

## **Vermont State Technical Committee Meeting**

August 23, 2023

Hosted hybrid: USDA State Office, Colchester and virtually via Microsoft Teams

### **NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 18, 2023**

**Attending (Colchester):** Travis Thomason (NRCS), Bob Thompson (NRCS), Angela Hyldburg (NRCS), Trevor Saylor (NRCS), Olivia Buttermann (FSA), Ali Malone (FSA), Jill Arace (VACD), Alli Lewis (VAWQP), Ryan Patch (VAAFM), Lauren Weston (Franklin Co NRCD)

**Attending (MS Teams):** Nathan Hamilton (NRCS), Chris Best (NRCS), Luis Aponte (NRCS), John Van Hoesen (NRCS), Marybeth Whitten (NRCS), Sinorakoune Bounmasananh (NRCS), Julia Grey (NRCS), Jason Eckert (NRCS), Nathanael Johns (NRCS), John Roberts (FSA), Eileen Powers (FSA), Sarah Waring (RD), Jeff Farber (VACD), Marli Rupe (DEC), Chris E. Smith (USFWS), Kira Jacobs (EPA Region 1 Drinking Water Program), Theresa Vander Woude (EPA), Liam Fagan (Senator Sanders, DC), Will Stevens (Senator Sanders, VT), Ryan McLaren (Senator Welch, DC), Laura Ranker (DEC), Nina Gage (VAAFM), Emma Redel (VAAFM), Emily Nummer (VACD), Jennifer Byrne (WRNRCD), Jake Jacobs (WRNRCD), Jillian Liner (Audubon VT), Cassandra Wolfanger (Audubon VT), Brad Roy (Vermont Rural Water Association), Eric Howe (LCBP), Dana Hazen (Redstart), Michael Rooney (Producer, Hill Section Farm), Britt Haselton (Vermont Land Trust), Sarah Damsell (OCCD), Laura DiPietro (FAAFM), Emily Finnegan (CCNRCD), Susan Hodgson (USDA Northeast Climate Hub/UVM Ext), Keith Thompson (VT ANR/FPR), Abe Collins (Land Care Cooperative)

## ***Vermont USDA State Technical Committee Meeting***

August 23, 2023 | 9:30 am-12:00 pm

USDA State Office, Colchester and MS Teams

### **Agenda**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
9:30 – 9:45 am	State Conservationist Welcome and NRCS Update	Travis Thomason
9:45 – 9:55 am	Farm Service Agency Update	John Roberts
9:55 – 10:05 am	Rural Development Update	Sarah Waring
10:05 – 10:25 am	Legislative Update	Congressional Delegations
10:25 – 10:45 am	Programs Update	Nathan Hamilton
10:45-10:50 am	Break	
10:50 – 11:05 am	Climate Subcommittee Update	John Van Hoesen
11:05 – 11:20 am	Irrigation Subcommittee Update	Bob Thompson
11:20 – 11:35 am	Ecological Sciences Update	John Van Hoesen
11:35 – 11:55 am	Partner Updates	
11:55 – 12:00 pm	Wrap-up	Travis Thomason

## **Welcome and NRCS Updates:**

*Travis Thomason, State Conservationist, NRCS Vermont*

Thank you for joining us. Grateful to have you all here. Review of the agenda.

**NRCS Updates** - Today's focus is on Subcommittee updates.

### **Local Work Groups (LWG)** – Subcommittees of the State Technical Committee

- There hasn't been a great process for incorporating or reporting back on LWG meetings.
- Currently working with VACD and the NRCDs to improve this process.
- Will undergoing a CPI and investment in the LWG to do Long Range Plans/Strategic Plans.
- Through that process, we will develop a consistent reporting mechanism so in the future one of our State Technical Committee meetings will be devoted to LWG recommendations and updates.
- I appreciate all the great work the NRCDs/District Managers do to facilitate those meetings and want to be sure the work they are doing has a very clear/transparent process for how we adopt those recommendations.

### **EQIP Disaster Assistance** – Thank you to the many partners that helped put together the roll-out.

- \$4 million dollars for this program, announced a few weeks ago
- Sign-up by September 1, 2023
- Funds must be obligated by September 30, 2023
- Only 7 practices (all non-engineering) that can get early-start waivers.
- Williston Service Center is the command station with Detailees and others assisting.
- Shout-out to Heather Darby and others

### **EWP Program**

- 18 Sponsor requests (so far) across VT with many more coming in
- 60 sites visited (so far), many more to visit.
- Leads: Bob Thompson and Mike Lapointe

### **Fiscal Year 2024 Priorities**

- Chief Cosby recently rolled out FY24 priorities during a National Leadership Team meeting
  1. Ensuring equity in all NRCS Programs and Services
  2. Increase assistance for climate-smart agriculture and forestry
  3. Addressing the unique needs of urban farmers and community scale agriculture nationwide
  4. Cultivating a diverse and well-trained workforce
  5. Leveraging innovative partnerships

**Climate Subcommittee** – you will hear updates, recommendations, and accomplishments from that committee. A lot of that work will influence the work we do in FY24.

### **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)** – NRCS received about \$20 billion overall

- EQIP general - On average we usually administer ~ \$11 million
- EQIP IRA funds are in addition to the EQIP general funds
  - FY24 – EQIP IRA \$5 million
  - FY25 – EQIP IRA \$10 million
  - FY26 – EQIP IRA \$12-\$14 million (depending on how we do prior years)
  - With the opportunity to increase the funding if not fully used by other states
- CSP general – FY23 we obligated ~ \$1 million (more applications than funding)
  - Thank you to all that made CSP successful (Soil Health Working Group, VAAFM with CSP Assist, Districts)

- CSP IRA funds are in addition to the CSP general funds
  - FY24 – CSP IRA \$1 million
  - FY26 – CSP IRA \$2-\$3 million
- RCPP is dependent on the proposals that are submitted
- ACEP – \$7-\$9 million for FY25 & FY26

**Next State Technical Committee meeting** - Will focus on the accomplishments for FY23, Partner Updates and how we are investing in Conservation Innovation Grants

**NRCS Agency Communication Update** – Trevor Saylor, Public Affairs Specialist

- Striving to have dynamic updates, utilizing our website rather than then individual newsletters
  - Demo of website – [News & Updates](#)
  - [Program Deadlines FY24](#), by month with details and hyperlinks
  - [News](#) – Recent VT news releases
  - [NRCS Vermont Blog](#) – links to recent events

### **Farm Service Update:**

*John Roberts, State Executive Director, FSA Vermont*

### **Flood Response:**

- Vermont has had 3 separate disasters in 8 months: Dec 2022 Winter storm - impacted Maple Producers; May 2023 Late frost - impacted most of our orchards and soft fruits; July 2023 Flooding and ongoing rain – impacting many producers.
- Staff are working very hard to take reports on the damage and direct producers to the appropriate programs.
- Working with Washington DC is a very bureaucratic process and takes time. Moving forward asking for waivers on certain programs and if they can cover flooding. Many programs were developed for drought.
- Major programs: Crop Insurance, NAP (specialty crops), ECP (clean-up damage), ELAP (livestock; forage that has been harvested and destroyed in the flood; apiaries that washed down river)
  - ECP - Trying to get a waiver to allow photographs rather than field inspection to allow farmers to start clean-up
  - No program currently for “wet weather”
- Signed up large number of new producers: new farmers, HU farmers
  - ~ 350 farms, reported damage with crop acres ~ 17,000-18,000 impacted (so far)
  - Eileen is gathering data on private forest landowners – damage mostly to logging roads

### **Under Secretary Robert Bonnie’s Visit**

- Vermont hosted this visit, mainly at the invitation of the Congressional delegation, but FSA and NRCS supported the event with farm visit coordination.
- Over the two-days, August 14th and 15th, visits to the Intervale in Burlington, Riverside Farm in Richmond (with many Addison Co. famers), Champlain Orchards in Shoreham (with a group of orchardist), an appearance at the Vermont Council on Rural Development Leadership Summit and a visit to Strafford Creamery in Strafford, VT (with free ice cream), provided the Under Secretary with a good exposure to the different types of farming that make up the Vermont agricultural portfolio, both organic and conventional.

- The Under Secretary got a very good exposure to Vermont's two significant disasters this year, the freeze event back in May and the flooding and excessive precipitation which has encompassed much of this summer and the limitations on some of our programs.
- Farmers were able to present views on where federal programs could be improved or were working well.
- There was also an opportunity for Under Secretary Bonnie to present to a joint FSA/NRCS meeting at the state office and answer questions at the beginning of the visit. *(Not stated during the meeting but provided in pre-notes.)*

#### **Deadline Waivers**

- As a result of the flooding event and the Presidential Disaster declaration, a number of programs have had deadlines for programs extended, including Crop Reporting and NAP, for example.

#### **Secretarial Disaster Declaration**

- Vermont is still waiting for a disaster declaration from Secretary Vilsack. I hope and expect that to happen very soon, but don't have a definite time at this moment. All paperwork has been submitted to DC.
- It's limited on the impacts it will have, but it will open up low interest loans that that could be used to refinance other loans with FSA, which might reduce their interest rate.

#### **Civil Rights Review**

- At the end of the month FSA, along with NRCS, will go through a weeklong Civil Rights Compliance Review at assess that we are meeting our goals on Equity, Inclusion, and all Civil Rights benchmarks.
- Staff have been working diligently to make sure the appropriate documents have been presented to the review personnel. The review will take place during the week of August 28th to September 1st. *(Not stated during the meeting but provided in pre-notes.)*

**Comments/Questions:** None

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#### **Rural Development Update:**

*Sarah Waring, State Director, RD VT/NH*

#### **Under Secretary Robert Bonnie's Visit**

- Thank you to Joe, Trevor, John, and team. The visit with Under Secretary Bonnie was great!

#### **Disaster Response: 504 Housing Repair Program**

- Unfortunately, we've had some upset farmers due to some miss communication on the eligibility of this program.
- Regular program used throughout the year, both loan and grant dollars.
- When FEME turned on the individual assistance and the Presidentially declared disaster happened, we were able to increase the amount of grant funding and waive the age restriction. Anybody, if they were very low income, in any of the individual assistance counties, could get up to \$40,675 in grant dollars to fix their primary residence.
- Our programs for homeowners exclude income generating properties. They are not designed for businesses, which includes farms. There's also another eligibility metric related to the assets that somebody has, which often means that farmers are ineligible for this program.
- In general, farmers are not going to be eligible to fix their primary home residence with our home repair dollars, except in extremely rare cases.

