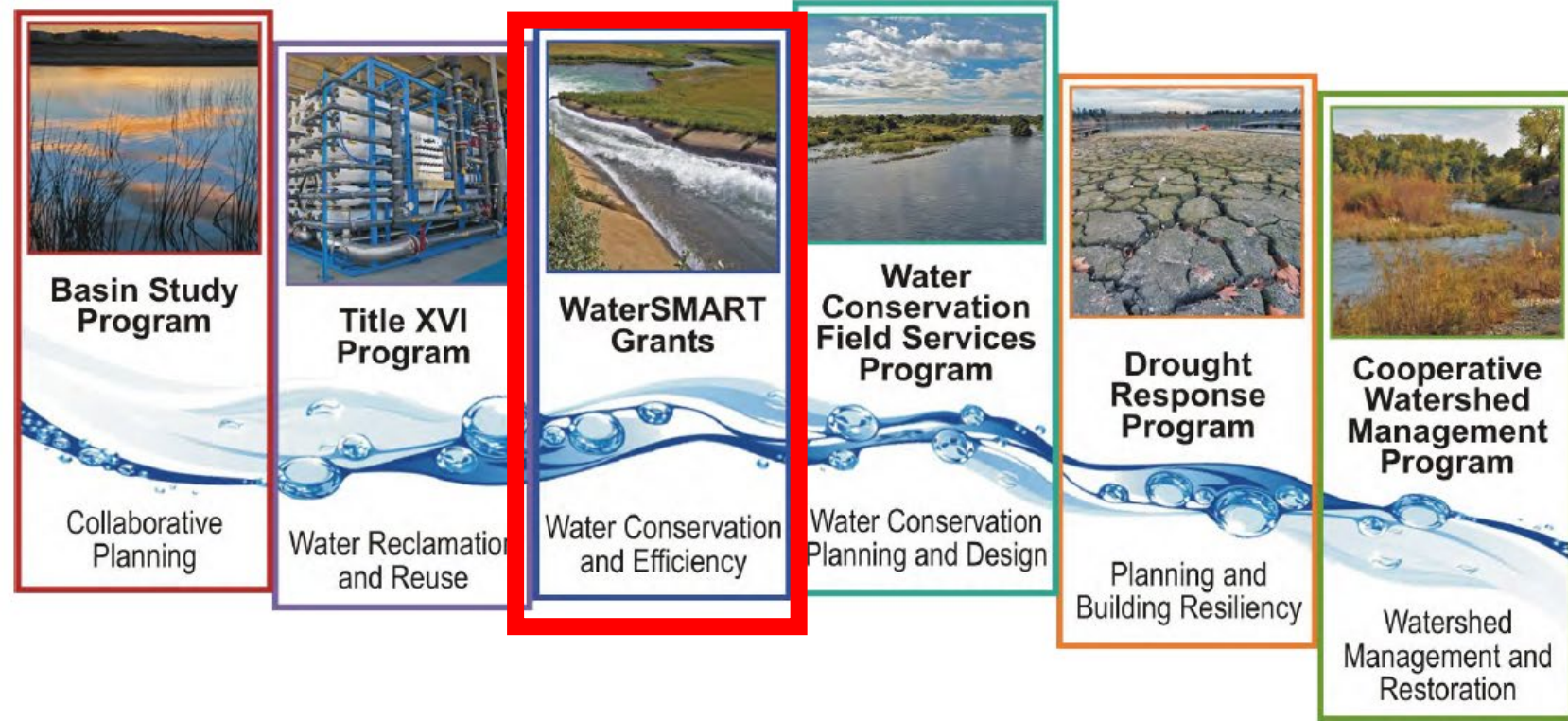
**December – Selections Announced**

# FY 23- New RCPP Proposal

- We received 2 AFA Application  
“Nebraska is listed as partner State”
- We received 3 Classics Applications  
“Nebraska is the lead State”



# WaterSMART Program



**The EQIP WaterSMART Landscape Conservation Initiative supplements the Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Program –Water Conservation and Efficiency Grants.**

# EQIP Water SMART Initiative

## Middle Republican NRD

### Obligations

2021: \$470,542

2022: \$10,503

2023: Completed

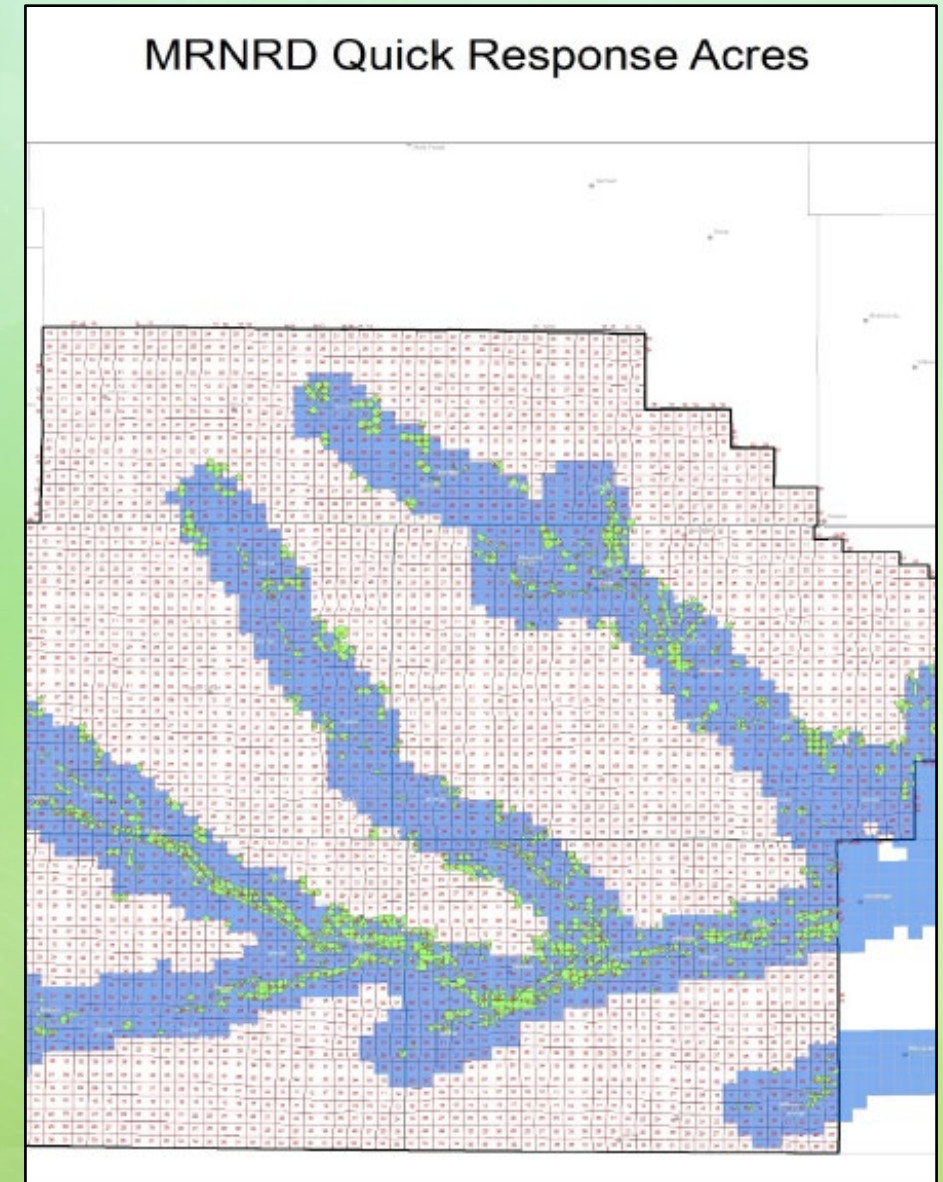
### Contracts

15

1

### Priority Resource Concern:

- Irrigation Water Use Inefficiency



# EQIP Water SMART Initiative

## Upper Republican NRD

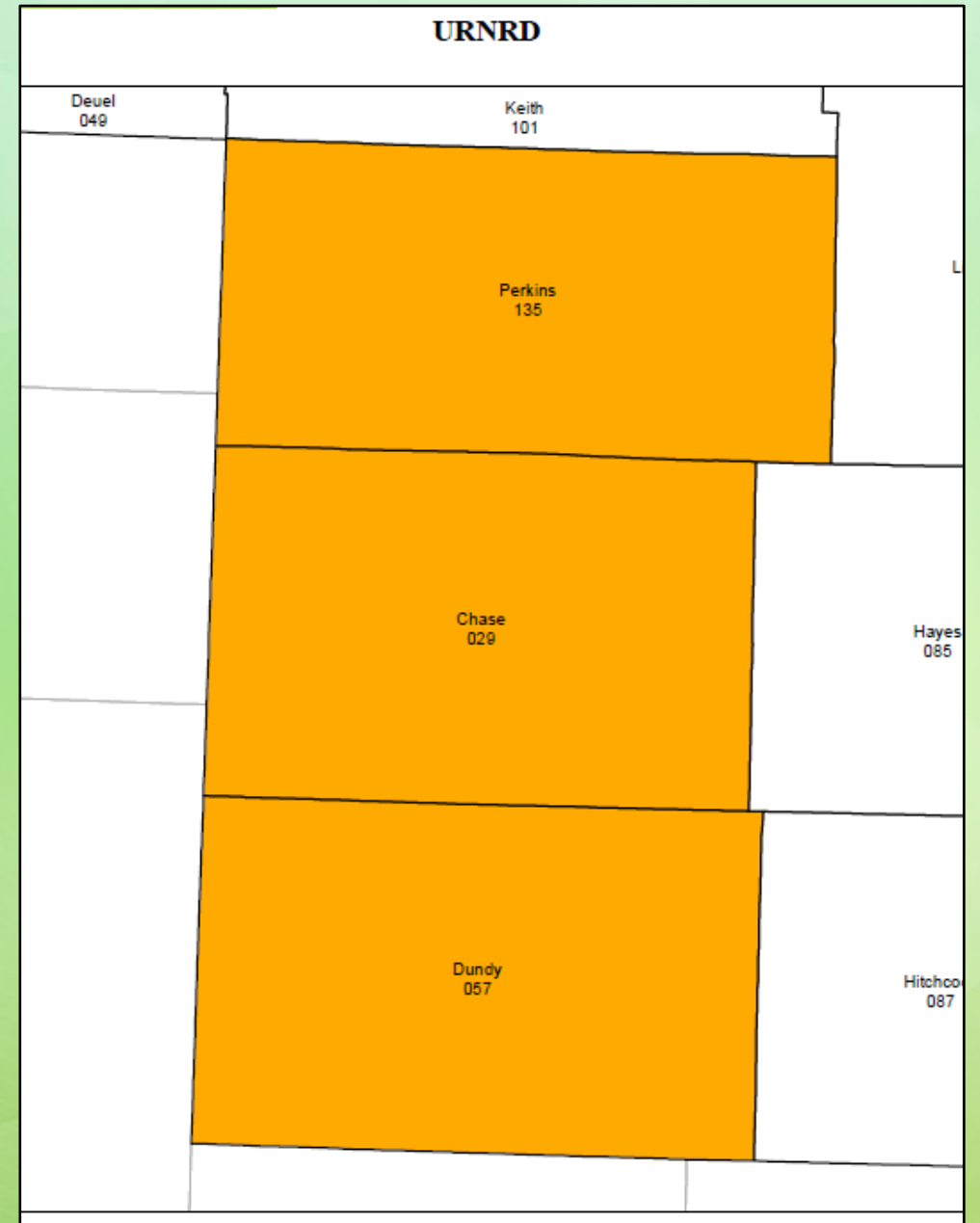
### Obligations

### Contracts

<u>2021</u>	\$18,013.35	1
<u>2022</u>	\$525,784.75	18
<u>2023</u>	\$236,348.94	10

### Priority Resource Concerns:

- Irrigation Water Use Inefficiency
- Nutrients Transported to Groundwater
- Plant Productivity and Health

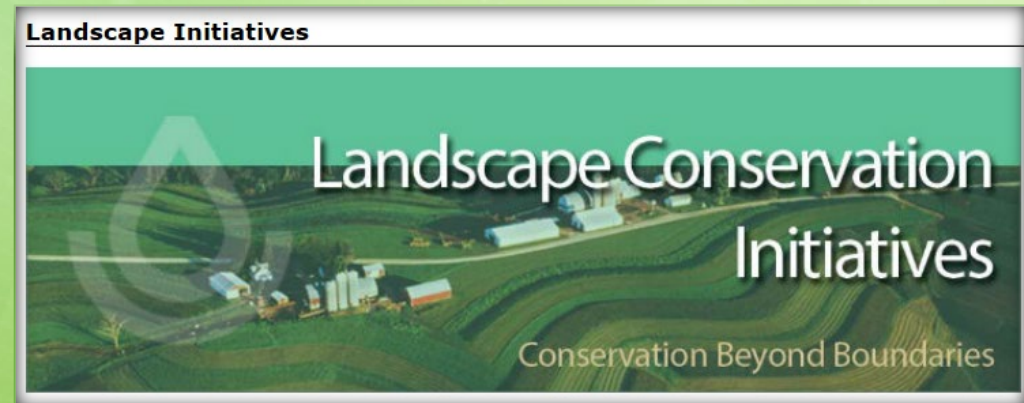




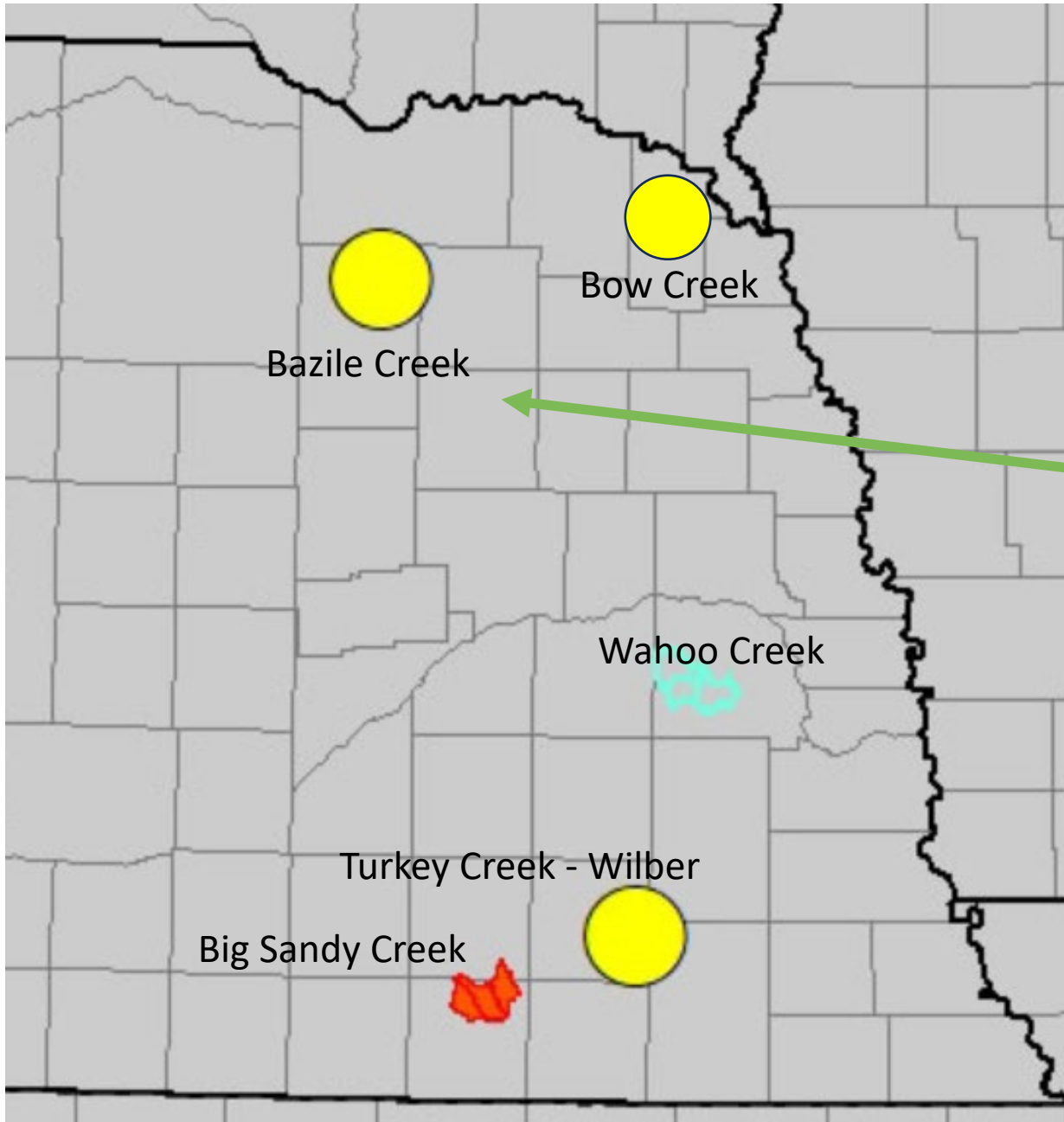
# EQIP WaterSMART Initiative

- Information about the EQIP WaterSMART Initiative at the National NRCS Landscape Initiatives website:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/initiatives/>



# **NATIONAL WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE (NWQI)**



## NWQI Source Water Protection Areas – Implementation

**Bazile Creek Ground Water Management Area** – Lower Elkhorn NRD, Lower Niobrara NRD, Lewis and Clark NRD, Upper Elkhorn NRD