- We are currently working with Senator Sanders office on a couple cases to get farmers home repair loans through SBA as individuals rather than as farms. There are a number of farmers who've had impacts to their houses rather than to the farm, or to both.
- There have been about 4200 FEMA applicants in the last five weeks. About 800 of those are eligible for RD programs. And then there's another 700 of existing RD borrowers who are eligible for a lot of our program flexibilities around more payment for their mortgages and payment moratoriums and things like that which we can provide.
- We are ramping down our presence in the disaster recovery centers (staffing all 11 centers for 5 weeks, 6 days/week, 11 hours/day).

### **Program Updates**

- Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) - Finalizing our March round and working through our June round and we anticipate all of those will be obligated and everybody will hear about their projects shortly. Being short staffed, only one person in the state is managing this work.
- We have a lot of money through IRA, but not the staffing it manage it. (Hiring freeze and other hiring challenges). We're trying our best to get through all of that and appreciate the patience that farmers and small businesses are showing us.
- REAP Technical Assistance money (\$500,000) - We did a lot of outreach with our farm assistance partners over the last few months. None of our farm or food system collaborators were interested or able to apply for this funding. The money will go back to the national office. There may be technical assistance provided to Vermont by a regional or national player.
- Meat and poultry processing money coming out this week. A new NOFA or NOSA, either Thursday or Friday. Grant dollars under American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). We were able to award \$1,000,000 in grant funding last year to Vermont Livestock Slaughter and Processing (Carl Cushing). We would love to get another three or four of these into the state of Vermont over the course of this next grant and application period. Would like NRCS (Trevor) to help promote this opportunity.

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### **Legislative Updates**

#### ***Liam Fagan (Senator Sander's Office)***

- Legislative Assistant covering agriculture (and other issues) in DC office
- Contact information: [Liam\\_Fagan@sanders.senate.gov](mailto:Liam_Fagan@sanders.senate.gov)
- Coming today from my parent's house in Rutland
- Appropriations is the main buzz of Congress right now, as government funding runs out at the end of September.
  - The Senate has reported all twelve annual appropriations bills; House as approved ten.
  - There is talk of a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR), which would temporarily keep funding at FY23 levels through some point in December.
  - Getting a full FY24 budget deal completed, while addressing other outstanding September deadlines (Farm Bill and the FAA reauthorization), would be a big lift with few working days in September.
  - There is automatic sequestration that kicks in if Congress uses a CR during FY24, but that penalty would only happen if a CR were in place in early January. So, we are expecting Congress to do everything they can to try to get some type of budget deal through by the end of the year.
- Letter from President Biden through the Office of Management and Budget to Speaker McCarthy requesting about \$40 billion in a supplemental funding, including funding for foreign assistance and funding for disaster supplemental funding. The request included about \$12 billion for FEMA but did not include other critical funding for disaster relief, including through the USDA. The

Vermont delegation wrote to President Biden in early August to request significantly more funding to address the Vermont disasters and other disasters around the country.

- There is a chance that Congress approves supplemental disaster funding in September, including if Congress goes with the CR route. As such, delegation staff are doing outreach right now to other offices in states that have also experienced disasters this year to coordinate and build a group ask.
- Focusing on top lines across the agencies to ensure we get the necessary funding through.
- We are also pushing policy solutions on these programs, so please don't hesitate to reach out with any suggestions or requests to better serve folks and to make these programs work better for Vermonters.
- During August recess, I and others from the congressional delegation have been in Vermont doing outreach visits with Vermonters who experienced flooding damage.
- Senator Sanders has also visited multiple farms during his outreach visits this summer, including with Under Secretary Bonnie. Thank you to Senator Welch's team for getting the Under Secretary here to see the damage and discuss recovery, which has also definitely driven home for him how devastating this growing season is.
- Thank you all for engaging with us on what is needed to help farmers and small businesses.

***Will Steven (Senator Sander's Office)***

- Outreach Representative covering agriculture, forestry, small business, nutrition, and other issues.
- Contact information: [Will\\_Stevens@sanders.senate.gov](mailto:Will_Stevens@sanders.senate.gov) (VT)
- I just want to second what Liam said and thank Senator Welch's team for setting up the visits with Under Secretary Bonnie. I was able to join FSA, RD and NRCS staff on many of those visits on Monday and Tuesday and it was a very worthwhile, if not a little bit depressing, just to see what was going on and to hear the stories.
- I'm continuing to get out and around and look forward to staying engaged with our agency friends.

***Ryan McLaren (Senator Welch's Office)***

- Ryan McLaren, Outreach Representative, works broadly on the Farm Bill
- Contact information: [ryan\\_mclaren@welch.senate.gov](mailto:ryan_mclaren@welch.senate.gov)
- As a delegation we were able to host Under Secretary Robert Bonnie, which was useful for him to see what is going on in Vermont and the application of the programs that he is responsible for, particularly the disaster relief programs.
- Our job now is to turn that visit, the information and goodwill we gained to something useful and applicable out of this appropriations process.
- We are working as a team on the appropriations process so as not to shut down the government, while also focusing on the funding for emergency relief needs. They are separate, but interdependent. And we are looking to pull in other states that have also experienced natural disasters to request an increase in funding.
- Another task is being engaged in the programs you are implementing; to understanding how they are and are not working; to appreciate your teamwork; and to be able to support you with challenges. (promoting federal programs to Vermonters)
- The Farm Bill is "hurry-up and wait" and there are still a lot of unknowns, but there is also time to incorporate changes to improve things in the long-term.

***Congresswoman Balint's Office***

- No one present/No update
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## NRCS Programs Update

*Nathan Hamilton, Acting Assistant State Conservationist for Programs*

### EQIP Disaster Assistance (EQIP DA)

- Received \$4 million
- Accepting applications until 9/1/2023
- 7 Available Practices (*See slides for details*)
  - Selected to get on the ground ASAP with early start waivers

### FY 2023 Programs Review to Date (*See slides for details*)

- Allocations: Review of all program allocations
  - Original allocation \$18,080,594
  - Adjusted allocation: \$24,434,670 (includes EQIP DA)
- Top Practices Contracted (#) for EQIP, AMA & CSP
  - Brush Management #1 (247 contracts)
  - Nutrient Management #19 (21 contracts)
  - Practice Count is number of times the practice shows up in a contract as a contract item
  - Does not include RCPP18
- Top Practices Contracted (acres) for EQIP, AMA & CSP
  - Nutrient Management #1 (only in 21 contracts)
  - Brush Management #3
  - Does not include RCPP18
- RCPP 2018 FB
  - 6 Active Projects
  - Preapproved 47 applications
  - Preapprovals \$2+ million;
  - As of 8/21/23: \$1.9 million obligated; some have dropped; still obligating
- ACEP Summary
  - ALE: 18 enrollments; 2770 acres; \$2,550,000
  - WRE: 18.5 acres; \$84,810

**Question:** *Jennifer Byrne (WRNRCD) – How is the number of acres determined?*

**Answer:** *Nathan Hamilton (NRCS) – It is the total of the number of acres for each year of the contract.*

*Example: If there will be nutrient management on 40 acres for all 3 years of the contract, it will total 120 acres of contracted practices (40 acres x 3 years).*

**Question:** *Ryan Patch (VAAFM) – The cover crop acreage seems three to four times lower than the average implementation by NRCS in previous three to four years. Is that your understanding of the 5.3 K acres? Is there a reason for that?*

**Answer:** *Travis Thomason (NRCS) – This data only includes one fiscal year, where implementation will consist of prior year metrics. I believe that is the discrepancy.*

**Answer:** *Marybeth Whitten (NRCS) – There has also been a reduction in cover crop contracting because a lot of our large farms adopted the practice and are no longer eligible for cover cropping through EQIP.*

**Comment:** *Ryan Patch (VAAFM) – That's what I was trying to get at and wanted to highlight that as a challenge for both state phosphorous reduction and carbon sequestration goals.*

### Working Lands Subcommittee – Recommendations for FY24 (*See slides for details*)

- All Programs (except ACEP) – Application deadline of October 20, 2023
- State Priority Resource Concerns will remain the same as FY23 for EQIP and CSP
- FY24 EQIP Ranking Pool and Spending Plan

- 6 local pools are being added
  - Flooding pool
  - Grazing pool
  - The remainder will stay the same
- High Priority Practices – changes from FY23 to FY24
  - 391 – Heavy Use Area Protection (HUA) (replacing Riparian Forest Buffer)
  - 393 – Fence (replacing Filter Strip)
- Expanded Source Water Protection Areas
  - Propose adding Dead Creek and Blood Brook (*Not added to the map in the slides yet*)

### **Easement Programs**

- Proposing the following Sign-up Dates:
  - ACEP-ALE – February 2, 2024
  - ACEP-WRE – February 2, 2024
  - RCPP US Held Easements – January 12, 2024 (Tentative)

### **ALE Recommendations for FY24** (*See slides for details*)

- No change to impervious surface limitation max waiver
- No change to the current soils waiver criteria
- Include farm transfers in ranking considerations
- Explore alternative valuation methods for future ALE agreements

### **WRE Recommendations for FY24** (*See slides for details*)

- Keep existing ranking priorities the same as FY23
- FY24 keep Valuation methodology the same as FY23, but for FY25 pursue Areawide Market Analysis for use of streamlined Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARCs)
- Leverage partnerships to boost WRE outreach
- Propose IRA target area for Champlain Basin

### **Questions/Comments:**

**Comment:** *Travis Thomason (NRCS) – This is an example of how important the subcommittees are to this work. The work gets done in subcommittees and then it is brought back to the full State Tech Committee meeting for a summary of recommendations. I encourage you, if you haven't been involved, to join a subcommittee. Unless we hear additional feedback, this is how we will roll out FY24, with a sign-up of Oct 20, 2023.*

**Question:** *Marli Rupe (DEC) – In the list of ALE recommendations you talked about the 10% limit for impervious surface, 50% for soils. Am I correct in that that is one of the joys of RCPP, is we can use different numbers in those categories? Correct?*

**Answer:** *Nathan Hamilton (NRCS) – That is my understanding.*

**Answer:** *Julia Grey (NRCS) – I will add that the impervious surface limitation for where applicable to US held easements is that at 2% for RCPP. I don't know about a waiver of that process. For soils, you are correct, Marley, those are different than our ALEs rules.*

**Question:** *Kira Jacobs (EPA) – Was there a meeting/discussion with the Vermont Drinking Water Program (Laura Ranker) regarding the proposal to add to the Source Water Protection priority areas?*

**Answer:** *Nathan Hamilton (NRCS) – It was discussed during the subcommittee meeting. I would have to look at the log to know who was in attendance. (The map is FY23 only)*

**Answer:** *Marybeth Whitten (NRCS): Part of the reason the Dead Creek was suggested to be added is because of the SEAP Watershed project with Josh Faulkner*

**Comment:** *Travis Thomason (NRCS) – Joe Buford is away this week, but I am confident that Laura*



*Ranker and team were involved in this recommendation. I will confirm that to be true (or get their feedback) before going forward.*

***Action:** Get confirmation that Laura Ranker was informed (or get feedback) of proposed changes to the Source Water Protection priority areas. (Propose adding Dead Creek and Blood Brook)*

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## BREAK

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### Climate Sub-Committee Update

*John Van Hoesen, State GIS Specialist/NRCS State Climate POC*

Large group of committee members from all across the state.

#### **Review of Subcommittee Charges** *(See slides for details)*

- Review CSAF Activities list and identify a priority list to target related to training and outreach (internal use only)
- Bring any other ideas forward (organizational structure, contracting, etc.) where NRCS should invest our time related to CSAF Activities.
- National asked to provide input into additional CSAF practices for future years
- Report: Climate Subcommittee Recommendations (will be added to the website)
- [NRCS Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities](#) – referenced website

#### **CSAF Priority List Recommendations** *(See slides for details)*

- Sent to Travis and will be reviewed by ECS team
- This list does not impact rankings or contracting, but where we might offer training/outreach

#### **National CSAF List Recommendations**

- Submitted 7 practices for review. *(See slides for details)*
- They must either reduce greenhouse gas emissions or sequester carbon
- Had to provide documentation that supported both of these two criteria
- An additional 50 practices are being review by National (some may be added as provisional)

#### **Organizational Recommendations**

- Focus was primarily around communication *(See slides for details)*

#### **Technical Recommendations**

- Lot of recommendations *(See slides for details)*
- Recommendations align nicely with the Under Secretary's message that NRCS needs to be more flexible.
- Develop 'Extreme Events' protocol
- Develop Bundles
- A few very specific practice recommendations

#### **Questions/Comments:**

**Comment:** *Jennifer Bryne (WRNRCD) – For CSP-IRA, there are not many Climate Smart practices for farmstead or associated ag land.*

**Response:** *John Van Hoesen (NRCS) – If there are additional CSAF practices that you feel should be added to the CSAF list, please send them to me along with the rational/documentation and we'll get them sent to the National Review Team. There are 6 additional practices that are under review right now.*

**Comment:** Susan Hodgson (USDA Northeast Climate Hub/UVM Ext) – I wanted to thank John for doing an incredible job in this role because I was one of many diverse stakeholders and I think this report accurately captures the views of a wide range of state holders. John did it with a lot of clarity, specificity and good references and documentations. I really appreciated being part of the process and what a great job you did. Thank you.

**Question:** Jillian Liner (Audubon VT) – Is the justification for some of the recommended practices included in the report? And does it include the estimates for what the practices it will achieve in carbon sequestration and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions? Was carbon storage considered?

**Answer:** John Van Hoesen (NRCS) – The journal articles are not imbedded in the report directly. Reach out to me if you want additional information. The rationale for why they were included is in the report and the estimates of the impact must be included, or they will likely not make it through the National Review. Carbon sequestration includes storage.

**Question:** Jill Arace (VACD) – Is there also priorities being placed on research to changes to practice design? New investment in the research to modify the design of the practices?

**Answer:** John Van Hoesen (NRCS) – There is research happening under USDA, but it also needs to happen at the state level and be “pushed up”. That is not currently happening and probably can’t happen in an annual year. There is a lot of work being done by ARS to explore whether there are different ways of doing things, but that is not in an annual year. They need multiple years of data.

**Answer:** Travis Thomason (NRCS) – NOFOs - CIG is a great place to invest in that work. If there are partners that feel like there's a suite of practices that need to be updated, CIG is a great place to start.

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## **Irrigation Sub-Committee Update**

**Bob Thompson, NRCS State Conservation Engineer**

Presented Irrigation Policy (Draft) and Recommendations from the committee (See attachment for details)

### **Irrigation (See attachment for details)**

- AMA: This program can be used for new irrigation systems (no history required), funds can also go towards water source development as well, but limited budget which goes mostly to high tunnels (~\$120,000/year)
- EQIP: Requires an irrigation history that must be documented two out of the last five years. Must show irrigation efficiency improvement using the FIRI tool. Funds can also go toward water source development.
- Yield Testing of wells is available and cost shareable.
- Recommend yield testing of all new and existing wells proposed for irrigation and/or livestock watering.
- Recommend potential projects that have (recent) previous yield testing should rank higher.
- Recommend irrigation systems which already have water sources or partial water sources should be ranked higher.

### **Wells (See attachment for details)**

- Challenge: Most are bedrock wells and do not produce high yields (2-3 gallons/minute, which is not enough to put in an irrigation system). In the past we might proceed anyway and if there was low yield, they would reduce the acreage to irrigate.
- Recommendation of steps before contracting and before installation to determine if there is sufficient yield. Do not proceed if there is low yield. NRCS cannot pay for a “dry well”.

**Shallow Wells** (*See attachment for details*)

- A well that is about 20 feet deep and can be dug with an excavator.
- Massachusetts is having success putting these in along the Connecticut River.
- Requires a lot of pre-contract assessment. (i.e., test pits, evaluation by soil scientist, etc.)
- Reliability is seasonal and tend to dry-up or have low yield during drier months.

**Spring Development** (*See attachment for details*)

- Similar challenges to shallow wells.
- Recommend that evaluation and assessment be done during the driest time of the year.
- Site should be evaluated by a soil scientist or other experienced employee.
- Recommend a back-up source in case of low yield or dries up.
- Reliability is seasonal and tend to dry-up or have low yield during drier months.

**Ponds** (*See attachment for details*)

- Needed for storage, but often can be near a wetland and will not pass the regulatory process.

**Storage Tanks – Above Ground** (*See attachment for details*)

- Seasonal, must be drained in the winter. Can be a good surplus of water to irrigate a high tunnel.

**Producer Self-Certification of Irrigation History** (*See attachment for details*)

**530.420C EQIP Irrigation History Waiver Checklist** (*See attachment for details*)

- Limited resource farmers can ask for a waiver for irrigation history.

**Questions/Comments:**

**Question:** Jennifer Bryne (WRNRCD) – Grateful for this guidance. Do you mean federally recognized tribes?

**Answer:** Travis Thomason (NRCS) – Yes because this is a federal program.

**Question:** Jennifer Bryne (WRNRCD) – Does the CEMA aquifer flow test count as a yield test (224)? We included that CEMA in our local fund pool and it is giving priority ranking if they include the CEMA.

**Answer:** Bob Thompson (NRCS) – I think so, but I'd have to review it. But I know we have a scenario under 642 for yield testing of wells. I recommend a small contract year 1 for the yield test and another contract for year 2 after the yield test is done to do an irrigation.

**Action:** Confirm if CEMA aquifer flow test counts as a yield test?

**Comments:** Ryan Patch (VAAF) –

1. I want to underscore the importance of water management for farms in the coming years, both to manage too much water and too little water.
2. AMA gets a low allocation relative to other irrigation programs and I think Vermont needs to start planning and investments in irrigation which will make farms more resilient in the future.
3. To dig into the specifics of this of this document, one concern the agency has about wells is the statistical analysis being enough to disqualify farmers desire to install a well. I would urge broader language or an exemption or variance process if the statistical analysis doesn't impact what NRCS needs.

**Action:** Expand the language regarding wells to provide more flexibility in an appropriate way.

**Response:** John Van Hoesen (NRCS) – I am fully on board with increasing flexibility as much as possible. The

way that the policy is written is that it's not just based on statistics. And the wells that are used are only those that are either GPS located or surveyed in. The others get filtered out. The Vermont Geological Survey has done a great job of updating those locations and the ones that are used in the analysis, that the engineering staff are using, are the filtered data points. Regarding the other piece that's in there, using existing reports, hydrogeologic reports, looking at cross sections - It is in this policy that beyond just the statistical analysis, that additional information will be taken into account.

**Comment:** Jennifer Bryne (WRNRCD) – Just to clarify, there is a federally recognized tribe in Vermont. It's the Stockbridge-Munsee tribe. It starts in New York State and ends on the other side of Middlebury. It goes from the top of Addison County all the way to the southernmost part of Bennington County.

**Comment:** Chris Smith (USFWS) – Clarification on the Native American tribes. Stockbridge-Munsee is not located in the state of Vermont. They are located in Wisconsin. They have an interest in the geographic area that Jennifer identified, and we do have to consult with them, but there is not a federally recognized tribe in Vermont. It's just recognized territory.

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## **Ecological Sciences Update**

**John Van Hoesen, State GIS Specialist on behalf of Joe Buford, State Resource Conservationist**

### **Soils Subcommittee** (See slides for details)

#### **Highlights of Subcommittee Charge and Activities**

- Provided input on the Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) priorities
- Provided input on the Vermont Soil Health Strategy
- Reviewed the following conservation practices implementation requirements:
  - Soil Carbon Amendment (application rates)
  - Cover Crop (higher level of conservation)

#### **Higher Level of Conservation and Cover Crop Examples**

Part 530 of the Working Lands Conservation Program manual highlights the idea of higher level of conservation.

- Producers can contract additional years of similar practices as long as there's some additional benefit that can be assessed and evaluated. This is typically documented in the CPA 52 and regardless of the program, the process is going to be the same. Under EQIP or CSP that documentation is going to happen in the assessment notes and or the CPA 52.
- Examples of Cover Crop that allow producers to receive payment for the same practice for multiple years as long as they can demonstrate this higher level of conservation.