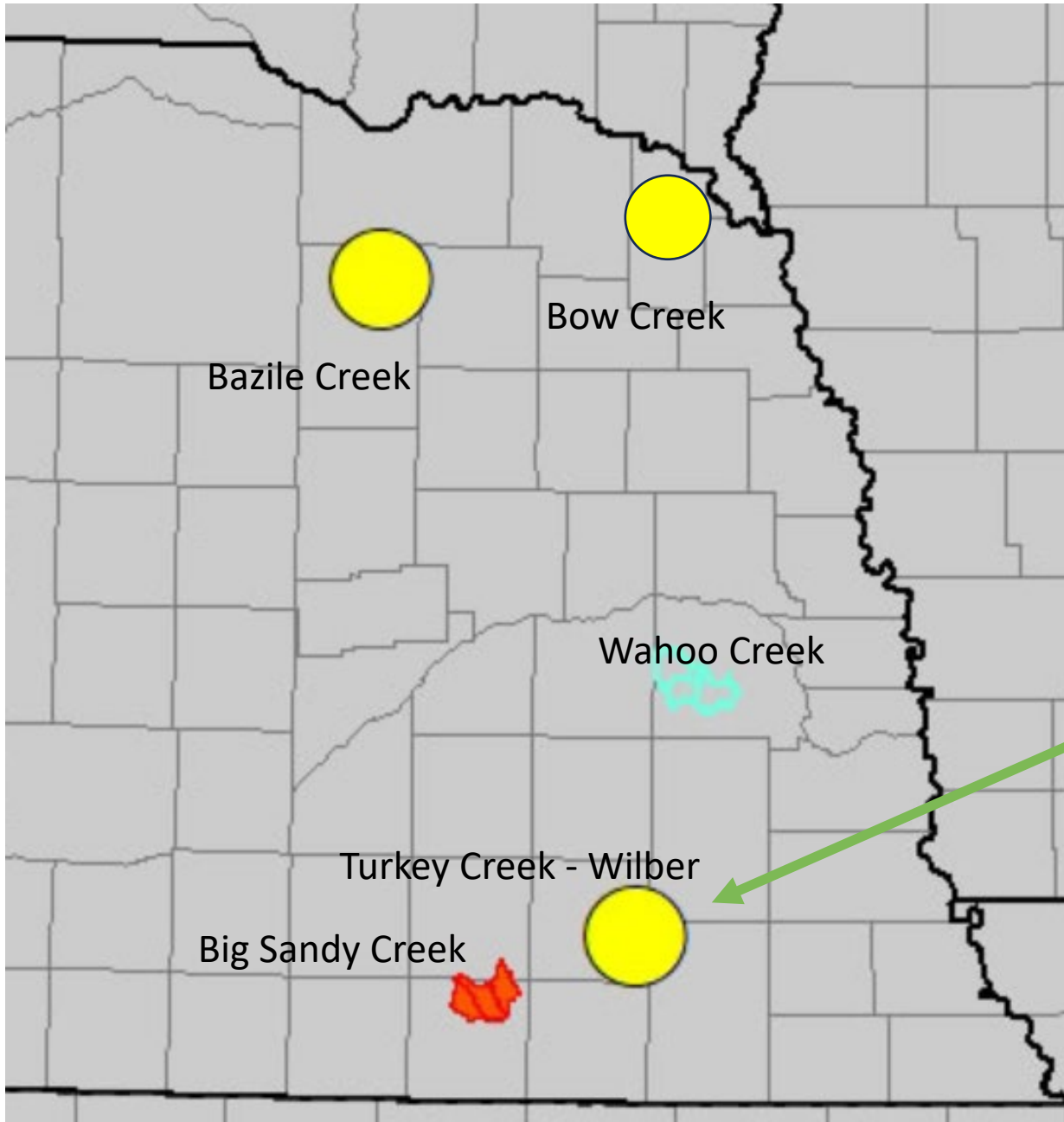
**FY2023**

**Contracts**  
26

**Obligation**  
\$1,071,948.26







**NWQI Source Water Protection Areas – Implementation**

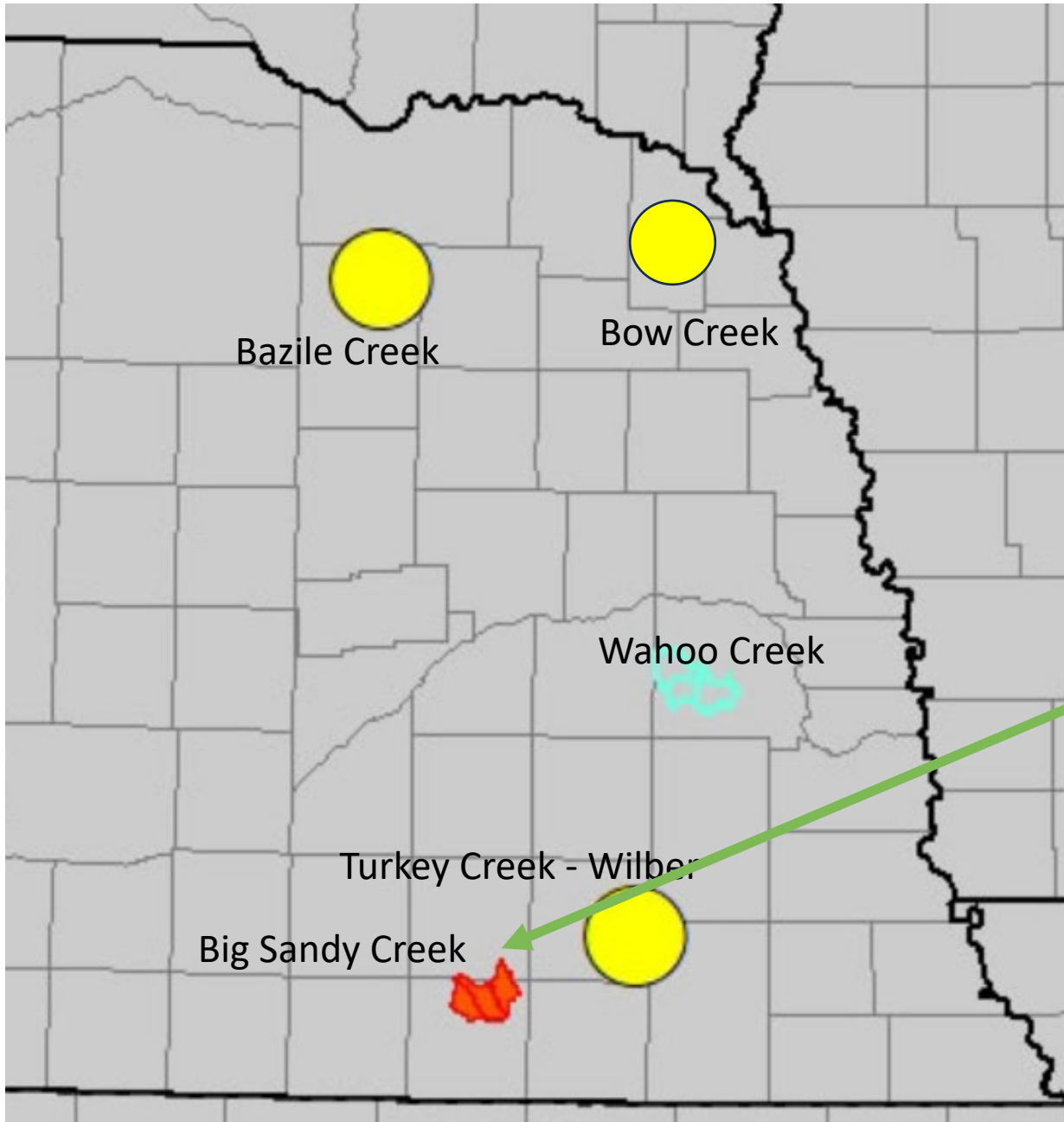
**Turkey Creek – Lower Big Blue NRD**

**FY2023**

**Contracts**  
13

**Obligations**  
\$ 620,087.00

[illegible]