### **Urban and Small Scale Agriculture Subcommittee** (See slides for details)

#### **Highlights of Subcommittee Charge and Activities**

- Shared the Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Grant Opportunities.
- July 18<sup>th</sup>, New Farms for New Americans and Association of Africans Living in Vermont awarded \$350,000. [USDA Invests \\$7.4 Million in 25 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Efforts](#)
- Provided input on the Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) priorities.
- Engaged in the following initiatives: SoilSHOP, Upper Valley Agroforestry Tour, Urban and small-scale survey, Payment schedule scenario review

### **Recommendations/Feedback**

- One concern/suggestion is that for very small farms keeping it simple is a key factor in program participation due to their limited management capacity.
- It would be great to have one very short form to request funding/reimbursement for a suite of well-proven, relatively inexpensive, and environmentally beneficial practices like cover cropping, drip irrigation, soil testing, pest scouting, especially if these take place on small acreage where the total cost is especially low.
- It would help to have your definitions of urban/small/community ag for your programs.
- It is difficult to get a farm and tract number assignment from FSA. Do you have to have 3 years of cropping history to get this? Can we have an urban/small farm cross agency meeting on this?

### **Forestry and Wildlife Subcommittee**

- Discussed adding 314, 315 and 395 practices to FY24 CSAF list.
- Discussed a ranking question related to water quality and suggested edits to make it less restrictive.
- Discussed potential CSAF oriented Forest Stand Improvement 666 treatments we might move to in the future focused on managing for old growth characters.
- Chart of Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories (*See slides for details*)

**Questions/Comments:** None

---

### **Public Comment:**

***Abe Collins, Land Care Cooperative***

[abenewsoil@gmail.com](mailto:abenewsoil@gmail.com), 802-782-1883

### **Invitation to attend the upcoming workshop:**

*Harnessing VT Ripsower, Healing our Watershed Homes*

Thursday, August 31, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm

North Hollow Farm Store, 1831 Vermont Route 100, Rochester, VT

Request of Vermont State Technical Committee from VT farmers, Land Care Cooperative, allies:

**Turning on Deep Tillage (324) and Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment (548) Codes in Vermont**

This is related to innovating and inventing the VT Ripsower. There are currently seven in the state.

*See slides for details.*

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### **Partner Update: EPA**

***Kira Jacobs, Region 1, Source Water Protection Coordinator***

We had a very successful Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Forest and Water Partnership meeting in May that was held in New Jersey. NACD was awarded a \$600,000 Forest Service landscape scale restoration project to replicate the Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water. Pilot projects starting in CT and OH. I expect VT will be either phase two or three. I bring this up because it's significant when it comes to being prepared for disasters, being able to protect the water supplies, repairing buffers. So that's what we're doing in some of the states. We're going to be doing riparian buffers to protect water bodies and using the Forest Service dollars for that. Our colleague, Annika McGurk, will be doing a presentation on this partnership at the NACD Northeast Regional Conference in September.

## **Partner Update: Vermont Rural Water Association**

***Brad Roy, Source Water Specialist***

Vermont Rural Water Association is a nonprofit based out of Essex, Vermont. We work with water and wastewater systems, providing training and technical assistance all over the state of Vermont. My specific position deals with source water, so I work closely with Kira Jacobs (EPA) and Laura Ranker (VT DEC).

Hosted a Field Day training session on June 1, 2023, in the Northeast Kingdom in partnership with NRCS, VT DEC, EPA, VACD/NRCD. All are common stakeholders when it comes to water quality.

- Lyndonville: Kira put on a virtual presentation; Laura Ranker put on a presentation explaining what a public community water system is, how it functions, how we deal with source protection from the drinking water side of things in the state of Vermont.
- Sutton: Field visit to their water system and then a multitude of stops in the Sutton, Burke, Lyndonville area.
- The big take home message was just starting to open up this conversation about how agriculture and source water lumps into our drinking water side of things and trying to get contacts together, get communication and dialogue opened up and see how we can get these different entities involved to try and create positive change when it comes to source water.
- A lot of participants, lots of great information. Thank you to all who participated.
- An invitation to attend future events, annual or semi-annual.

***Action item: Kira and Brad to provide a write-up to Trevor for the NRCS Vermont blog.***

## **Partner Update: EPA**

***Theresa Vander Woude, Region 1***

Self-introduction. New to the EPA, Region 1 Surface Water Protection Branch.

## **Partner Update: VT Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets**

***Nina Gage, Agricultural Water Quality Program Coordinator***

### **CSP Assist Program**

- The Payment for Ecosystem Services and Soil Health Working Group recommended a program this past year to provide assistance to encourage producers to enroll in the NRCS CSP.
- We've offered about \$595,000 in awards to 88 farm operations to folks who've gone into NRCS to apply for CSP.
- This program was successful at creating a buzz and desire for applying to that program.

### **Capital Equipment Assistance Program**

- A program that will be released this fall in early September.
- We often appreciate insight from NRCS planners as they work with farms who are requesting conservation equipment.
- Beginning in early September with applications due November 1st.
- Equipment such as manure injectors, no till grain drills for cover cropping are eligible for assistance under that program.

### **FY 2025 State Budget Process for Clean Water Fund**

- Starting the budget process for FY25 now over the next few months.
- Major funding source for both local and regional technical assistance for farms.
- As well as for providing financial assistance to match or assist on some federal contracts (Example: EQIP Assist program)



## **Flood Updates**

- Release of the Business Emergency Gap Assistance Program.
  - This is being administered through the State Agency of Commerce and Community Development.
  - There was \$1 million of the \$20 million allocation set aside for agriculture.
  - We have received/assisting with the review and approval of more than 100 applications.
  - The program is set up such that it can offer an award for most businesses up to \$20,000 and not to exceed 20% of unrecovered losses.
  - We don't have the data to confirm, but we're fairly sure that those funds have been used up.
  - We do not have information yet if additional funds will become available for this program.
  - We encourage farms to apply but want to make sure that folks are aware that we likely have expended those funds, as it was available on a first come first serve basis.
  - The legislature may be coming back in October, so we may see some movement there.
- Support around feed and accessing sufficient feed.
  - Setting up an online tool to help match folks, basically an online marketplace.
  - Folks will be able to go online and enter their information that they'll be offering feed for sale and compile this info into a place that makes it a little bit easier for farms to access additional suppliers if they're lacking.
  - The agency is not reviewing each submission, so there will be a lot of disclaimers, but we're trying to do what we can to support matching folks who have feed needs with folks who have it for sale.
  - That will be released in the next week or so.

## **Wrap-up**

**Travis Thomason, State Conservationist, NRCS Vermont**

Next meeting is October 18<sup>th</sup>, USDA State Office, Colchester and MS Teams

- Wrap up of FY23 and outcomes
- Updates on CIG Innovations
- Partner updates
  - Reach out to Angela Hyldburg if you would like to be on the agenda.
  - [angela.hyldburg@usda.gov](mailto:angela.hyldburg@usda.gov) or 802-951-6796 ext. 227
- Subcommittee list with dates for FY24 for planning for FY25
- FY24 – Program application cutoff date is October 20, 2023
- FY25 – Program application cutoff date will be in August 2024 (moving up two months so conservation planning can begin before there is snow on the ground)

## **Future meetings:**

- October 18, 2023, 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
- January 17, 2024, 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
- April 17, 2024, 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
- July 17, 2024 – Field Tour (on or around this date, details to come)

Thank you so much.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm





## Vermont State Technical Committee Agenda August 23, 2023, 9:30 am – 12:00 pm

USDA Vermont State Office  
356 Mountain View Drive, Colchester, VT

### MS Teams

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Or call in (audio only)**

+1 202-650-0123,,967029853# United States, Washington DC

Phone Conference ID: 967 029 853#

Time	Topic	Speaker
9:30 – 9:45 am	State Conservationist Welcome and NRCS Update	Travis Thomason
9:45 – 9:55 am	Farm Service Agency Update	John Roberts
9:55 – 10:05 am	Rural Development Update	Sarah Waring
10:05 – 10:25 am	Legislative Update	Congressional Delegations
10:25 – 10:45 am	Programs Update	Nathan Hamilton
10:45 – 10:50 am	Break	
10:50 – 11:05 am	Climate Subcommittee Update	John Van Hoesen
11:05 – 11:20 am	Irrigation Subcommittee Update	Bob Thompson
11:20 – 11:35 am	Ecological Sciences Update	John Van Hoesen
11:35 – 11:55 am	Partner Updates (If time allows)	
11:55 – 12:00 pm	Wrap-up	Travis Thomason

### Next scheduled State Technical Committee Meetings:

October 18, 2023

January 17, 2024

April 17, 2024

July 17, 2024

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Vermont State Office  
356 Mountain View Drive, Suite 105, Colchester, VT 05446  
Voice 802-951-6796 | Fax 855-794-3677  
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*Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Service*

United States Department of Agriculture

August 23, 2023

VT State Technical Committee



# NRCS Programs Update



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# EQIP Disaster Assistance

- Received \$4 million
- Taking applications until 9/1/2023

## Available Practices

Practice Name	Practice Code
Cover Crop	340
Critical Area Planting	342
Fence	382
Pasture and Hay Planting	512
Mulching	484
Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till	345
Feed Management	592

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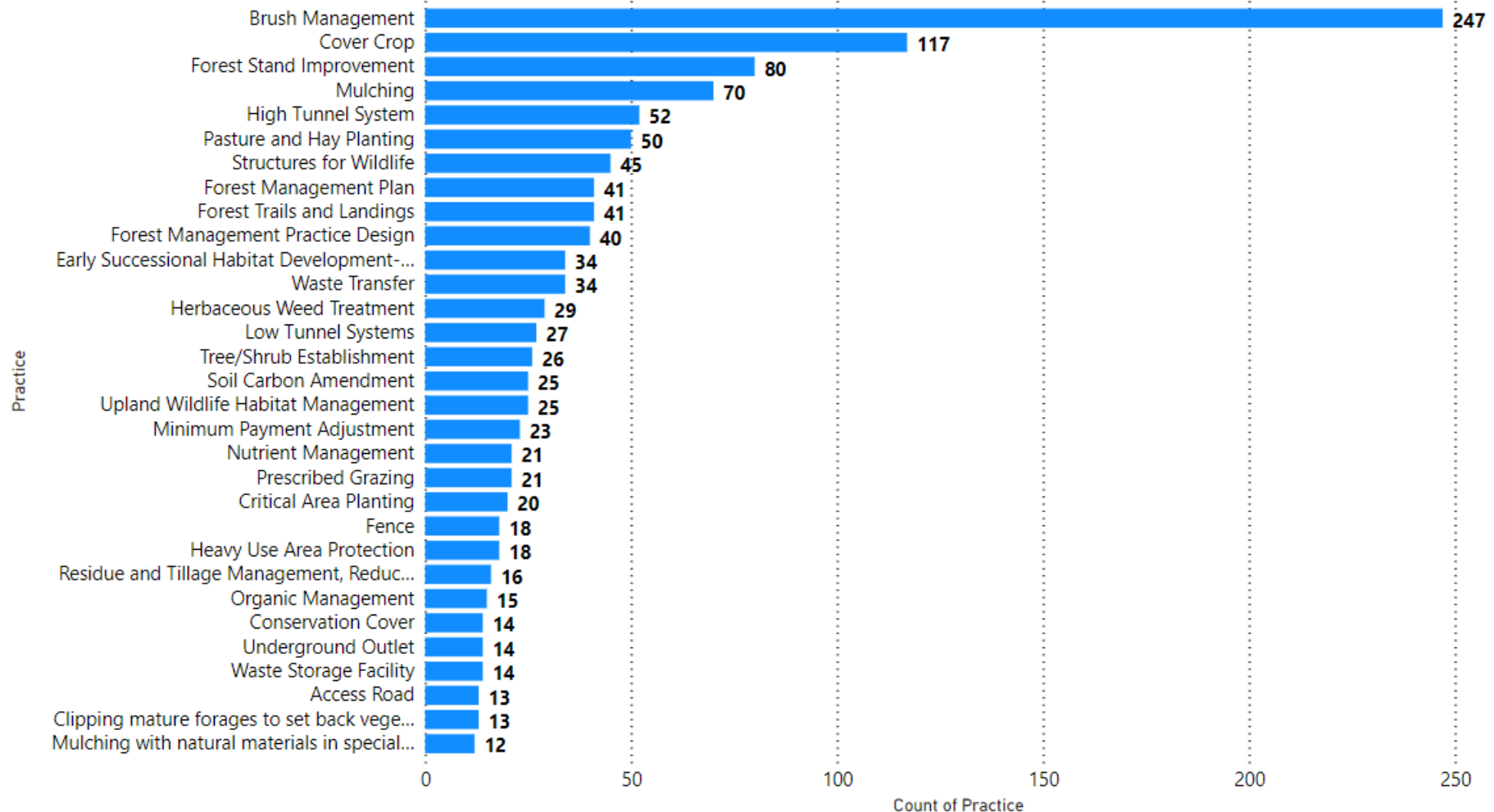
# FY 2023 Allocations



Program	Initial Allocation	Adjusted Allocation
AMA	\$239,591	\$174,113
CSP Classic	\$1,200,000	\$1,446,363
CSP-IRA	\$478,866	\$478,866
EQIP	\$10,060,410	\$15,157,410
EQIP-IRA	\$900,297	\$900,297
ACEP-ALE	\$2,608,858	\$3,251,358
ACEP-WRE	\$514,860	\$1,114,860
RCPP 18	\$2,077,712	\$1,911,403
Total	\$18,080,594	\$24,434,670

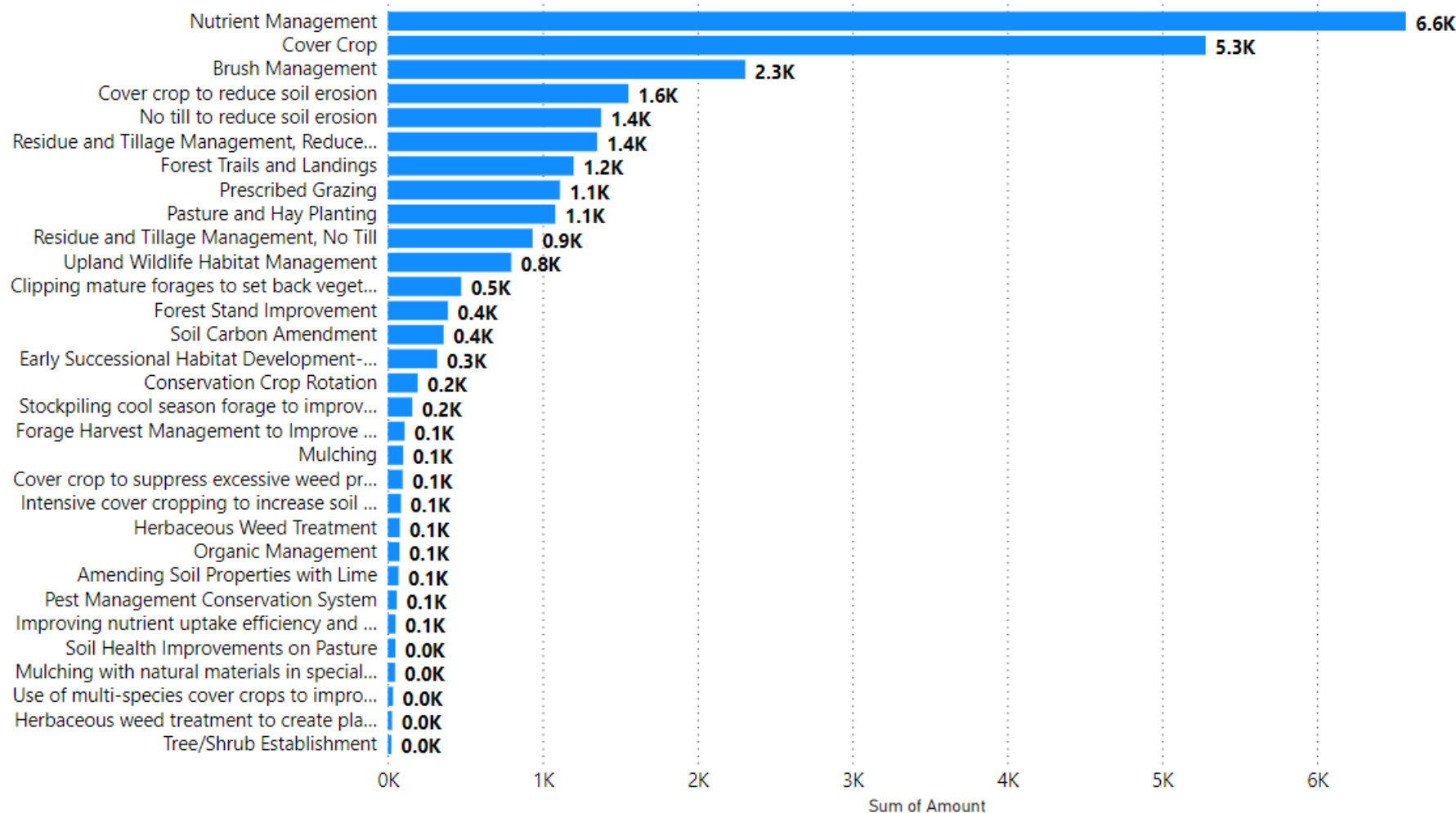
# FY 2023 Top Practices Contracted (#)

Count of Practice by Practice



# FY 2023 Top Contracted Practices (acres)

Sum of Amount by Practice





# RCPP 2018 FB



FY 2024 Financial Assistance Ranking Pools and Spending Plan Draft

Program	CART Ranking Pool Name	CART Category	ProTracts/CDA Sign-up	Application Deadline/Sign-Up Deadline/Request for Assistance	CART Assessment and Ranking Deadline	Field Office Approval Deadline [DC moves application to "Approve"]	Deadline for Submission to State Office Obligation Log or Internal Controls	Final Obligation Target Date (100% obligation)
RCPP LMR Producer - 2018 Farm Bill	2132_LMR_Producer_FY23 - (DEC Water Quality II)	LMR Producer - Agronomic	1	10/20/2023	3/15/2024	5/17/2024	5/31/2024	6/14/2024
		LMR Producer - Forest Erosion						
		RCPP18 CPA, DIA, CEMAs						
	2132_Easement_Restoration_FY23	Easement Restoration						
	2280_LMR_Producer_FY23 - (Lake Memphremagog Water Quality Partnership)	LMR Producer		10/20/2023	3/15/2024	5/17/2024	5/31/2024	6/14/2024
	2311_LMR_Producer_FY23 - (Regenerative Agriculture for Western New England)	LMR Producer		10/20/2023	3/15/2024	5/17/2024	5/31/2024	6/14/2024
	2517_LMR_Producer_FY23 - (Vermont Stream Restoration and Protection)	LMR Producer		10/20/2023	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	1865_LMR_Producer_FY23 - (Northern Tier Stream Restoration)	LMR Producer		10/20/2023	3/15/2024	5/17/2024	5/31/2024	6/14/2024

- 6 Active Projects
- Preapproved 47 applications across these projects.

LMR	# Preapproved	Original	Updated
1865	1	\$32,660.00	\$32,661
2132 Ag	23	\$1,510,600	\$1,477,522
2132 Forest	15	\$262,200.00	\$148,729
2132 CPA	4	\$12,552.00	\$12,096
2280	2	\$202,700.00	\$169,797
2311	2	\$57,000.00	\$70,598
Total	47	\$2,077,712	\$1,911,403

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# 2023 ACEP Summary



## FY23 ALE Enrollments (Projected as of 8.23.2023)

	Count	Acres	Funds
New Enrollment	11	1739.9	\$ 2,353,500
Substitute	7	1030.5	\$ 196,500
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2770.4</b>	<b>\$ 2,550,000</b>

## FY23 WRE Enrollments (Projected as of 8.23.2023)

	Offered acres	Total Estimated Cost
Eligible	18.5	\$ 84,810
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>\$ 84,810</b>



# Working Lands Programs

**Sign-up  
Dates Up-  
Front**

**All Programs  
Except (ACEP)**

**Application  
deadline  
10/20/2023**

# State Priority Resource Concerns

**2024 EQIP State Priority Resource Concerns as follows:**

## **Water Quality:**

- **Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss**
- **Storage and handling of pollutants**

## **Soil:**

- **Wind and water erosion**
- **Concentrated erosion**
- **Soil quality limitations (soil health) – focus on organic matter**

## **Habitat and Forestry:**

- **Terrestrial habitat**
- **Degraded plant condition**
- **Concentrated erosion – trails and landings**

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# State Priority Resource Concerns

## 2024 CSP State Priority Resource Concerns as follows:

State Priority Resource Concerns:

<b>Agricultural Land Ranking Pools</b>	<b>Non-Industrial Private Forestland Ranking Pools</b>
Degraded Plant Condition	Degraded Plant Condition
Pest Pressure	Fire Management
Livestock Production Limitation	Pest Pressure
Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pesticide Loss	Aquatic Habitat
Soil Quality Limitations	Soil Quality Limitations
Terrestrial Habitat	Terrestrial Habitat
Concentrated Erosion	Concentrated Erosion
Wind and Water Erosion	Wind and Water Erosion



# 2024 EQIP Ranking Pool and Spending Plan

FY 2024 Financial Assistance Ranking Pools and Spending Plan Draft

Program	CART Ranking Pool Name	CART Category	ProTracts/CDAAs Sign-up	Application Deadline/Sign-Up Deadline/Request for Assistance	CART Assessment and Ranking Deadline	Field Office Approval Deadline (DC moves application to "Approve")	Deadline for Submission to State Office Obligation Log or Internal Controls	Final Obligation Target Date (100% obligation)
EQIP	Conservation Innovation Grants	Statewide	Reserved					
	2024_YT_EQIP_Emergency_Disaster	Disaster Area	Reserved					
	2024_YT_EQIP_ACT_NOV	Project Area	Need to decide dates. Maybe Jan?					
	2024_YT_EQIP_CIC_Cropland	Statewide	EQIP-CIC 1	10/20/2023	3/15/2024	5/17/2024	5/31/2024	6/14/2024
	2024_YT_EQIP_CIC_Pasture	Statewide						
	2024_YT_EQIP_Windham_Local_Pool	Forest						
	2024_YT_EQIP_NWZ_Local_Pool							
	2024_YT_EQIP_Tri_District_Local_Pool							
	2024_YT_EQIP_WR_Ott_Local_Pool							
	2024_YT_EQIP_Orlenas_Local_Pool	Ag Ditch/Gullies						
		Invasives						
	2024_YT_EQIP_Flooding_Pool							
	2024_YT_EQIP_General_Statewide	Livestock Partnership (vice Farmstead)						
		Agroforestry (should we with lack of training?)						
		Cropland						
	2024_YT_EQIP_Source_Water	Source Water - Black Creek/Hardwick Lake Dam-Lamoille River/Headwaters Brown River/Headwaters Passumpsic River/Jail Branch/Lords Creek/New Haven River/Sodom Pond Brook-Vinooski River/South Stream Valloomsac River/Stony Brook-Black River/Vernon Dam-Connecticut River - Dead Creek						
	2024_YT_EQIP_Forest_Upland_Habitat	Statewide						
	2024_YT_EQIP_CPA_DIA_CEMA	Forest CPAs + DIAs + CEMAs All Other						
	2024_YT_EQIP_Community_Scale_Urban_Agriculture (vice specialty crop and HT)	Statewide						
	2024_YT_EQIP_Beginning_Farmer	Statewide						
	2024_YT_EQIP_Socially_Disadvantaged	Statewide						
	2024_YT_EQIP_Organic	Organic - Practices						
		Organic - CPA_DIA_CEMA						
	2024_YT_EQIP_Grazing	Statewide						
	2024_YT_EQIP_On-Farm_Energy	Statewide						
	2024_YT_EQIP_NWQI	Implementation - Rock River/East Creek/Hungerford Brook						
	2024_YT_EQIP_WLFW_GWW	Project Area						

Service



# High Priority Practices



## Elevated Payment Rates (Top-10) – Pr prefix

Proposal for 2024 - “Top-10” set at 90%

**313 – Waste Storage Facility**

**340 - Cover Crop**

**329 - Residue and Tillage Management – No till**

**345 - Residue and Tillage Management – Reduced till**

**391 – HUA (replacing Riparian Forest Buffer)**

**393 – Fence (replacing Filter Strip)**

**512 - Pasture and Hay Planting**

**590 - Nutrient Management**

**612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment**

**634 – Waste Transfer**

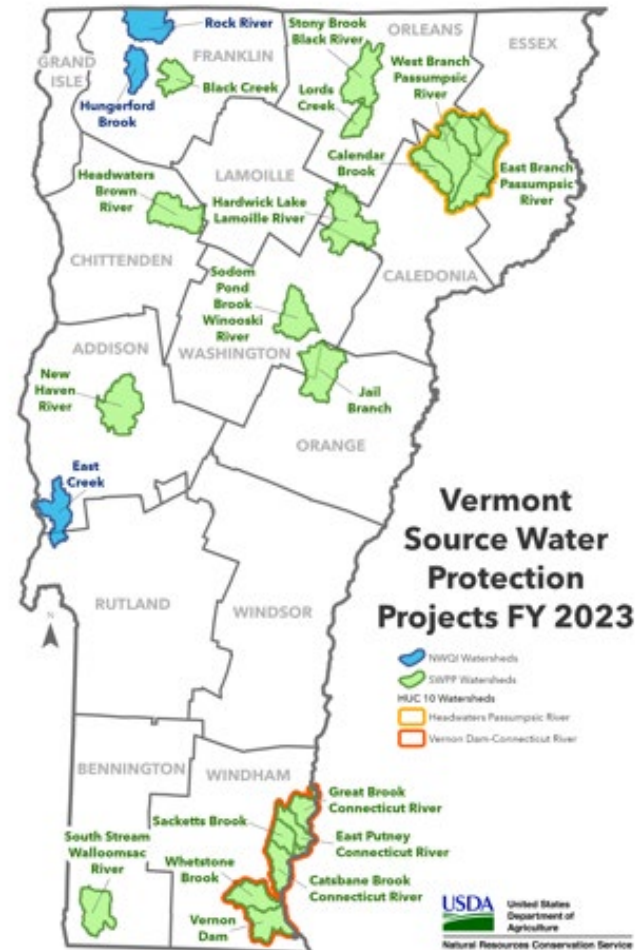
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# Expanded Source Water Protection Areas

**East Branch Passumpsic River, West Branch Passumpsic River, Calendar Brook, Stony Brook Black River, Hardwich Lake Dam Lamoille River, Lords Creek, Black Creek, New Haven River, Sodom Pond Brook Winooski River, Headwaters Brown River, South Stream Walloomsac River, Jail Branch, Great Brook Connecticut River, East Putney Connecticut River, Catsbane Brook Connecticut River, Whetstone Brook, and Vernon Dam. Propose adding Dead Creek and Blood Brook**



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# Easement Programs

# Sign-up Dates Up-Front

## ACEP-ALE

- February 2, 2024

## ACEP-WRE

- February 2, 2024

## RCPP US Held Easements

- January 12, 2024 (Tentative)



# 2024 ALE Recommendations

- **No change to impervious surface limitation max waiver**
  - Currently set at 10%, updated guidance will be released in FY24
- **No change to the current soils waiver criteria**
  - 50% Prime and/or Statewide soils in the Lake Champlain Basin and Connecticut River
  - 35% Prime and/or Statewide soils in all other parts of the State
- **Include farm transfers in ranking considerations**
- **Explore alternative valuation methods for future ALE agreements**



# 2024 WRE Recommendations

- **Keep existing ranking priorities the same as FY23**
- **Pursue Areawide Market Analysis for use of streamlined Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARCs) in FY25**
- **Leverage partnerships to boost WRE outreach**
- **Propose IRA target area for Champlain Basin**



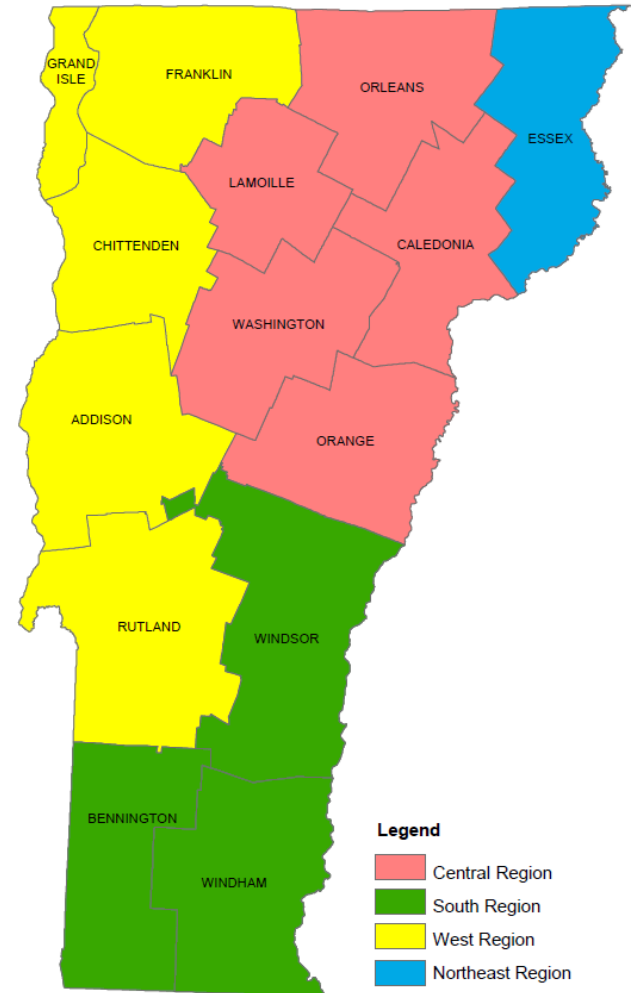
# WRE Recommendations

## 2024 Valuation methodology

Region	All acreage ranges and land use categories	Appraisal GARC percentage	Not-to-exceed rate/acre*
Central	<i>Appraisal only</i>	90%	\$5,000
South	<i>Appraisal only</i>	95%	\$5,000
West	<i>Appraisal only</i>	95%	\$5,000
Northeast	<i>Appraisal only</i>	95%	\$5,000

\* Offered amount will be the lowest of: appraised GARC value or landowner offer.

- **USPAP appraisals only in FY24 with GARC percentage caps from FY23 geographic areas and not to exceed rate of \$5,000/acre**



### Legend

- Central Region
- South Region
- West Region
- Northeast Region





# QUESTIONS







# NRCS State Technical Committee

## Climate Subcommittee

August 23, 2023

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# State Technical Climate Subcommittee

## Charge

- Review and comment on priority list of Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List.
- Offer recommendations and rationale for pursuing additional or different CSAF activities in (FY24 – 26).
- Identify potential areas of additional investment in NRCS and Partners to support CSAF activities.
- Provide summary of recommendations by July 2023.