**NWQI Watershed –  
Implementation**

**Big Sandy Creek – Little Blue NRD**

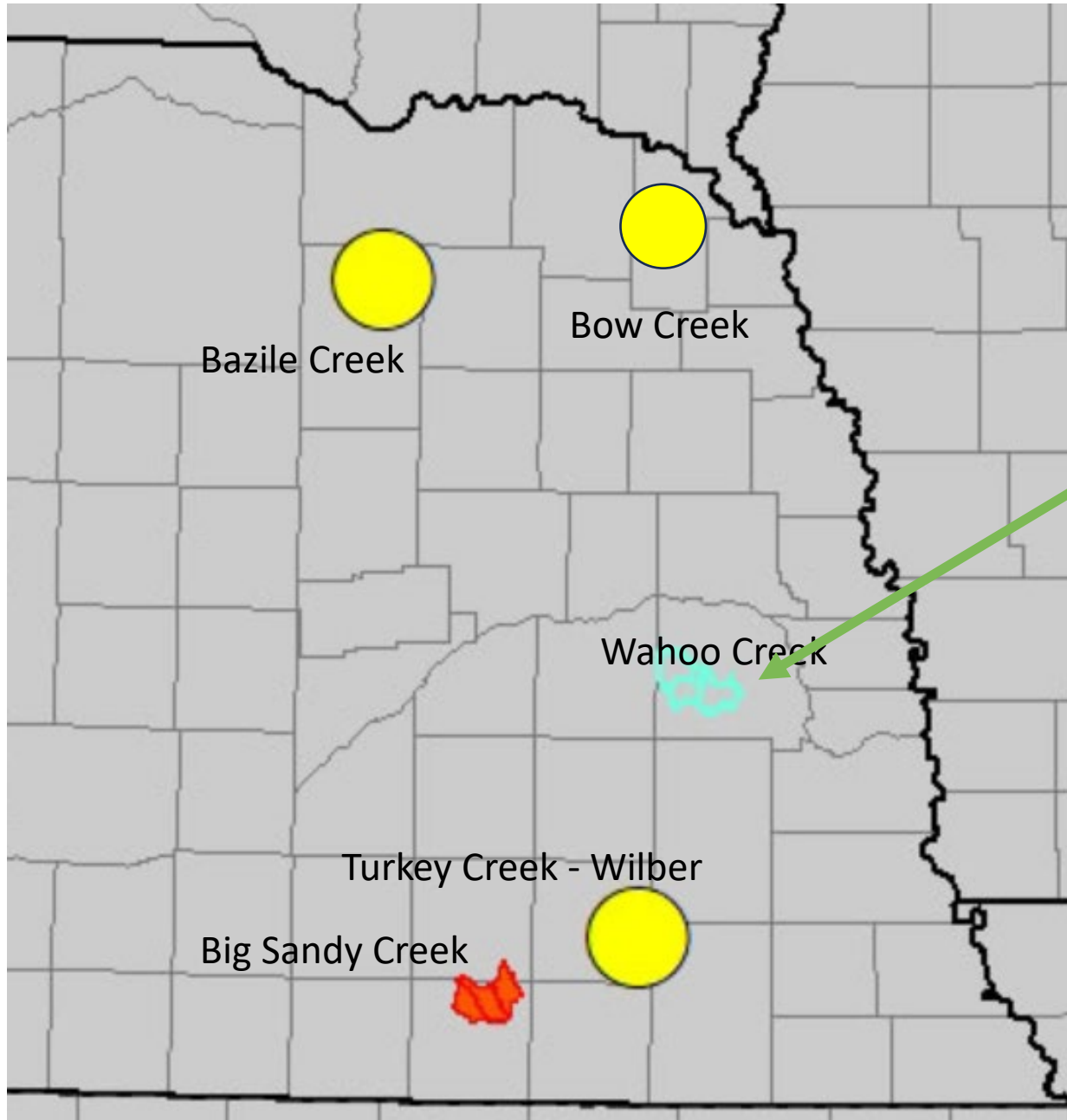
**FY2023**

**Contracts**  
1

**Obligations**  
\$ 17,424.00





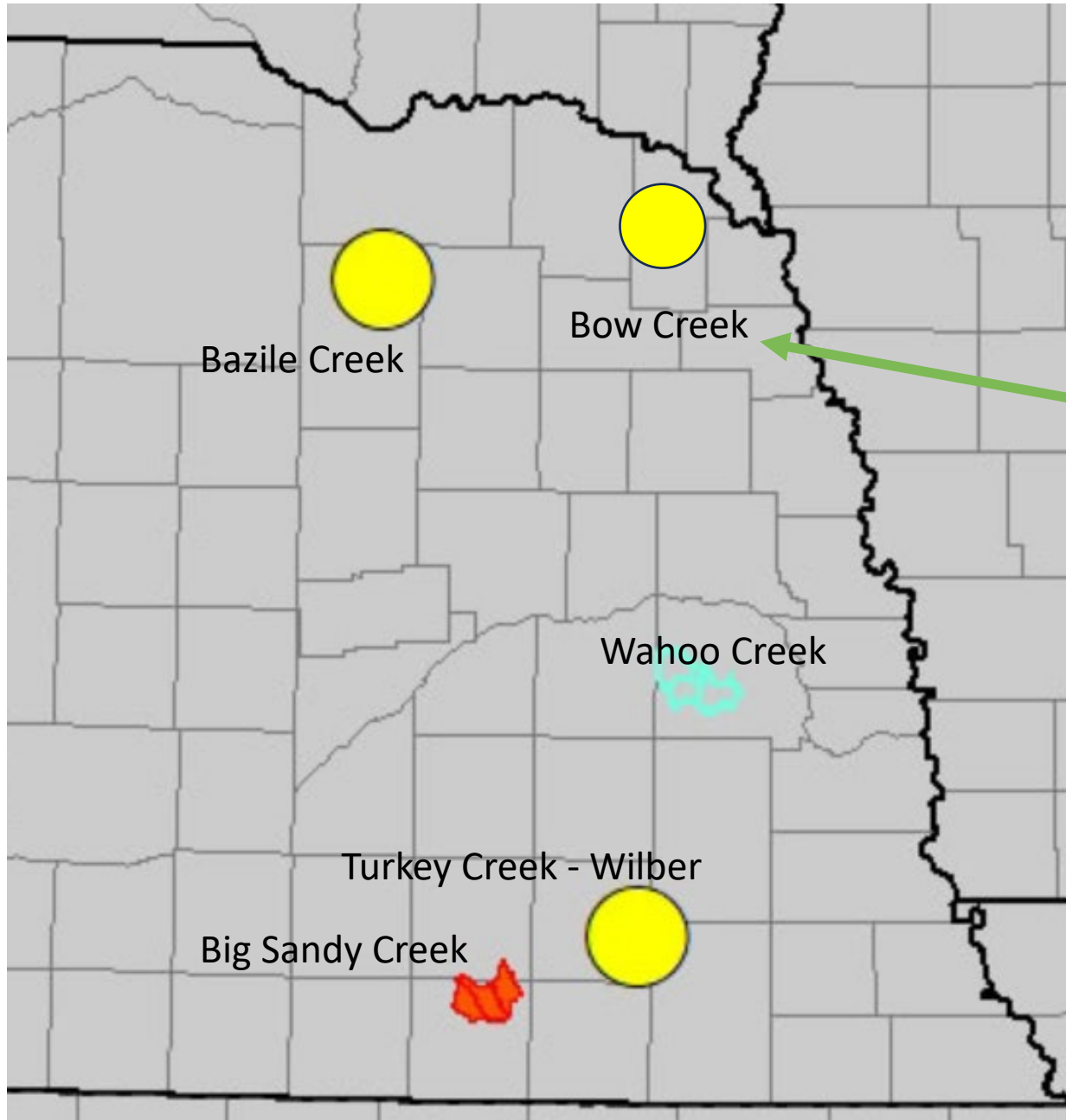


## NWQI Watershed- Implementation

**Wahoo Creek** – Lower Platte  
North NRD

### **Renewed Their Plan**

Recruiting Producer Interest and  
working with partners.



## NWQI Watershed- Planning Phase

**Bow Creek – Lewis & Clark NRD**

### Developing Their Plan

Recruiting Producer Interest and working with partners.

# Thank you to all our Partners!

**Tammy Timms**

Programs Initiatives Coordinator

[Tammy.Timms@usda.gov](mailto:Tammy.Timms@usda.gov)

402-437-4114

**Fred Stevens**

State Program Specialist

[Fred.Stevens@usda.gov](mailto:Fred.Stevens@usda.gov)

402-870-2370



# CRP CPA's & Signup Updates

**Farm  
Service  
Agency**

**[fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov)**

# Conservation Priority Areas (CPA's) & Wildlife, Water Quality and Air Quality Zones

Notice CRP-1003 provided FSA and Partners an opportunity to review/modify CPAs for next General SU (Program Year 2024).