# State Technical Advisory Committee

## Climate Subcommittee Recommendations

Submitted by: John Van Hoesen, 7/28/2023



*Contributors: Aaron Guman, Alissa White, Chris Smith, Dana Hazen, Dave Adams, Heather Wetzstein, Jane Lazorchak, Jennifer Byrne, Jesse Marksohn, Jill Arace, Joe Buford, John Van Hoesen, Judson Peck, Keith Thompson, Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Marli Rupe, Mojtaba Zeraatpisheh, Nathan Hamilton, Nina Gage, Ryan Crehan, Ryan Patch, Sarah Damsell, Susan Hodgson, Toby Alexander, Tom Eaton, and Travis Thomason.*

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# NRCS Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities

[Home](#) > [Conservation Basics](#) > [Natural Resource Concerns](#) > [Climate](#) > NRCS Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities

Producers and land managers are experiencing firsthand the impacts of climate change, which is caused by the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. With support from NRCS, farmers, ranchers and forest landowners across the nation's working lands can contribute to climate solutions.

[NRCS Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities | Natural Resources Conservation Service \(usda.gov\)](#)

# State Technical Climate Subcommittee

## CSAF List Recommendations

FY 2024 Priority List (top 15)	
Practice Code	Practice Name
528	Prescribed Grazing (acres)
345	Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (acres)
512	Pasture and Hay Planting (acres)
391	Riparian Forest Buffer (acres)
612	Tree/Shrub Establishment (acres)
340	Cover Crop (acres)
329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)
645	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (acres)
666	Forest Stand Improvement (acres)*
393	Filter Strips (acres)
328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)
657	Wetland Restoration (acres)*
381	Silvopasture (acres)
311	Alley Cropping (acres)
449	Irrigation Water Management (acres)

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# State Technical Climate Subcommittee

## National CSAF List Recommendations

- Submitted 7 practices for review:
  - Brush Management (314)
  - Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)
  - Stream Habitat Improvement & Management (395)
  - Aquatic Organism Passage (396)
  - Stream Crossing (578)
  - Feed Management (592)
  - Water Facility (614)

# State Technical Climate Subcommittee

## Organizational Recommendations

- Develop a unified communication strategy.
- Possibly develop NRCS survey of farmers.
- Increase collaboration with surrounding States to evaluate mitigation benefits.
- Develop a CSAF specific training schedule (quarterly?) that would provide an integrated overview of the CSAF priority list and how it relates to other agencies and to different NRCS funding pools.
- Develop a 'Common Application' process that would allow producers to apply to multiple funding sources using one application.
- Develop clear guidance that explains the process, requirements, and deadlines for updating NRCS payment rates.



# State Technical Climate Subcommittee

## Technical Recommendations

- Track manure injection separately from Nutrient Management (590). To offer better tracking/accountability, but also because there are questions about mitigation benefits.
- Turn on Field Operations Emissions Reduction (376) practice in Vermont. Many producers in Vermont are interested in precision agriculture and GPS-enabled equipment.
- Develop/utilize bundled practices, encourage producers to use bundles, like the CSP Bundles and Supplemental Activities.
- Consider requiring CSAF applications to include Conservation Planning Activities (CPAs) and/or completing Comprehensive Conservation Plans.
- Look at NRCS digester standards to adjust scale for Vermont, if needed, create practice standard for small digesters.
- Look at the timing of cover crop contracts in diversified and agroforestry systems and adjust contract period to reflect actual need. Implement ACT NOW for ease and speed of access. Overall, need to increase flexibility to react to climate/weather-related events.

# State Technical Climate Subcommittee

## Technical Recommendations

- Develop an 'Extreme Events' protocol that offers flexibility and makes it easier to update contracts, obligate funds, etc., at the State level. That way even if an event isn't declared a State or FEMA emergency, there's a process for helping producers quickly.
- Develop a 'Resilient Infrastructure' bundle, which would focus on site location, more durable infrastructure, energy efficiency, and alternative heating sources (e.g., replace propane with heat pumps).
- Update technical specification documents to incorporate/support resilience (i.e., place additional emphasis on site location requirements).
- Irrigation Water Management (449) – extend application beyond just rice fields.
- Riparian Buffer Suggestions
- Invasive Species Control Suggestions
- Riparian Grazing Suggestions

QUESTIONS?

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COMMENTS?



## Irrigation Policy (Draft)

August 10, 2023

### Irrigation

- AMA
  - Can be used for new irrigation systems, ie. no history.
  - Can be used to develop water supplies.
- EQUIP
  - Can be used if there is a documented history of irrigation 2 out of the last 5 years.
  - Can be used to develop water supplies.
  - Irrigation history:
    - Can be documented using the attached form.
    - Irrigation history can be in the form of “hand watering”.
    - Indian Tribes or Self-Certified Limited Resource Farmers may request, in writing, a waiver to the irrigation history requirement.
  - FIRI tool needs to be used to show increase in irrigation efficiency.
- Yield Testing of Wells is available as a cost shareable practice under 642, Water Well, Well Yield Test. All new and existing wells proposed to be used for irrigation and/or livestock watering (grazing) should be yield tested to confirm the yield of the well.
- Potential projects who have previously yield tested their well should rank higher than other projects.
- Irrigation Systems which already have water sources or partial water sources should be ranked higher.
- Payment rate shall remain 75%

### Wells

- Before contracting:
  - The proposed site will be evaluated for wetlands and cultural resources.
  - A statistical analysis shall be conducted on all proposed wells which is based upon the well yields and depths of nearby existing wells.
  - Recommend a minimum of all existing wells within a 1 mile radius to conduct this analysis. Also, a review of the geology maps to ensure the surficial & bedrock bed rock geology is approximately the same within that 1 mile radius.
  - If the statistical analysis determines the median well yield is less than the required need, a water well will NOT be installed.
- Before installation, further geological review and investigation of the proposed site should be conducted. This includes reviewing existing surficial/bedrock cross-sections and private well logs. to better characterize subsurface relationships. NRCS cannot pay for a “dry well”!
- Payment rate shall remain 75%

### Shallow Well

- Before contracting:
  - The proposed site will be evaluated for wetlands and cultural resources.
  - Test pits will be conducted by a Soil Scientist or other qualified individual.
  - The ground water table shall be evaluated and monitored, this may take several days.
  - If possibly, the recharge rate of the ground water shall be measured and/or estimated using a stopwatch or other acceptable means.
  - If it is determined that the water table is insufficient to maintain a reliable water source throughout the growing season, a shallow well will NOT be installed.
- Keep in mind that reliability will be seasonal.

## Irrigation Policy (Draft)

August 10, 2023

- Payment rate shall remain 75%.

### Spring Development

- Before contracting:
  - The proposed site will be evaluated for wetlands and cultural resources.
  - The proposed site shall be evaluated by a soil scientist or other qualified individual.
  - If possible, estimate the approximate flow rate. The site should be evaluated during the dry time of year, ie. August.
- Spring developments for livestock watering shall only be considered if there is a backup water source available, ie. livestock can be moved to other pastures with reliable watering systems or water can be hauled in from other water sources, in the event the spring development dries up.
- If it is determined that there is not enough flow, a spring development will not be installed.
- Keep in mind that reliability will be seasonal.
- Payment rate shall remain 75%.

### Pond

- Before contracting:
  - The proposed site will be evaluated for wetlands and cultural resources.
  - Test pits will be conducted a soil scientist or other qualified individual to evaluate subsurface water and soil conditions.
  - Soil classification shall be Unified Classification System.
  - Soil samples will also be sent to the Soil Mechanics Center to verify the classification.
  - The estimated runoff from the watershed upgradient of the pond shall be measured and computed. Assume a minimum drainage area of 1.5 acres / acre foot of water stored.
  - If possible, estimate the approximate flow rate. The site should be evaluated during the dry time of year, ie. August.
  - State and federal regulatory agencies shall be called in to determine if pond can be constructed in the desired location.
- Surface water ponds intended for irrigation shall be sized to collect at least enough water to apply 4" of water over the irrigated area.
- Ponds will NOT be installed if:
  - The estimated volume for irrigation and grazing is not met.
  - If the predominant soils are sand or gravel.
- Keep in mind that reliability will be seasonal.
- Payment rate shall remain 75%.

### Storage Tanks – Above Ground

- Storage tanks can be installed in areas where the planned water source must have enough re-charge to satisfy the daily system demand within a 24 hour period.
- The minimum storage requirement is the water demand for 1 day, however; 3-7 days is recommended.

Irrigation Policy (Draft)

August 10, 2023

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

PRODUCER SELF-CERTIFICATION OF IRRIGATION HISTORY

Program Year: FY 2020

Operator/Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ Water Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_ Application No: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify the irrigation history listed below. I am attaching a map that shows the location of the Irrigated land. I further certify that the inventory of irrigation equipment accurately represents the pumps, pipes and sprinkler system I have used to irrigate these acres during the last five years.

I understand that it is my responsibility to provide NRCS with all records necessary to verify this irrigation history. I also understand that it is my responsibility to provide accurate and complete information and that providing false information is grounds for contract termination and repayment of funds. I understand that NRCS has the final decision regarding irrigation history requirements.

Inventory of irrigation equipment:

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Sprinkler System: (type, make, delivery capacity):

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Irrigation Water Conveyance: (buried pipeline, portable pipe, flexible hose):

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Irrigation Policy (Draft)

August 10, 2023

Pumping Plant: (type, horsepower, pumping capacity in gpm):

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NOTE: If I am awarded a Program contract, my signature indicates that I agree to use the installed system only on the acres listed and approved in my Program contract for the NRCS-designated life of the installed practice. My signature below indicates that I have read and understand or had explained to me, all requirements referenced within this document.

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Participant Name (Printed)

---

Participant Signature

---

Date



## **530.420C EQIP Irrigation History Waiver Checklist**

### **Criteria**

This exhibit explains the data and information required by the agency to evaluate whether a waiver to the irrigation history requirement should be approved by the Deputy Chief for Programs.

The following should be used as a guide to document criteria required for evaluation and justification of a waiver request to the EQIP irrigation history eligibility requirement in 7 CFR Part 1466. Refer to Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual (CPM), Part 530, Subpart R, Section 530.402, “EQIP Eligibility.”

**Instructions:** The following checklist will be completed and submitted as supporting documentation, including any additional documentation, as applicable, when submitting the policy waiver through the agency-approved business tools.

Upload the waiver request for review by the Deputy Chief for Programs using the “Policy Waiver Request” on the FAPD SharePoint. Supporting documentation associated with the application should be stored electronically in the designated NRCS document management business tool.