Under General Signup a producer must meet land eligibility. For a producer to meet land eligibility the land must meet one of the following:

- Erodibility – Have a weighted average Erodibility Index (EI) of 8 or greater
- Expiring CRP – be currently enrolled in CRP the last year of the contract that is set to expire on 09/30 of the current year
- CPA's – be located within an approved State CPA



# Conservation Priority Areas (CPA's) & Wildlife, Water Quality and Air Quality Zones

2018 Farm Bill allowed States to reevaluate each year the CPA's and Zones keeping the following in mind:

- ❖ Recent Updated Environmental Index (EI) calculations
  - ❖ New estimates for wind and water erosion are more granular than previous signups
- ❖ The designated areas shall achieve the desired wildlife, water quality or air quality objectives
- ❖ Ensure the minimum land eligibility requirements around erosion are met

# Conservation Priority Areas (CPA's) & Wildlife, Water Quality and Air Quality Zones

The following was considered by the group when deciding on areas to include, remove or add:

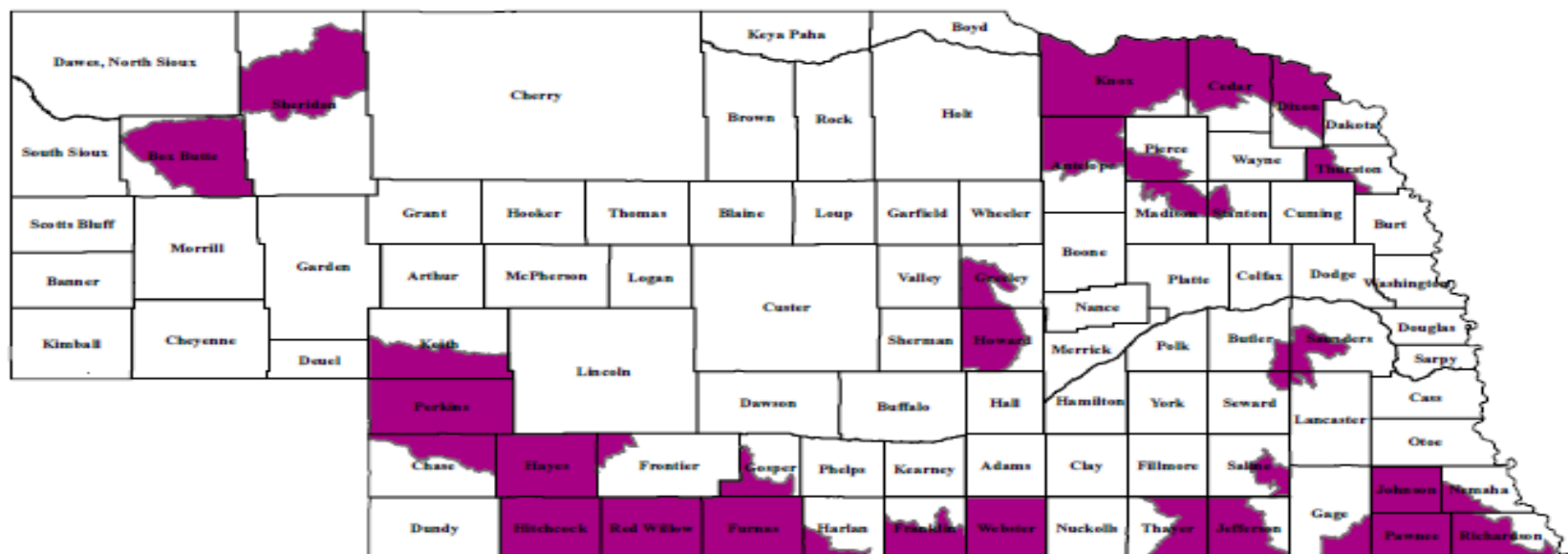
- ❖ Erodibility Benefits Index (EBI)
  - ❖ EI Scores changed with new erosion tool
- ❖ Bird Habitat- Grassland bird Species (western meadowlark, dickcissel, greater prairie chicken and sharp-tail grouse.
  - ❖ Wanted to increase and/or retain grasslands in areas that will provide the most benefits to grassland species.

# Conservation Priority Areas (CPA's) & Wildlife, Water Quality and Air Quality Zones



The following was considered by the group when deciding on areas to include, remove or add:

- ❖ Water Quality Based & Water Impairments
  - ❖ Impaired waters were viewed using NDEE maps, overlapped water quality CPA's and wildlife CPA's where possible to make the most impact
- ❖ Locations of Expiring CRP
  - ❖ Contracts that will expire in 2025-2027
- ❖ Avoided areas with heavy irrigation
  - ❖ Only pay dryland rates
    - ❖ Exception: Platte Republican CREP (pay irrigated rates)

## Nebraska Farm Service Agency Conservation Priority Areas



### Legend

-  NE FSA County Boundary
-  NE CPA

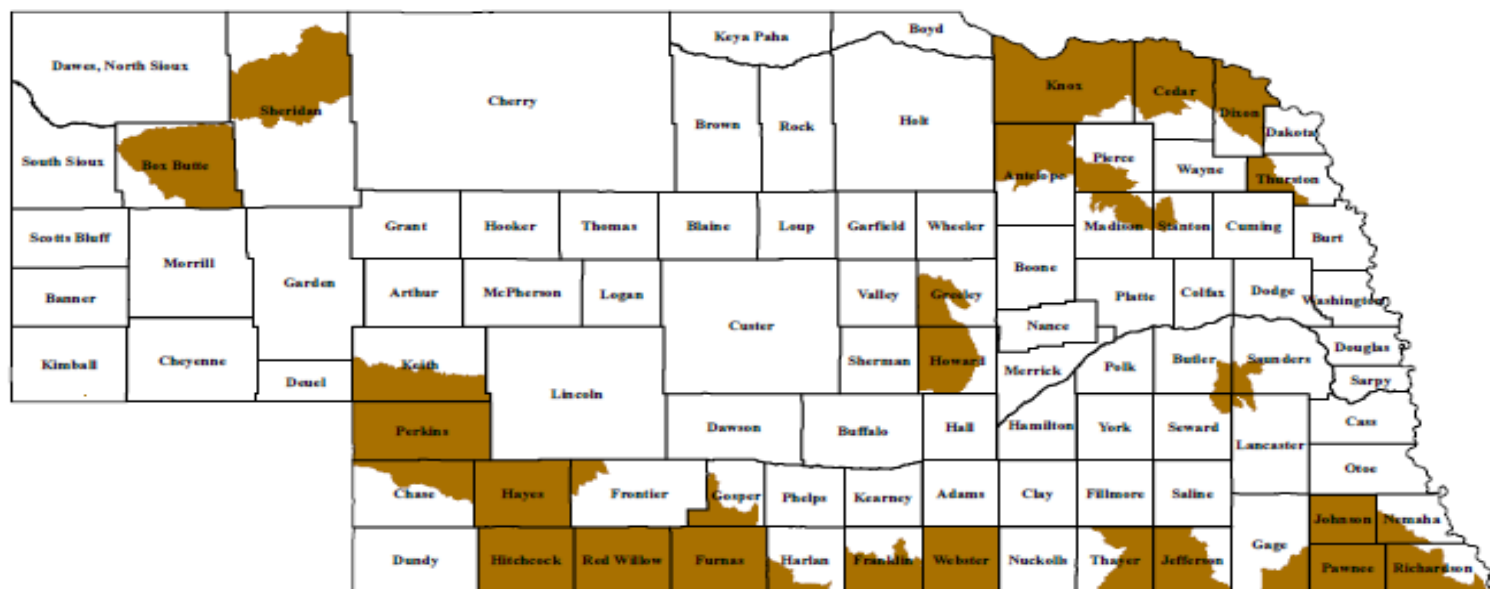
Nebraska Conservation Priority Area layer is defined by a combination of the dd17\_NonGeneralized County Boundary layer and the wbdhu12 HUC layer.

Date Created: 12/9/2020

**Farm  
Service  
Agency**

**fsa.usda.gov**

## Nebraska Farm Service Agency Wildlife Zone



### Legend

- NE FSA County Boundary
- NE Wildlife Zone

Nebraska Conservation Priority Area layer is defined by a combination of the dd17\_NonGeneralized County Boundary layer and the wbdhu12 HUC layer.

Date Created: 12/9/2020

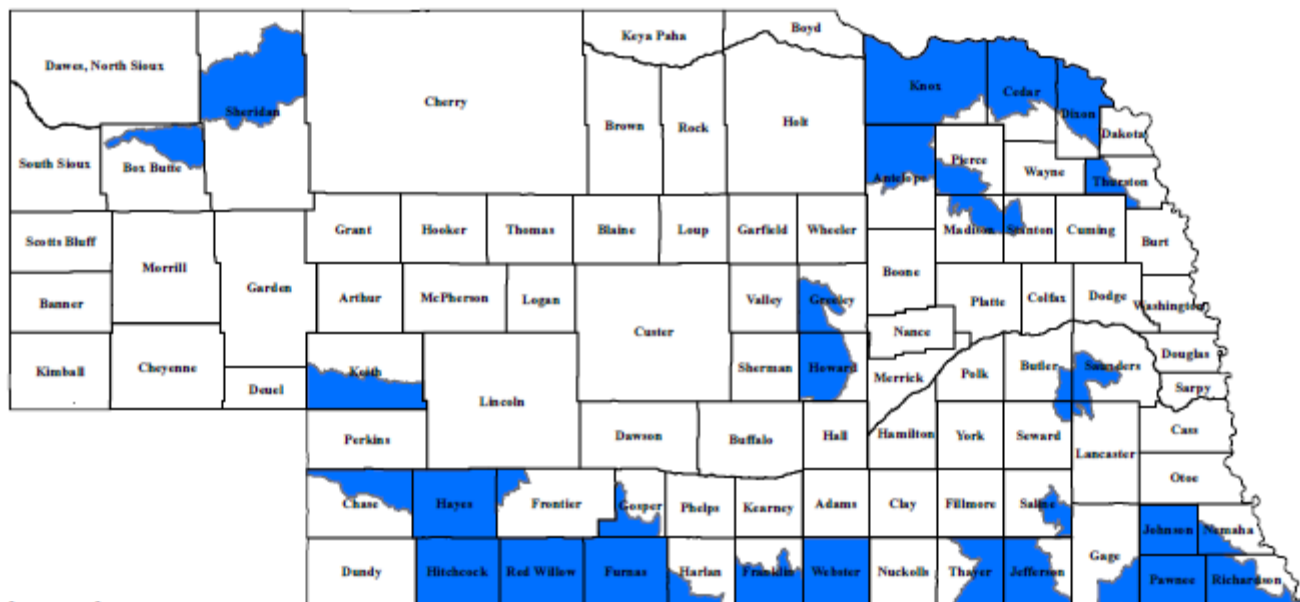
USDA is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