**Note:** The irrigation history requirement is an eligibility criterion for EQIP. Applicants seeking a waiver of this requirement must meet all eligibility requirements specified in 7 CFR Part 1466 to be considered for funding, including requirements for irrigation-related practices, by either providing documentation of irrigation history or by receiving an irrigation history waiver, or through a drought or practice exception. Refer to 440-CPM-530-R, section 530.402C, “Land Eligibility”.

## 530.420C EQIP Irrigation History Waiver Checklist

Irrigation History Waiver Checklist			
<b>Waiver Requested By:</b> (Applicant Name)			
<b>Application Number:</b>		<b>State:</b>	
<b>Section 1: Basic Waiver Requirements</b> Complete this section to verify if the application meets required criteria needed to request an irrigation history waiver. If any response in this section is “no” then application does not meet the basic requirement for an irrigation history waiver. Refer to 440-CPM-530, Subpart D “Processing Applications,” for guidance on notifying the applicant of ineligibility.			
<b>Criteria to Request an Irrigation History Waiver</b>			<b>Yes</b>
1. The Form NRCS-CPA-1200 is complete, signed, dated, and stored electronically.			
2. Applicant meets all producer eligibility requirements in 7 CFR part 1466. Refer to 440-CPM-530, Subpart C, and Subpart R, Section 530.402.			
3. Except for irrigation history, the land where irrigation-related practices will be applied meets all land eligibility requirements per 7 CFR Part 1466, Refer to 440-CPM-530-R-530.402.			
4. Applicant was unable to provide sufficient evidence of irrigation history. Refer to 440-CPM-530-R-530.402C(2).			
5. Applicant is an Indian Tribe, or applicant self-certified on the NRCS-CPA-1200 as a limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.			
6. Applicant provided NRCS a written request for an irrigation history waiver.			
7. Applicant cannot meet the irrigation history requirement for reasons beyond their control. Include any information that documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Known factors that prevented the applicant from irrigating the land.</li> <li>• Actions the applicant could have taken to allow irrigation but did not pursue.</li> <li>• Reasons that explain why lack of irrigation history was beyond control of applicant.</li> </ul>			
8. Land has been in active agricultural production (cropped, hayed, or grazed) 4 out of the last 6 years:			
Year 1		Agricultural Product:	
Year 2		Agricultural Product:	
Year 3		Agricultural Product:	
Year 4		Agricultural Product:	
Year 5		Agricultural Product:	
Year 6		Agricultural Product:	
9. The planned irrigation system will address soil quality or erosion resource concerns as part of a sustainable agricultural system, such as establishment of cover crops to ensure a positive trend in the soil condition index as part of the producer’s conservation tillage, conservation crop rotation or organic production systems, or establishment of another sustainable agricultural system identified by the agency.			
10. The schedule of operations will not, individually or cumulatively, significantly adversely impact available surface or ground water supplies. The impacts upon water supplies may be based on, but not necessarily limited to, the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For ground water systems, the aquifer must not be declining in elevation or in yield.</li> <li>• The project area has not been subject to water shortages. NRCS may consider whether the project area has been listed as a short-term D2 “Severe Drought” (or higher) or long-term D1 “Moderate Drought” (or higher), as identified on the U.S. Drought Monitor (<a href="http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/">http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/</a>).</li> <li>• NRCS also may consider whether the project area has been subject to any other identified water shortages, either natural or imposed, by State or local regulations within the prior full irrigation season. Producers in the area received a relatively normal amount of water for a reasonable amount of the irrigation season.</li> </ul>			

<b>Criteria to Request an Irrigation History Waiver (cont.)</b>	<b>Yes</b>
11. An environmental review has been conducted using the NRCS-CPA-52, "Environmental Evaluation Worksheet," to document the benefits of the irrigation practices and determine whether significant adverse effects on natural resources or human environment are likely to result from implementation of the proposed irrigation practices. Provide a copy of the NRCS-CPA-52 and a summary of any adverse effects as part of supporting documentation.	
If all criteria in section 1 are answered "Yes," then proceed to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 2, if applicant self-certified as limited resource or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.</li> <li>• Section 3, if applicant is an Indian Tribe.</li> </ul>	
<b>Section 2: Limited Resource or Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher Criteria</b>	
Complete this section and provide supporting documentation for all criteria in the designated business tool.	
<b>Irrigation History Waiver Request -- Documentation Requirements:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
1. Applicant can demonstrate a legal right to access and use ground and/or surface water for irrigation purposes. For surface water sources, the applicant must also meet one of the following criteria depending upon location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. For surface water diversions east of the 100th meridian, a legal right to use surface water must be in possession of the applicant. The surface water source would need to be documented as meeting all other legal water rights 8 out of 10 of the last years.</li> <li>b. For surface water diversions west of the 100th meridian, the surface water source must be shown to have met all State-designated beneficial uses for which legal rights are held 5 out of the last 10 years.</li> </ul>	
2. Evidence or documentation that demonstrates the applicant had legal rights to use identified water source for purposes of irrigation is provided as supporting documentation.	
3. Additional documentation or data that is relevant to providing evidence to address the listed criteria above has been provided as supporting documentation.	
4. All above criteria have been answered "Yes" or, if evidence or documentation cannot be provided for any criteria listed above, provide an explanation of the effort made to obtain requested information and provide as supporting documentation.	
<b>Section 3: Indian Tribe Criteria</b>	
Complete this section and provide supporting documentation for all criteria in the designated business tool.	
<b>Irrigation History Waiver Request -- Documentation Requirements:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
1. The Indian Tribal land has <u>not</u> been designated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) "permanently nonassessable" or otherwise identified as permanently non-irrigable lands. NRCS may also consider whether existing irrigation delivery facilities are present or whether the land is considered assessable. Refer to BIA National Irrigation Handbook, Chapter 10, "Land Designation and Assessment," as authorized per 25 CFR Part 171 for applicable definitions and explanation of BIA designations.	
2. Investigate and obtain BIA designations and provide explanation of current designations as part of supporting documentation.	
3. The Tribe can provide evidence that legal water rights are secured and that for surface waters, established Tribal water rights are such that they would have resulted in full-volume delivery 5 out of the last 10 years. Document or included any evidence provided by the Tribe demonstrating legal water rights for land intended to be supported by irrigation-related practices.	
4. Additional documentation or data that is relevant to providing evidence to address the listed criteria above has been provided as supporting documentation.	
5. All above criteria have been answered "Yes" or, if evidence or documentation cannot be provided for any criteria listed above, provide an explanation of the effort made to obtain requested information and provide as supporting documentation.	



# **NRCS State Technical Committee** **Ecological Sciences Subcommittees**

August 23, 2023

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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

# Overview

- Soils Subcommittee
  - Higher Level of Conservation – Cover Crop
- Urban Ag Subcommittee
- Forestry and Wildlife Subcommittee



# Soils Subcommittee

- **Held quarterly subcommittee meetings.**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> meeting participation was affected by gov.delivery transition
- **Committee participants provided input virtually, in person, and/or via email.**
- **Committee participants provided input on the Conservation Innovation Grant priorities.**
- **Provided input on the VT Soil Health Strategy.**
- **Committee participants reviewed the following conservation practices implementation requirements:**
  - **Soil Carbon Amendment (Application Rates)**
  - **Cover Crop (Higher Level of Conservation)**

# Talking Points Higher Level of Conservation

Part 530 references “higher level of conservation” when contracting additional years of land management practices

**“land management practices that address a higher-level quality concern may be implemented again on the same land unit.”**

**“achieve a higher level of conservation benefit as documented through the conservation planning assessment.”**

**“results in a higher level of conservation benefit as documented on Form NRCS-CPA-52, “Environmental Evaluation Worksheet.”**

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# Higher Level of Conservation

When a client wants to receive payment for cover crop after adopting it through NRCS financial assistance, they would be eligible for additional payments if the reapplication of the cover crop resulted in a higher level of conservation.

When this is done through EQIP funds, NRCS would document the higher level of conservation through the assessment, notes, and/or the CPA-52. They would do the same in CSP. Planning process and documentation is program neutral.

# Cover Crop Examples

- Single species to multi-species.
- Planting all by the end of September, when previous cover crop was planted by October 10.
- Transition from broadcast to incorporation with tillage.
- Transition from incorporation with tillage to drilling.

# Cover Crop Examples

- Higher seeding rate (drilling before October 1 could be as low as 50-lbs per acre of rye...increasing it to 75-lbs per acre and drilling it prior to October 1 would provide better soil protection.
- Interseeding in place of planting after harvest.
- Transition from a winter killed cover to an over wintering cover crop.
- Incorporating additional practices (e.g., 329 / 345) as part of soil health management system.

# Urban and Small Ag Subcommittee

- **Held 3 subcommittee meetings**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> meeting participation was affected by the gov.delivery transition
- **Committee members provided input virtually, in person, and/or via email.**
- **Shared the Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Grant Opportunities.**
- **July 18th New Farms for New Americans and Association of Africans Living in Vermont awarded 350k. [USDA Invests \\$7.4 Million in 25 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Efforts](#)**
- **Committee participants provided input on the Conservation Innovation Grant priorities.**
- **Engaged in the following initiatives:**
  - SoilSHOP
  - Upper Valley Agroforestry Tour
  - Urban and small-scale survey
  - Payment schedule scenario review

# Recommendations/Feedback

- One concern/suggestion is that for very small farms keeping it simple is a key factor in program participation due to their limited management capacity. I've long thought that it would be great to have one very short form to request funding/reimbursement for a suite of well-proven, relatively inexpensive and environmentally beneficial practices like cover cropping, drip irrigation, soil testing, pest scouting - especially if these take place on small acreage where the total cost is especially low.
- It would help to have your definitions of urban/small/community ag for your programs.
- It is difficult to get a farm and tract number assignment from FSA. Do you have to have 3 years of cropping history to get this? Can we have an urban/small farm cross agency meeting on this?

# State Technical Forestry and Wildlife Subcommittee

- Discussed adding 314, 315 and 395 practices to FY24 CSAF list.
- Discussed a ranking question related to water quality and suggested edits to make it less restrictive.
- Discussed potential CSAF oriented Forest Stand Improvement 666 treatments we might move to in the future focused on managing for old growth characters.

Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name <sup>[2]</sup> (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife Habitat	311	Alley Cropping (acres)	None Available	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)	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*

QUESTIONS?

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COMMENTS?