**Farm  
Service  
Agency**

**fsa.usda.gov**



## Nebraska Farm Service Agency Water Quality Zone



### Legend

- NE FSA County Boundary
- NE Water Quality Zone

Nebraska Conservation Priority Area layer is defined by a combination of the dd17\_NonGeneralized County Boundary layer and the wbdhul2 HUC layer.

USDA is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

Date Created: 12/9/2020

**Farm  
Service  
Agency**

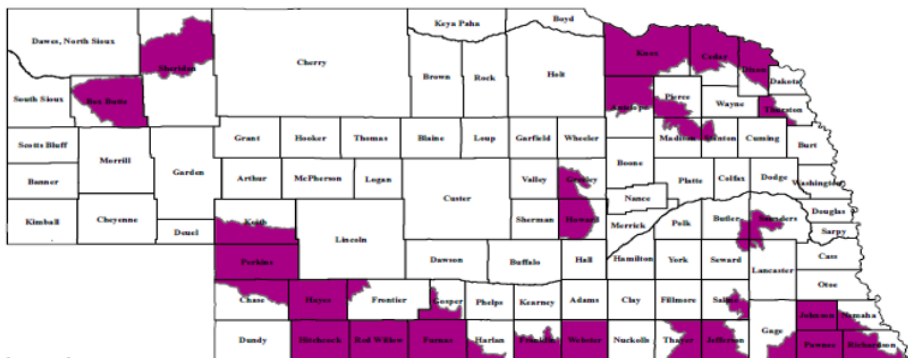
**fsa.usda.gov**

# Comparison Previous CPA/Proposed CPA

## 2021-2023 CPA

## Proposed CPA

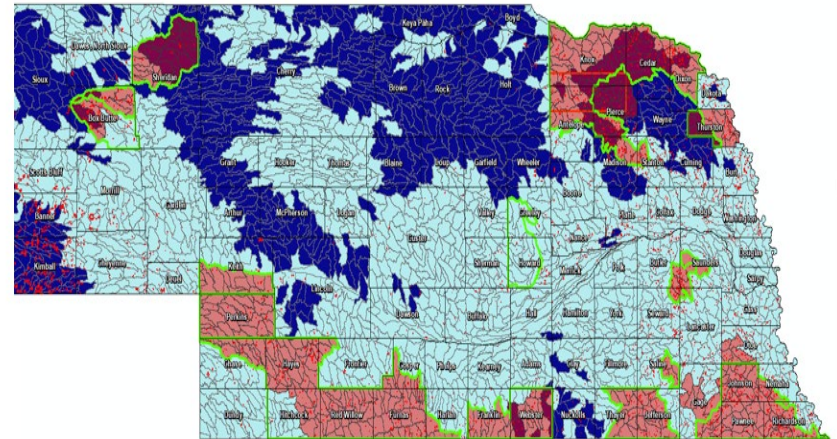
Nebraska Farm Service Agency  
Conservation Priority Areas



**Legend**  
 NE FSA County Boundary  
 NE CPA

Nebraska Conservation Priority Area layer is defined by a combination of the dd17\_NonGeneralized County Boundary layer and the wbdn12 HUC layer.

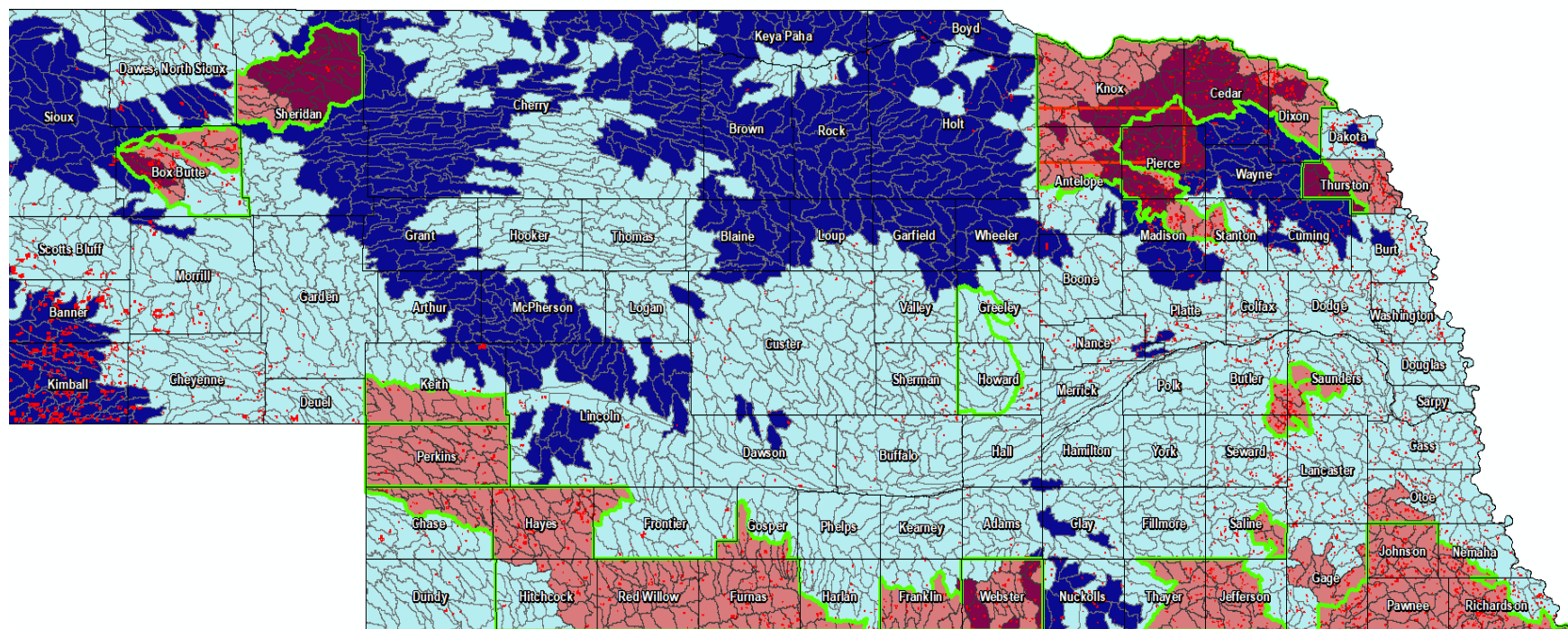
Date Created: 12/9/2020



**Farm  
Service  
Agency**

**fsa.usda.gov**

# CPA, Zone Area Proposal



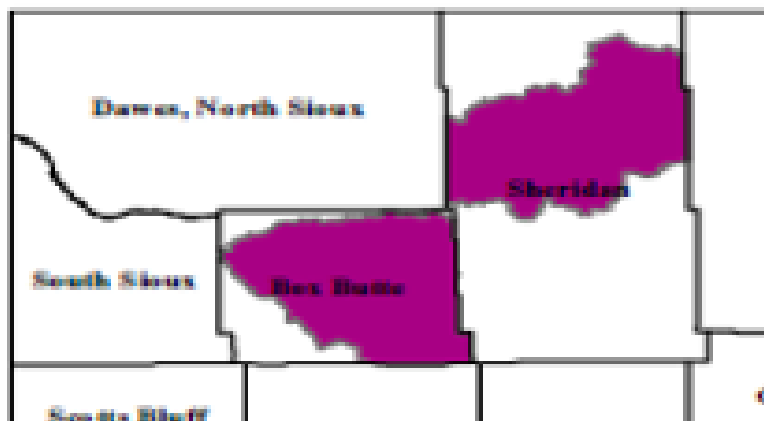
**Pink/red:** CPA Proposed Areas

**Outlined in Green:** Previous CPA Area

**Blue:** Represents High Wildlife

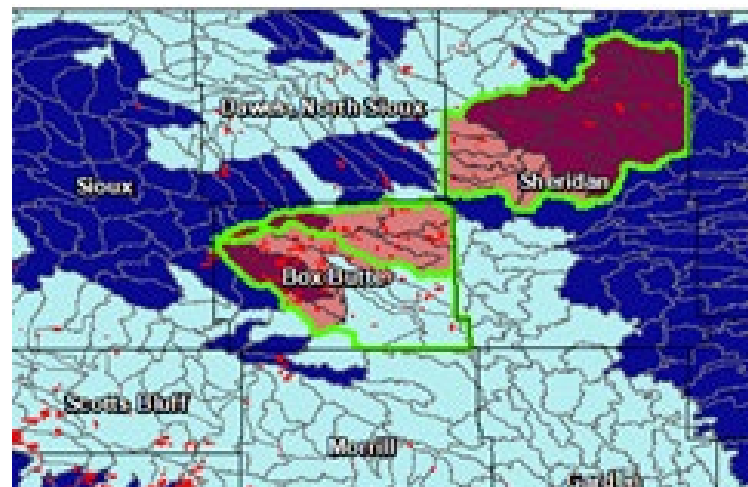
**Dotted areas:** show acres expiring in 2025-2027

## Northwest Prior CPA/Zones

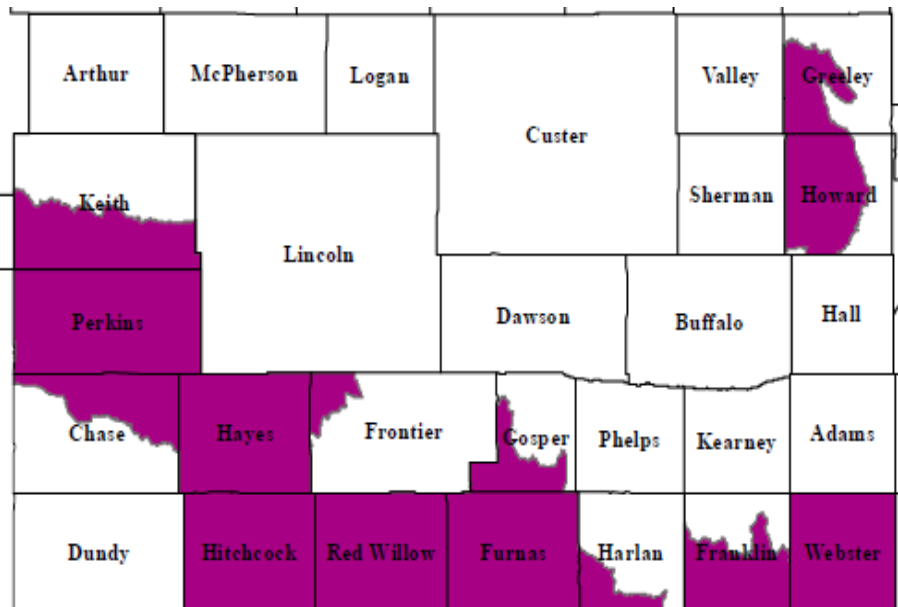


### Recommended CPA:

We wanted to retain the areas within the current CPA boundary with heavy CRP expirations, but the edge of Box Butte are more likely grassland in nature.



## Southwest Prior CPA/Zones

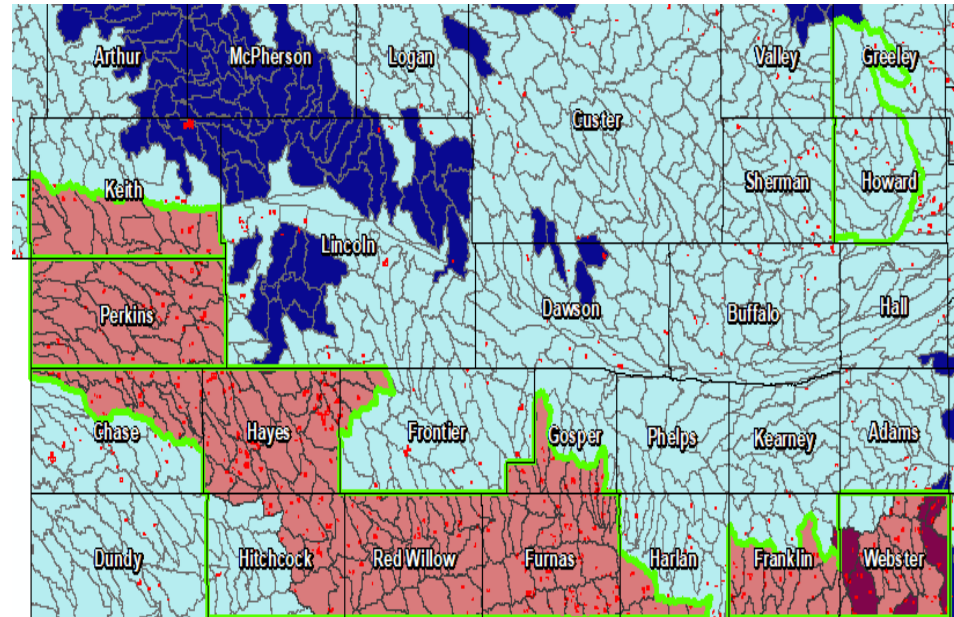


### Recommended CPA:

Greeley and Howard counties are removed from the proposed CPA areas. This area does not contain a large amount of expiring CRP. These acres would be more beneficial added elsewhere in the state.

Northern Webster was removed from proposed CPA due to being heavily irrigated land, which landowners typically do not enroll into CRP. There were not many expiring CRP acres in this area.

Southwestern Hitchcock was removed from proposed CPA the low amount of any expiring CRP acres. There are many other continuous CRP options for this area.

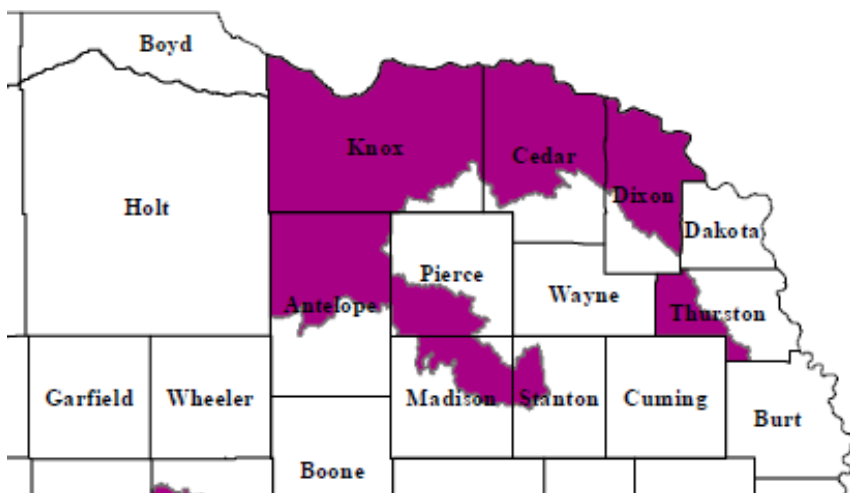


**Service  
Agency**

**fsa.usda.gov**



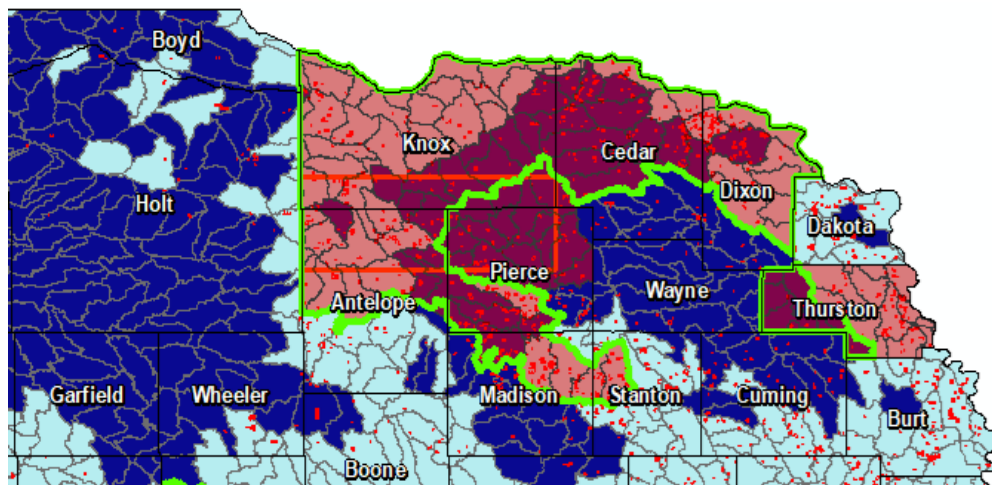
## Northeast Prior CPA/Zones



### Recommended CPA:

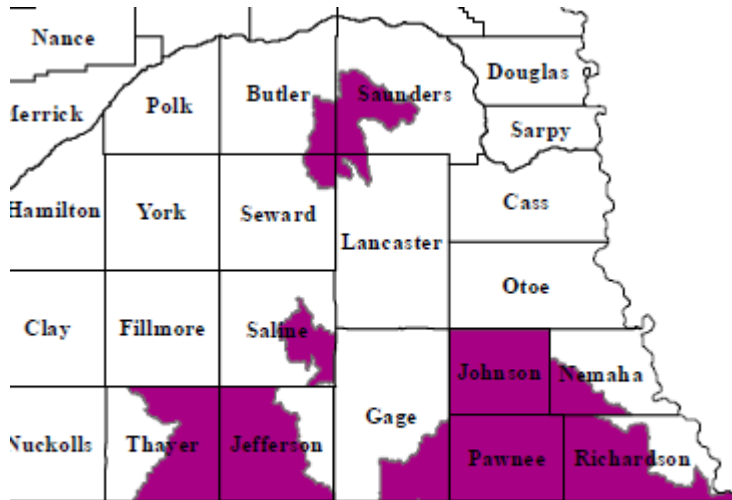
Pierce County will be increased. The increased area had many clusters of expiring CRP. This area also has a large grassland bird occurrence. Capturing more of this county would cover more of the impaired waters of Bazile Creek.

The entire county of Thurston will be in proposed area. There were many clusters of expiring CRP. The area has a large grassland bird occurrence. Tribal lands will also be within the proposed CPA.





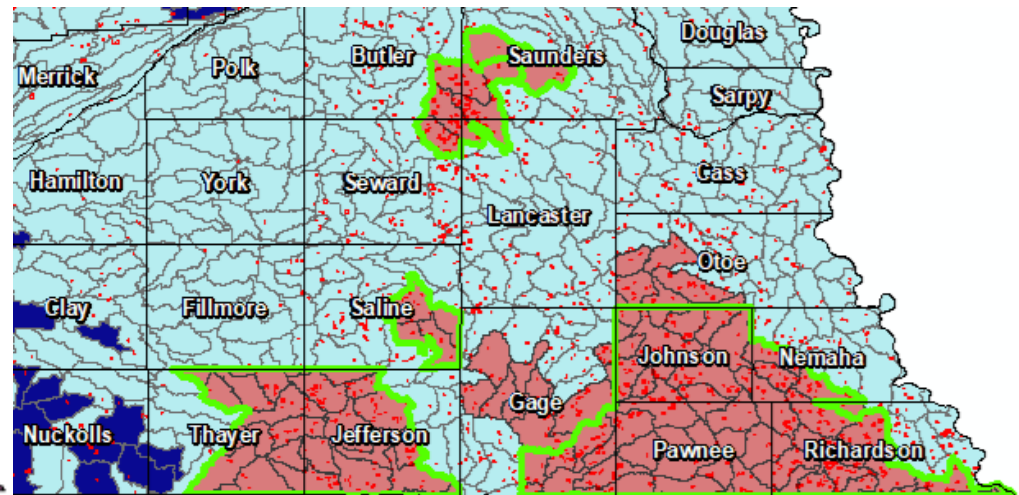
## Southeast Prior CPA/Zones



### Recommended CPA:

Gage County CPA is being expanded to include many clusters of expiring CRP. It will also capture more of the tributaries leading into the Big Blue River watershed.

Adding Southwestern Otoe County to proposed CPA. This area has many clusters of expiring CRP. There has been a large decrease in CRP enrollment in this area.



ed by a

# CRP Update

## ❖ Continuous Signups:

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

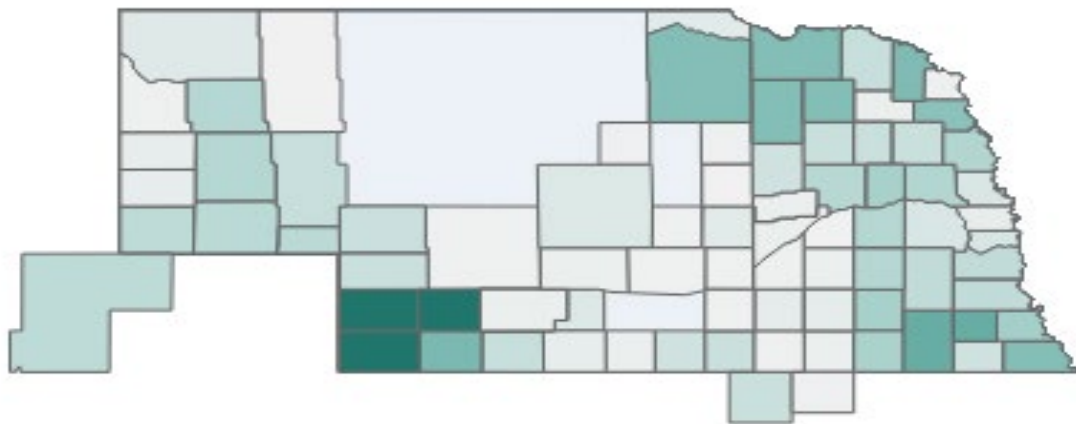
# CRP Update

## ❖ Continuous Signup Results:

Total Offers = 1,211

Practice Acres = 37,815

Complete	Submitted	Submitted For Plan	Submitted to COC	COC Approved
<b>216</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>298</b>
10,501 acres	1,344 acres	16,576 acres	2,144 acres	7,249 acres



**Farm  
Service  
Agency**

**fsa.usda.gov**

## CRP Update

### ❖ Signups that require National Office Ranking Process:

- SU59, Migratory Birds, Butterflies & Pollinator SAFE (KS, NE & OK)

Offers Submitted: 24

Accepted Offers = 13

# CRP Update

## ❖ Signups that require National Office Ranking Process:

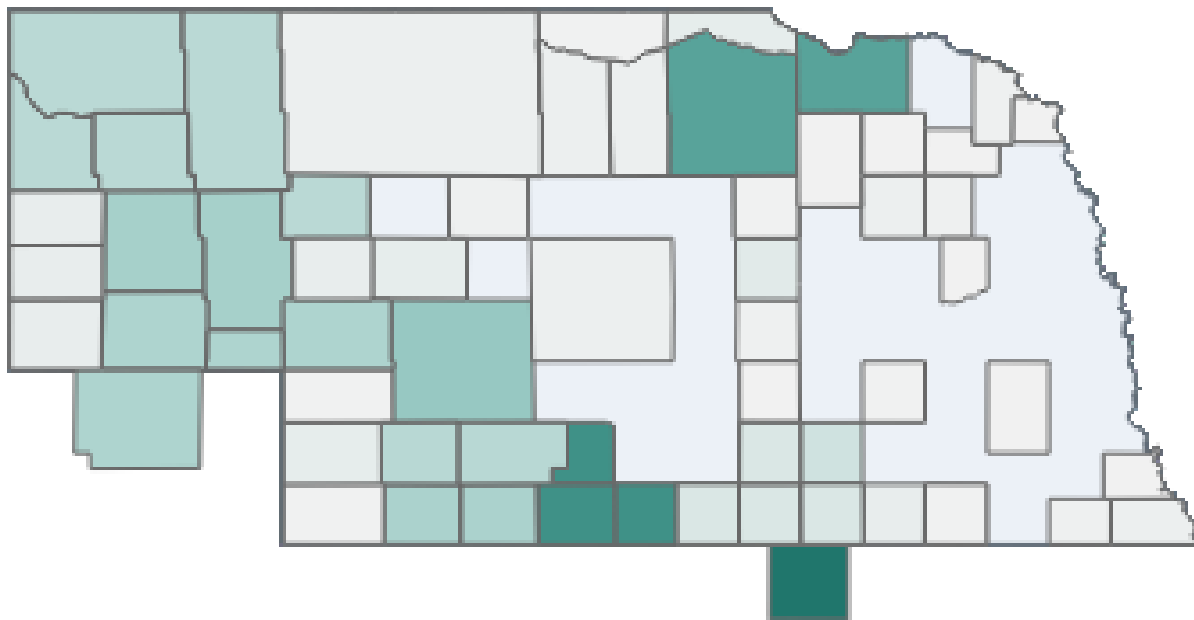
- General Signup 60
  - Offers Submitted = 989
  - Offered Acres = 61,358
  - Offers Accepted = 862
  - Accepted Acres = 58,960



# Grasslands CRP Signup 2005

**Total Offers = 1,118      Practice Acres = 381,850**

Complete	Submitted	Submitted For Plan	Submitted to COC
<b>35</b> 15,532 acres	<b>2</b> 70 acres	<b>1,028</b> 344,237 acres	<b>53</b> 22,010 acres



# 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**